St. Anthony Mary Claret

PASTORAL LETTER ON THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION

Carta pastoral sobre la Inmaculada Concepción

From the Spanish of the first edition (Santiago de Cuba, 1855)

English translation

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About this translation

Translated from the *Carta pastoral* on the Immaculate Conception (Santiago de Cuba, 16 July 1855). The translation is complete.

The notes give the references to Claret's sources and the notes he printed himself; the modern editors' commentary and the translator's own remarks are not reproduced.

Pastoral Letter on the Immaculate Conception (1855)

Title page of the 1855 edition

Pastoral Letter which the Most Excellent and Most Illustrious Lord Archbishop of Cuba, Primate of the Indies, Prelate Grand Cross of the American Order of Isabella the Catholic, of Her Majesty's Council, etc., addresses to his beloved diocesans on the occasion of the declaration as a dogma of faith of the mystery of the Immaculate Conception of the Most Holy Virgin Mary by our Most Holy Father Pius IX. Santiago de Cuba: Imprenta de Casañas, Calle de San Germán, 1855.

The Pastoral Letter

We, Don Antonio María Claret y Clará, by the grace of God and of the Holy Apostolic See Archbishop of Cuba, Primate of the Indies, Prelate Grand Cross of the Royal American Order of Isabella the Catholic, of Her Majesty's Council, etc.

To the venerable Dean and Chapter of our holy Primatial Church, to the vicars forane, parish priests, clergy and faithful of our diocese, health, peace and blessing in our Lord Jesus Christ.

> *The Lord God said to the serpent: "Because you have done this, cursed are you among all the animals and beasts of the earth; upon your breast you shall crawl, and earth you shall eat all the days of your life. I will put enmities between you and the woman, and between your race and her offspring; she shall crush your head." (Gen 3:14–15.)*

The Pastoral Letter

I. Introduction

1. The happy day has come at last, most beloved brothers and dearest children in Jesus Christ![1] The blessed hour has struck in which our Most Holy Father Pius IX, organ of the voice of God Himself, has pronounced and declared as a dogma of faith the mystery of the immaculate conception of Most Holy Mary. Do not doubt it; the bull of the declaration has just reached our hands. Let us all rejoice in the Lord,[2] and bless the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Let us praise Him and exalt Him for ever and ever.[3]

2. With the deepest respect and tender love let us congratulate our loving Mother Mary, let us all give her our felicitations, and let us say to her with the most fervent devotion: Hail, immaculate Mary, Daughter of God the Father. Hail, immaculate Mary, Mother of God the Son. Hail, immaculate Mary, Spouse of God the Holy Spirit. Hail, immaculate Mary, Mother and Advocate of poor sinners. Blessed are you among all women.[4] You are the glory of Jerusalem, the joy of Israel and the honour of our people.[5] You are the refuge of the helpless, the consolation of the afflicted and the guiding star \[*el norte*: the north, the pole star\] of seafarers. You are the health of the sick, the encouragement of the dying and the gate of heaven. You are, after Jesus, the blessed fruit of your womb,[6] all our hope, O clement, O loving, O sweet Virgin and immaculate Mary!

3. God, beloved brothers, has exalted Mary and has given her a name which, after that of Jesus, is above every name, so that at the name of immaculate Mary every knee should bow in heaven, on earth and in hell, and every tongue confess that Mary was conceived without stain of original sin,[7] that Mary is Virgin and Mother of God, and that Mary is in body and soul in the glory of heaven, crowned by the Most Holy Trinity as queen of heaven and earth and advocate of sinners.[8]

4. You have known very well, beloved brothers, the confidence we cherished in our heart that we would at last see fulfilled our desire that the mystery of the immaculate conception of Most Holy Mary be declared a dogma of faith, a mystery of such honour for her and such consolation for her devotees. When we saw the crowds in the churches to gain the indulgence in the form of a jubilee that our Most Holy Father Pius IX granted for this purpose on the first of August of last year, and which we were so glad to communicate to you by our pastoral letter of 25 January of this year; when we saw the frequency and devotion with which you approached to receive the holy sacraments of penance and communion, not only to gain the plenary indulgence but also to beg from heaven this honour so desired by Mary's true devotees; and, finally, when we saw your fervour and perseverance in prayer to obtain this grace the sooner, full of firm confidence we said: Yes, we shall see it. God will not turn a deaf ear to these fervent prayers; we shall not die without seeing our desires fulfilled.

And so it has been fulfilled, beloved brothers, because we now have in our hands the bull declaring the dogma of faith. The mystery of the immaculate conception of Most Holy Mary, our dear Mother, is a Catholic truth.

5. Now it does not grieve us to die. Yes, beloved brothers, we will gladly die at whatever hour the Lord deigns to dispose of us, for our eyes have now seen what we so longed for.[9] Even more, we desire to loose the chain of this body that binds us here to earth, so as to be able to rise to heaven and be with the Mother of Jesus Christ, who is also our mother, and to be able to congratulate her in person.[10]

But since it is not yet given to us to leave this exile, we will turn this valley of tears into a field of joy to celebrate Mary's feasts; and since we cannot yet celebrate her in person and face to face, we will do so before her image.

So that your homage may be more solid and true, we will give you a brief explanation of the principal reasons for this solemnity.

[1] *Revista Católica* 26 \[1855\] 516.

[2] Cf. Rev 19:7.

[3] Dan 3:57–88.

[4] Lk 1:42.

[5] Jdt 15:9.

[6] Cf. Lk 1:42.

[7] Cf. Phil 2:9–11.

[8] *Apuntes para el régimen de la diócesis* \[Madrid ²1865\] pp. 191–192. It has also been published by Goñi Gaztambide, J., *Epistolario de Pío IX con Isabel II de España*: *Archivum Historiae Pontificiae* 4 (1966) 304.

[9] Cf. Lk 2:30.

[10] Cf. Phil 1:23.

II. Doctrinal Exposition

1. The Immaculate Conception is a most glorious feast of Our Lady

6. Among all the feasts the Church celebrates in honour of the Most Holy Virgin Mary, none is so glorious as that of the Immaculate Conception. In it we recall that first instant in which the Most Holy Virgin began to have being and found herself, by a special grace, perfectly beautiful in the eyes of God, her Creator, who, having formed her as the most finished and perfect work of His omnipotence, and having at the same time filled her with all gifts more liberally than all other creatures, recognized in her an object worthy of His love and of His sweetest delight.

7. This first moment, so shameful and so fatal for all men, since all begin to be children of wrath from the moment they begin to live (slaves of the devil as soon as they are men, objects of God's hatred as soon as they come forth from nothing), this moment is in Mary the beginning and source of all the blessings God can, it seems, pour out on a mere creature. This moment, so unfavourable for all men, is a moment of great glory for Mary, who appears as Daughter of the Most High, heiress of heaven, worthy Spouse of the Holy Spirit, precious object of God's love, while all the children of Adam are, in the same situation, slaves of the devil, heirs of hell and victims of divine justice.

8. But just as shipwrecked men, swimming against the waves and unable, despite all their efforts and exhaustion, to escape the jaws of death, when they make out far off a rescuing boat sailing towards them with a following wind, majestically ploughing the seas, oh, how their spirits rise, how they make for it, how they shout! So do the unhappy children of Adam, shipwrecked in the stormy sea of sin, who do not wish to be lost, the poor things struggling in vain: if they see Mary floating like a boat, driven by the Holy Spirit to help her brothers, naturally, and as if by the instinct of their own salvation, they hasten to her, they call out to her and say: *Ave María purísima, sin pecado* (or *en gracia*) *concebida* \[Hail Mary most pure, conceived without sin (or in grace)\]. So they greet her, so they invoke her, so they often praise and honour her.

