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# ON THE QUEENSHIP OF MARY

Encyclical Letter  
(*Ad Caeli Reginam*)  
of  
His Holiness Pope Pius XII

Issued October 11, 1954



NATIONAL CATHOLIC WELFARE CONFERENCE

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## PRAYER ON THE QUEENSHIP OF MARY

### Composed and recited by His Holiness Pope Pius XII

Out of the depths of this valley of tears, through which suffering humanity painfully struggles—up from the bellows of this sea, endlessly buffeted by the waves of suffering—we raise our eyes to you, Most Beloved Mother Mary, to be comforted by the contemplation of your glory and to hail you as Queen and Mistress of Heaven and earth, Queen and Mistress of mankind.

With legitimate filial pride, we wish to exalt your queenship and to recognize it as due to the sovereign excellence of your entire being, O Most Sweet True Mother of Him Who is King by right, by inheritance and by conquest.

Reign, O Mother and Mistress, by showing us the path of holiness, and by guiding and assisting us that we may never stray from it.

In the heights of heaven, you exercise your primacy over the choirs of angels, who acclaim you as their sovereign, and over the legions of saints who delight in beholding your dazzling beauty. So, too, reign over the entire human race, above all by opening the path of faith to those who do not yet know your Divine Son.

Reign over the Church, which acknowledges and extols your gentle dominion and has recourse to you as a safe refuge amid the calamities of our day. Reign especially over that part of the Church which is persecuted and oppressed; give it strength to bear adversity, constancy never to yield under unjust compulsion, light to avoid falling into enemy snares, firmness to resist overt attack, and at every moment unwavering faithfulness to your kingdom.

Reign over men's minds, that they may seek only what is true; over their wills, that they may follow solely what is good; over their hearts, that they may love nothing but what you yourself love.

Reign over individuals and over families, as well as over societies and nations; over the assemblies of the powerful, the counsels of the wise, as over the simple aspirations of the humble.

Reign in the streets and the squares, in the cities and the villages, in the valleys and the mountains, in the air, on land and on the sea; and hear the pious prayer of all those who recognize that yours is a reign of mercy, in which every petition is heard, every sorrow comforted, every misfortune relieved, every infirmity healed, and in which, at a gesture from your gentle hands, from death itself there arises smiling life.

Obtain for us that all who now, in every corner of the world, acclaim and hail you Queen and Mistress, may one day in heaven enjoy the fulness of your kingdom in the vision of your Divine Son, Who with the Father and the Holy Ghost, lives and reigns for ever and ever. Amen.

ENCYCLICAL LETTER  
OF HIS HOLINESS  
PIUS XII  
BY DIVINE PROVIDENCE  
POPE  
ON THE ROYAL DIGNITY OF THE  
BLESSED VIRGIN MARY  
AND ON THE INSTITUTION OF HER FEAST

TO THE VENERABLE BRETHREN  
PATRIARCHS, PRIMATES, ARCHBISHOPS, BISHOPS  
AND THE OTHER LOCAL ORDINARIES  
HAVING PEACE AND COMMUNION WITH THE APOSTOLIC SEE  
POPE PIUS XII

Venerable Brethren, Greetings And Apostolic Blessing.

1. Already from the earliest centuries of the Catholic Church, the Christian people have addressed suppliant prayers and hymns of praise and veneration to the Queen of Heaven, both when they had reason to rejoice and particularly when they were beset by serious troubles. The hope placed in the Mother of the Divine King, Jesus Christ, has never failed. There has never been a weakening of that faith by which we are taught that Mary, the Virgin Mother of God, reigns with her maternal heart over the entire world, just as she is crowned with the diadem of royal glory in heavenly blessedness.

2. After the frightful calamities which, under Our very eyes, have covered flourishing cities, towns, and villages with ruins, We, sorrowing, see so many and such great spiritual evils spreading themselves abroad with fearful violence, and We behold justice giving way and the attractions of evil triumphing. We are filled with great sorrow in

this threatening and fearful danger and thus with confidence We fly to Mary Our Queen, manifesting not only our own sense of filial reverence, but also that of all those who glory in the Christian name.

