

Leo XIII, Pope

For A Perpetual Memorial. — The islands that lie scattered over the wide expanse of the China Sea and the Pacific Ocean, and called after Philip II, King of Spain, the Philippines, were scarcely discovered by Hernando Magellan at the dawn of sixteenth century, when they not only became consecrated to God by the planting of the holy Cross on their shores, but in that very act received the principles of the catholic faith. From that very moment it became the chief and most earnest endeavour of all the Roman Pontifs [*sic*], seconded by the high-minded desires of Charles V and his son Philip II, Kings of Spain, to lift the inhabitants of these islands out of the idolatrous worship in which they were living and to convert them to the faith of Christ. With the help of God, and the untiring exertions of Religious of the various Orders, this was most happily accomplished; before many years had passed, the time came when Gregory XIII was led to appoint a prelate for the growing Church and to establish the Bishopric of Manila. Subsequent progress fully corresponded to such auspicious beginnings. And so, thanks to the united efforts of Our Predecessors and of the Kings of Spain, slavery was abolished, the natives were brought through the discipline of letters and art to civilization, sumptuous temples were raised, the number of dioceses was increased, so that the people and the Chucch [*sic*] in the Philippines might truly become eminent in civil life and in the dignity and love of their Religion. Thus it was that Catholic interests went forward in the Philippines under the protection of the Kings of Spain and under the patronage of the Roman Pontiffs. But when, recently, the fortunes of war changed the political face of the country, the conditions of

religious affairs also underwent a change. When once the Spaniards yielded up their sovereignty of the islands, the patronage of the Kings of Spain over them also ceased; and thus it is, that the Church came to be placed in more favorable conditions for liberty, each party preserving its respective rights, intact and secure. And that the strength of ecclesiastical discipline might not suffer detriment therefrom, careful measures were at once taken to inquire into the means and measures to be taken under the new state of affairs. For this purpose we sent to the Philippine Islands, as our Delegate Extraordinary, the Venerable Brother Placidus Louis Chapelle, Archbishop of New Orleans, who, after a personal examination of everything, and after settling moreover, what would not admit of delay, might give Us a report of affairs. He certainly fulfilled to our satisfaction the office which had been entrusted to him; for which he has well merited our honor and praise. Afterwards, it fortunately came to pass that the Government of the United States of America desired to consult directly with this Holy See, by means of a special Commission, regarding the manner of solving certain questions relative to Catholic affairs in the Philippine [*sic*] Islands. Willingly did we offer our aid to settle such questions, and thanks to the diligence and moderation of those entrusted with these negotiations, steps were easily taken for a resolution of the questions, which are now to be brought to a conclusion in the country itself. The arrangements, which, after We had heard the opinions of some of the Cardinals of the Holy Roman Church, who compose the Sacred Congregation of extraordinary affairs, and which, having been carefully weighed, have appeared best calculated to ensure the interests of the Church in the Philippine Islands, We hereby declare and publish in this Apostolic Constitution: hoping that what We with our supreme authority now establish, favored by the equity and justice of the State, will be carefully and inviolably kept.

I. New Division of Dioceses.

First of all, we desire and propose to extend the sacred Hierarchy. After Gregory XIII had, as we have said, established the diocese of Manila, as the number of the faithful gradually increased, as well through the natives

who embraced Catholicism as through arrivals from Europe, Clement VIII judged that the number of their prelates should be increased. Hence, he elevated the Church of Manila to the dignity of an Archiepiscopal See, and wished that three new dioceses be erected, namely, those of Cebu, Caceres and Nueva Segovia, with bishops as suffragans to Manila. To these in the year MDCCCLXV, was afterwards added the bishopric of Jaro. These dioceses are however so extensive that owing to the distances between points and the difficulty of travel, the bishops can scarcely make a thorough visitation of these districts except at the expense of very great labor. Hence necessity demands, under existing circumstances, that we should restrict somewhat the limits of the old dioceses and erect other new ones. Wherefore, preserving still the Archdiocese of Manila and the dioceses of Cebu, Caceres, Nueva Segovia and Jaro, we institute and erect four other dioceses, namely, those of Lipa, Tuguegarao, Capiz and Zamboanga, all of which like the others, suffragans of the Metropolitan of Manila. Moreover, we create in the Marianas Islands a Prefecture Apostolic, subject, without dependence on any other authority, to Us and Our Successors.