2. The content of the greeting "Ave María purísima"

9. This praise that the faithful give her, which forms Mary's most honourable blazon \[*blasón*: coat of arms, title of honour\], contains two things. The thing they attribute to her is expressed in the word "most pure." So that you may understand this doctrine well, beloved brothers, it should be noted that there are two kinds of purity: one positive and the other negative. Positive purity consists in charity and the other virtues, and it is not our intention to treat it here, though we could say a very great deal. Negative purity consists in being free of all fault and sin; and this purity is supreme in Mary, because from the first instant of her physical being she was kept utterly far from all sin, and she herself fled with the greatest care from all personal sin throughout her life. That is why she was called fair as the moon and chosen as the sun,[1] to teach us that in

positive holiness the Virgin is distinguished from her Son as the moon is distinguished from the sun;[2] that is, that her beauty, though ineffable, was incomparably less in her than in Jesus Christ, the Sun of justice;[3] and, besides this, because it was not an innate beauty but one shared from her divine Sun; which is why St. John saw her clothed with the Sun;[4] and it is well known that clothing serves to cover the naked, to keep warm and to adorn. On the other hand, in negative purity the Virgin is beautiful as the sun is; because, preserved from all fault, she imitated her Son exactly in innocence, possessing, as He did, a total exemption from every stain, although in a different manner and for a different reason. In this way is fulfilled the oracle of Isaiah, who says that in the heaven of the Church the light of the moon will be like the light of the sun,[5] because sin had no part in either, neither in Jesus Christ nor in His most holy Mother.

10. Having explained, beloved brothers, the first part of Mary's blazon with which her devotees praise her, which is *Ave María purísima*, now comes the second, which is: conceived in grace, or conceived without sin. It is true that the holy Scriptures do not explicitly affirm that so singular a privilege was granted to Mary; but it is also certain that both the Old and the New Testament say enough to let it be clearly deduced. Indeed, what else does God mean to give us to understand when, cursing Satan, figured in the serpent that had led Eve and Adam into sin, He pronounced those remarkable words: She shall crush your head, *Ipsa conteret caput tuum*?[6] What else did God mean to indicate by such words but precisely that Mary would never be subject to his dominion? And, as St. Augustine says,[7] original sin is like the head of the infernal serpent, because this sin is the fatal beginning by which the devil makes himself master of man.

3. Reasons from Scripture that prove the privilege

11. Since Mary was preserved from the bite of this serpent in her immaculate conception by a prevenient grace, it was properly at this moment that she crushed his head; and this signal privilege made her say: My enemy shall not rejoice over me, *Non gaudebit inimicus meus super me*.[1]

12. In the New Testament we have another very great proof in favour of this truth, for St. Luke assures us in the first chapter, verse 28, that the angel said to Mary: *Ave, gratia plena*.[2] He calls Mary full of grace in intensity and extension, so that Mary was not for any space of time empty of grace, but was always full of grace.[3]

13. In the Greek text we read *kecharit■men■*, which means not only full of grace but conceived in grace. So Origen explains it, who studies and speaks Greek so perfectly, and he adds: "I do not remember having found this word elsewhere in Sacred Scripture; this salutation has not been addressed to any man; it has been reserved for Mary alone."[4] Jeremiah and the Baptist were sanctified before birth, but they were not preserved as Mary was, and Mary alone, because she was created and destined to be Mother of God made man.

14. Announced by so many figures by the holy patriarchs and prophets, Mary was called the dawn,[5] because just as the dawn comes forth from the darkness and goes on showing its light until it brings the sun to the horizon by the hand, so, and much more, Mary, from the midst of the general darkness of original sin, appeared shining with the light of grace and brought us the Sun of justice, Christ our Lord.[6] Mary is beautiful as the morning star.[7] Mary was prefigured in Jacob's ladder, for just as it reached from earth to heaven, and at the top God rested and the angels went down and up by it,[8] so Mary, by grace and privileges, reaches from earth to heaven; in Mary God rests; through Mary graces come down to us from heaven, and through Mary our petitions go up to heaven. Mary is that house which the eternal Wisdom built for itself, in which it set seven pillars,[9] which are the three theological virtues and the four cardinal moral virtues. She is the ark of sanctification,[10] the throne of God;[11] she is the holy Jerusalem,[12] the pure dove[13] and the delight of God Himself.[14] Mary is the mystical fountain of paradise,[15] Noah's ark,[16] the ark of the covenant of the law of grace,[17] the rod of Aaron for priests,[18] the rod of Moses for rulers[19] and the rod of Jesse for good souls.[20] Mary is the tower of David, in which there is an abundance of shields for defence;[21] she is the temple of Solomon[22] and the ivory throne,[23] where one prays and from where the petitions made to God are

dispatched.

15. Mary, in the first instant of her immaculate conception, stood out from the children of Adam more than the cedar of Lebanon,[24] the cypress of Zion,[25] the palm of Cades,[26] the leafy olive of the fields, the plane tree well watered by the streams and the most fragrant myrrh stand out among the other trees.[27]

16. Mary, from the first instant of her conception, is all beautiful; in her there is no stain at all; she is beautiful in body, beautiful in soul, beautiful in thoughts, and the friend of God by grace. Mary is the holy city of God, of crystal transparent by her purity and of the finest gold by her charity; she is built on the twelve foundations of precious stones that are the virtues; adorned by God to be His dear daughter, His beloved Spouse and the tender mother of the Lamb, and so she has the brightness of God.[28] This holy Marian city has twelve gates: three gates to the east, three gates to the north, three gates to the south and three gates to the west,[29] so that Mary receives people from every side. So much does she desire the salvation of all that she herself lets us know that he who finds her will find life and will obtain salvation from the Lord.[30] And St. John assures us that the nations will walk by her light and the kings of the earth will bring their honour and glory into her.[31] From the birth of the Church there has been no century in which the immaculate conception of the Mother of God has not been the object of its veneration and worship. Churchmen and lay people, kings and subjects, the learned and the ignorant, people of honour have been guided by this light of Mary; their favourite devotion has been the immaculate conception of Mary.[32]

4. Tradition in favour of the Immaculate Conception

17. In the first century we see St. James, St. Mark and St. Andrew in their liturgies, and especially in that of St. James the Less Most Holy Mary is called immaculate. And St. Andrew says: Just as the first Adam was formed from the earth before it was cursed, so the second Adam was formed from the virgin earth, which was never cursed. In the first centuries of the Church very little is found written about the immaculate conception of Most Holy Mary, and the reason is that those holy Fathers did not take much trouble to speak of a privilege that was already supposed to be known and believed in favour of her who was singularly chosen as Mother of Jesus, who came to take away the sins of the world.[1] And they were persuaded that He who after death wished to have a new tomb in order to rise from it[2] had likewise chosen a new womb, not contaminated by the old Adam, in which to be born. Nevertheless writers are not lacking; thus in the second century we have St. Irenaeus,[3] St. Justin Martyr,[4] St. Hippolytus[5] and St. Cyprian. In the third, St. Gregory Thaumaturgus,[6] St. Dionysius of Alexandria and Origen. The Virgin Mary, says Origen, is worthy of the Worthy One, immaculate of the Immaculate One, one of the One, unique of the Unique One.[7]

18. In the fourth century, St. Athanasius, St. Ambrose[8] and St. Amphilochius,[9] all of whom speak of the Most Holy Virgin as free of every stain of sin by a special grace.