3. It is pleasing and helpful to remember that We ourselves, on the first day of November of the Holy Year 1950, before a huge multitude of Cardinals, Bishops, priests, and of the faithful who had come there from every part of the world, defined the dogma of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary into heaven<sup>1</sup> where, present in soul and body, she reigns together with her only-begotten Son, amid the heavenly choirs of the angels and the Saints. And moreover, since a century was being completed from the time our predecessor of immortal memory, Pius IX, proclaimed and defined that the great Mother of God had been conceived without any stain of original sin, We instituted this current Marian Year;<sup>2</sup> Now, with great consolation to our fatherly heart We see, not only here in Rome—and especially in the Liberian Basilica, where great multitudes have manifested in a striking way their faith and their most ardent charity towards the heavenly Mother—but also in all parts of the world, that filial reverence toward the Virgin Mother of God has increased more and more, and that the principal shrines of Mary have been visited and are still being visited by many throngs of Catholic pilgrims gathered in prayer.

4. Everyone knows that We, as often as the opportunity presented itself, that is when We were speaking to our children in Christ who were gathered in our presence, or when, by radio, We spoke to people afar off, We have exhorted all whom We could to love our most kind and powerful Mother, as children should, with a strong and tender love. On this point We may especially call to mind the radio message which We addressed to the people of Portugal, when the miraculous image of the Virgin Mary, which is venerated at Fatima, was being crowned with a golden diadem.<sup>3</sup> We ourselves called that image the messenger of the “royalty” of Mary.<sup>4</sup>

5. And now, so that We may, as it were, bring to a climax the series of many manifestations of our filial reverence towards the great Mother of God, manifestations which the Christian people have followed so carefully, and likewise so that we may happily and usefully conclude

the Marian Year, which is now drawing to a close, and so that We may freely grant the urgent petitions on this matter which have come to Us from all over the world, We have decided to institute a liturgical feast of the Blessed Virgin Mary as Queen.

6. On this point We have not wished to propose a new truth for the Christian people to believe, since actually the title and the arguments on which Mary's royal dignity is based have at all times been clearly expressed, and are already contained as handed down long ago in the documents of the Church and in the books of the sacred liturgy.

7. It is our pleasure to recall these things in this present encyclical letter, so that We may renew the praises of our heavenly Mother, and so that We may encourage a more zealous filial reverence towards her, to bring spiritual gain to the souls of all men.

## I

8. Since the Christian people, even long ago, rightly believed that she from whom was born the Son of the Most High, the One who "will reign in the House of Jacob forever",<sup>5</sup> the "Prince of Peace",<sup>6</sup> the "King of kings and the Lord of lords",<sup>7</sup> has received singular gifts of grace over and above all other creatures and since they took cognizance of the intimate connection between the Mother and the Son, they easily acknowledged the supreme royal dignity of the Mother of God.

9. Hence it is not astonishing that the ancient writers of the Church, basing their stand on the words of St. Gabriel the Archangel who foretold that Mary's Son was going to reign forever,<sup>8</sup> and on the words of Elizabeth who reverently greeting her, praised "the Mother of my Lord",<sup>9</sup> called Mary "the Mother of the King," and "the Mother of the Lord," thereby clearly signifying that, from the royal dignity of her Son, she has obtained eminence and outstanding position.

10. So it is that St. Ephrem, burning with poetic inspiration, represents her as speaking in this way: "Let Heaven sustain me in its embrace, because I am honored above it. For heaven was not Thy mother, but Thou hast made it Thy throne. How much more honorable and venerable than the throne of a king is his mother".<sup>10</sup> And in another place



he thus prays to her: “. . . girl, empress and ruler, queen, lady, protect and keep me in your arms lest Satan who causes evil exult against me, lest my wicked foe be glorified against me”.<sup>11</sup>

11. Mary is called by St. Gregory Nazianzen “the Mother of the King of the entire universe,” and the “Virgin Mother who brought forth the King of the entire world”.<sup>12</sup> And Prudentius asserts that the mother marvels “that she has brought forth God as man, and even as Supreme King.”<sup>13</sup>

12. And this royal dignity of the Blessed Virgin Mary is clearly and openly meant and stated by those who call her “Lady,” “Mistress,” and “Queen.”

