



**DALL'ALTO**  
**DELL'APOSTOLICO SEGGIO**  
 ENCYCLICAL OF POPE LEO XIII ON  
 FREEMASONRY IN ITALY

*To the Bishops, the Clergy, and the People of Italy.  
 Venerable Brethren and Beloved Children,  
 Health and Apostolic Benediction.*

*Italy Has Come to This*

From the height of the Apostolic Throne, where Divine Providence has placed Us to watch over the salvation of all nations, We look upon Italy in whose bosom, by an act of singular predilection, God has established the See of His Vicar, and from which come to Us at the present time many and most bitter sorrows. - It is not any personal offence that saddens Us, nor the privations and sacrifices imposed upon Us by the present condition of things, nor the outrages and scoffs which an insolent press has full power to hurl every day against Us. If only Our person were concerned, and not the ruin to which Italy threatened in its faith is hastening, We should bear these offences without complaint, rejoicing even to repeat what one of Our most illustrious Predecessors said of himself: "If the captivity of my country did not every moment for each day increase, as to the contempt and scorn of myself I should joyfully be silent."<sup>(1)</sup> - But, besides the independence and dignity of the Holy See, the religion itself and the salvation of a whole nation are concerned, of a nation which from the earliest times opened its bosom to the Catholic Faith and has ever jealously preserved it. Incredible it seems, but it is true; to such a pass have we come, that we have to fear for this Italy of ours the loss even of the faith. - Many times have We sounded the alarm, to give warning of the danger; but We do not therefore think that We have done enough. In face of the continued and fiercer assaults that are made, We hear the voice of duty calling upon Us more powerfully than before to speak to you again, Venerable Brethren, to your Clergy, and to the whole Italian people. As the enemy makes no truce, so neither you nor We must remain silent or inert. By the Divine mercy We have been constituted guardians and defenders of the religion of the people entrusted to Our care, Pastors and watchful sentinels of the flock of Christ; and for this flock We must be ready, if need be, to sacrifice everything, even life itself.

*The Object of the Encyclical*

2. We shall not say anything new; for facts have not changed from what they were, and We have had at other times to speak of them when occasion was given. - But We now intend to recapitulate these facts in some way, and to group them into one picture, so as to draw out for general instruction the consequences which flow from them. The facts are incontestable which have happened in the clear light of day; not separated one from another, but so connected together as in their series to reveal with fullest evidence a system of which they are the actual operation and development. The system is not new; but the audacity, the fury, and the rapidity with which it is now carried out, are new. It is the plan of the sects that is now unfolding itself in Italy, especially in what relates to the Catholic religion and the Church, with the final and

avowed purpose, if it were possible, of reducing it to nothing. - It is needless now to put the Masonic sects upon their trial. They are already judged; their ends, their means, their doctrines, and their action, are all known with indisputable certainty. Possessed by the spirit of Satan, whose instrument they are, they burn like him with a deadly and implacable hatred of Jesus Christ and of His work; and they endeavour by every means to overthrow and fetter it. This war is at present waged more than elsewhere in Italy, in which the Catholic religion has taken deeper root; and above all in Rome, the centre of Catholic unity, and the See of the Universal Pastor and Teacher of the Church.

3. It is well to trace from the beginning the different phases of this warfare.

*"Facilis Descensus Averni"*

4. The war began by the overthrow of the civil power of the Popes, the downfall of which, according to the secret intentions of the real leaders, afterwards openly avowed, was, under a political pretext, to be the means of enslaving at least, if not of destroying the supreme spiritual power of the Roman Pontiffs.-That no doubt might remain as to the true object of this warfare, there followed quickly the suppression of the Religious Orders; and thereby a great reduction in the number of evangelical labourers for the propagation of the faith amongst the heathens, and for the sacred ministry and religious service of Catholic countries. - Later, the obligation of military service was extended to ecclesiastics, with the necessary result that many and grave obstacles were put to the recruiting and due formation even of the secular Clergy. Hands were laid upon ecclesiastical property, partly by absolute confiscation, and partly by charging it with enormous burdens, so as to impoverish the Clergy and the Church, and to deprive the Church of what is necessary for its temporal support and for carrying on institutions and works in aid of its divine apostolate. This the sectaries themselves have openly declared. *To lessen the influence of the Clergy and of clerical bodies, one only efficacious means must be employed: to strip them of all their goods, and to reduce them to absolute poverty.* So also the action of the State is of itself all directed to efface from the nation its religious and Christian character. From the laws, and from the whole of official life, every religious inspiration and idea is systematically banished, when not directly assailed. Every public manifestation of faith and of Catholic piety is either forbidden or, under vain pretences, in a thousand ways impeded. - From the family are taken away its foundation and religious constitution by the proclaiming of *civil marriage*, as it is called; and also by the entirely lay education which is now demanded, from the first elements to the higher teaching of the universities, so that the rising generations, as far as this can be effected by the State, have to grow up without any idea of religion, and without the first essential notions of their duties towards God. This is to put the axe to the root. No more universal and efficacious means could be imagined of withdrawing society, and families, and individuals, from the influence of the Church and of the faith. *To lay Clericalism (or Catholicism) waste in its foundations and in its very sources of life, namely, in the school and in the family:* such is the authentic declaration of Masonic writers.