In the fifth century we have St. Augustine,[10] St. Jerome,[11] St. Maximus of Turin[12] and Theodoret.

In the sixth century, St. Fulgentius[13] and St. Sabas, author of an office in honour of the immaculate conception of Mary.

19. In the seventh century, St. Isidore,[14] Sophronius, patriarch of Jerusalem,[15] and the Sixth General Council held at Constantinople, which received with applause the letter of this patriarch, who calls Mary immaculate and free of all contagion of sin.[16]

20. In the eighth, Abbot Radbertus, Raymond Jordan, St. John Damascene[17] and the Second General Council of Nicaea, which calls the Most Holy Virgin purer than all sensible and intellectual nature, that is, purer than the angels themselves, who were never stained with the least sin, original or actual.

21. In the ninth century, Theophanes[18] and the very ancient Greek Menaea, which are ecclesiastical books for the use of the Greeks, in which the devotion they had to the immaculate conception of Most Holy Mary is

very clearly marked. In them we read these words: By a singular providence God made the sacred Virgin, from the beginning of her life, as pure as befitted her who was to be worthy of so great a good, that is, of Christ.

22. In the tenth century, St. Fulbert,[19] St. Anselm,[20] St. Peter Damian[21] and St. Bruno, founder of the Carthusians.[22] In the eleventh, Blessed Ivo of Chartres.[23] In the twelfth, St. Bernard.[24] In the thirteenth, St. Anthony of Padua, St. Albert, Alexander of Hales, St. Thomas and St. Bonaventure. In the fourteenth, Scotus[25] and St. Lawrence Justinian.[26] In the fifteenth, sixteenth and seventeenth centuries more than four hundred authors are counted, all men great in learning and virtue, of whom more than seventy are bishops. But on reaching this last century and a half, one can no longer keep count of authors, because all Catholics together felt the same thing, uttered the same words, and with one universal voice said that Mary was conceived without original sin.[27]

23. The supreme pontiffs speak the language of the holy Fathers. All the popes who have governed the Church from Sixtus IV to Pius IX, except three, who because of the few days they lived had no time to declare their sentiments, have all promoted and stirred up the piety of the faithful towards the immaculate conception of Most Holy Mary, granting privileges, graces and indulgences to this end.[28]

24. Pope Sixtus IV issued two bulls to this end and published an office for the feast of the Immaculate Conception of Mary, whose chief aim is to declare that Mary was entirely preserved from original sin.

Pope St. Pius V in the year 1569 gave permission to the whole Order of St. Francis to recite the office of the Immaculate Conception of Mary.

Pope Clement XIII in the year 1761 gave permission to all the secular and regular clergy to recite this same office of the Immaculate Conception of Mary.

25. With the authority of Pope Innocent VIII an order of nuns was founded in honour of the immaculate conception of the Queen of heaven, and it was later confirmed by Julius II in the year 1507. In the rule this pope gives to the nuns of this foundation, after saying in the first chapter that those who enter this Order intend to honour the immaculate conception of the Mother of God, he adds that to enter this Order is to render a singular service to this august Queen. He likewise orders that the nuns go dressed in a white habit and scapular and a sky-blue mantle; and the reason he gives for this ordinance is that by this dress they show that the soul of the Most Holy Virgin was from its creation made in a particular way a temple of the Son of God. From then until now the institutes, confraternities and congregations erected by the piety of the faithful in honour of the immaculate conception are without number, and the supreme pontiffs have not only approved them with great pleasure of heart but have also enriched them with very many graces and indulgences.

26. Pope Alexander VII, in a decree he gave on 8 December 1661, says that it is an ancient piety of the faithful to believe that the Mother of God was preserved from the stain of original sin, and he had her feast celebrated in Rome with magnificence.

We will not list one by one the supreme pontiffs who have taken pains and displayed their zeal in favour of the immaculate conception of Mary, for we would never finish.

27. Not only in the popes is this zeal for the immaculate conception of Mary seen; this star shines also in the councils. The General Council of Ephesus, held in the year 431, called the Most Holy Virgin immaculate, because she was in nothing corrupt. The Fourth Council of Toledo, of the year 634, approves with praise the breviary reformed by St. Isidore, archbishop of Seville, in which there is an office of the Immaculate Conception, appointed for the whole octave, and throughout it she is called preserved, by a singular privilege, from original sin. The Eleventh Council, held in the year 675, praises the doctrine of St. Ildefonsus and, in praising this illustrious devotee of Mary, gives enough to understand that this Lady was not included

in original sin. The Fathers of the Council of Basel, held in the year 1439, and those of the Council of Avignon in 1457 think the same. And finally, the General Council of Trent, in its fifth session, after having authoritatively defined in its decree the dogma of the transmission of original sin to all Adam's descendants, added the following most important clause: "The same holy council declares, however, that it is not its intention to include in this decree, where original sin is treated, the blessed and immaculate Mary, Mother of God."

28. Besides what has been said of the supreme pontiffs and sacred councils, we can add for you the particular devotion of all the religious orders, the zeal of the universities, the enthusiasm of the Catholic kings and the unanimous consent of all peoples in honouring this privilege of the Queen of heaven, the beginning and foundation of all the others. The celebrated Orders of St. Benedict, of Camaldoli, of the Carthusians, of Cîteaux, of Cluny, of the Premonstratensians and all those that have come after them, all profess to honour the privileged holiness of the Most Holy Virgin Mary in this first moment and to give her witness of their zeal and tender devotion by the magnificence of their worship.[29]

29. The most brilliant universities of Europe, and particularly those of Cervera, Seville, Valencia, Salamanca, Alcalá, Paris, Cologne, Prague and others, without excepting a single one in Spain, have among their statutes that of not admitting to academic degrees anyone who does not bind himself to defend the immaculate conception of Most Holy Mary.

30. The Catholic and Most Christian kings of Spain, France and other kingdoms have taken particular pains to honour the immaculate conception of Most Holy Mary. Louis XIV, king of France, the admiration of his century, not content with having renewed by a declaration of 1650 the solemn consecration that the late king his father, Louis XIII, had made of his person, his royal family and his kingdom to the Most Holy Virgin, in 1667 wished to show his piety towards the same Virgin still more, obtaining from Pope Clement IX an octave for the feast of the Immaculate Conception.

31. Earlier still, King Don Juan I of Aragon and Valencia, in the year 1394, made a total consecration of his person and his kingdom to the Most Holy Virgin, with an authentic declaration in favour of her immaculate conception.

32. Well known in both worlds \[*ambos mundos*: the Old World and the New\] are the worship and devotion that we Spaniards give to the Most Holy Virgin, and especially under the title of her Immaculate Conception. This feast has for many years been one of the most solemn in Spain, and in the Cortes of the year 1760 Most Holy Mary, under the title of her Immaculate Conception, was declared patroness of all the dominions subject to the Catholic King, on the proposal of his most devout king Don Carlos III, authorized by Pope Clement XIII, who founded the most distinguished Spanish Order, called the Order of Carlos III, in honour of Most Holy Mary.[30]

33. No preacher in the dominions of Spain ever omits, when beginning his sermon: "Blessed and praised be the Most Holy Sacrament of the Altar and the most pure and immaculate conception of Most Holy Mary, Mother of God, our Lady, conceived without stain of original sin in the first instant of her being. Amen." And in all Spanish Catholics and faithful, the expression they have most at heart, and from whose abundance the mouth speaks, is this: *Ave María Purísima, sin pecado concebida*. With it they begin and end their prayers, and it is the sign of peace they give each other when they visit or greet one another.

