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SPREAD THE FAITH THROUGHOUT THE WORLD

AN APOSTOLIC LETTER
OF HIS HOLINESS
POPE BENEDICT XV.



PRESS OF
**THE SOCIETY FOR THE PROPAGATION
OF THE FAITH**
343 LEXINGTON AVENUE
NEW YORK, N. Y.

CATHOLICISM AND NATIONALISM

In the work of the missions it is necessary to maintain the truly Catholic idea. NATIONALISM IS ONE OF THE EVILS FROM WHICH THE CHURCH MOST SUFFERS. How few are there who understand the Heart of Our Lord as did St. Paul, who says: "To the Greeks and to the barbarians, to the wise and to the unwise, I am a debtor."

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by joining

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Propagation of the Faith

ITS AIM

is to assist by prayers and alms the missionaries who are engaged in preaching the Gospel in heathen and non-Catholic countries.

THE CONDITIONS OF MEMBERSHIP

are to offer a daily prayer and to make a yearly contribution to the missions.

RIGHT REV. JOSEPH FRERI, D.C.L.

General Director

343 Lexington Avenue, New York City

Spread the Faith Throughout the World

THE APOSTOLIC LETTER "MAXIMUM ILLUD" ADDRESSED
BY HIS HOLINESS BENEDICT XV. TO THE PATRIARCHS,
PRIMATES, ARCHBISHOPS AND BISHOPS OF THE
CATHOLIC CHURCH.

VENERABLE Brethren, Greeting and Apostolic Benediction. — The great and sublime mission which Our Lord Jesus Christ, just before returning to the Father, entrusted to His disciples in these words, "Go ye into the whole world and preach the Gospel to every creature" (Mark xvi, 15), was certainly not to terminate with the death of the Apostles, but to endure through the medium of their successors until the end of time, that is, as long as there should be men to be saved by the teaching of the truth. And in fact since that day when they "went forth and preached everywhere," so that "their sound hath gone forth into all the earth and their words unto the ends of the world," the Holy Church of God, remembering the Divine command, has never ceased through the centuries to send out continually heralds and ministers of the Divine Word to announce the tidings of eternal salvation brought to the human race by Jesus Christ.

Wherefore, during the first three centuries of Christianity, when the fury of the persecutions let loose from hell seemed as if it would stifle the growing Church in blood, the Gospel was proclaimed and resounded to the extreme confines of the Roman Empire. And when peace and liberty were then given to the Church, very great was the progress that she made in the apostolate throughout the whole world, especially by the aid of men distinguished for zeal and sanctity. Gregory the Illuminator enlightened Armenia with the light of the Gospel; Victorinus, Styria; Frumentius, Ethiopia; Patrick made a conquest of the Irish for the Faith; Augustine of the English; Columba and Palladius of the Scots; then Clement Willebrord, the first Bishop of

Utrecht, evangelized Holland; Boniface and Ansgar brought to the Church of Jesus Christ the peoples of Germany, and Cyril and Methodius the Slavs. Extending still further the scope of the apostolate, William de Robruck penetrated with the torch of the Gospel amongst the Mongolians; Blessed Gregory the Tenth sent missionaries to China, and the sons of St. Francis soon afterwards established a flourishing Christian Church, which was subsequently destroyed by persecution. When the New World was discovered, a crowd of apostolic men, amongst whom was prominent the noble figure of Bartholomew Las Casas, the glory of the distinguished Dominican Order, devoted themselves to the defense and the conversion of the poor natives; while St. Francis Xavier, worthy in truth to be compared to the Apostles, after having worked so energetically in India and Japan for the glory of God and the salvation of souls, died on the borders of China, towards which he had been making, as if opening up by his death the way for a new evangelization of those immense regions, where members of so many distinguished Religious Orders and Missionary Congregations, eager to propagate the Faith, were to exercise the apostolate amidst many vicissitudes. Finally, Australia, the latest discovered continent, and the interior of Africa, recently explored with great boldness and persistence, received messengers of the Christian Faith, and now there is no island in the vast Pacific Ocean so remote that it has not experienced the zealous activity of our missionaries, amongst whom have been many who, whilst endeavoring to secure the salvation of their brethren, following the example of the Apostles, reached the highest degree of sanctity, and not a few who, as martyrs, sealed their apostolate with the shedding of their blood.

