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Just as Pope Benedict XIV instituted formerly the Archconfraternity of Christian Doctrine in order to animate the clergy and the people with a spirit of fervor as well as a zeal for the Christian institution, so also did the Roman Pontiff Pius VII formerly establish the Archconfraternity under the title of the Most Precious Blood in order to recall souls to a study of the Crucified Lord; for though the devil would like to conquer all, the victim of justice came to give life to the people through the efficacy of the Precious Blood of the immaculate Lamb, providing hope for mercy and pardon. But, how can that be accomplished is not through the two great means of reform, namely, Retreats and Missions? So, to achieve that most important objective, the founding members of the aforementioned Archconfraternity, joined together in Mission and Retreat Houses, afford the facilities for the application of these very same means to the greater glory of God and the welfare of souls.

Hence, the life of these evangelical workers is directed to no other purpose than that of sustaining the primary objectives of the ministry, by contacting the various groups and classes of people in a way proportionate to their status, and providing those salutary incitements through which the heart is led to compunction and souls return penitently into the arms of the Divine Savior. That is why they cultivate the practice of the nightly Oratory for men, the organizations for young people in observing feast days, the visits to the hospitals and prisons, and many other devout pious practices whereby they fulfill not only the principle aim of the Society for Missions and Retreats, but also their own particular aspirations.

Within the House itself, assiduous study is made of the basic ecclesiastical subjects, and, in the communication of ideas, one cannot sufficiently describe what advantages accrue to the Society which nowadays, in a special way, is being promoted. Everything is in conformity with the Sacred Canons, the practices of the saints, and is, indeed, the support of the episcopal ministry during these difficult times in what we are living.

Therefore, not only do they seek to train (by setting up pious organizations) the people where the Mission House is located, but by traveling about to neighboring towns, they try to stabilize and make perfect in them the fruits of a holy Mission. This is the great good that these evangelical ministers supply in various ways. As cannot be denied, if these are the bases that will bring about the desired reform, is there anyone who would not, through prayer and good works and with the most solicitous care, not wish to cooperate in the designs of Divine Providence, manifested by the Roman Pontiff who ardently seeks the cleansing of souls through the application of the means of redemption?

This is only a brief outline of our Society concerning which we have spoken. You can get an even clearer concept of its nature by reading our regulations that have been printed, which . . .

To the Most Reverend Bishop
Paper presented by Can. G. Del Bufalo
October 20, 1821 (In Velletri)

XII, 48-50 a

July 29, 1825

General idea of the Society (1)

(1) St. Gaspar's presentation shows signs of corrections made by Cristaldi. Here we are reproducing St. Gaspar's edition.

Pope Leo XII

In these times of upheaval, which it has pleased God to reserve for us, there is great need for a reform of the people. The Lord, in misericordia dives, wished to provide an effective means for curbing the torrent of iniquity and for restoring order in the hearts of the people by furnishing them with helps that are most suitable for the sanctification of their souls and for their continuous and lasting improvement. One such means is the establishing of more Mission and Spiritual Retreat Houses for the secular clergy, to revive in them a sense of dignity, of good example, as well as an eagerness for study and holiness, all of which is in line with the spirit of that ancient discipline in which community living of ecclesiastics was eagerly fostered. St. Augustine, the Doctor of Grace, treated this matter in a special way. St. Charles Borromeo also followed a program such as this when he founded the Oblates, and the same can be said for St. Philip Neri when he instituted his congregation. The institution that we are discussing here, however, differs from that of the Filippini Fathers only because it adds to their most praiseworthy objectives, the practice of giving Missions and Spiritual Retreats, either by doing their preaching to the people in a very public way as well as (in the Retreats) by a very private approach in the respective Houses that have been founded. This expansion of good work was not undertaken by the Apostle of Rome, St. Philip Neri, for he limited the work of his congregation to those devout programs for which his sacred institute is so well-known. It differs from that of the Oblates of St. Charles insofar as they are required to assume bonds that hold them in conscience and, as a necessary propagation of the faith. It likewise differs from the Missionaries of St. Vincent de Paul, because they too are bound by the sacred vows and, abstracting from the apostolate of the Missions and other pious works undertaken by their foundation, they do not have the flexibility to put into practice what shall be described in detail in these pages, not ordinarily making use of a public church for each of the sexes, so that all of the souls are given an equal portion of nourishment of the divine Word through which the faith has been promoted among peoples, and through which we can look forward to a renewal: "fides ex auditu, auditus autem per verbum Christi".

One must now also cast a glance at the foundation of the Liguori Fathers. For the sake of brevity