5. Theology and the Immaculate Conception

34. This devotion not only springs from their fervent heart; reason itself also moves them to increase it, for in order to render it this reasonable homage they argue in this way: "It is not credible that God should have wished to permit the stain of sin in that woman who was destined to be His Mother and to give lodging in her womb to the precious lily of the valleys, to Him foretold by the prophets, awaited by the nations, desired by

the eternal hills, the saviour of the world." Did God perhaps lack the power to withdraw from the common law of sin that most singular creature, His distinguished and favourite one, who was to be the instrument of our redemption? And if He could do this, and if it befitted His own dignity that He should do it, what difficulty is there in admitting that He did it, and that, applying to the holy Virgin in advance the merits of the passion and death of His most blessed Son, He exempted her from the necessity of being, even for a brief instant, a slave of sin and of the devil, His chief enemy? Will anyone suppose that Mary was not granted what was granted to the angels and to Adam and Eve, when Mary is Queen of the angels and of the saints? The understanding is convinced, and from conviction and from devotion all say that Mary was conceived without stain of original sin.

6. Pius IX, and an apologetic argument

35. This, beloved brothers, is a brief survey of the main points concerning the immaculate conception of Most Holy Mary; now the hour has come when, ceasing to be a pious belief, it passes to being a dogma of faith. It is the common doctrine of the doctors and holy Fathers that God chooses persons and gives them His graces according to the object and end for which He destines them. God, in the series of the ages, marked with His divine sceptre the middle of the nineteenth century; this was the time preordained for publishing this truth. The object is grand, the matter is delicate, and it has kept all the learned men of the Church busy until now; it is the soul of the devotion of the faithful. God will give His Church a pope of great spirit; he will be wise, he will be pious. We already have that pope: he is Pius IX; he is a pope of great spirit, a wise pope, a pious pope.[1]

When God arranged for the ark of the covenant to be made, He chose Bezalel and filled him with His spirit, with wisdom, understanding, knowledge and all craftsmanship to work every kind of work in gold, silver...[2]

We know that that ark of the covenant was a figure of Most Holy Mary, living ark of the new covenant with God. If, then, to melt the gold and silver, cut the incorruptible acacia wood \[*madera de Setim*: shittim wood\] and form that ark, He gave so much wisdom to Bezalel, what wisdom must He have given, and with what virtues must He have adorned, the Bezalel of the law of grace, that he might give a new form to the gold and silver of the purity of Mary's grace without changing its essence: that he might present to the Christian people as a dogma of faith what was before a pious belief, considering the intrinsic merit of Mary, Mother of God?

36. Our Pius IX, using the Apostle's words, can very well say: *Gratia Dei sum id quod sum, et gratia Dei in me vacua non fuit*;[3] for scarcely had he sat in the chair of St. Peter when he began this great mission on which God and His Mother sent him. He uses all the means that prudence, zeal and piety dictate to him. He humbles himself, fasts and mortifies himself to obtain the help of heaven; he gathers the prayers of all his children, who are the faithful; he asks the opinion and counsel of all his brothers the bishops, to whom the Lord has given wisdom and understanding to help him, as He gave it to Oholiab and to all the craftsmen to help Bezalel; and finally he proceeds to define.[4] See here the very words of the bull:

> *"Therefore, trusting in the Lord and believing that the opportune moment has come for the definition of the immaculate conception of the Virgin Mary, Mother of God, a definition wonderfully illustrated and declared by the divine word, venerable tradition, the constant judgement of the Church, the unanimous assent of the bishops and faithful of the world, and the outstanding acts of our predecessors; and after having weighed everything with exquisite diligence and raised fervent supplications to God, we have thought that we should not hesitate to sanction and define by our supreme office the immaculate conception of the Virgin, so as to satisfy the most vehement desires of the Catholic world and our own piety towards the Most Holy Virgin, and at the same time to honour more and more in her her only Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, since all the honour and praise given to the Mother redounds to the Son.*
>
> *"Wherefore, after not having ceased to offer, in humility and fasting, our private prayers and the public supplications addressed by the Church to God the Father through His Son, that He might deign to direct and*

confirm our mind by the power of the Holy Spirit; after having also implored the protection of the whole heavenly court, invoking with sighs the assistance of the consoling Spirit, and feeling that He inspired us in this sense; for the honour of the holy and undivided Trinity, for the glory and dignity of the Virgin Mother of God, for the exaltation of the Catholic faith and the triumph of the Christian religion; by the authority of our Lord Jesus Christ, of the holy apostles Peter and Paul and by our own, we declare, pronounce and define that the doctrine which teaches that the Blessed Virgin Mary, in the first moment of her conception, by a singular grace and privilege of almighty God and by the merits of Jesus Christ, Saviour of the human race, was preserved immune from all stain of original sin, is a doctrine revealed by God, and that, consequently, it must be firmly and constantly believed by all the faithful. By virtue of which, if any, which God forbid, should presume to harbour inwardly a view contrary to what We define, let them know and understand that they are condemned by their own judgement, that they suffer shipwreck in the faith, that they separate themselves from the unity of the Church, and that moreover by that very fact they subject themselves to the penalties established by law if they dare to express their inward view by word, in writing or in any other external manner."[5]

37. See here, beloved brothers, the words of the divine oracle, of our supreme pontiff Pope Pius IX, in the bull he gave on the 8th of December of the year 1854, declaring as a dogma of faith the mystery of the immaculate conception of Most Holy Mary, Mother of God and our Mother and Lady. Let us all give thanks to God, to Most Holy Mary and also to our supreme pontiff Pope Pius IX. Oh, what great glory awaits him there in heaven! God is infinite in all His attributes; yet we see that He inclines more to mercy than to justice, and is more generous in rewarding than rigorous in punishing. Now, then, if the serpent, the poor reptile, merely because it served as an instrument without any will of its own, only by the devil's choice, to make the woman sin and cause original sin, was condemned to be the most wretched of all the animals and beasts of the earth, to crawl on its breast, and to eat earth all the days of its life,[6] what prize, what pay, what reward will God give to our supreme pontiff Pius IX, who has served as an instrument, not merely passive or indifferent, but active, with all the affection of his heart and all the piety of his soul, whom God has used to declare free of sin this valiant woman, the virgin woman and Mother of God Himself? God alone knows the merit of Pius IX. Let us greet him and say to him on God's behalf: You are, O Most Holy Father, the happiest of all the supreme pontiffs there have been since St. Peter; your breast is the repository of all our hearts; you are our shepherd, and we follow you in the pasture of heavenly doctrine, and you will lead us to the banquets of glory.[7]

38. The serpent was cursed, it and all its race; but the privileged woman was blessed, she and her offspring.[8] Heaven has filled Pius IX with blessings, him and all his successors, in a particular way for having declared the immaculate conception of Mary a truth of faith.[9] Let us all congratulate him, let us always join ourselves to him and his successors with our understanding and our will, and let us never, ever leave his side and his party, because the serpent and its race, which are the devil and wicked men, will always be at enmity with the supreme pontiff; and so, when you hear someone speak ill of the Pope, think that he is the devil himself, or the serpent, or one of its accursed race.

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[10] Cf. Song 6:10.

[11] Cf. 1 Cor 15:41.

[12] Cf. Mal 3:20.

[13] Cf. Rev 12:1.

[14] Cf. Is 30:26.

[15] Gen 3:15.

[16] St. Augustine, *Enchiridion*; *Serm. de Conc.*

[17] Ps 40:12.

[18] (Lk 1:28).

[19] *Revista Católica* 26 \[1855\] 512.