*Italy Among the Fallen*

5. It will be said that this does not happen in Italy only, but is a system of government which States generally follow. - We answer, that this does not refute, but confirms what We are saying as to the designs and action of Freemasonry in Italy. Yes, this system is adopted and carried out wherever Freemasonry uses its impious and wicked action; and, as its action is widespread, so is this anti-Christian system widely applied. But the application becomes more speedy and general, and is pushed more to extremes, in countries where the government is more under the control of the sect and better promotes its interest. Unfortunately, at the present time the new Italy is of the number of these countries. Not today only has it become

subject to the wicked and evil influence of the sects; but for some time past they have tyrannised over it as they liked, with absolute dominion and power. Here the direction of public affairs, in what concerns religion, is wholly in conformity with the aspirations of the sects; and for accomplishing their aspirations, they find avowed supporters and ready instruments in those who hold the public power. Laws adverse to the Church and measures hostile to it are first proposed, decided, and resolved, in the secret meetings of the sect; and if anything presents even the least appearance of hostility or harm to the Church, it is at once received with favour and put forward. - Amongst the most recent facts We may mention the approval of the new penal code, in which what was most obstinately demanded, in spite of all reasons to the contrary, were the articles against the Clergy, which form for them an exceptional law, and even condemn as criminal certain actions which are sacred duties of their ministry. - The law as to pious works, by which all charitable property, accumulated by the piety and religion of our ancestors under the protection and guardianship of the Church, was withdrawn altogether from the Church's action and control, had been for some years put forward in the meetings of the sect, precisely because it would inflict a new outrage on the Church, lessen its social influence, and suppress at once a great number of bequests made for divine worship. - Then came that eminently sectarian work, the erection of the monument to the renowned apostate of Nola, which, with the aid and favour of the government, was promoted, determined, and carried out by means of Freemasonry, whose most authorised spokesmen were not ashamed to acknowledge its purpose and to declare its meaning. Its purpose was to insult the Papacy; its meaning that, instead of the Catholic Faith, must now be substituted the most absolute freedom of examination, of criticism, of thought, and of conscience: and what is meant by such language in the mouth of the sects is well known. - The seal was put by the most explicit declarations made by the head of the government, which were to the following effect: - That the true and real conflict, which the government has the merit of understanding, is the conflict between faith and the Church on one side and free examination and reason on the other. That the Church may try to act as it has done before, to enchain anew reason and free-thought, and to prevail; but the government in this conflict declares itself openly in favour of reason as against faith, and takes upon itself the task of making the Italian State the evident expression of this reason and liberty: a sad task, which has just now been boldly reaffirmed on a like occasion.

### *The Masonic Ideal*

6. In the light of such facts and such declarations as these, it is more than ever clear that the ruling idea which, as far as religion is concerned, controls the course of public affairs in Italy, is the realisation of the Masonic programme. We see how much has already been realised; we know how much still remains to be done; and we can foresee with certainty that, so long as the destinies of Italy are in the hands of sectarian rulers or of men subject to the sects, the realisation of the programme will be pressed on, more or less rapidly according to circumstances, unto its complete development. - The action of the sects is at present directed to attain the following objects, according to the votes and resolutions passed in their most important assemblies, - votes and resolutions inspired throughout by a deadly hatred of the Church. *The abolition in the schools of every kind of religious instruction, and the founding of institutions in which even girls are to be withdrawn from all clerical influence whatever it may be; because the State, which ought to be absolutely atheistic, has the inalienable right and duty to form the heart and the spirit of its citizens, and no school should exist apart from its inspiration and control. - The rigorous application of all laws now in force, which aim at securing the absolute independence of civil society from clerical influence. - The strict observance of laws suppressing religious corporations, and the employment of means to make them effectual. - The regulation of all ecclesiastical property, starting from the*