and in order to point out that this congregation in the Papal State does not engage in an extensive propagation, it, too, excludes those programs that make the Society that we are discussing here plausible. The Houses of Study for priests, immediately subject to the Holy See and hence to the respective bishops, began speaking, more or less, having an even much broader idea of the Apostolate than the spirit of the now-deceased Doctor Bartolomeo del Monte and the now-deceased Marchese Imperiale, particularly with respect to the secular clergy who were devoid of any bond of sacred vows. In the case of the latter, the Gospel Ministers, adhering to their pious legacies, contemplated the giving of Mission. But in our present foundations, we are taking into consideration, as a whole, everything that could be needed by the pastors in the respective dioceses, so that we can be of immediate help to the urgent needs of the people to effect the reform of their daily lives. While other institutes, such as the Fathers of the Company of Jesus, have their primary objective the education of youth, our Mission and Retreat Houses offer whatever is necessary to bring about, with the greatest possible rapidity, the conversation of souls, good example from the grown-ups, and, in short, an apostolate directed towards every sort of grouping of people in the various dioceses which will then evaluate, facilitate and consolidate the education given. There will be no fear that the clergy will fall into a state of inertia, for, excluding the pastors, the canons and other sacred ministers necessary for the respective places, the other clergy will gradually be brought together into a union bounded by dedication to the ministry and they will activate this apostolate which is so very necessary for the greater glory of God. Their own personal affairs will not deter them, since we do not forbid proper ecclesiastical assistance. Nor can being advanced in age make them at times fearful of the fulfillment of their sacred duties, since those who are more vigorous will apply themselves to the giving of Mission and those are not so strong in health can take care of the internal forum, thus enjoying that peace which the Houses of our foundation can offer. In these Houses, in a special way, the soul is lifted to God in prayer. Also ignorance, at time, may be the cause of complaints, but even with all that, one moves ahead by the provision of scholarly conferences which, in a way, make up for the past and eventually prepare them for whatever may be relevant. So, we conclude that in these foundation, already put into motion by the now-deceased Supreme Pontiff Pope Pius VII, the clergy find a haven and the longed-for reform of the clergy itself is promoted so that they can become a beacon of holiness for the people. The seminaries, in preparing new plants for the Church of Jesus Christ, are effecting a certain graduated scale by which, through mutual assistance, they will bring about a certain equilibrium in the clergy. Eventually, with this mystical growth being supported, they will produce the noble fruit of vocations to the Mission of the Propaganda Fide. The evangelical works, which will be well-fortified in solid virtue, in adequate learning, in detachment from everything, will go forth. The glory of God will be wondrously promoted. Still completely available to those souls who prefer the sacred vows will be those other institutes which they can embrace, whichever one they may be called to however, that step must be the fruit of mature advice and of a true spirit of vocation. Finally, in our Houses of Study, there is offered a compensation for the present shortage of Regulars insofar as the people will have outside confessors to go to. Furthermore, the bishops are afforded a means whereby, even after the completion of the course of studies in the seminaries, the new priests will have the opportunity to be further developed in their vocation so as to be equipped for parochial work or other areas in the priestly ministry. All of this is merely a general presentation of the idea of our Institute. If necessary, more details can be given at another time.

[The title]

Now, we turn to the question of the title which adorns these foundations. As if evident from various documents, it was the Supreme Pontiff Pius VII who considered it, as a matter of fact, a good idea to

take it from the Archconfraternity having the august title of the most Precious Blood of Jesus Christ, of the most holy Mary, Help of Christians and assigned to it as special protector the glorious apostle of the Indies, St. Francis Xavier. This title does not present anything novel, since it flows from what we see in the sacred scriptures: "Redemisti nos Domine in Sanguine tuo, et fecisti nos Deo nostro regnum et sacerdotes". We priests, therefore, are marked with the sacerdotal character in order to apply the divine Blood to souls. It is his Blood that is offered in the divine Sacrifice; it is his Blood that is applied in the sacraments; it is his Blood that is the price of redemption. This is what we can present to the heavenly Father for the reconciliation of sinners.: "Te ergo quaesumus tuis famulis subveni quos pretioso Sanguine redemisti". Whereas the devil would like all to be the victims of justice, we ministers of the sanctuary must make known the depths of God's mercy so that justificati in Sanguine ipsius salvi simus ab ira per ipsum. In this devotion, we have the treasures of wisdom and holiness; in it we find comfort, peace and salvation.

Indeed, it is an essential devotion in Christianity venerated by our mother, the Church "quam acquisivit sanguine suo. The Mass, the Office of the most Precious Blood are already in practical usage in the church militant. Even from most ancient history, for example, we note that God, indeed prescribed that the Hebrews in Egypt should taint their doorways with blood so as to be freed from the avenging sword, alluding to that means of eternal salvation by which our souls would be liberated from the slavery of hell. Add to this, what the Apostle states: "si sanguis hircorum et vitulorum inquinatos santificat, quanto magis Sanguis Christi emundabit conscientiam nostram ab operibus mortuis? One should read the precious little booklet entitled Il mese di Giugno (The month of June) dedicated to the devotion of the mysteries of the Divine Blood. It contains the documents supporting this important devotion. Sufficient for now is to conclude with the words of St. Bernard (Ep. 7): "Sanguis Christi ut tuba clamat"; or, the words of St. thomas (Opusc. 158) "Sanguis Christi clavis paradisi". But, to sum up everything briefly, one must not omit listening to what St. Paul observes in Col. 1: "Pacificans per Sanguinem suum sive quae in terris sive quae in coelis sunt". Our times demand that we carry out what is proposed in that quotation. It is, therefore, the divine Blood that will placate the divine eternal father, that will purify our hearts and will inebriate us with love for Jesus who dilexit nos, et lavit nos in Sanguine suo.

XII, 80-81

July 29, 1825

Pope Leo XII

Respectful observations concerning the Archconfraternity of the most Precious Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ

It cannot be denied that the Lord, always rich in mercy, has provided powerful means in every age that are capable of drawing souls to a consideration of the Crucified Lord and thus seeing in them the application of the redemption through his Divine Blood.

Prescinding from the first centuries in the Church, centuries productive of martyrs, in the following