[20] Origen, *Homil. VI in Lucam*: PG 13, 1815–1816.

[21] Cf. Song 6:9.

[22] Cf. Mal 3:20.

[23] Cf. Sir 50:6.

[24] Cf. Gen 28:12–22.

[25] Cf. Prov 9:1; 24:3.

[26] Cf. Ps 131:8.

[27] Cf. Ps 88:38; Prov 20:28; Mt 5:34.

[28] Cf. Rev 21:2, 10.

[29] Cf. Song 6:8.

[30] Cf. Prov 8:31.

[31] Cf. Gen 2:6.

[32] Cf. Gen ch. 6.

[33] Cf. Josh 3:11; Rev 11:19.

[34] Cf. Ex 7:12.

[35] Cf. Ex 4:2–4; 7:15.

[36] Cf. Is 10:15.

[37] Cf. Song 4:4.

[38] Cf. 2 Chron chs. 6–8.

[39] Cf. Song 7:4.

[40] Cf. Ps 91:13; Song 5:15; Sir 24:17; 50:13.

[41] Cf. Sir 24:17; 50:11.

[42] Cf. Sir 24:18.

[43] Cf. Sir 24:19–20.

[44] Cf. Rev 21:2, 10–11.

[45] Cf. Rev 21:12–13.

[46] Cf. Prov 8:35.

[47] Cf. Rev 21:24; Is 60:3.

[48] *Revista Católica* 26 \[1855\] 514.

[49] Cf. Jn 1:29.

[50] Cf. Mt 27:60; Lk 23:53; Jn 19:41.

[51] Cf. St. Irenaeus, *Adversus haereses* bk. 3 c. 22: PG 7, 959–960.

[52] Cf. St. Justin, *Quaest. 136 adversus orthodoxos*: PG 6, 1387–1390.

[53] Cf. St. Hippolytus, *In Ps. 22* (fragment in Theodoret): PG 10, 610B.

[54] *sancta corpore et spiritu exstitit*.

[55] PL 177, 1212.

[56] St. Ambrose, *Enarrat. in Ps. 118*: PL 15, 1599D.

[57] PG 39, 430.

[58] PL 44, 267. *Obras de San Agustín* \[BAC, Madrid 1949\] vol. 6 p. 871.

[59] PL 22, 422. *Cartas de San Jerónimo* \[BAC, Madrid 1962\] vol. 1 p. 202. PL 22, 510.

[60] St. Maximus of Turin, *Homil. V ante Nat. Domini*: PL 57, 235D.

[61] PL 65, 728C. *De laudibus Mariae ex partu Salvatoris*: PL 65, 899C.

[62] St. Isidore, *De ortu et obitu Patrum* n. 36: PL 83, 1283.

[63] St. Sophronius, *Oratio II in Sanctissimae Deiparae Annunt.* n. 25: PG 87 (3), 3247.

[64] *Epist. Synodica ad Sergium, Patriarcham Constant.*: PG 87, 3159D.

[65] PG 96, 663A.

[66] Theophanes Cerameus, *Homil. 53 in Annunt. Sanctissimae Dei Genitricis*: PG 132, 936, 940.

[67] St. Fulbert, *Sermo 6 in ortu almae Virginis*: PL 141, 326D.

[68] PL 158, 451AB. *Obras completas* \[BAC, Madrid 1953\] vol. 2 p. 47.

[69] PL 144, 752B.

[70] PL 152, 1167.

[71] PL 162, 570D.

[72] This letter can be seen in PL 182, 535–536 and in *Obras completas* (BAC, Madrid 1955) vol. 2 pp. 1177–1181.

[73] Scotus, *In IV Sent.* bk. 3 dist. 3 c. 1 and dist. 18.

[74] Cited by Godínez García, L., *Triunfo de la verdad en justa defensa del misterio encumbrado de la concepción sin mancha de María* (Madrid 1854) vol. 2 p. 219.

[75] Croisset, J., *Año cristiano*, December \[LR, Barcelona 1854\] p. 132.

[76] Cf. Le Bachelet, X., DTC, s.v. "Immaculée Conception" vol. 7 cols. 1124–1209.

[77] See also: Brlek, M., *Legislatio Ordinis Fratrum Minorum de Doctore Immaculatae Conceptionis*: *Antonianum* 29 (1954) 496–522; Masson, R., *De Immaculata Conceptione apud Fratres Praedicatores*: *Angelicum* 31 (1954).

[78] *Aut.* n. 633.

[1] Clotet, J., *Resumen de la admirable vida...* \[Barcelona 1882\] p. 123.

[2] Cf. Ex 36:1–38. Also cited by the Pope in the bull *Ineffabilis Deus* (*Revista Católica* 26 \[1855\] 513–514).

[3] 1 Cor 15:10.

[4] Cf. *Revista Católica* 26 \[1855\] 515–516.

[5] Bull *Ineffabilis Deus* (cf. ibid., p. 516).

[6] Cf. Gen 3:14.

[7] *Const. CMF* 1866 n. 2.

[8] Cf. Gen 3:15.

[9] *Commentaria in Pentateuchum Moysis* \[Antwerp 1671\] pp. 84–85.

III. Effects of the Definition

39. We have observed, beloved brothers, very carefully, and examined with the greatest scrupulousness, the effects this declaration of the immaculate conception of Mary has produced in people, and we have seen that some have complained, others have rejoiced and others have become angry. The ignorant devout have complained; the learned have rejoiced; and the wicked, who are of the race of the serpent and have the devil for their father, as Jesus Christ says, *Vos ex patre diabolo estis*,[1] these have become angry.

1. In the ignorant devout

40. The ignorant devout have complained and said: What is the point of this? We have always believed that Most Holy Mary was conceived without stain of original sin. To them we reply: Very well; but your belief was a pious belief; it had its merit in good affection, and you honoured Most Holy Mary with the heart; but now, since it has been declared a truth of faith, you honour Most Holy Mary with the heart and with the understanding. Before, you exercised devotion and faith together in this, like one who fasts out of mortification, which has its merit; but if he does the same thing on a day commanded by the Church, besides the virtue of mortification he exercises obedience.[1]

2. In the instructed devout

41. The learned devout have felt a singular joy, both as regards Mary and as regards themselves. Since they truly love Mary, they wish her every good; they wish Mary the possession of this so glorious title, which they know very well belongs to her. Before, as regards this declaration, they recognized in Mary in a certain way a *ius ad rem*, and now a *ius in re*, and they contemplate her with great satisfaction in the possession of this right.

One of the greatest joys man feels is when, by force of reasoning and calculation, he succeeds in finding the truth; then the understanding is so pleased and satisfied that it delights in its object. Now, then, what great joy must the learned devotees of Most Holy Mary feel, who have reasoned so much, written so much and defended her immaculate conception with such effort, giving her proofs of their love and fidelity? But now, on this matter, they may be told to attend and listen to the voice St. John heard when he said: *Ut requiescant a laboribus suis; opera enim illorum sequuntur illos*.[1] Let them rest from the labours they have had to bear in

defending this honourable title of Mary, for the good works they have done for this Lady will follow them to heaven and will be very well rewarded.

a) Why did God permit some to oppose Mary's privilege?