Considering, then, the numerous and heavy labors undertaken by our brethren for the propagation of the Faith, all their efforts, the proofs of their undaunted courage, we may well wonder at the numberless heathen who are still sitting in the shadows of death, for according to recent statistics, their number amounts to a thousand million.

Taking therefore compassion on the sad fate of this

multitude of souls, and as it has always been Our nearest duty to extend to them the benefits of Divine redemption, it is also with glad and grateful feelings that We watch the movement, inspired by the Holy Ghost, taking place throughout the Catholic world, for promoting and developing the missions. It is therefore to urge on and further this movement—a duty in keeping with Our office and Our dearest wishes—that after fervently imploring the Lord for light and assistance, We address to you, Venerable Brethren, this letter to exhort you, your clergy and your flocks, and to remind you how you can best serve this important cause.

THE HEADS OF THE MISSIONS.

This letter is first of all addressed to those who, either as Bishops, Apostolic Vicars or Prefects, have been placed at the head of the missions: as it is their first and direct care to propagate the Faith, it is in them that the Church places her main hopes for expansion. We know their apostolic zeal, We know their difficulties and trials, chiefly these last years, in their efforts not only to remain at their posts, but also to extend the kingdom of God. It is because We know their loyalty to, and their love for, the Apostolic See, that We express Our feelings to them as a father does to his sons. Let them, therefore, further the best interests of their priests and other assistants, by word and deed, encourage and urge them to better things. Whoever works in the Lord's vineyard, in whatever capacity, should be made to feel that the mission is ruled by a father, watchful, diligent and full of charity, keenly interested in all and everything, rejoicing in their success, sympathetic in their trials, encouraging and helpful in their good efforts and undertakings, and looking upon everything that concerns them as concerning himself. The condition and fate of the missions depend on their government, and the worst that could befall them would be to be ruled by men either incapable or unfit for the task. Whoever leaves his country, his nearest and dearest to propagate the Christian name, often exposes himself to long and dangerous journeys, joyfully keen on suffering the greatest trials to gather in a harvest of souls to Christ. If such

men come under diligent rulers, whose prudence and charity they may benefit by in all things, their works will, no doubt, bear fruit; if otherwise, it is much to be feared, that growing gradually tired of work and discomforts, they will finally give way to discouragement and disgust.

Then again, the first care of one who is at the head of a mission, is to extend the work and bring it to completion. For, as the whole country which lies within the limits of his mission is entrusted to his care, he must seek to work out the salvation of all those who inhabit that country. Hence when he has converted a few thousands out of an extensive population, he should not draw the line there and rest contented. He must, no doubt, foster, bring up and protect those whom Jesus Christ has begotten, nor should he allow them to drift and perish. But let him not imagine that he has done his duty, unless he strives with all his strength and without flagging to bring Christian truth and life within the reach of all the others, whose number is infinitely greater. In order then that the preaching of the Gospel should come within every one's hearing more successfully and quickly, he will find it useful to found other mission stations and centers, which will grow into so many seats of new vicariates and prefectures into which the same mission should be divided as soon as opportunities allow.

Here We must give due praise to all those Apostolic Vicars, whoever lay new foundations for the future kingdom of God in the way We have outlined: and when for this purpose they lacked a supply of men belonging to their own Order, they never hesitated to call in and accept the assistance of other religious institutions.

On the other hand, how reprehensible would be the conduct of one who should look upon that portion of the Lord's field which was assigned to him, as his own property, which no one else would dare to touch. How severe would God's justice not be on him, chiefly if—as has happened too often—a small number of Christians were lost in the midst of a great number of heathen, and that he should refuse to accept proffered assistance to instruct them, though he and his clergy are unable to

cope with the work. The head of a Catholic mission, for whom God's glory and the salvation of souls are nearest to his heart, calls in assistants if need be from everywhere to help him in his holy task, not caring whether they belong to another nation or to a different Religious Order as long as Christ be preached (Philip I. 18). Not only does he make use of men, but of nuns as well, for his schools, orphanages, hospitals, hostels and other charitable institutions, whom he knows are, with God's help, endowed with an extraordinary power to extend our Faith.