epochs which history records for us, we note how one of the other dogma was attacked, how sacred things were subjected to scorn in one or their part of the Catholic world. In our miserable times, the crisis in the people is a general one, with indescribable perversion of basic principles and of proper living so as to hurl an insult at the redemptive act and, through human malice, to frustrate the application of the merits of Jesus Christ who has redeemed us by the price of his Blood. Now, Blessed Father, is it not necessary to rekindle apostolic zeal and follow the inspirations of soul that are so favored by God so that we can revive in the memories of these people the inestimable price of our redemption and attempt to stir them to repentance and to tears? Is it not also a fact that Sacred Scripture itself gives us the steps to take for a reform? *Pacificans per Sanguinem Crucis eius sive quae in coelis, sive quae i terris sunt?* Do we ourselves not know that *Christus dilexit ecclesiam tradidit semetipsum pro ea...acquisivit sanguine suo?* Does not Divine Wisdom tell us that *justificati in Sanguine salvi erimus ab ira per ipsum?* It is not sufficient simply to utter the name of the Lord to be saved: *Non qui dixerit Domine Domine hic salvus erit, but qui fecerit voluntatem Patris mei, hic salvus erit.* Therefore, there are two things that must necessarily be done nowadays. The first is to find a way of placating the Divine Eternal Father; and that we have in the merits of the Divine Blood: *calicem salutaris accipiam.* The other is to try to find a way to effectively applying those merits to souls, and this can be done particularly through holy Missions and Spiritual Retreats, as well as other pious programs that are proportionately salubrious for our times. In fact, these are the very same reasons that motivated the holy Pontiff Pius VII to erect the Archconfraternity, bearing this most august title of the Divine Blood. Sinners continue to be horrendously abusive and the Lord, in the transports of his love, keeps crying out: *Quae utilitas in Sanguine meo?* So, is there not anyone who will, through this sacred, solemn cult, procure adoration in compensation, and preach to the people its glories, bringing to their attention that in this devotion we have a compendium of faith itself; that is why, in the consecration of the chalice, we say: "*mysterium fidei*"; and, consequently therein lies the salvation of souls.

In fact, it is to this that the prophetic oracles, the predictions, the symbols, the figures, the sacrifices of the old covenant have their focus. As we read in Genesis: *Lavabit in vino stolam suam, et in sanguine uvae pallium suum.* The Hebrews were ordered to taint their doorposts with the blood of the lamb in order to be freed from their chastisements in Egypt, a symbol of the liberation of our souls from diabolical servitude... Without saying too much further, what did Moses do for his people? *Accipiens librum aspersit Sanguine dicens...hic sanguis testamenti quod mandavit ad vos Deus...Omnia in sanguine mundantur, et sine sanguinis effusione non fit remissio...* Hear, now, what the Apostle says: *Si sanguis hircorum et vitulorum inquinatos sanctificat, quanto magis Sanguis Jesu Christi emundabit conscientias nostras.* Without saying everything that could be said, the divine Scriptures are loaded with sacred citations... *Quare rebrum est indumentum tuum. Vestitus erat veste aspersa sanguine.* One should add only that by means of this devotion the remembrance of our baptism, through which our souls were purged, is revived; we are reminded of penance and the other sacraments. And when asked why, we conclude that it was because: *redemisti in Sanguine, fecisti nos Deo nostrum regnum et sacerdotes.* Other devotions are all means for facilitating Catholic piety, but this devotion is the basis, the sustenance, the essence of all. Other devotions, coming forth at various times, signal a period of time, ever holy, ever praiseworthy, but this devotion of ours is so antique that it goes back to the very moment when Adam sinned; that is why Jesus was called the *agnus occisus a constitutione mundi.* And it was because of this that we were given the means of reproducing, through the public press, the glories of this inestimable treasure of our souls. Along with the noble compositions of the Fathers of the Church for the understanding of the sacred text; and especially so, since in our days, generally speaking, this is not sufficiently known. However, the Lord will regenerate them in the hearts of people! Indeed, St.

Thomas says: Sanguis Christi clavis paradisi... St. John Chrysostom: Sanguis Christi salus animarum...bonum aurum Sanguis Christi. One should read the small work composed by the outstanding member of the Missionaries of the Archconfraternity, that is to say, the now-deceased bishop Monsignor Strambi who, in giving his final retreats to all the Roman clergy, had them meditate on this very devotion. One could consult with the present bishop of Assisi, well-known for his theological knowledge, or also the bishop of Nocera, not to mention others, and one will discover the interest that everyone should have in diffusing and spreading the glories of the Archconfraternity of the Divine Blood... glories that already are evident in the establishment of the Mission and Spiritual Retreat Houses under the direction of its Missionaries; they make available those means for fulfilling its objective... the glories that are evident in the many, many confraternities erected everywhere in the Catholic world, etc. etc. etc. How could it every have been possible for the very respectable bishops, among whom we include his Eminence Sevaroli, to give their consent to the diffusion of this good work if there had been the least disagreement with the principles or the practices of the Church? How could it be that the now-deceased Pontiff Pius VII should issue a number of briefs for the erection of that Archconfraternity, and the Congregation of Rites should recognize its title by the granting of privileges, in particular, to the Mission and Spiritual Retreat Houses where the clergy have been reclaimed for the apostolate, for pursuing studies, for attaining holiness? Even your Holiness himself, with the vision of the Chaplet for use by that same Archconfraternity, has increased its privileges through the organ of that same Congregation of rites, and, at the time when you were Cardinal Vicar of Rome, established the women of charity (under the direction of Butirroni) who had this same most august title. In these miserable times in which we live, one must point this out, how can the procedure of the Roman Curia be subjected to such derision? In fact, it is because of this that evil-doers are led to criticize other titles, thus multiplying the number of enemies, while supposing that they are doing something good by suppressing a title which is the glory of redemption. This is the language of truth, and it is a well-known fact that hell itself trembles at the very mention of "Divine Blood". Further, because of this confusion of mind, one is led to erroneously judge the good people who then disturb the peace of your Holiness' magnanimous heart. So, in view of the fact that there is nothing involved here which is contrary to good Catholic interpretation, why, then, now change something that has been canonically established? The Pontiffs Paul III and Paul IV, the Pontiff Gregory XIII and Pope Sixtus V (who confirmed it with a brief of May 8, 1586), were these not all men who, S. Maria in Vado, erected and promoted the same good work which is now being done by the confraternity erected there under the title of the Divine Blood and which presently has the most intimate connection with Archconfraternity?