42. Perhaps someone will ask: "How is it possible that a thing so honourable for Mary, so proclaimed by saints and doctors, by pontiffs and councils, by kings and subjects, and so reasonable besides, should nevertheless have been opposed, and precisely by men of piety and religion, by disciples of St. Thomas?" To this we could reply what Jesus Christ said when His disciples asked Him, about a blind man, what was the cause of his being so, the sin of the son or that of his parents. And Jesus Christ replied: "Neither has this man sinned, nor his parents. This has been a permission, so that the works of God's power may shine forth in him."[2]

That it is so is clearly read in the *Revelations* of St. Bridget, to whom the Most Holy Virgin said: "God has so permitted it, that some of His friends should piously doubt my conception, and that each should show his zeal until the truth should be made manifest in the preordained time." *Quia sic placuit Deo, quod amici sui pie dubitarent de conceptione mea, et quilibet ostenderet zelum suum, donec veritas claresceret in tempore praeordinato*.

43. When there is an eclipse of the sun, it draws the attention of all the inhabitants of that hemisphere, whereas when there is no eclipse, perhaps very few raise their heads to fix their eyes on the king of the planets. Oh, how many, many people have raised the eyes of their consideration and contemplated the beauty of Mary, chosen as the sun,[3] and have observed that the contrary opinion was no more than a passing moon, a satellite of the earth, nearer to us than to her, and that it in no way affected her beauty in itself, even if she was less seen by us!

Oh, how many canticles and praises we have heard, which we would have been deprived of had there not been such contradiction! It is like a traveller in summer who, at midday, tired and weary, comes to a leafy, cool valley covered with roses, lilies and violets, and sees a fountain of abundant, crystal-clear water springing from a rock. He stops, refreshes himself, drinks the water and sits beside it, and he observes that in the middle of the stream there are some stones that seem as if they must hinder its course. But it is not so, for the water does not stop because of them, and those stones are the occasion of a certain murmur that produces a sound softer and more pleasing to the ear than the most melodious musical compositions; had those stones not been there, the water would run silently along its bed.

b) The position of St. Thomas Aquinas and his disciples

44. We all know that the doubt of the apostle St. Thomas was the cause of the Lord's giving the clearest proofs of His resurrection.[4] The same can be said in the present case: the contrary opinion that is read in the *Summa* of St. Thomas[5] and in other places of his works has given occasion for the clearest and most convincing proofs of the truth of the immaculate conception of Most Holy Mary. But we are of the opinion that the holy doctor followed the opinion of the truth of Mary's immaculate conception, as he says clearly: *Talis fuit puritas Beatae Virginis, quae a peccato originali et actuali immunis fuit*: "Such was the purity of the Blessed Virgin that she was immune from original and actual sin."[6] This and other similar passages read in his works clearly reveal what his opinion was; and if the contrary is read in other places, it is not because the Angel of the Schools suffered a mistake or fell into contradiction, but rather because on this point his works have suffered some alteration; and, believing this was the holy doctor's doctrine, his disciples upheld it with great enthusiasm. Besides, they could not understand how Most Holy Mary could have shared in the medicine prescribed by the divine physician if she had never been subject to the illness of sin. Nor did they understand how Mary could share in the fruit of Jesus' redemption without having been for even an instant in sin, the cause of the redemption.

c) Preservative redemption

45. To each of these disciples of Thomas we can say what Jesus said to that apostle: "Come here, disciple of Thomas; see these hands pierced with hard nails; put your finger here; see this side opened by a cruel lance; put your hand here."[7] Do you know that this is Jesus? Yes. Do you believe it? Yes. He is true God and true man, the only saviour and redeemer of the human race; He heals the sick and frees captives. This is the common and ordinary way; but He has another, extraordinary and most noble way, which is to apply the medicine before the illness comes on, so that one does not fall into it, and to pay the ransom before the captivity comes. It is more to preserve than to raise up after a fall. If, by reason of the mission He entrusted to them, God purified and sanctified Jeremiah[8] and John,[9] much more was it fitting, by reason of Mary's most exalted mission, that she should be purified and sanctified in her very conception. She is His Mother, and He must redeem her in the most noble and perfect way, which is by preserving her from falling into sin.[10]

46. Some doctors of the Church, treating of Mary's immaculate conception, have said that nature stopped and stood trembling before grace,[11] in the way that the waters of the Jordan stopped at the passing of the ark, a figure of Mary, and the ark passed over on dry ground;[12] and so Mary passed over on dry ground, without getting in the least wet in the current of the waters of iniquity.

47. There is no doubt: Mary's flesh was taken from Adam, but without Adam's stains. Mary had in common with Adam only the nature, but not the fault, and this was much more fitting by reason of her being destined to be Mother of the Word; for just as the Word has a most holy Father in heaven, He was to have on earth a most holy Mother, as far as is possible in a creature. And so St. Bridget assures us: *Maria de radice Adae processit, et de peccatoribus nata est, licet sine peccato concepta, ut filius Dei de ea sine peccato nasceretur*.

48. Of this truth we have a proof, the clearest, and a figure, the most fitting, in the third book of Kings.[13]

In it we read that Elijah went up to the top of Carmel, where, kneeling on the ground, he said to his servant: "Go, look towards the sea." The servant did so, and came back saying: "There is nothing." Elijah answered him: "Go back, up to seven times." And the seventh time he saw rising from the sea a little cloud, small as a man's footprint. And Elijah said: "Go and say to Ahab: Harness your chariot and go down at once, so that the rain does not stop you." And while this was being done, and he went from one place to another, the sky grew dark in a moment and a most abundant rain began to fall. This is the story. The little cloud is a figure of the humble Mary. This little cloud rises from the sea by the force of the sun; the particles of water that form it are of the same mass as the waters of the sea; these are bitter and salty, but those of the little cloud are sweet. Mary, by the merits of Jesus Christ, Sun of justice,[14] rises from the sea of human nature, but without the bitterness of original sin and without the salt of concupiscence, so that in her there is neither the *sal-maste*, which would excite her to mortal sin, nor the *sal volátil*, which would induce her to venial sin.[15] Oh, how sweet is the Virgin Mary! The seven times the prophet ordered his servant to look at the sea figure the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit with which God adorned her and the seven virtues with which He enriched her. That little cloud grew and covered the whole horizon; so Mary places herself between God and us and covers us with her protection. Three full years, or nearly four, had passed without rain; the drought was extraordinary, and no less the barrenness, and necessarily the misery; but very soon after it had rained, the earth gave abundant and delicious fruits. Before the coming of Mary four thousand years of spiritual drought passed: what barrenness! what misery! But Mary appears. What abundant rains of graces! What fertility of virtues! What abundance of souls for the granaries of glory!

49. Another reason and figure of Mary's immaculate conception can be given, and it is this. When a man has a property of his and sells it, he alienates only what is his and at his disposal; but he cannot dispose of the lien or charge that weighs on the estate, even if the seller makes no exception or mention of the charge. In the same way, although it is true that Adam enslaved human nature to Satan, the Most Holy Virgin was not included, because God had already excepted and chosen her, as we read in the sacred book of Ecclesiasticus,

chapter 24, whose words the Church applies to Most Holy Mary, and they are these: From the beginning, or *ab aeterno*, and before the ages, I already received being, and I shall not cease to exist through all the ages to come.[16] And in Proverbs we read: *Nondum erant abyssi et ego iam concepta eram*.[17] God Himself says to her what King Ahasuerus said to Esther: *Non pro te, sed pro omnibus haec lex constituta est*.[18] This law of original sin extends to all and includes all, except you.

50. These and many other authorities and reflections that could be related, and are omitted for brevity, have all been called forth by reason of the contradiction this truth has met. But scarcely has the oracle of God, the successor of St. Peter, spoken and defined it a dogma of faith, when the disputes among Catholics are over; now it is of faith. Faith is one; we all say with one voice: *Ave María purísima, sin pecado concebida*. Oh, what a great good the Catholic Church possesses in having a supreme judge to end dissensions at one stroke! It is a gift of God. Blessed be God for so singular a favour. Those who separate themselves from the unity of the Catholic Church are deprived of this great good. Oh, happy unity!