13. Already in one of the homilies attributed to Origen, Mary is called by Elizabeth, not only “the Mother of my Lord,” but also “Thou my Lady.”<sup>14</sup>

14. The same thing is found in the writings of St. Jerome where he introduces the following statement amidst various explanations of Mary’s name: “We should realize that Mary means Lady in the Syrian language”.<sup>15</sup> After him St. Chrysologus says the same thing in a more certain fashion in these words: “The Hebrew name ‘Mary’ means ‘Domina’ [Lady] in Latin. The Angel therefore calls her Lady so that the Mother of the Lord, whom the authority of her Son made and caused to be born and to be called the Lady, might be without servile fear”.<sup>16</sup>

15. Moreover Epiphanius, the Bishop of Constantinople, writing to the Sovereign Pontiff Hormisdas, says that we should pray that the unity of the Church may be preserved “by the grace of the Holy and the con-substantial trinity and by the prayers of Mary, Our Lady, the holy and glorious Virgin and Mother of God.”<sup>17</sup>

16. Another writer of that same era thus solemnly salutes the Blessed Virgin sitting at the right hand of God to pray for us: “the Lady ruler of mortal man, the most holy Mother of God”.<sup>18</sup>

17. St. Andrew of Crete frequently ascribed the dignity of a queen to the Virgin Mary. He has written this, for example: “His ever-virgin Mother, from whose womb He, being God, took on human form, He today transports from earthly dwellings as Queen of the human race.”<sup>19</sup>

18. And in another place he speaks of "the Queen of the entire human race faithful in reality to the meaning of her name, who is exalted above all things save only God himself."<sup>20</sup>

19. Likewise St. Germanus speaks to the humble Virgin in these words: "Be seated, Lady, for it is fitting that you should sit in a high place since you are a Queen and glorious above all kings".<sup>21</sup> He likewise calls her the Lady ruler of all of those who dwell on earth".<sup>22</sup>

20. She is called by St. John Damascene: "Queen, ruler, and lady",<sup>23</sup> and also "the Lady ruler of every creature".<sup>24</sup> Another ancient writer of the Eastern Church calls her "the fortunate Queen," "the perpetual Queen beside the King, her Son," "whose glorious head is crowned with a golden diadem".<sup>25</sup>

21. And finally St. Ildephonsus of Toledo gathers together almost all of the titles of honor in this salutation: "O my Lady, my Ruler, Thou who governs me, Mother of my Lord . . . . Lady among the handmaidens, Queen among sisters".<sup>26</sup>

22. The theologians of the Church, deriving their teaching from these and almost innumerable other testimonies handed down long ago, have called the most Blessed Virgin the Queen of all creatures, the Queen of the world, and the Lady ruler of all things.

23. And the supreme pastors of the Church have considered it their duty to approve and advance by their own words of praise the piety of the Christian people towards the heavenly Mother and Queen. And so, to pass over the documents of more recent Pontiffs, it is well to remember that already in the seventh century our predecessor St. Martin I called Mary "our glorious Lady, ever Virgin".<sup>27</sup> St. Agatho, in the Synodal letter sent to the Fathers of the Sixth Ecumenical Council called her "Our Lady, really and truly the mother of God".<sup>28</sup> And in the eighth century Gregory II in the letter sent to St. Germanus, the patriarch, and read in the Seventh Ecumenical Council with all the Fathers applauding, called the Mother of God: "The Lady ruler of all, the true mother of God," and also "the Lady ruler of all Christians."<sup>29</sup>

24. We wish also to recall that our predecessor of immortal

memory, Systus IV, touched favorably upon the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin beginning the Apostolic Letter "Cum preexcelsa"<sup>30</sup> with words in which Mary is called "Queen", "Who is always vigilant to intercede with the King whom she bore". Benedict XIV also asserted this in his Apostolic Letter "Gloriosae Dominae" in which Mary is called "Queen of heaven and earth" and it is stated that the sovereign King has in some way communicated His power of ruling to her.<sup>31</sup>

25. Consequently St. Alphonsus Ligouri, collecting all the testimonies of past ages, most reverently writes these words: "Because the Virgin Mary was raised up to such a lofty dignity as to be the mother of the King of kings, therefore rightly and deservedly the Church has honored her with the title of 'Queen' ".<sup>32</sup>

## II

26. Furthermore, the sacred liturgy, which is, as it were, a faultless mirror of the doctrine handed down from the elders and believed by the Christian people through the course of all the ages both in the East and in the West has sung the praises of the heavenly Queen and constantly sings them.