Most blessed Father, these are the intrinsic reasons as well as arguments from the history of the Church . . . But using such a title would be a case of become overly familiar! This was the same difficulty proposed when the Company of Jesus, in particular, emerged. Was it to be given that name, the name of Jesus before which omne genuflectatur so that it would be on the lips of everyone and adored by all. And what was the answer given? The religious titles are all very praiseworthy. Any abuse of it would be due to the person who, through his own malice, would beget it, but the Church's intention is a holy one (so says Fr. Suarez in: De mysteriis vitae Jesu Christi) insofar as a distinct veneration is shown toward the sacrosanct mysteries of the Savior. No would it be a valid argument for one to say: There will be someone who will abuse this title, so let us get rid of it... Well, there will also be someone who, as a matter of fact, will do the same thing with the name of religion, so therefore... Oh my, to what consequence would this not lead? In keeping with the bases and principles explained, we have the establishment of Confraternities of the most holy Trinity, of the most Blessed Sacrament, etc. Finally, it would be good to point out that there is a mandatory that says: Alms for the Confraternity of

the most Blessed Sacrament, and so in ours too there should accordingly be a similar provision. But, transeat, with regard to this last remark which was produced only to relax the mind of your Beatitude. We conclude by saying that the adherence to basic principles, the observance of fundamentals, the welfare of our times, the glory given to the Redemption as well as the scorn that hell itself will receive, all demand that your Holiness, rather than derogating and removing this most august title, should be exultant with it and promote it throughout the entire Catholic World with a solemn decree, extending the use of the Mass and the Office of the Price of our Redemption. May what happened to Blessed Giacomo di Bevagna, with regard to the Divine Blood, encourage your soul to do what, in all humility, has been proposed to you for the pure glory of God.

XII, 82-83

June 1829

Pope Pius VIII

Once his deportation had been brought to an end in the year 1814, the Supreme Pontiff Pius VII, of happy memory, occupied himself immediately in sending out evangelical preachers for the sanctification of souls and the reform of the people. Already beforehand he had erected the Archconfraternity of the most Precious Blood of Jesus Christ in order to promote this sacred cult in compensation for the abuses made by sinners, particularly in our times; likewise, through it, to animate the faithful to offer up this inestimable price of our redemption to the divine eternal Father. In view of the fact that one of the purposes of the Archconfraternity was that of having our brother-priests dedicate themselves to the apostolic ministry of giving holy Missions and Retreats, that beloved Pontiff wished to make use of them for this project of God's greater glory, and through their services to promote also that most important devotion to the Divine Blood. Eventually, he recognized that it was of the highest advantage to establish residences in the various provinces so as to facilitate assistance to the bishops in the holy ministry of God, and, at the same time, to afford a sacred haven in those localities for anyone who would wish to make a Retreat. In this manner, he intended to offer to God a work of compensation. After having been a witness of the devastation to the sanctuary, he in this way, wanted to call back many priests to detach themselves from everything and everyone, while urging them to take up the apostolate for the holy glory of God. He did not wish to have an institute with vows since the society would be directed to the clergy and for the clergy. Likewise, it is not possible to estimate the advantage it has been for souls, despite the continuous attacks of the devil who is always prepared to cause confusion and tear down any sacred institution whatsoever.

Our first foundation was set up in S. Felice in Giano, a locale granted to us by pontifical rescript, as can be seen in the chancery of the archdiocese of Spoleto.

That foundation was also supported by the now-deceased Pope Leo XII on the occasion of his Brief for the installation of the Jesuit Fathers in Spoleto.

After the foundation in S. Felice in Giano in Umbria, another was made in Pievevitorina in the archdiocese of Camerino, and, since the locale was available to the archdiocese, it was granted to our

Institute, so that also the Marche, the exercise of the ministry would be facilitated.

Then, too, Pope Pius VII also founded the House of S. Paolo in Albano, as can be seen in the acta of that chancery. He extended it further to include the province of Marittima and Campagna with the hope of spreading the work of our Society in the interests of religion and the training of souls.

His Eminence Cardinal Spinucci, upon having a place available in Benevento, with an apostolic faculty, likewise wanted to diffuse throughout that city the Institute for giving Missions and Retreats which is under the direction of the Missionaries of the Archconfraternity of the most Precious Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ. One cannot describe the concern shown also by the present Archbishop, his Eminence Bussie as he continues to support the establishment of a foundation such as this. As a sign of his special attachment, he has selected our pro-tempore superior there as a Synodal Examiner for his priests. This can be read in the recent compendious synod directed by this beloved Eminence Bussi.

After the foundation in Benevento, the one in Rimini was set up. This was activated by the very distinctive zeal of Monsignor Marchetti, Archbishop of Ancira, and then followed through by the present bishop, Monsignor Zollo.

At the present time, negotiations are underway with other bishops for further foundations which will supply also for a lack of vocations to the solemn vows and will activate the local clergy to the apostolic life. One of these foundations is being considered now for Naples, and, there has been detailed interest expressed for the Isle of Malta. God is, indeed, stirring up interest in other places abroad.

Now, returning, more in detail, to the reign of Pope Leo XII, of holy memory, it was he who was very desirous of maintaining protection for our new Institute. He had already sent word to the now Cardinal Cristaldi but at that time the General Treasurer, that he should seek some locale in Rome to set up our Society there, and likewise, to arrange for the study of languages to be used in foreign missions, thus providing new support for the major concerns of his Pontificate. As a matter of fact, he sent one of our Missionaries to the island of Santa Maura, but this man was subsequently called by God to the eternal years, a victim of the sufferings encountered during that mission. He also had me write letters to the bishops within the State, to urge the clergy to take up the apostolic life, stressing the principle of not allowing indolence in so very, very many available men in comparison with the mean, many needs to countless dioceses; and, finally, in this way to draw them together again in the Church of Jesus Christ.