For all this an efficient head of a mission does not lock himself up within his own limits, as though any other interests outside these were foreign to him; but under the impulse of Christ's charity, whose glory is his dearest interest, he tries to keep in touch and foster friendship with his neighboring colleagues. As a matter of fact, there are many interests common to the whole country which obviously can only be negotiated in common. Besides this it would be to the greatest profit of the missions were the various heads to gather at stated times for discussion and mutual encouragement.

A NATIONAL CLERGY.

Lastly, the main care of those who rule the missions should be to raise and train a clergy from amidst the nations among which they dwell, for on this are founded the best hopes for the Church of the future. Linked to his compatriots as he is by the bonds of origin, character, feelings and inclinations, the indigenous priest possesses extraordinary facilities for introducing the Faith to their minds, and is endowed with power of persuasion far superior to those of any other man. It thus frequently happens that he has access to where a foreign priest could not set foot.

But to obtain the expected results it is absolutely necessary to mold and build up an indigenous clergy in a way that is satisfactory. A raw and unfinished preparation, such as will allow one to be ordained, will not do by any means; but the training should be full, adequate in extent of studies and length of years, such as is given to priests of civilized nations. Neither should

the indigenous priest be reared for the sole purpose of assisting foreign missionaries in subordinate ministry, but he must be fitted for his Divine task, and rendered able one day to undertake with credit the administration of his own people. Indeed, as the Catholic Church of God is foreign to no nation, so should every nation yield its own sacred ministers to follow them as teachers of the Divine law and spiritual leaders.

Wherever, therefore, there exists an indigenous clergy, adequate in numbers and in training, and worthy of its vocation, there the missionary's work must be considered brought to a happy close; there the Church is founded. And if ever persecution threatened her existence, her roots and foundations would have struck too deep to give any chance of success to hostile attacks. The Apostolic See has always urged the heads of the missions to look upon this grave duty with the care it deserves and to carry it out diligently: and of this the colleges recently erected in Rome to train priests of foreign nations, chiefly of the Oriental rite, afford clear evidence. Yet, notwithstanding, the Roman Pontiff's insistence, it is sad to think that there are still countries where the Catholic Faith has been preached for several centuries, but where you will find no indigenous clergy, except of an inferior kind; sad to think that there are nations, who have fully seen the light of the Gospel, have reached such a degree of civilization as to possess men distinguished in every department of secular knowledge; who for many centuries have come under the salutary influence of the Gospel and the Church, and have yet been able to yield neither Bishops to rule them, nor priests to direct them. Therefore, to all appearances, the methods used in various places to rear a clergy for the missions, have up to now been lame and faulty.

In order to remove this inconvenience, We order the Sacred Congregation of the Propagation of the Faith to establish wherever there is need, seminaries for the benefit of each country and several dioceses simultaneously, or to see to their foundation or to their proper management; and We enjoin on the Congregation to be particularly careful to watch the growth of the new clergy in vicariates and other missions.

FORGET YOUR OWN COUNTRY.

And now We address you, beloved sons, tillers of the Lord's vineyard, in whose hands are directly placed the salvation of souls and the propagation of Christian wisdom. From the outset ever hold before your eyes the excellence and greatness of the dignity which informs your work. It is a Divine task and one infinitely remote from the meanness of human interests, to light the torch to those sitting in the shadows of death, and open the gate of heaven to those who rush to their destruction. Holding therefore that these words of the Lord are addressed to each one of you: "Forget your people and your father's house" (Ps. XLIV, 11), remember then that you are not to propagate the kingdom of men, but that of Christ; that you are not to enroll citizens into any country of this world, but that of the next. It would be regrettable indeed were any of the missionaries to be so forgetful of their dignity as to think more of their earthly than of their heavenly country, and were too much bent upon extending its earthly glory and power. This would indeed be a plague most deadly to their apostleship, which would kill in the preacher of the Gospel every activity for the love of souls, and would undermine his authority with the public. However barbarous and savage they be, men pretty easily understand what it is that the missionary expects from them, and they are very shrewd in detecting whether any of his expectations be at variance with their own spiritual advantage. Suppose him then to be in any way preoccupied in worldly interests, and instead of acting in everything like an apostolic man, to appear to further the interests of his own country, people will at once suspect his intentions, and may be led to believe that the Christian religion is the exclusive property of some foreign nation; that adhesion to this religion implies submission to a foreign country and the loss of one's own national dignity.