II. The Metropolitan and the Suffragan Bishops.

The Archbishop of Manila shall be the only one to hold the title of Metropolitan; the other bishops, as well those of the old Sees, as those who shall be constituted in the new Sees, shall be subordinate to him, holding the office and name of suffragans. The rights enjoyed by the Metropolitan, and the duties incumbent on him, are set forth in the ecclesiastical laws already in existence. While we wish these laws to be inviolably observed, we desire at the same time that the bonds of love and charity shall always remain intact between the Metropolitan and his Suffragans, and that through mutual services rendered, through the interchange of ideas, and especially through meetings of the Bishops, as often as circumstances will permit, these bonds may day by day become more closely united. For, concord of mind is, in truth, the parent and preserver of the greatest blessings.

III.

The Metropolitan Chapter and the Chapters of the Suffragan Churches.

The decorum and splendor of the Metropolitan Church demands that it be honored with a College of Canons. The Apostolic Delegate will consider whence is to come in the future, the stipend which in times past, was supplied by the Spanish Government to each one of the canons. And if owing to the reduced resources the number of canons formerly existing cannot be sustained, it may be reduced to a smaller number in such a way that without in any way suppressing such as are honorary, the number be fixed at not less than ten. It shall be the Archbishop who by his own right shall confer such dignities and canonries, as well as any other benefices whatsoever, which may pertain to the metropolitan Church; exception however being made in regard to such as either are reserved by common law to the Apostolic See, or such as belong to some patronage, or such as are subject to election. In like manner we earnestly desire that Colleges of Canons be established in the other Cathedrals. And during such time as this cannot be done, let the bishops have as consultors some individuals distinguished in piety, learning, and executive ability, chosen from one or other body of the clergy, such as is often done in certain dioceses that are not provided with a Chapter of Canons. And in order that in such Cathedral Churches that have no Chapters, nothing may be wanting in the dignity of the sacred functions, the above mentioned consultors shall assist the officiating Bishop. And if for any reason whatsoever they should be prevented from doing so, the Bishop shall supply their places with others chosen from the most worthy of the rest of the clergy, secular as well as regular.

IV.

Vacant Sees in the Suffragan Dioceses.

When a suffragan diocese, destitute of a Chapter of Canons, shall be without a Bishop, it shall be the duty of the Metropolitan to see to its administration; and if there be no Metropolitan, the administration of the

same shall devolve on the nearest Bishop, although with the proviso that a Vicar be appointed as soon as possible. But in the meantime the Vicar General of the late Bishop shall govern the diocese.

V.

The Secular Clergy.

As experience has clearly shown that in every part of the world a native clergy is of great utility, let the Bishops procure with all diligence that the number of native priests be increased, in such a way however, that those who are entrusted with the ecclesiastical functions be prepared beforehand in all piety and discipline and be known to be worthy of having such offices conferred upon them. And let those whom experience shows most worthy, be gradually promoted to higher dignities. But let those who are numbered among the clergy ever bear in mind that they must not permit themselves to be guided by partisanship. Now, though by common law, those who are fighting in the service of God are prohibited from engaging in secular business, nevertheless, on account of the circumstances, we feel that this must be avoided in a particular manner in the Philippine Islands by men who belong to the ecclesiastical state. Moreover, since union of mind is the chief force in the successful carrying on of every great and useful enterprise, let all priests without exception, whether they belong to the secular clergy or to the Regular, cultivate in a most special manner this union of mind for the good of Religion. It is certainly becoming that those who constitute the one body, of which Christ is the head, should not bear envy one to another, but should all be of one mind, loving one another with fraternal charity. And let the Bishops remember that it conduces greatly to the promotion of this charity, and to the preservation of strict discipline to convoke Synods as the opportunities of time and place permit. If they do this, union of thought and action will easily be obtained. But that the virtues worthy of the priesthood may be preserved and increased, the practice of the spiritual exercises is of the utmost importance. Consequently, let the Bishops take care that all those who have been called to the service of the Lord shall, at least every three years, retire to some suitable place for