*principle that its ownership belongs to the State, and its administration to the civil power. - The exclusion of every Catholic or clerical element from all public administrations, from pious works, hospitals, and schools, from the councils which govern the destinies of the country, from academical and other unions, from companies, committees, and families, - an exclusion from everything, everywhere, and forever. Instead, the Masonic influence is to make itself felt in all the circumstances of social life, and to become master and controller of everything. - Hereby the way will be smoothed towards the abolition of the Papacy; Italy will thus be free from its implacable and deadly enemy; and Rome, which in the past was the centre of universal Theocracy will in the future be the centre of universal secularisation, whence the Magna Charta of human liberty is to be proclaimed in the face of the whole world. Such are the authentic declarations, aspirations, and resolutions, of Freemasons or of their assemblies.*

7. Without exaggeration, this is the present condition and the future prospect of religion in Italy. To shrink from seeing the gravity of this would be a fatal error. To recognise it as it is, to confront it with evangelical prudence and fortitude, to infer the duties which it imposes on all Catholics, and upon us especially who as Pastors have to watch over them and guide them to salvation, is to enter into the views of Providence, to do a work of wisdom and pastoral zeal. - As far as We are concerned, the Apostolic office lays upon Us the duty of protesting loudly once more against all that has been done, is doing, or is attempted in Italy to the harm of religion. Defending and guarding the sacred rights of the Church and of the Pontificate, We openly repel and denounce to the whole Catholic world the outrages which the Church and the Pontificate are continually receiving, especially in Rome, and which hamper Us in the government of the Catholic Church, and add difficulty and indignity to Our condition. We are determined not to omit anything on Our part which can serve to maintain the faith lively and vigorous amidst the Italian people, and to protect it against the assaults of its enemies. We, therefore, make appeal, Venerable Brethren, to your zeal and your great love for souls, in order that, possessed with a sense of the gravity of the danger which they incur, you may apply the proper remedies and do all you can to dispel this danger.

### *Thus Shall You Fight*

8. No means must be neglected that are in your power. All the resources of speech, every expedient in action, all the immense treasures of help and grace which the Church places in your hands, must be made use of, for the formation of a Clergy learned and full of the spirit of Jesus Christ, for the Christian education of youth, for the extirpation of evil doctrines, for the defence of Catholic truths, and for the maintenance of the Christian character and spirit of family life.

9. As to the Catholic people, before everything else it is necessary that they should be instructed as to the true state of things in Italy with regard to religion, the essentially religious character of the conflict in Italy against the Pontiff, and the real object constantly aimed at, so that they may see by the evidence of facts the many ways in which their religion is conspired against, and may be convinced of the risk they run of being robbed and spoiled of the inestimable treasure of the faith. - With this conviction in their minds, and having at the same time a certainty that without faith it is impossible to please God and to be saved, they will understand that what is now at stake is the greatest, not to say the only interest, which every one on earth is bound before all things, at the cost of any sacrifice, to put out of danger, under penalty of everlasting misery. They will, moreover, easily understand that, in this time of open and raging conflict, it would be disgraceful for them to desert the field and hide themselves. Their duty is to remain at their post, and openly to show themselves to be true Catholics by