Some of the mission accounts, which have in recent years begun to spread, are very painful reading, as one finds there the anxiety not so much to extend the kingdom of God as to increase the power of the missionary's own country. We are surprised it does not occur to the writers to what extent the mind of the heathen is in

danger of being thus repelled from religion. Not in this way does the Catholic missionary act, who is worthy of the name; but bearing perpetually in mind that he is the ambassador, not of his own country, but of Christ, he should so comport himself that everyone can recognize in him a minister of a religion which embraces all men that adore God in spirit and truth, is a stranger to no nation, and "where there is neither Gentile nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian nor Scythian, bond nor free. But Christ is all and in all" (Col. III, 11). Another danger which the missionary must carefully guard against is to seek no other profits but those of souls. But of this We need not say more. For how is one to seek only the glory of God as he should, and be ready to sacrifice his goods and his life to further that glory by calling others to wisdom, if one is actuated by the desire of lucre? Moreover, such a man would lose much of his authority over the Gentiles chiefly, as is natural, if the desire of acquisition should have degenerated into the vice of avarice; there is no stain more contemptible in the eyes of men and more unworthy of the Kingdom of God. The good preacher of the Gospel will therefore follow in this matter also the Apostle of the Gentiles, who exhorted Timothy, though not him alone: "Having food and wherewith to be covered, with these we are content" (I Tim. VI. 8); and the Apostle sometimes carried his love of abstention so far as to support himself with his own work, occupied as he was with the care of onerous duties.

THE MISSIONARY'S TRAINING.

It is understood that before undertaking his apostolic work, the missionary must undergo a thorough training, though it be sometimes objected that there is no need of so much learning for one who has to announce Christ to uncivilized nations. It is true that spiritual accomplishments are better adapted to the work of the salvation of souls than any literary equipment; yet if any one should be lacking in this he will often find that his deficiency is a hindrance to the successful exercise of his holy ministry. He is often without a library and far from learned men whom he could consult, yet he must answer

questions, settle objections against the Faith, and elucidate difficulties of an abstruse nature. The greater the missionary's erudition, the greater the esteem in which he will be held, chiefly if he dwells among a nation which values mental accomplishments. In all this it would be too regrettable if the ministers of truth were overtaken by the ministers of error. Hence, whilst ecclesiastical students, whom God should call, are trained for their apostolical expeditions, they must by all means be initiated into every department of knowledge, profane as well as sacred. This is what We wish to be done, as it behooves, in the Pontifical College of Urban for the Propagation of the Faith; and We order that the college should organize its own special staff for the teaching of the science of the missions.

One of the chief items of the missionary's equipment is evidently the language of the people to whose salvation he is destined to devote himself. He should not rest satisfied with a superficial knowledge, but it should be thorough enough for a fluent and elegant command. The missionary is at the service of all, the uneducated as well as the learned, and he ought to know what power a perfect command of the language gives to gain a sympathetic hearing from a crowd. Above all, a diligent missionary will not leave the duty of explaining the Christian doctrine to his catechist, but he must reserve to himself this department, not only as his own, but as the most important portion of his task; for no other reason was he sent by God but to preach the Gospel. He will sometimes be called upon, as the ambassador and interpreter of our holy religion, to approach influential men, or to address an educated body: how will he then preserve his dignity, if he cannot express himself in their own native language? This is what We have had particularly in view in founding a special house of studies in Rome for the spread of the Catholic name in the East, so that those who are preparing themselves for the apostolate in those countries may receive a serious grounding in the knowledge of Oriental languages and customs. As this institute seems to Us to offer exceptional opportunities, We hasten to exhort all the superiors of Religious Orders whose work lies in the East to send

there their recruits for the mission, so that they may avail themselves of its training.