3. In the wicked

51. We have said, beloved brothers, that with this declaration of faith some have become angry, and that these were the wicked, those who form the race of the serpent; it is very natural that it should have been so. When the serpent is not disturbed, it goes along in its own way; if its head is trodden on, it resents it and turns back on its body; and the more its head is pressed and crushed, the more it is enraged, swells up and takes its revenge in its own way on whoever makes it suffer. Here is clearly the reason why the wicked have become angry: because their head, which is Satan, suffers; the Virgin presses and crushes it, and they, who form its body, writhe full of rage and fury; and since they cannot wound the Most Holy Virgin, they take revenge on her children and do them all the harm they can, in every way.[1]

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[2] You are children of the devil (Jn 8:44).

[3] Cf. *Aut.* nn. 414–415.

[4] Rev 14:13.

[5] Jn 9:3.

[6] Cf. Song 6:9.

[7] Cf. Jn 20:24–29.

[8] *Summa theol.* III q. 27 a. 2.

[9] St. Thomas, *Sent.* bk. 1 dist. 44 q. 1 a. 3.

[10] Cf. Jn 20:27.

[11] Cf. Jer 1:5.

[12] Cf. Lk 1:41–44.

[13] Cf. *Revista Católica* 26 \[1855\] 514.

[14] Cf. St. John Damascene, *Homil. in Virginis Mariae natalitium diem* n. 2: PG 96, 663A.

[15] Cf. Josh 3:7–17.

[16] Cf. 3 Kgs 18:42–45.

[17] Cf. Mal 3:20.

[18] Cf. *Enciclopedia Espasa* vol. 53 p. 77.

[19] Cf. Sir 24:9.

[20] Prov 8:24.

[21] Esth 15:13.

[1] Cf. Rev 12:17.

IV. Practical Part: Moral Teachings

52. It must necessarily be so, because the words God spoke to the serpent in the beginning must be fulfilled: I will put enmities between you and the woman, and between your race and her offspring.[1] That is why it is very important, beloved brothers, that you know how to distinguish the one from the other, so as to follow the favoured woman and manfully resist the serpent and all who form its body.

The woman of the Protoevangelium is Mary

53. You know well that the woman spoken of here is Mary; her offspring is Jesus Christ, her firstborn son,[1] and all true Catholics are the second, or adopted children by grace.[2] Jesus Christ Himself, after the resurrection, calls us brothers;[3] for if we are brothers of Jesus, Mary, who is His mother, will also be ours, and God, who is His father, will also be our father. This is a consequence as legitimate as it is true, so that Truth itself commands us to say to God when we pray: Our Father who art in heaven.[4] And St. John tells us: See what tender love the Father has had for us, willing that we should be called children of God and be so in fact;[5] for by the Spirit He has regenerated us[6] and by grace He has adopted us and made us sharers in His divine nature.[7] That is why the world takes no notice of us, because it does not know God, our Father. Dearly beloved, we are already now children of God; but what we shall be one day has not yet appeared. We know, indeed, that when Jesus Christ appears we shall be like Him in glory, because we shall see Him as He is;[8] and this vision will transform us into His image.[9]

1. Criteria for knowing the children of the woman

54. Meanwhile, whoever has such hope in Him, let him sanctify himself,[1] that is, let him do everything possible to live a holy life; for whoever commits sin, by that very fact commits injustice,[2] since sin is injustice, or a transgression of the law. And truly, no one will be like God and Jesus Christ in glory in heaven who here on earth was unlike Him in his conduct.

55. You know well that He came to take away our sins and that in Him there is no sin.[3] And so great is the horror and aversion He has for sins that, to take them away from us, He paid with His death and washed us with His blood.[4] Everyone who abides in Him, with due observance of the law and with constant love, does not sin; and he who sins has not seen Him nor known Him.[5] Behave as a servant with his master, a son with his father, a wife with her husband, revering Him, fearing Him, loving Him, venerating Him and honouring Him. My little children, let no one deceive you,[6] saying that by faith alone man is justified and saved; for not he who only believes, but he who does justice fully and entirely, that is, he who does all that God's law commands, is just, a son and heir of God.[7] Whoever practises justice is just, as Jesus Christ also is. Whoever commits sin is a child of the devil, for he follows his maxims and spirit; because the devil has gone on sinning from the moment of his fall. That is why the Son of God came, to destroy the works of the devil.[8] The devil's whole effort is to beget children like himself. Everyone who is born of God does not commit sin, because the seed of God, which is sanctifying grace, dwells in him; and if he does not cast it out of himself, he cannot sin, because he is a child of God. By this the children of God will be distinguished from the children of the devil. Everyone who does not practise justice is not a child of God, and so neither is he who does not love his brothers. Truly this is the doctrine you learned from the beginning: that you love one another. Not like Cain, who was a child of the evil spirit and killed his brother. And why did he kill him? Because his works were evil and his brother's just. Do not be surprised, brothers, if the world hates you.[9]

2. How the devil seeks followers

56. With this doctrine of St. John you will be able to know clearly, beloved brothers, the difference between the descendants of the woman called Mary and those who form the race of the serpent. It is also fitting that you be informed of the way Lucifer fell and makes others fall, so forming his race. To this end the Church teaches us that God began the creation of the world by creating, before all things, the heavenly intelligences,

as if to form for Himself a numerous court and have ministers ready to carry out His orders. We firmly believe, says the Fourth Lateran Council, that there is only one true God, who at the beginning of time brought forth together from nothing both kinds of creature, the spiritual and the corporeal, the angelic and the earthly, and afterwards formed, as it were, a nature midway between the two, which was human nature, composed of body and soul.[1] That is, the angels are created substances, intelligent and purely spiritual, not destined to be united to bodies, from which they are wholly independent. They are endowed with gifts more or less perfect according to their different degrees of perfection and excellence. God, having determined from eternity not to give the glory of heaven either to angels or to men except by way of crown and reward, created the heavenly spirits with full knowledge of good and evil and with perfect freedom. Lucifer and all his followers, seeing themselves so beautiful and perfect, puffed up by their own excellence, instead of referring to God their Creator all the good and excellence they had, took complacency in themselves and, full of pride, refused obedience to God, for which they were cast down into the abyss to be unhappy for all eternity. But the other angels, who persevered in good, always faithful to their Creator, humble, submissive and obedient to His orders, were confirmed in grace.