their belief and by actions in conformity with their faith. This they must do for the honour of their faith, and the glory of the Sovereign Leader whose banner they follow; and that they may escape that great misfortune of being disowned at the last day, and of not being recognised as His by the Supreme Judge who has declared that whosoever is not with Him is against Him.-Without ostentation or timidity, let them give proof of that true courage which arises from the consciousness of fulfilling a sacred duty before God and men. To this frank profession of faith Catholics must unite a perfect docility and filial love towards the Church, a sincere respect for their Bishops, and an absolute devotion and obedience to the Roman Pontiff. In a word, they will recognise how necessary it is to cease from everything that is the work of the sects, or that receives impulse or favour from them, as being undoubtedly infected by the anti-Christian spirit; and they will, on the contrary, devote themselves with activity, courage and constancy, to Catholic works, and to the associations and institutions which the Church has blessed, and which the Bishops and the Roman Pontiff encourage and sustain. Moreover, seeing that the chief instrument employed by our enemies is the press, which in great part receives from them its inspiration and support, it is important that Catholics should oppose the evil press by a press that is good, for the defence of truth, out of love for religion, and to uphold the rights of the Church. While the Catholic press is occupied in laying bare the perfidious designs of the sects, in helping and seconding the action of the sacred Pastors, and in defending and promoting Catholic works, it is the duty of the faithful efficaciously to support this press,-both by refusing or ceasing to favour in any way the evil press; and also directly, by concurring, as far as each one can, in helping it to live and thrive: and in this matter We think that hitherto enough has not been done in Italy. Lastly, the teaching addressed by Us to all Catholics, especially in the Encyclicals "*Humanum genus*" and "*Sapientiae Christianae*," should be particularly applied to the Catholics of Italy, and be impressed upon them. If they have anything to suffer or to sacrifice through remaining faithful to these duties, let them take courage in the thought that the Kingdom of Heaven suffereth violence and is gained only by doing violence to ourselves; and that he who loves himself and what is his own more than Jesus Christ, is not worthy of Him. The example of the many invincible champions who, throughout all time, have generously sacrificed everything for the faith, and the special helps of grace which make the yoke of Jesus Christ sweet and His burden light, ought to animate powerfully their courage and to sustain them in the glorious contest.

#### *From Another Point of View*

10. So far We have considered only the religious side of the present state of things in Italy, inasmuch as this is for Us the most essential, and the subject which eminently concerns Us by reason of the Apostolic office which We hold. But it is worthwhile to consider also the social and political side, so that Italians may see that not only the love of religion, but also the noblest and sincerest love of country should stir them to resist the impious attempts of the sects. - As a convincing proof of this, it suffices to take note of the kind of future, in the social and political order, which is being prepared for Italy by men whose object is - and they make no secret of it - to wage an unrelenting war against Catholicism and the Papacy.

11. Already the test of the past speaks eloquently for itself. - What Italy has become in this first period of its new life, as to public and private morality, internal safety, order and peace, national wealth and prosperity, all this is known to you by facts, Venerable Brethren, better than We could describe it in words. The very men whose interest it would be to hide all this, are constrained by truth to admit it. We will only say that, under present conditions, though a sad but real necessity, things could not be otherwise: the Masonic sect, with all its boast of a spirit of beneficence and philanthropy, can only exercise an evil influence - an influence which is evil because it attacks and endeavours to destroy the religion of Christ, the true benefactress

of mankind.

### *Without Religion Ye Are Naught*

12. All know with what salutary effect and in how many ways the influence of religion penetrates society. It is beyond dispute that sound public and private morality gives honour and strength to States. But it is equally certain that, without religion there is no true morality, either public or private. - From the family, solidly based on its natural foundations, comes the life, the growth, and the energy of society. But without religion, and without morality, the domestic partnership has no stability, and the family bonds grow weak and waste away. - The prosperity of peoples and of nations comes from God and from His blessings. If a people does not attribute its prosperity to Him, but rises up against Him, and in the pride of its heart tacitly tells Him that it has no need of Him, its prosperity is but a semblance, certain to disappear so soon as it shall please the Lord to confound the proud insolence of His enemies. - It is religion which, penetrating to the depth of each one's conscience, makes him feel the force of duty and urges him to fulfil it. It is religion which gives to rulers feelings of justice and love towards their subjects; which makes subjects faithful and sincerely devoted to their rulers; which makes upright and good legislators, just and incorruptible magistrates, brave and heroic soldiers, conscientious and diligent administrators. It is religion which produces concord and affection between husband and wife, love and reverence between parents and their children; which makes the poor respect the property of others, and causes the rich to make a right use of their wealth. From this fidelity to duty, and this respect for the rights of others come the order, the tranquillity, and the peace, which form so large a part of the prosperity of a people and of a State. Take away religion, and with it all these immensely precious benefits would disappear from society.