27. Ardent voices from the East sing out: "O mother of God, today thou art carried into heaven on the chariots of the cherubim, the seraphim wait upon thee and the ranks of the heavenly host bow before thee".<sup>33</sup>

28. Further: "O just, O most blessed (Joseph), since thou art sprung from a royal line, thou hast been chosen from among all to be spouse of the pure Queen who in a way which defies description will give birth to Jesus the King."<sup>34</sup> In addition: "I shall sing a hymn to the Mother, the Queen, whom I shall joyously approach to praise her, gladly singing of her wonders . . . Our tongue cannot worthily praise thee, O Lady; for thou who hast borne Christ the King, art exalted above the seraphim . . . Hail, O Queen of the world; hail, O Mary, Lady ruler of us all".<sup>35</sup>

29. We read, moreover, in the Ethiopic Missal: "O Mary, center of the whole world, . . . thou art greater than the many-eyed cherubim and the six-winged seraphim . . . The



heaven and the earth is entirely filled with the sanctity of thy glory.”<sup>36</sup>

30. Furthermore, the Latin Church sings that ancient and very sweet prayer which is known as the “Hail Holy Queen” and the lovely antiphons “Hail Heavenly Queen,” “O Queen of Heaven Rejoice,” and likewise those which we are accustomed to recite on feasts of the Blessed Virgin Mary: “The Queen stood at Thy right hand in golden vesture surrounded with beauty”<sup>37</sup>; “Heaven and earth praise thee as a powerful Queen”<sup>38</sup>; “Today the Virgin Mary ascends the heavens: rejoice because she reigns with Christ forever.”<sup>39</sup>

31. To these should be added, in addition to other things, the Litany of Loreto which daily invites the Christian people to call upon Mary as Queen. Likewise, for many centuries past, Christians have been accustomed to meditate upon the ruling power of Mary which embraces heaven and earth when they consider the fifth glorious mystery of the Rosary which can be called the mystical crown of the heavenly Queen.

32. Finally, art which is based upon Christian principles and is animated by their spirit as something which faithfully interprets the sincere and freely expressed filial reverence of the faithful, since the Council of Ephesus portrays Mary as Queen and empress seated upon a royal throne adorned with the royal insignia, crowned with the royal diadem and surrounded by the host of the angels and the saints in heaven and ruling not only nature and its powers but also over the Machinations of Satan. Iconography, to represent the royal dignity of the Blessed Virgin Mary, has always been enriched with works of the highest artistic value and the greatest beauty and has gone so far as to represent colorfully the divine Redeemer crowning His mother with a splendid diadem.

33. The Roman Pontiffs, favoring this devotion of the people, have often decorated with a crown, either personally or through representatives, the images of the Virgin mother of God which were already distinguished by public veneration.

### III

34. As we have already indicated above, venerable brethren, the basic principle upon which Mary's royal dignity rests, a principle already evident in the documents handed down by the elders long ago and in the sacred liturgy, is without doubt her divine maternity. In the sacred scriptures we read this statement about the Son whom the Virgin will conceive: "He shall be called great, and shall be called the Son of the Most High; and the Lord God will give him the throne of David his father, and he shall be king over the house of David forever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end."<sup>40</sup> And furthermore, Mary is called the "Mother of the Lord".<sup>41</sup> From this it is easily deduced that she too is Queen since she brought forth a Son who, at the very moment that he was conceived, was, by reason of the hypostatic union of the human nature with the Word, even as man, King and Lord of all things. As a result, St. John Damascene could rightly and deservedly write these words: "Truly she has become the Lady ruler of every creature since she is the mother of the Creator".<sup>42</sup> And it can likewise be said that the first one who with heavenly voice announced Mary's royal office was Gabriel the Archangel himself.