Among others, his Eminence Frasoni can relate to you how, upon his return as Nuncio to Portugal, the Holy Father brought to his attention the possibility of extending the Institute abroad, pointing out the lack of personnel in so many of the houses of Regulars, and how, in the seminaries that are constantly producing new members for the clergy, it would be possible to extract with great fruitfulness individuals to be workers in the foreign missions. He had many other plans in his mind for the betterment of our Institute; however, death called him away from us at the time when our hopeful ideas were in the best phase of development, and prevented the execution of his plans. At the beginning of his pontificate, it cannot be denied, he had been misinformed about our Society; but once the diabolical plots were recognized, he was to the very end of his life an indomitable supporter. He was very pleased to see the increase in the Institute of the number of young priests who constituted this new greenhouse of ours, and he was accustomed to say: "Train the young men for the Institute and we will make greater progress than ever in making the basics more secure".

Thus, now it is urgent that the one to whom the Lord has given the government of the Church should lend a helping hand to this Society which has been initiated and has continued its work up to this time; this, in order to see that it is completely set in order and firmly established, that etc.

We point out that the entire plan for this Institute was the work of the now-deceased Monsignor Francesco Albertini, bishop of Terracina, Sezze and Piperno, and Monsignor Strambi assisting with his counsel. (1)

(1) This is a copy of a Memorandum that was certainly sent to Pius VIII, who was elected to the papacy on March 31, 1829 and died on November 10, 1830. Therefore, it has been assigned to this period of time. In the text, however, there are indications that help to determine the date even better. Above all, the expositive tone of the Memorandum, which seeks to solicit a "helping hand to this Society that has been initiated and has continued its work up to this time" seems to be connected with the subsidy which the Papal State had been granting to the Mission Houses but was suspended for three months and then resumed in June 1829 (cfr. G. Merlini, o.c., 297). Consequently, we find ourselves at the opening years of the pontificate of Pius VIII, as can be deduced also from the words: "Thus, it is now urgent that the one to whom the Lord has given the government of the Church should lend a helping hand etc." Furthermore, in the Memorandum it says that "correspondence with Naples is presently underway" for the foundation of a Mission House there. This correspondence, which was preceded by investigations which had been initiated already in 1828, was formalized in April of 1829. (cfr. Vol. Istanze de Foundazioni)

XII, 69-72

March 1831

Pope Gregory XVI

Justificati in Sanguine ipsius salvi erimus ab ira per ipsum

SUMMARY (1)

of everything that pertains to the pious Institute of Mission or Retreat Houses under the direction of the Missionaries enrolled in the venerable Archconfraternity of the most Precious Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, canonically erected by Pope Pius VII.

PREFACE

In the upheaval of our times, times which God has been pleased to reserve for us, and in the need for reform of the people, the Lord, rich in mercy, has willed to bring forth a powerful means to be used in setting up a rampart against the torrent of iniquities and to provide us, at the same time, with means that are salutary for attaining eternal salvation through the sanctification and the spiritual cultivation of souls. Therefore, in his Providence, he presented to the Roman Pontiff, Pius VII, of holy memory, the plan

for instituting Mission and Retreat Houses in order that through these two weapons of apostolic ministry, a way could be waged against sin. As well as to lead back to the Heart of Jesus all those who had strayed.

The Holy Father then selected as his norm the one set down by Benedict XIV for promoting the Archconfraternity of Christian Doctrine which served at that time, as it still does, to encourage the clergy and the people to a revival of giving instruction, something most necessary for knowledge and observance of the holy laws of God.

We are presently, living in times in which there is urgent need for stimulating the clergy and the people to the yearned-for reform. The freethinkers, not all in love with the Catholic religion, are waging a most decisive type of warfare against the Crucifix; and, they would like to see everyone become victims of justice through a multiplication of vices and sins. Consequently, it is urgent that zeal for the glory of God, like a spreading fire, must burn in a holy fashion within every soul, and, by calling attention to the glories of the Crucified One, to open the fountains of mercy, thanks to the application of the merits of the Divine Blood which is the thing that will fully placate the justice of the divine, eternal Father: "Pacifians per Sanguinem Crucis ejus, sive quae in caelis, sive quae in terris sunt...Ipsi vicerunt draconem propter Sanguinem Agni".

Having these basic principles in mind, his Holiness was pleased to erect the Archconfraternity under the august title of the Divine Blood, together with the invocation to most holy Mary, Help of Christians; and, as its special protector, he selected the Apostle of the Indies, St. Francis Xavier, so as to provide an exemplar who would stir one from any feelings of languor, who would urge one to the doing of good work, who would encourage one in the face of difficulties and point out, furthermore, the quickest way of promoting the great glory of God and the sanctification of souls.

Therefore, one can easily note what his plans for the future were and how very well directed they were for the verification of the Apostle's words: "Justificati in Sanguine ipsius salvi erimus ab ira per ipsum".

In addition, the Holy Father wanted the priests, as the primary members of the Archconfraternity, living together in community life after the pattern of the Filippini Fathers, but with a different extension of objectives, to constitute, in the urgent situation of the times, a supporting force for the Catholic religion, reviving in these ministers of the sanctuary, decorum, good example, holiness and study. It was to be similar to the practice of ancient discipline in the Church, emphasizing strongly the idea of the priests living in union. Aligning himself with this same attitude was St. Charles Borromeo when he founded his Oblates. This is likewise true of St. Philip Neri as he instituted his congregation.

It is not necessary here to go into details about how useful this Institute has been in the various Provinces, especially in making it easier for bishops to provide the salutary practice of having Missions, Retreats and other pious works in their respective dioceses; for Pastors who see promoted among their flocks a perennial training in religion; for the clergy themselves, stimulating them to a greater dedication to the apostolate, along with a new growth which training in morality affords in the sacred cloisters; in the development of holy vocations to the religious life of vows. The practical experience which has been realized through this continuous exercise of the ministry confirms these truths.