### *Italy Without Religion*

13. For Italy, moreover, the loss would be sensible. - All its glories and greatness, which for a long time gave to it the first place among the most cultured nations, are inseparable from religion, which has either produced or inspired them, or certainly has given to them favour, help, and increase. Its communes tell us of its public liberties: of its military glories we read in its many memorable enterprises against the enemies of the Christian name. Its sciences are seen in its universities which, founded, fostered, and privileged by the Church, have been their home and theatre. Its arts are shown in the numberless monuments of every kind with which Italy is profusely covered. Of its institutions for the relief of suffering, for the destitute, and the working-classes we have evidence in its many foundations of Christian charity, in the many asylums established for every kind of need and misfortune, and in the associations and corporations which have grown up under the protection of religion. The virtue and the strength of religion are immortal because religion is from God. It has treasures of help and most efficacious remedies, which can be wonderfully adapted to the needs of every time and epoch. What religion has known how to do and has done in former times, it can do also now with a virtue ever fresh and vigorous. To take away religion from Italy, is to dry up at once the most abundant source of inestimable help and benefits.

### *The Dangers of Socialism*

14. Moreover, one of the greatest and most formidable dangers of society at the present day, is the agitation of the *Socialists*, who threaten to uplift it from its foundations. From this great danger Italy is not free; and although other nations may be more infested than Italy by this spirit of subversion and disorder, it is not therefore less true that even here this spirit is widely spreading and increasing every day in strength. So criminal is its nature, so great the power of

its organisation and the audacity of its designs, that there is need of uniting all conservative forces, if we are to arrest its progress and successfully to prevent its triumph. Of these forces the first, and above all the chief one, is that which can be supplied by religion and the Church: without this, the strictest laws, the severest tribunals, and even the force of arms, will prove useless or insufficient. As, in old times, material force was of no avail against the hordes of barbarians, but only the power of the Christian religion, which entering into their souls quenched their ferocity, civilised their manners, and made them docile to the voice of truth and to the law of the gospel; so against the fury of lawless multitudes there will be no effectual defence without the salutary power of religion. It is only this power which, casting into their minds the light of truth, and instilling into their hearts the holy moral precepts of Jesus Christ, can make them listen to the voice of conscience and of duty, and, before restraining their hand, restrain their minds and allay the violence of passion. - To assail religion, is therefore to deprive Italy of its most powerful ally against an enemy that becomes every day more formidable.

15. But this is not all. - As, in the social order, the war against religion is becoming most disastrous and destructive to Italy, so, in the political order, the enmity against the Holy See and the Roman Pontiff is for Italy a source of the greatest evils. Even as to this, demonstration is not needed; it is enough, for the full expression of our thought, to state in few words its conclusions. The war against the Pope is for Italy, internally, a cause of profound division between official Italy and the great part of Italians who are truly Catholic: and every division is a weakness. This war deprives our country of the support and co-operation of the party which is the most frankly conservative; it keeps up in the bosom of the nation a religious conflict which has never yet brought any public good, but ever bears within itself the fatal germs of evil and of most heavy chastisement. Externally, the conflict with the Holy See, besides depriving Italy of the prestige and splendour which it would most certainly have by living in peace with the Pontificate, draws upon it the hostility of the Catholics of the whole world, is a cause of immense sacrifices, and may on any occasion furnish its enemies with a weapon to be used against it.

16. Such is the so-called welfare and greatness prepared for Italy by those who, having its destinies in their hands, do all they can, in accordance with the impious aspiration of the "sects, to overthrow the Catholic religion and the Papacy.

### *If Only*

17. Suppose, instead of this, that all connection and connivance with the sects were given up; that religion and the Church, as the greatest social power, were allowed real liberty and full exercise of their rights. - What a happy change would come over the destinies of Italy! The evils and the dangers which we have lamented, as the result of the war against religion and the Church, would cease with the termination of the conflict; and further, we should see once more flourish on the chosen soil of Catholic Italy the greatness and glory which religion and the Church have ever abundantly produced. From their divine power would spring up spontaneously a reformation of public and private morality; family ties would be strengthened; and under religious influences, the feeling of duty and of fidelity in its fulfilment would be awakened in all ranks of the people to a new life. - The social questions which now so greatly occupy men's minds would find their way to the best and most complete solution, by the practical application of the gospel precepts of charity and justice. Popular liberty, not allowed to degenerate into license, would be directed only to good ends, and would become truly worthy of man. The sciences, through that truth of which the Church is mistress, would rise speedily to a higher excellence; and so also would the arts, through the powerful inspiration