35. Now, the most Blessed Virgin Mary is to be called Queen not only by reason of her divine maternity, but also because by the will of God she has had an outstanding part in the work of our eternal salvation. "What more pleasant or sweeter thought could we have," wrote our predecessor of happy memory, Pius XI, "than that Christ rules over us not only by native right but also by an acquired right, namely that of the redemption? Would that all men who have forgotten how much we have cost our Saviour might remember: 'You were redeemed . . . not with perishable things, with silver or gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.'<sup>43</sup> We are no longer our own for 'at a great price'<sup>44</sup> Christ has purchased us."<sup>45</sup>

36. Now, in accomplishing this work of the redemption the Most Blessed Virgin Mary was certainly intimately associated with Christ. Appropriately, therefore, we sing in the sacred liturgy: "Holy Mary the Queen of heaven and the Lady ruler of the world was standing, sorrowful, by the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ."<sup>46</sup> Wherefore, as even

in the Middle Ages, a very pious student of St. Anselm wrote, "As . . . God is the Father and Lord of all things preparing all by his power, so the Blessed Mary, repairing all things by her merits is the mother and ruler of all. For God is the Lord of all things, in each constituting by His Command in its own nature, and Mary is the Lady ruler of all in restoring each to its original dignity through that grace which she has merited."<sup>47</sup>

37. As Christ is our Lord and King by a special title because He redeemed us, so the Blessed Virgin [is our Lady and Queen] because of the unique way in which she has co-operated toward our redemption by giving of her own substance, by offering Him willingly for us, and by desiring, praying for, and bringing about our salvation in a singular manner."<sup>48</sup>

38. From these premises the following argument is drawn. Mary was, by the will of God, associated with Jesus Christ, the principle of salvation itself, in bringing about spiritual salvation in a way that was quite similar to the way in which Eve was associated with Adam, the principle of death, so that it may be said that the work of our salvation was accomplished through a certain "recapitulation", in which a virgin is instrumental in saving the human race just as a virgin was instrumental in making it subject to death.<sup>49</sup> Moreover, it can also be said that this most glorious Lady was the beloved mother of Christ precisely "so that she might be made His associate in the redemption of the human race."<sup>50</sup> Actually, "It was she, the second Eve who, free from all sin, original or personal, and always most intimately united with her Son, offered Him on Golgotha to the Eternal Father for all the children of Adam, sin-stained by this unhappy fall, and her mother's rights and mother's love were included in the holocaust."<sup>51</sup> Hence we may certainly conclude that just as Christ, the new Adam, must be called King, not only because He is the Son of God, but also because He is our Redeemer; so, by a certain kind of analogy, the most Blessed Virgin is Queen, not only because she is the mother of God, but also because, as the new Eve, she was associated with the new Adam.

39. And so it is that Jesus Christ alone, God and man, is King in the full, proper, and absolute sense of the term. Yet Mary also, although in a restricted way and only by

analogy, shares in the royal dignity as the mother of Christ who is God, as His associate in the labors of the Divine redemption, and in His struggle against His enemies and in the victory He won over them all. From this association with Christ the King she obtains a splendor and eminence surpassing the excellence of all created things. From this association with Christ comes the royal function by which she can disperse the treasures of the Divine Redeemer's Kingdom. Finally, from this association with Christ comes the unfailing efficacy of her maternal intercession with the Son and with the Father.

40. There is no doubt whatsoever that the most holy Mary surpasses all created things in dignity and likewise that she has gained a primacy, after her Son, over all things. As St. Sophronius says: "Thou hast, in fact, far surpassed every creature . . . What could be more sublime than this joy, O Virgin Mother? And what could be greater than this grace which thou alone hast received from God?"<sup>52</sup> St. Germanus adds these words of praise to that greeting: "Thine honor and dignity surpass all created things."<sup>53</sup> And St. John Damascene goes so far as to say that "There is an infinite difference between God's servants and His Mother".<sup>54</sup>

41. In order to understand this most exalted grade of dignity which the mother of God has obtained above all created things, we should recall that the holy mother of God was, already in the first moment of her conception, filled with such an abundance of graces as to surpass the grace of all the Saints. Hence—as our predecessor of happy memory, Pius IX, wrote in his Apostolic Letter—the indescribably perfect God "so marvelously endowed her above all the angels and Saints with the abundance of all heavenly gifts from the treasury of the Divinity that she, always completely free from every stain of sin and entirely beautiful and perfect, possesses such a fullness of innocence and holiness that under God no greater than this is understood and that no one other than God Himself can ever know."<sup>55</sup>