Finally, adding just a few more things to this preface, it is to be noted that in carrying out these apostolic works of the ministry, we seek to give a cult of compensation to the mysteries of our redemption, so greatly abused by sinners. We wish to awaken in their souls the great idea of the inestimable price of our eternal salvation... Redemisti in Sanguine...Empti enim estis praetio magno. Those who have gone astray are encouraged to have hope for the pardon of the faults that they have committed, since Christus dilexit nos, et lavit nos Sanguine suo...quae utilitas in sanguine meo? And, finally, this is an opportunity for helping them take notice of the motives which caused a St. Bernard (Ep. 7) to exclaim: Sanguis Christi ut tuba clamat; and a St. Thomas Upusc. 158) to say: Sanguis Christi Clavis Paradisi.

St. Catherine of Siena, during the schism of her time, received the inspiration from the Lord that on this devotion depended peace within the Church.

Though overlooking many other things... there are the documents pertinent to the Office of the Mass of the Divine Blood which urge us to cherish it deeply within our hearts, but at the same time indicate how much of our holy Mother Church is concerned about the special cult addressed to the price of our redemption: Christus dilexit ecclesiam, tradidit semetipsum pro ea, acquisivit Sanguine Suo.. one should read the little work written by the now-deceased Monsignor Strambi, outstanding supporter of our Institute and our devotion, so humbly presented in these pages. Likewise, one should check the catalog of indulgences granted by Pope Gregory XIII, confirmed and augmented by Pope Sixtus V in behalf of the Confraternity of the most Precious Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, erected in the church of the Canons Regular of S. Maria del Vado in Ferrara (v.f.n.1).

Then, Pope Leo XII, in addition to what he expresses in his Brief (v.f.n.2) on the occasion of the installation of the Jesuit Fathers in Spoleto, speaking incidentally of our House in S. Felice in Giano, and aware of the various confraternities erected under our title, granted through the Sacred Congregation of Rites the faculty of a solemn Mass of the Divine Blood on the first Sunday in July (v.f.n.3). Already when he was the Cardinal Vicar he had canonically erected in the church of Beata Vergine Maria del Buon Consiglio in Rome, the pious union of sisters visitators of the sick under the title of the Divine Blood (v.f.n.4 and n.5).

As a final reflection, note how Vincenzo, Duke of Mantova, erected as an equestrian order in the year 1608, the union of Cavaliers under the title of the Divine Blood. That order was later approved by Paul V as can be seen in the work "Catalogus ordinum equestrium in imaginibus expositus a P. Philippo Bonanni Societatis Jesu, oblati Clementi XI".

HISTORICAL NOTES ABOUT OUR FOUNDATIONS

The first foundation was the one of S. Felice in Giano in the Archdiocese of Spoleto.

The second was in the Province of the Marche, and precisely in Pievetorina, diocese of the archbishopric of Camerino.

There followed, progressively, the Houses in the Province of Marittima e Campagna, then the ones in Benevento, in Albano. Finally, the now-deceased Monsignor Marchetti, archbishop of Ancira, at the time when he was administrator in Rimini, began our foundation in Rimini.

Other foundations are still pending, such as the one in the city of Veroli, and especially in the Kingdom of Naples, where negotiations were initiated by Pope Leo XII. However, because of disturbances of the times, they have been suspended up to now. What is certain, however, is that the administration in Naples has made it known that wherever the communes have the funds for activating a foundation such as this, the court would be agreeable to its being done.

The above-mentioned Pope Leo XII ordered that a circular letter be sent out by the bishops in the Papal State, urging the clergy to promote the most rapid propagation of our Institute. He intended to grant us an ample location in Rome, once his other ideas were carried out, where the study of foreign languages would be especially promoted so that workers could then be sent out into the foreign missions. However, while all of this was being negotiated, the Lord called him back to himself.

This oft-mentioned Pope knew that Pope Pius VII had given the Institute the locale and the church of S. Clemente in Rome, which later on this aforementioned Pope Leo XII, while promising to provide another suitable place of the Institute, granted it to the Dominican Fathers who were in S. Maria della Pace.

At the present time, we have the hospice of Buon Consiglio, bearing the burden of a Canon of the Archconfraternity of Christian Doctrine, trusting that the Lord will improve the economical circumstances so as to ameliorate the temporal situation of the Institute.

It would be good here to point out that the places that have been assigned to the Institute are convents that have been renounced by Regulars and are legitimately possessed since the Institute has been granted them by the Holy See. Only the locale in Frosinone presents a housing now being converted from a convent; one cannot imagine the type and number of expenditures. yet, even in this establishment, Pope Leo XII's intentions have been adhered to.

GOVERNMENT IN THE INSTITUTE

1. There is in every House a Missionary with the title of President, overseeing the observance of the rule, and this man is one of the older members in the Institute. Without actually having the government of the House, he only watches carefully that everything proceeds in due fashion. All of the individuals hold a particular deference to him. The President supplies when there is a vacancy in some office in the community until another member has been assigned. He directs the association for priests, the so-called association of the Apostles. This consists in having a meeting of those priests who wish to have a monthly spiritual conference as well as take part in the apostolic ministries after the pattern of the Union of S. Paolo in Rome, thus providing instructions in prisons, military bases, congregations. When one of the members of the community becomes ill, the President, with the warmest charity, is the principal one to see to the provision of care in whatever may be necessary for that sick person. On the occasion of death, with singular zeal, he is to promote and procure suffrages for the deceased member.

2. There is the Local Superior whose duty it is to see to giving the bell-signals for the daily schedule as well as the fulfillment of community tasks. He has particular care of the Lay Brothers who help in the temporalities of the Institute. With appropriate instructions, he strives to encourage them in the doing of good works, in seeking evangelical perfection. he is also in charge of the sisters of charity who look

after the poor who are sick as well as other urgent cases.

3. There is a Vice-Superior who supplies in the absence of the Superior. He is responsible for the archives and library. he records the minutes of the community congressi and is the director of the association of the children of Mary. This consists of giving a monthly conference in the schools for girls which are conducted by the Maestre in the church, or carried out, depending on the different locales, in accordance with the directives of the bishops.