meditation upon the eternal truths, where they may cleanse themselves from the dirt and dust of the world, and where they may renew the ecclesiastical spirit. They must also endeavor to maintain in its vigor among the clergy by frequent exercise the study of sacred learning: "For the lips of the priest shall keep knowledge" in order that he may be able to teach others, "who shall seek the law at his mouth." (Malachi 2, 7) And certainly nothing is so conducive to this end, as to hold frequent conferences concerning points of moral and liturgy. But if the difficulty of travel, the scarcity of priests or other causes of like nature should prevent such conferences and discussions, it would be well that those who cannot assist at the same should solve in writing the questions proposed and send the solution to the Ordinary at the proper time.

VI. Seminaries.

In what great esteem the Church holds the seminaries, where young men aspiring to the clerical state are educated, may be clearly seen in the decree of the Council of Trent, which first treats of their establishment. It is therefore incumbent on the Bishops to use every means and endeavor to have in their dioceses a house, in which youthful aspirants to the sacred militia may be received from their earlier years, formed in holiness of life, and instructed in the lower and higher branches of learning. But it would be preferable that the youths who study letters should live in one house, while those who have finished this course and devote themselves to philosophy and theology should live in another. In both cases however, let the students dwell there constantly, until, if they be deserving, they be raised to the priesthood; and never without grave cause should they be given permission to return to their families. Let the Bishop entrust the government of the Seminary to the most deserving person, whether belong [*sic*] to the secular or to the regular clergy, and let him be endowed with prudence and experience in government, and excel in holiness of life. Both We and Our Predecessors have frequently laid down what shall be the course of studies to be followed in the Seminaries. Wherever there is no Seminary, the Bishop shall take care that the students of his diocese

be educated in the seminaries of the neighboring dioceses. Moreover, let the Bishops on no account open the Seminaries to any except such as give hope that they will offer themselves to God in Holy Orders. Let them, if it be possible, erect other establishments distinct from the above for such as wish to prepare themselves for civil callings, which may be known as *convictorios* or episcopal colleges. The greatest care must be taken, according to the precept of the Apostle, that no Bishop impose hands upon anyone without due consideration, but let those only be raised to Holy Orders and entrusted with the Sacred Ministry, who, having been diligently examined and duly trained in science and virtue, may be an ornament and a benefit to the diocese. Moreover, after they have gone forth from the Seminary, they should not be left entirely to themselves; but that they may not neglect the study of the sacred sciences, it will be of the greatest utility, that during, at least the first five years after their ordination, they be obliged every year to undergo an examination in dogma and moral before learned and grave men. And as moreover a house shall be opened in Rome for youths of the Philippine Islands who wish to devote themselves to higher studies, We should be gratified if the Bishops send thither chosen young men, who will be afterwards useful in communicating to their own countrymen the knowledge of Religion acquired in that center of truth. In turn, this Holy See on its part will take care that the best means be provided for raising the secular clergy to the highest culture and for giving them the best ecclesiastical formation, to the end that in due time they may be fit to replace the regular clergy in fulfilling the duties of the pastoral charge.

VII.

The Religious Education of Youth and the University Course of Studies in Manila.