42. Moreover, the blessed Virgin has not only received the grade of excellence and perfection which is supreme after that of Christ Himself but has also received some sharing of that efficacy by which her Son and our Redeemer is rightly and properly said to reign over the minds and



wills of men. For if the word of God performs miracles and gives grace through the Humanity He has assumed, if He employs the Sacraments and His Saints as instruments for the salvation of souls, why should He not use His mother's office and efforts to bring us the fruits of the Redemption. As Our predecessor of immortal memory, Pius IX, said: "Turning her maternal heart toward us and dealing with the affair of our salvation, she is concerned with the whole human race. Constituted by the Lord, Queen of heaven and earth, and exalted above all the choirs of angels and the ranks of the Saints in heaven, standing at the right hand of her only begotten Son, Our Lord Jesus Christ, she petitions most powerfully with her maternal prayers, and she obtains what she seeks. And she cannot fail."<sup>56</sup> On this subject another of Our predecessors of happy memory, Leo XIII, has said that in the distribution of graces an "almost immeasurable power" was given to the most Blessed Virgin Mary.<sup>57</sup> St. Pius X adds that Mary performs this function "as it were by a mother's right".<sup>58</sup>

43. Therefore, let all Christ's faithful glory in the fact that they are subject to the rule of the Virgin Mother of God who both enjoys royal power and burns with a mother's love.

44. Yet, in these and other questions about the Blessed Virgin let theologians and preachers of the word of God take care to avoid certain deviations lest they fall into twofold error. Let them beware of teachings that lack foundation, and that, by misuse of words, exceed the bounds of truth. And let them beware of too great a narrowness of mind when they are considering that unique, completely exalted, indeed almost divine dignity of the Mother of God which the Angelic Doctor teaches we must attribute to her "by reason of the infinite good which is God."<sup>59</sup>

45. Moreover, in this part of Christian doctrine as in others the living Magisterium of the Church which Christ has constituted "to elucidate and explain things that are contained in the deposit of faith only obscurely and, as it were, implicitly" stands forth for all as "the immediate and universal norm of truth."<sup>60</sup>

#### IV

46. Therefore, from the monuments of Christian antiquity,



from liturgical prayers, from the Christian people's profound sense of religion, and from the works of art that have been produced, We have collected statements asserting that the Virgin Mother of God possesses royal dignity. Likewise We have proved that the arguments which sacred theology has constructed by reasoning from the deposit of divine faith completely confirmed this same truth. From so many testimonies gathered together there is formed as it were, a far-sounding chorus that praises the high eminence of the royal honor of the Mother of God and men to whom all created things are subject and who is "exalted above the choirs of the angels unto heavenly kingdoms."<sup>61</sup>

47. Since, after long and careful consideration We have come to the conclusion that great benefits will accrue to the Church if that solidly established truth were to shine forth even more clearly to all, like a bright light placed on its pedestal, We, by Our Apostolic Power, decree and institute the feast of Mary as Queen to be celebrated throughout the entire world every year on May 31. And likewise We command that on that same day there be renewed the consecration of the human race to the Immaculate Heart of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Upon this there is founded a great hope that there may arise an era of happiness that will rejoice in the triumph of religion and in Christian peace.

48. Therefore let all approach with greater confidence now than before to the throne of mercy and grace of our Queen and Mother to beg help in difficulty, light in darkness and solace in trouble and sorrow. And, what is very important, let them strive to free themselves from the servitude of sin. Let them pay unswerving homage, mingled with the beautiful veneration of her children to the royal scepter of that great Mother. May her shrines be filled with a multitude of people, and may her feasts be celebrated. May her Rosary be found in the hands of all. May she gather together small groups or great multitudes of Christ's faithful in churches, in homes, in hospitals, and in prisons, to sing her praises. May the name of Mary, which is sweeter than nectar and more precious than any jewel, be given the highest honor. Let no one speak vile words against that name so majestically beautiful and venerable by her maternal grace. Such talk is the sign of a vile mind. And let no one dare say anything lacking in due reverence to her.