MISSIONARY VIRTUES.

But to one who wishes to qualify himself for apostolic work, there is one thing he must acquire before everything else, as being of the highest importance, it is, as We have said, sanctity of life. For whoever preaches God must be a man of God; who preaches hatred of sin must himself hate sin. It is chiefly among the Gentiles, who are led by sense more than by reason, that preaching by deeds is more efficient than by words. Granted, therefore, that the missionary be endowed with every quality of head and heart, versed in sciences, accomplished in every department of culture; if his accomplishments are not supported by innocence of life, they will be powerless instruments for the conversion of the people, nay more, they may become harmful to himself and to others.

Let him therefore be an example of humility, obedience, chastity, chiefly of piety, prayer and constant union with God, before whom he must fervently plead for souls. The better united he is with God, the greater will be his share in Divine grace and assistance. Let him heed the Apostle's counsel: "Put ye on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, the bowels of mercy, benignity, humility, modesty, patience" (Col. III, 12). It is by these virtues that truth finds an easy and straight access to the souls, and that all obstacles are removed; there is no obstinacy of will that can resist them. Hence a missionary, who like Jesus Christ is burning with charity and who is ready to number among the sons of God the most backward Gentiles as the children of redemption by the Divine blood, is neither irritated by their roughness, nor is he roused by their moral perversity; he neither despises nor scorns them; he does not treat them harshly or bitterly, but he will strive to attract them by all the good offices of Christian charity, to draw them all into the embrace of Christ, the good Pastor. Holy Scripture gives on this subject food for meditation: "O how good and sweet is thy spirit, O Lord, in all things! And therefore thou chastisest them that err, by little and little: and admonishest them, and

speakest to them concerning the things wherein they offend, that leaving their wickedness, they may believe in thee, O Lord . . . But thou, being master of power, judgest with tranquillity." (Wisdom XII, 1, 2, 18.) What difficulties, annoyances and trials could make such an ambassador of Christ swerve from his resolve? None whatever: dear to God as must be one who has set himself to such a sublime task, he will bravely face all hardships and difficulties, work, insults, poverty, hunger and even death however cruel, as long as he can snatch a soul from the mouth of hell.

Thus resolved and inspired, following in the footsteps of Christ the Lord and the Apostles, the missionary will confidently buckle to his task, placing however the full measure of his confidence in God. It is as We have said, a work altogether Divine to propagate Christian wisdom, for God alone can pierce through to the soul, to light up the mind with the glare of truth, warm the will in the flame of virtue, and endow man with the strength to follow and obey what he knows to be the good and the true. That is why, unless God stands by His minister, his efforts are vain. Let him nevertheless strain every nerve to carry out his resolve, relying on the assistance of Divine grace, which never fails him who prays.

Here We must not omit to mention the women, who ever since the birth of the Christian religion, have lent their valuable assistance and given unstinted service to the preachers of the Gospel. Worthy of special mention and praise are those virgins who have consecrated themselves to God and gone to the missions in great numbers to devote themselves to the education of children, and to numerous works of mercy and charity; We wish that this commendation of their services may stir up their courage and enthusiasm in the service of Holy Church. Let them, however, be convinced that the more they strive towards spiritual perfection, so much the more will their work yield abundance of results.

THE SUPPORT OF THE MISSIONS.

It is gratifying to address all those who by a special favor of the merciful God are in possession of the true Faith, and share in its innumerable benefits. They should

first of all consider by what sacred obligations they are bound to lend their support to the missions among infidels. "For (God) gave to every one of them commandment concerning his neighbor" (Eccl. xvii, 12), which commandment is all the more urgent, as our neighbor is under a greater necessity. Who in fact stands in greater need of our brotherly assistance than the Gentile races which, in ignorance of God, are enslaved to blind and unbridled instincts, and live under the awful servitude of the evil one? Whoever therefore contributes, as far as in him lies, to enlighten them, chiefly by helping the missionaries, performs his duty in a work of the greatest moment, and acquits himself, in a manner most acceptable, of the debt of gratitude he owes to God for the grace of his own Faith.