The efforts of the Bishops should certainly not be limited to the care of the Seminaries alone, for they must consider as commended to their care and providence the young laymen who frequent other schools. It is therefore the duty of the Prelates of the Church to see with all diligence, that the minds of the youths who attend the public schools be not

deprived of religious training. Therefore, in order that this be properly attended to, let the Bishops take effective measures that the books used be not tainted with error, and since We are speaking, of public schools, We cannot pass by without bestowing merited praise on the great Lyceum of Manila, founded under the authority of Innocent X by the Dominicans. This school, as it has always shone in the integrity of its doctrine, in the excellence of its doctors, and has rendered great services, We now not only desire that all the Bishops look upon it with favor, but moreover We and Our Successors take it under Our patronage. Hence, We confirm in all their plenitude the privileges and honors conferred on the same by the Roman Pontiffs Innocent X and XI and Clement XII, and We endow it with the title of Pontifical University, and desire that the academic degrees that are conferred by it, shall have the same value as those of other Pontifical Universities.

VIII. Regulars.

Taking advantage of the new order of things which has come to pass in those regions, this Holy Apostolic See has made opportune provisions for those religious who wish to return to the mode of life set down in their institute, which is altogether consecrated to works of the holy ministry, the betterment of morals among the people, and the increase of harmony between civil and religious interests. We therefore most earnestly enjoin upon all the members of the religious orders, that they religiously fulfil the obligations which they took upon themselves when they pronounced their vows, “giving no offense to any man” (2 Cor. VI, 3.). We order that the laws of enclosure be inviolably kept: wherefore We wish that all consider themselves as bound by that Decree, which, laid down by the Congregation of Bishops and Regulars on July XX, MDCCXXXI, was confirmed by Our Predecessor Clement XII in the Apostolic Letters, *Nuper pro parte* on August XXVI of the same year. Let the rule and limits of the enclosure be fixed according to that other decree laid down by the Holy Congregation *De Propaganda Fide*, August XXIV, MDCCLXXX, with the approbation of Pius VI. Moreover, let all religious whatsoever,

who live in the Philippines, be careful above all things to render all reverence and obedience to those whom “the Holy Ghost hath placed to rule the Church of God” (Act. XX. 28), and united with the secular clergy by the strictest bonds of concord and charity, let them have nothing more at heart than to employ all their energy in the work of their ministry, and to be all of one mind, to the edification of Christ’s body. And to the end that every element of discord be completely rooted out, it is Our will that in the future the Constitution *Firmandis*, given by Benedict XIV, on November VII, [*sic*] MDCCXLIV, be observed also in the Philippine Islands; and also that other one “*Romanos Pontifices*” in which We, on the eighth of the Ides of May, MDCCCLXXXI, decided certain points of controversy between Bishops and missionaries of the regular orders in England and Scotland.

IX. Parishes.

The Bishops shall see which parishes are to be entrusted to the care of the Religious Orders, after having first conferred with the Superiors of the said Religious Families. And if in this matter any question shall arise which cannot be settled privately, let the case be brought before the Apostolic Delegate.

X. Missions.

Those spiritual Exercises, commonly called Missions which are of the greatest utility, must be joined to the other means which the Church makes use of that no harm may result to the faith, to integrity of morals, or to other matters appertaining to the eternal salvation of souls. It is therefore above all things desirable that at least one house be established in each province, where some eight Religious may reside, whose only obligation should be to visit from time to time the cities and pueblos, and in this manner cultivate the spiritual life of the people by means of sacred preaching. And if such work is useful to the faithful, it is altogether

necessary for those who have not yet received the light of the Gospel. Wherever therefore people are found still uncivilized and given to the barbarous worship of idols, let the Bishops and priests know that they are obliged to labor for their conversion. Hence, let stations be founded among them for the priests engaged in the exercise of the Apostolic Ministry, and let them not be content with drawing the idolaters to the Christian Religion, but let them moreover occupy themselves in instructing the children. Such stations should be so situated that afterwards when occasion demands they may be raised to Prefectures and Vicariates Apostolic. But lest those that work in the sacred ministry there be without the means necessary for their own subsistence and for the extension of the faith, We earnestly exhort that in each diocese, keeping intact however the institution of Lyons known as the Propagation of the Faith, various societies be formed of men and women, who may attend to the collection of the offerings of the faithful, and place in the hands of the Bishops the funds collected, all of which must be distributed equitably among the missions.