49. Let all strive vigilantly and strenuously to reproduce, each according to his own condition, in their own souls and in their own conduct the exalted virtues of our heavenly Queen and our most loving Mother. And hence it will follow that those who are counted as Christians, honoring and imitating their Queen and Mother, will finally realize that they are truly brothers and, spurning jealousies and immoderate desires, may promote social charity, respect the rights of the weak, and love peace. And let no one consider himself a child of Mary to be taken readily under her most powerful protection, unless according to her example, he practices justice, meekness and chastity and devotes himself to true brotherhood not harming or hurting anyone, but rather helping and consoling.

50. In some parts of the world there are those who, because of the Christian name, suffer persecution and are deprived of divine and human rights to liberty. Justified protests and repeated complaints have up until now availed nothing to remove these evils. May the Lady, who commands things and ages and who knows how to put down evils with her virginal foot turn her merciful eyes, whose light dispels storms and clouds and brings calm, toward her innocent and afflicted children. And may she soon grant that, enjoying at last the liberty which is their due, they may be able to perform the public duties of religion. Furthermore, while they are serving the cause of the Gospel, may they advance the strength and the growth of earthly states by their concerted effort and by the splendid virtues which amidst these hardships shine forth as examples.

51. We also think that the Feast which We have instituted through this Encyclical Letter, so that all may more clearly acknowledge and more zealously venerate the kind and maternal rule of the Mother of God, can contribute a great deal toward keeping, strengthening and continuing the peace among nations which almost every day disquieting events disturb. Is she not the bow that God has placed in the clouds, the sign of the covenant that brings peace?<sup>62</sup> "Look upon the rainbow, and bless him that made it; it is very beautiful in its brightness. It encompasseth the heaven about with the circle of its glory, the hands of the Most High have displayed it."<sup>63</sup> Whoever, therefore, honors the Lady ruler of angels and of men—and let no one think himself exempt from the payment of that tribute

of a grateful and loving soul—let him call upon her as most truly Queen and as the Queen who brings peace. Let him honor and guard the peace that is neither unpunished wickedness nor unrestrained license, but is concord well-ordered under the command and decree of the Divine Will. The maternal exhortations and orders of the Virgin Mary work to protect and increase this peace.

52. Since We hope very much that the Queen and Mother of the Christian people may accept these Our prayers and bring happiness through her peace to the earth that is troubled by hatred, and may show us all, after this exile, Jesus Who will be our enduring peace and joy, We cordially grant to you, venerable Brethren, and to your flocks the Apostolic Benediction as a gage of Almighty God's help and as a token of Our love.

53. Given at Rome, at St. Peter, on the Feast of the Maternity of the Blessed Virgin Mary, on the eleventh day of the month of October in the year 1954, the sixteenth of Our Pontificate.

PIUS PP. XII

FOOTNOTES

1. Cfr. *Constitutio Apostolica* MUNIFICENTISSIMUS DEUS: A. A. S. XXXXII, 1950, p. 753 sq.
2. Cfr. *Litt. Enc. FULGENS CORONA*: A. A. S. XXXXV, 1953, p. 577 sq.
3. Cfr. A. A. S. XXXVIII, 1946, p. 264 sq.
4. Cfr. *L'OSSERVATORE ROMANO*, d. 19 Maii, a. 1946.
5. LUC. 1, 32.
6. IS. 9, 6.
7. APOC. 19, 16.
8. Cfr. LUC. 1, 32, 33.
9. LUC. 1, 43.
10. S. Ephream, HYMNI DE B. MARIA, ed. Th. J. Lamy, t. II, *Mechliniae*, 1886, hymn. XIX, p. 624.
11. Idem, ORATIO AD SS. mam DEI MATREM; OPERA OMNIA, Ed. Assemani, t. III (graece), Romae, 1747, pag. 546.
12. S. Gregorius Naz., POEMATATA DOGMATICA, XVIII, v. 58: P. G. XXXVII, 485.
13. Prudentius, DITTOCHA-EUM, XXVII: P. L. LX, 102 A.
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