Support can be given to the missions in three different ways, each answering the persistent requests of the missionaries themselves. The first, which is within everybody's reach, is to invoke God's protection. Again and again have We said that missionary undertakings are dry and barren, unless fecundated by Divine grace, on St. Paul's own testimony: "I have planted, Apollo watered: but God gave the increase." To the acquisition of this grace there is but one way open, persevering and humble prayer, for as Our Lord says: "Concerning anything whatsoever they shall ask, it shall be done to them by my Father" (Mat. xviii, 19). If ever such prayers remain unanswered, it cannot be so in this cause, than which there is none more sublime and more agreeable to God. As Moses, standing on the hill, raised his arms to secure Divine assistance to the Israelites, battling with Amalec, so must all Christians give the assistance of their fervent prayers to the preachers of the Gospel exerting themselves in the Lord's vineyard. As the Apostleship of Prayer has been founded particularly for the better performance of this duty, We urgently recommend it to all the Faithful, and with that none should fail to associate himself, all striving to take their share in the apostolic work if not by material assistance at least by their moral support.

RECRUITMENT OF MISSIONARIES.

Then, again, We must remedy the scarcity of mis-

sionaries. Great as it was, it has become appalling during the war, so much so that many portions of the Lord's vineyard have lost their laborers. It is for this that We make a special appeal, Venerable Brethren, to your devoted activities. You will do a deed most consonant with your love for your religion, if among your clergy and in your diocesan seminary, you carefully nurse the seeds of apostleship which you may discover in them. Do not be misled by appearances or moved by earthly reasons, as though the gift to the foreign missions were the loss to your diocese. Instead of one priest you might send abroad God will raise several priests to do useful work at home.

As to those who rule Religious Orders and Congregations devoted to the missions, We pray and request them to destine to such an important work none but the choicest among their subjects, those who stand foremost for the innocence of their lives, the fervor of their piety and their zeal for souls. Then again when superiors know that their missionaries have successfully accomplished their task and converted some nation from unhallowed superstition to the Christian Faith, and have founded there a church with sufficient prospects, they should transfer them, as Christ's forlorn hope, to some other nation to snatch it from Satan's grasp, willingly leaving to others whatever they have acquired for Christ, that they may carry on their work and improve it. Having in this way gathered, so to say, a rich harvest of souls, they will receive rich rewards of Divine goodness for the institutions to which they belong.

Lastly abundant resources are needed to keep up the missions, and their needs have greatly increased since the war by the loss of so many schools, hospitals, hostels and other free places of refuge. We here appeal to all the Faithful to exercise their liberality according to their means. For "he that hath the substance of this world and shall see his brother in need and shall shut up his bowels from him: how doth the charity of God abide in him?" (1 John III, 17). Thus speaks John the Apostle about those who suffer from material want. But how much more sacred becomes the obligation of the law of charity in this matter, where it is a question not only of

relieving the poverty, destitution and other miseries of an infinite multitude of men, but also and chiefly of reconquering from Satan's proud dominion to the liberty of the children of God an incalculable number of souls. Hence, We wish Catholics liberally to assist those holy works organized for the support of the missions.

INSTITUTIONS.

Of these comes first THE SOCIETY FOR THE PROPAGATION OF THE FAITH, so often praised by Our predecessors. We ask the Sacred Congregation of Propaganda to devote special attention to it that the fecundity of this excellent work may increase in the future. Its principal role is to supply funds for the support of missions already existing or for the founding of new ones. We are confident that, while immense sums are being expended for the dissemination of error, the Catholic world will not permit those who plant the truth to struggle with adversity.