4. There is a Director of Missions whose duty it is to handle the correspondence dealing with that branch of the ministry. He also directs the men of the Oratory of St. Francis Xavier, following the method of the Oratorio del Padre Caravita in Rome.

5. There is Director of Retreats for anyone applying for a Retreat. He adheres to the usual method laid down by St. Ignatius Loyola in the giving of the Retreat. He is in charge of the association of S. Luigi of feastdays and during vacations in order to provide moral instructions to the young boys.

6. There is the Prefect of the church and the sacristy. He presides over the sacred rites and ceremonies. He, too, works with the association of S. Luigi.

7. There is the Economist who handles temporal matters. This man, likewise, assists in the association of S. Luigi Gonzaga.

On the occasion of giving a Mission, one House comes to the help of the other, depending on how close they are to each other. The Missionaries who are not scheduled for Missions or those who during that year have been relieved of any office or burden, supply by taking care of the chores in the community. When the President in charge of the observance of the rule is not there, the one who is next in precedence supplies.

Every month and even more often, there is to be a Congressus of the community in which they discuss whatever is needed for the efficient execution of things. In case there are doubts, recourse is to be had with the Director General of the Institute.

With these pages we intend only to give a general picture of the Institute, reserving any further clarifications that may be needed or requested. The substantial picture (which is the matter of interest here) is completely described and identified, as can also be noted from the following.

Each Mission House maintains complete correspondence with the primary House in Rome (which, for the time being is in Albano since in Rome we have only that hospice which is considered united to the family in Albano).

Every year a summary of the most important events in the ministry are sent in for the Cronaca and are recorded in the archives, verifying the text *ecce quam bonum, et quam jucundum habitare fratres in unum*. That communication is urgent for making necessary changes either in the speakers or in the change of climate, as well as to cooperate, a suo tempo, in spreading the glory of the Lord even into foreign lands.

(Pope Leo XII, through the Propaganda, made use of one of our men to give Missions, precisely to the island of S. Maura. That member has recently been called by God to eternity).

The Institute is immediately subject to the Holy See and to the respective bishops, following the norm observed by the Filippini Fathers.

The Director General, either himself or through another Missionary of his selection, visits the Mission Houses each year as to always maintain through this communication that holy harmony which is the very soul of the ministry, as well as to provide, in due fashion, the things that are needed of their respective contentment.

When his office is vacant, in the meantime, the President of the House in Rome (for now the one is Albano) will fill in.

Meanwhile, each house makes its choices for the new election. The vote is decided from the container by secret ballot; the paper is then signed by each individual in that community. Those documents then are opened in the presence of all the members in the primary Houses, having included their own choice, and a majority in the votes is to be sought. If the voting comes out even, the President, who has in the meanwhile filled in, gives the decisive vote. If the President himself is involved in an even vote, the individual next in the line of responsibility has the decisive vote.

Any member of the clergy who wishes to dedicate himself to the Institute is required to produce his qualifications to the primary House; the most accurate information about that person is to be gotten from the respective dioceses and bishops. He will undergo a period of experimentation for one year of probation to allow him time to make a better deliberation. Each individual will have to renounce whatever upright career he has and be content to live a life in community and apostolic work. Upon his death, he will be master of making his last will and testament, disposing of whatever he may have owned *de proprio*, just as he was master of them when alive.

THE MISSIONARY'S METHOD OF LIFE

When the alarm rings in the morning, he is to apply himself in his own room to private mental prayer. Later, each in turn will celebrate the first Mass, while another of the Missionaries recites with the people the Chaplet of the Divine Blood. Then, the other Masses will be said.

Continuous silence is to be observed and, when necessary (except during recreation time) he should speak *submissa voce*, and with *pauca verba*. Since the community members are responsible for the retreatants, it is required that this regulation be observed, but also for other reasons.

On Fridays and feastsdays, the confessional is a common responsibility; on ferial days, each man will assist in turn. The men are to be taken care during free hours, inasmuch as possible. At a time which is to be determined in Congressus, there are to be days for study-conferences, alternating days for Dogma, Moral, and Sacred Scripture. On Fridays, however, Liturgy and Asceticism are the topics. Any member of the clergy, situated within our respective locales, who wishes to attend, is not to be forbidden.

Never should any member go out alone, but always with a priest-companion or a lay Brother; never

is a member to go to dinner outside the House, nor visit private houses, except in the case of having to hear the confession of a sick person. Thus, solitary roads should be selected when taking a walk for a bit of relaxation, etc. (see folio n. 6).

Fifteen minutes before noon, the bell for the examination of conscience rings and each one will review how he has spent the morning. At noon, at the sound of the bell, he is to proceed to the chapel for the Angelus Domini and then to the dining room where, each in turn, does the spiritual reading which is never to be omitted.

After the noon meal, there is the recreation period after which the bell is rung for a period of rest, and he is to go, in silence, to his room. At another signal, each is to attend to his respective tasks in keeping with the schedule of the day, either for visits to the hospital or for travelling etc.

At night, he is to be present for the Oratory of the men, following the method set up by the Oratory of Father Caravita in Rome.

Before supper, there is a meditation in common for the community. During supper, there is likewise to be reading. After a period of recreation, he is to go to chapel for an examination of conscience and the customary prayers.

For Missions, the system of the Jesuit Fathers, recently published in Rome, is to be used.

Whoever wishes to make a temporal donation to the benefit of the Mission Houses may do so, but never to individual members. Likewise, during Missions, gifts are not to be accepted, not even alms for Masses.