XI.

Ecclesiastical Discipline.

Nothing is so efficacious for securing to the clergy the esteem of the faithful, as to see that the priests at the same time practice in their deeds what they teach by their words. Raised as they are, according to the words of the Council of Trent, above the things of the world, the rest of the people turn their gaze towards them as to a mirror, and look upon them as models to be imitated. Wherefore, it is absolutely necessary that the clergy should have their lives and manners so completely ordered that nothing may be seen but what is grave, moderate, and religious in their dress, deportment, words and all other things; and let them avoid even the slightest defects, which in them indeed are considered grave, to the end that their actions may fill all with edification. But for the restoration of ecclesiastical discipline, and for the perfect execution of this Our Constitution, we send to the Philippine Islands, as Delegate Apostolic extraordinary, the Venerable Brother John Baptist Guidi, Archbishop of

Stauropolis, to represent Our Person there. And to him, consequently, we have given the proper faculties, and moreover We have made it his duty to take proper measures to announce and hold a Provincial Synod, as soon as circumstances permit.

XII.
**The Establishment of Peace of Mind, and the
Reverence Due to Those of Authority.**

It remains now to say a word in paternal charity to all the inhabitants of the Philippine Islands, and with all the earnestness of which We are capable to exhort them to preserve unity in the bond of peace. The duty of the christian profession demands this: for, “The brotherhood of Christ is greater than that of blood; for the brotherhood of blood regards only the likeness of the body, but the brotherhood of Christ shows forth the unity of body and soul,” as it is written (Act. IV, 32), “All the multitude were of one mind and one heart” (S. Maxim. Int. Sermon. S. Agustin. C.). The good of religion, which was the source and origin of the virtues which in times past flourished among the people of the Philippines, demand it. In fine, sincere love of country, which reaps from public disturbance nothing but harm and misfortunes, demands it. Let reverence be paid to those in authority, according to the precept of the Apostle, “for all authority is of God” (Rom. XIII, 2). And though they are separated from us by the wide expanse of ocean, let them know that they are under the patronage of the Holy See, which, as it embraces them with peculiar love, so shall it ever be mindful of their special interests.

Finally, We decree, that these Our Letters shall at no time be tampered with or assailed through subreption or obreption or through defect of intention on Our part, or through any other cause whatsoever, and that they be always valid and binding, and have their full effect in all things, and be observed inviolable; the general or particular Apostolic decrees, published either by Synodal councils, provincial or general, as also the rights and privileges of the ancient Philippine Sees, or of missions established there, or of which they are formed, or of any churches or pious foundations, to the contrary notwithstanding: all such

as far as they are opposed to the above Letters We hereby expressly abolish. In like manner We declare null and void whatever may be attempted against the same Letters either knowingly or unknowingly, by any authority whatsoever. We wish moreover, that whatever copies of these Letters, either printed or written by some public notary, or by some constituted ecclesiastical dignitary authenticated by his seal, be given the same value as would be given to the manifestation of Our will set forth in this very document. It shall therefore be unlawful for anyone to violate or presume to contradict the tenor of this Our Decree, command, and will, of erection, constitution, restitution, dissolution, suppression, partition, aggregation, and attribution. And if anyone shall presume to attempt such a thing, let him know that he shall incur the indignation of Almighty God and of the holy Apostles Peter and Paul. Given at St. Peter's in Rome, under the seal of the Fisherman, on the seventeenth day of September, MDCCCCII, of Our pontificate the twenty-fifth.

The Seal.

ALOYSIUS. CARD. MACCHI.