which religion derives from above, and which it knows how to transfuse into the minds of men. - Peace being made with the Church, religious unity and civil concord would be greatly strengthened; the separation between Italy and Catholics faithful to the Church would cease, and Italy would thus acquire a powerful element of order and stability. The just demands of the Roman Pontiff being satisfied, and his sovereign rights acknowledged, he would be restored to a condition of true and effective independence; and Catholics of other parts of the world, who, not through external influence of ignorance of what they want, but through a feeling of faith and sense of duty, all raise their voice in defence of the dignity and liberty of the supreme Pastor of their souls, would no longer have reason to regard Italy as the enemy of the Pontiff. - On the contrary, Italy would gain greater respect and esteem from other nations by living in harmony with the Apostolic See; for not only has this See conferred special benefits on Italians by its presence in the midst of them, but also, by the constant diffusion of the treasures of faith from this centre of benediction and salvation, it has made the Italian name great and respected among all nations. Italy reconciled with the Pontiff, and faithful to its religion, would be able worthily to emulate the glory of its early times; and from whatever real progress there is in the present age it would receive a new impulse to advance in its glorious path. Rome, pre-eminently the Catholic city, destined by God to be the centre of the religion of Christ and the See of His Vicar, has had in this the cause of its stability and greatness throughout the eventful changes of the many ages that are past. Placed again under the peaceful and paternal sceptre of the Roman Pontiff, it would again become what Providence and the course of ages made it - not dwarfed to the condition of a capital of one kingdom, nor divided between two different and sovereign powers in a dualism contrary to its whole history; but the worthy capital of the Catholic world, great with all the majesty of Religion and of the supreme Priesthood, a teacher and an example to the nations of morality and of civilisation.

#### *Founded on a Rock*

18. These are not vain illusions, Venerable Brethren, but hopes resting upon the most solid and true foundation. The assertion which for some time has been commonly repeated, that Catholics and the Pontiff are the enemies of Italy, and in alliance, so to speak, with those who would overturn everything, is a gratuitous insult and a shameless calumny, artfully spread abroad by the sects to disguise their wicked designs, and to enable them to continue without obstacle their hateful work of stripping Italy of its Catholic character. The truth which is seen most clearly from what we have thus far said, is that Catholics are Italy's best friends. By keeping altogether aloof from the sects, by renouncing their spirit and their works, by striving in every way that Italy may not lose the faith, but preserve it in all its vigour, - may not fight against the Church, but be its faithful daughter, - may not assail the Pontificate, but be reconciled to it, - Catholics give proof by all this of their strong and real love for the religion of their ancestors and for their country. - Do all that you can, Venerable Brethren, to spread the light of truth among the people so that they may come at last to understand where their welfare and their true interest are to be found; and may be convinced that only from fidelity to religion and from peace with the Church and with the Roman Pontiff, can they hope to obtain for Italy a future worthy of its glorious past. - To this We would call the attention, not of those affiliated to the sects, whose deliberate purpose it is to establish the new settlement of the Italian Peninsula upon the ruins of the Catholic Religion; but of others who, without welcoming such malevolent designs, help these men in their work by supporting their policy; and especially of young men, who are so liable to go astray through inexperience and the predominance of mere sentiment. We would that everyone should become convinced that the course which is now followed cannot be otherwise than fatal to Italy; and, in once more making known this danger, We are moved only by a consciousness of duty and by love of our country.



### *Prayers and Benedictions*

19. But, for the enlightening of men's minds, we must above all ask for special help from heaven. Therefore, to our united action, Venerable Brethren, we must join prayer; and let it be a prayer that is general, constant, and fervent: a prayer that will offer gentle violence to the heart of God, and render Him merciful to Italy our country, so that He may avert from it every calamity, especially that which would be the most terrible - the loss of faith. - Let us take as our mediatrix with God the most glorious VIRGIN MARY, the invincible Queen of the Rosary, Who has such great power over the forces of hell, and has so many times made Italy feel the effects of Her maternal love. - Let us also with confidence have recourse to the holy Apostles PETER and PAUL, who subjected this blessed land to the faith, sanctified it by their labours, and bathed it in their blood.

20. As a pledge meanwhile of the help which We ask, and in token of Our most special affection, receive the Apostolic Benediction, which from the depth of Our heart We grant to you, Venerable Brethren, to your Clergy, and to the Italian people.

*Given in Rome, at St. Peter's, on the 15th of October, 1890, the thirteenth year of Our Pontificate.*

**LEO XIII**

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#### REFERENCE:

1. St. Gregory the Great: *Letter to the Emperor Maurice*, Reg. 5.

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