SACRED FUNCTIONS WHICH THE INSTITUTE PROMOTES

The sacred functions of each day have been described above. The weekly functions are the following: On Thursdays, the adoration of the most Blessed Sacrament in memory of the institution of that divine mystery. Each Missionary, in turn, is asked to direct this tender exercise. On Fridays, there is the public Via Crucis. On Saturdays, an example from the life of most holy Mary is presented. On Sundays, there is the urban Mission. Thus, it is that our churches offer the idea of a continuous urban Mission, providing a continual and shared cultivation of the people. This ministration is of such an importance that it is a special grace of the Lord who has called us to it.

Every month, spiritual conferences are to be held for the various groups and congregations on the days that are determined by the Congressus of the community, as well as the day of recollection in preparation for a happy death, together with a general communion in the church.

Every year, public retreats are made available for the people, just as our community itself makes its Retreat during the Novena in preparation for the feast of St. Francis Xavier. At the time, no other assignment in the ministry is made, except for the holy Mass and the Office. *Attende tibi.*

Anything else pertinent to the apostolic ministry can easily be deduced from the basic principles established.

ECCLESIASTICAL HOUSE FOR THEOLOGICAL STUDIES FOR YOUNG MEN
WHO ARE DEDICATING THEMSELVES TO THE MINISTRY
OF GIVING MISSIONS

Pope Leo XII wished to have us activate in some of our Houses, ecclesiastical Houses of study for young men who both in age and in their studies are being called to the ministry of giving Missions.

The spiritual regulations are substantially those drawn up by St. Charles Borromeo for this Oblates. The regulations governing the studies present the following method: Both in Dogma and Moral a distinction is made as to what is theoretical, either from unshakable principles or from the decisions made by the Church, which reproves error and classifies the different propositions in just accordance with what sacred theology manifests. An historical reference is made to other opinions, adducing the reasons for them hinc inde, so that the young men will come from these courses of study with an exact understanding of the ideas as well as with a level sense of judgment.

In the field of oratory, the young men are given training in the basics of preaching, following the pattern that is so laudably practiced by other sacred Institutes and especially by the Fathers of the Company of Jesus.

This Institute was promoted by the now-deceased Monsignor Albertini, bishop of Terracina, Sezze and Piperno, a very close associate of Pius VII, and one who died a saintly death. The basic notions of our Society date back to this man.

One who cooperated very much in this effort is the present bishop of Norcia, Monsignor Gaetano Bonanni, who was the first Superior of our house in S. Felice in Giano and who worked with distinctive zeal to establish its basic plans from the very beginning. Monsignor Strambi, of holy memory, was one of its outstanding supporters and the Institute is deeply indebted to him for the indefatigable concern that this holy prelate showed. Monsignor Marchetti, archbishop of Ancira, once he had learned about our Society in Rome, founded a Mission and Retreat House in Rimini at the time that he was administrator of the church there. He displayed the most tender affection of our Society just as did the now-deceased Cardinal Cristaldi who, in his last will and testament, left some Missions to be carried out in the Abbacy of Farfa and that of San Salvatore. He named our Institute for the execution of those Missions.

In our Houses, we observe the clausura, following the pattern of Regulars and also like the Regulars we have the Common Roman Calendar for all our Missionaries through a privilege granted by Pope Pius VII.

God has begun this Society, ipse perficiet, consolidabitque. That our Institute was born among thorns, and among thorns has been spread abroad, is a sign that this Society is the Lord's. Signa Apostolatus in multa patientia.

By the grace of the Lord, the workers have shown their vocation decisively, especially by exposing their very lives to danger in the past battles with brigandry in the Province of Marittima and Compagna.

As for anything further dealing with the ministry, we can draw up a listing of the Missions that have been given up to now, but always keeping in mind this text: *Cum Feceritis haec omnia, dicite: servi inutiles sumus*".

The glory of God, the welfare of souls, the desire of the bishops and the people of our Institute, the urgencies of the time, and seeing priests detached from their families and every other external attraction, applying themselves totally to apostolic work in answer to the continual requests made by pastors, while still remaining lovers of withdrawal, of study, of prayer, all of these reasons form the total beautiful design of this picture which, through the Providence of God, is being presented today. May prayer and honor be given to him. Amen.

NOTES

(1) This is a rough copy of a memorandum presented to a Pope. An annotation of Fr. Giovanni Merlini says: "It speaks of the foundation in S. Salvatore e Farfa, left behind by Cristaldi. so, this memorandum was given to Gregory XVI". Cfr. also G. Merlini, o.c., 297, 512-513. But when was this Summary given to Gregory XVI? This will be known with certainty when the original one given to the Pope is found. For now, we must be content to assign a tentative date, drawn from the following arguments.

Gregory XVI was elected Pope on February 2, 1831. Herein St. Gaspar, in speaking of the foundations that were already made, stops with the House in Rimini which was opened on August 14, 1824. He says nothing at all about the following one set up in Nepi. The rescript granted for that is dated August 31, 1831 and the House was opened on November 10, 1831. Consequently, this memorandum is certainly prior to August of 1831. in the "Summary" mention is made of the now-deceased cardinal Cristaldi, who died on February 25, 1831. Furthermore, it is known that towards the middle of April of 1831, Carindla Odescalchi, upon St. Gaspar's request, spoke to Gregory XVI about the Congregation of the Missionaries of the Most Precious Blood and the Pope expressed his lack of esteem for them (cfr. G. Merlini, o.c., 277-278). It does not appear that this memorandum, with its expositive and serene tone, lacking the air of defense evident in the one to Leo XII (cfr. Epistolario III, nn. 1214-1216), was presented to Gregory XVI after the middle of April of 1831. Therefore, we maintain that this Summary should be tentatively assigned to the month of March of 1831, and more precisely to a time between the death of Cristaldi (February 25, 1831) and the meeting between Cardinal Odescalchi and Gregory XVI (Circa April 12, 1831).

(2) A couple of lines here have been crossed out; in them he mentions the sending of a member to the Institute into the foreign Missions, to the island of S. Maura.