The second work We strongly recommend is that of the Holy Childhood, whose task it is to see that baptism be administered to the dying children of infidels. This work is the more commendable, as it is open to the membership of children, who may thus learn to appreciate the gift of faith and to contribute their help to confer it on others. Neither must We omit to mention the Work of St. Peter which provides for the education and the upkeep of the indigenous clergy of the missions. We wish to call your careful attention to the regulation of Our predecessor, Leo XIII, who stipulated that on the Feast of the Epiphany a collection should be made in all the churches of the world "to redeem African slaves" and that the collection should be sent to the Sacred Council of the Propagation of the Faith.

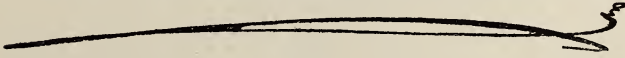
But that Our wishes may be carried out with better security and success, you absolutely must, Venerable Brethren, direct, so to say, the training of your clergy towards the object of the missions. The Faithful, as a rule, are willing and love to support apostolic men; but you must make a wise use of this inclination, for the great benefit of the missions. Know therefore it is Our wish that in all Catholic dioceses of the world there be

founded what We would call a Clerical Association of the missions, to be placed under the authority of the Sacred Congregation of the Propagation of the Faith to which We have given all necessary authority. Recently founded in Italy, it has rapidly spread to other countries; and as it has flourished with Our support, We have munificently endowed it with Pontifical indulgences. And for good reasons, for under its influence the activities of the clergy are excellently directed, not only to the work of inspiring the Faithful with a zeal for souls, but also to carry on the various institutions which the Apostolic See has patronized for the benefit of the missions.

This is, Venerable Brethren, what We felt compelled to write to you about the propagation of the Catholic Faith throughout the world. If, then, everyone acquits himself of his task, as it behooves him, the missionaries abroad and the Faithful at home, We may cherish the fond hope of seeing the sacred missions reviving from the wounds and the ruin of the war. Whilst the Lord's voice urges Us as it once urged Peter: "Launch out into the deep" (Luke v, 4), the fire of paternal charity presses Us to drive into the Lord's embrace innumerable men. The Church is ever fed and strengthened by the Spirit of God; and the efforts of those apostolic men who have labored and are still laboring for her extension, cannot be without their fruits. Roused by their example many will henceforth arise who, supported by the piety and the munificence of the Faithful, will gather unto Christ a cheerful harvest of souls. May the great Mother of God, the Queen of the Apostles, bless our common wishes by obtaining for the preachers of the Gospel the graces of the Holy Ghost; under His auspices and as a proof of Our friendship, We most lovingly impart to you, Venerable Brethren, your clergy and your people the apostolic benediction.

Given in Rome at St. Peter's, November 30, 1919,
sixth year of Our Pontificate.

Benedictus P. XV



EXTRACT FROM THE
AMERICAN BISHOPS' PASTORAL LETTER (September 24, 1919)

FOREIGN MISSIONS

“The mission which Our Lord Jesus Christ, on the eve of His return to the Father, entrusted to His disciples, bidding them ‘go into the whole world and preach the Gospel to every creature’ (Mark xvi, 15)—that office most high and most holy—was certainly not to end with the life of the Apostles: it was to be continued by their successors even to the consummation of the world, as long, namely, as there should live upon earth men to be freed by the truth” (Apostolic Letter, “*Maximum illud*,” Nov. 30, 1919.)

These words of the Holy Father, addressed, with his characteristic love of souls, to all the Bishops of the Church, have for us in America a peculiar force and significance. The care of our Catholic population, which is constantly increased by the influx of immigrants from other countries, hitherto has fully occupied the energies of our clergy and of our missionary organizations. Until quite recently the Church in the United States was regarded as a missionary field. As such it has drawn upon Europe for recruits to the priesthood and the Religious Orders, and for financial assistance, which it owes so largely to the Society for the Propagation of the Faith.

The time now has come to show our grateful appreciation: “freely have you received, freely give” (Matth. x, 8). Wherever we turn in this whole land, the memory of the pioneers of our Faith confronts us. Let it not appeal in vain.

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FIGURES SPEAK



To many, the proportion of Catholics represented in the above diagram is surprising, if not disappointing. Are we right in believing that it should be larger?

It is in your power to help making it larger.