57. When the angelic doctor St. Thomas treats of the sin of the angels, he says that to sin is nothing other than to decline from the rectitude the act ought to have.[2] And God alone is impeccable, because He is the very rule and rectitude, and therefore cannot decline from it; by this rule all creatures must be regulated, and must be directed to their Creator, who exists of Himself, from whom and through whom all things exist and are preserved and perfected.[3]

But Lucifer, seeing himself so beautiful, said: "I will go up to heaven and be like the Most High."[4] In truth, says St. Augustine, "Lucifer, full of pride, wished to be called God."[5]

And St. Thomas adds: Without doubt the angel sinned by desiring to be like God; not according to God's nature, for he knew well that this was impossible, but according to likeness, seeking it in an undue way, desiring as the ultimate end of beatitude what he could attain by virtue of his own nature, turning his appetite away from supernatural beatitude, which is of the grace of God. Or, if he desired as his ultimate end that likeness to God which is given by grace, he wished to have it by virtue of his nature, not by divine help according to God's disposition.[6]

And St. Anselm said very aptly: Lucifer sought something that he would have obtained had he been constant and faithful to grace and humble to God's disposition;[7] but to seek his happiness and glory independently of God is a perverse way, it is great pride, for in this consists the sin of pride: not to submit to one's superior in that in which one ought. *Non subdi superiori in eo in quo debet*.[8]

The unhappy one, instead of finding the happiness of heaven, merited the eternal fire of hell, prepared to punish him and his followers, as the Gospel of St. Matthew says.[9]

58. The sin of pride was soon followed by envy, as its immediate consequence,[10] grieving at the good of man, as he grieved and still grieves at the divine excellence, because God makes use of man for His greater honour and glory against the will of the devil. Envy made him set snares for our first parents Adam and Eve. He suggests to them that they should not be subject to God, that they should not keep the law, that they should eat of the forbidden fruit, and so they would know all things, good and evil, and would be like gods.[11]

And our parents, fascinated by such flattering promises, fall miserably into sin, failing in God's ordering; and instead of being happy, they find themselves reduced to every misery, and even to death itself, temporal and eternal.[12]

The pride of Satan never gives up the attempt, and his envy never says "enough." At the beginning of the world he made use of the serpent,[13] because there was no other man and woman than those two; now he has other men and women, and he will use them to spread the nets of errors and vices, but always with the aim of

making them fail in God's ordering, depriving them of attaining happiness and making them wretched in this world and in the next for all eternity.

Just as the fisherman tries to cover the hook with the bait, with some pleasant food, and so catches the fish, Satan uses the same trick: he covers the hook of misfortunes with the bait of pleasure, of freedom, of happiness, because the cunning tempter knows, and is quite sure, that man cannot accept an evil thing as evil, but only under the appearance of good.[14]

He suggests to men freedom of private examination, and so separates them from the ordering and the obedience they owe to the Church, to Jesus Christ, to God, and makes them slaves of reason and of the passions.

He suggests to them freedom of conscience, and so turns them away from God's ordering and takes the sacraments from them, especially that of communion, and reduces them to slaves of sin and to perishing of spiritual hunger.

He suggests to them the freedom of the individual, and so turns them away from God's ordering and says to them: Away with God's law! He takes from them this sweet yoke and light burden,[15] and the unhappy ones find themselves loaded with the most heavy yoke of Satan.

He suggests to them, finally, to protest against all order, all law, all right and all morality; he wants only that they live by the spirit of autonomy, a Greek word meaning the right of each one to govern himself by himself, which is the spirit of the devil, of pride and of damnation.

But just as Lucifer placed his happiness in himself, through an excess of self-love or too great complacency in his own excellence, which Scotus calls spiritual lust, and since this complacency was not directed by God's order but, on the contrary, turned away from God, it becomes pride, says Billuart; this is precisely what he suggests to his followers: self-worship; that they make themselves gods of themselves, independent of everything. And since they are men, being made of body and soul, they procure lust and every pleasure for the body, and for the soul, which is spirit like the angel, every insubordination and independence. So, through his doing, they become devils in soul and body, deserving that curse which Jesus Christ will hurl on the day of judgement: Depart from me, you cursed, into the eternal fire, which was prepared for the devil and his angels or ministers.[16]

3. The marks and works of the children of Mary

59. We have now spoken, beloved brothers, of the serpent and its race; it is fitting now to treat of the woman and her offspring, and you will see a spirit diametrically opposed.[1] This most blessed woman called Mary is Queen of angels and of men, and destined to be mother of God Himself, which is an almost infinite dignity, with the other graces corresponding to this dignity. But such greatness does not make Mary vain; on the contrary, she humbles herself more and more. The angel, on God's behalf, greets her as full of grace, and she replies: Behold the handmaid of the Lord: be it done to me according to your word.[2] What humility! What submission and obedience to the will of God! She goes to visit her cousin to sanctify St. John, the Lord's precursor.[3] What obedience to the will of God! What humility in her words! She knows very well that the Lord has done great things in her; but she attributes nothing to herself; she refers everything to the goodness and mercy of God, and takes delight in God alone[4] (entirely the contrary of Lucifer and his race). Mary, out of humility and submission to the will of God, submitted to the purification, a thing so repugnant to a virgin mother,[5] and she went as far as Calvary, a thing so painful to a loving mother.[6] Humility, obedience, charity and her other virtues merited for Most Holy Mary such glory that the Church, full of holy enthusiasm, sings: *Exaltata est sancta Dei Genitrix super choros angelorum ad caelestia regna*: "The holy Mother of God is exalted above the choirs of angels to the heavenly kingdoms." What envy and what rage for Lucifer to see this humble dove rise to heaven and be placed there in glory on so sublime a throne, and to see himself,

through his pride, in the depths of the abyss and in a place of torment! What envy and what rage for Lucifer when he saw God repair, and with advantage, what he had wrecked, and conquer and confound him with the same weapons! He made use of the woman,[7] and God makes the woman crush his head[8] and be mother of God Himself.[9] He conquered at the tree of paradise, and at the tree of the cross he is conquered. He suggested to man that if he failed in obedience he would be like God,[10] and so he made him his slave; but God becomes man to give men power to become children of God, and for this the Word was made flesh.[11]

4. Exhortation to acquire these marks

60. He, being a mere creature, wished to make himself like the Most High, and he suggested this same idea to our parents and to his followers; but Jesus Christ, who, having the nature of God, is equal to God not by usurpation but by essence, nevertheless emptied Himself, taking the form or nature of a servant, made like other men and reduced to the condition of man. He humbled Himself, becoming obedient unto death, even death on a cross; for which reason God also exalted Him above all things and gave Him a name above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bend in heaven, on earth and in hell, and every tongue confess that the Lord Jesus Christ is in the glory of God the Father.[1]

The apostles were animated by these same sentiments of obedience and humility, and tried to instil them in the faithful. So St. Paul himself said: "You must have in your hearts the same sentiments that Jesus Christ had in His."[2]

Indeed, experience teaches that obedience makes people free and happy, and disobedience makes them slaves and wretched. The angels disobey, and are turned into demons; our parents disobey, and become unhappy and slaves of Satan. Jesus Christ obeys, and redeems and saves us; sinners who obey, by receiving the holy sacraments, obtain pardon. And even the wise lawgivers and philosophers of antiquity knew the necessity of obedience, and for this reason Solon said: "That kingdom is happy because the people obey authority, and authority keeps the law it has given its people." The wise and eloquent Cicero taught that there was no other means of escaping slavery to disordered vices and all evils than obedience to the laws. And he concluded with these words: "Let us be servants of the laws, so that we can remain free": *Legum servi sumus, ut liberi esse possimus.*[3]

61. Experience teaches that disciples who obey their masters are freed from ignorance and attain knowledge; that children who obey their good parents are freed from a thousand misfortunes and attain happiness. And because obedience is the virtue that preserves happiness and is the regulator and guide of good living, God imposed it on our first parents.[4] Would that they had kept it! Jesus Christ taught and practised the same, subjecting Himself and obeying His Mother and St. Joseph in everything: *Et erat subditus illis*.[5] Would that we imitated Him! By this we shall know whether we are His disciples: if we do what He has commanded us;[6] so we shall be truly free, since freedom consists in doing what one wills by doing what one ought; like water, which is free to pass between the walls that form the channel or irrigation ditches, and is of great usefulness.

5. Invitation to unite ourselves with Christ

62. Jesus Christ, beloved brothers, is not only our Redeemer and our way,[1] which He Himself has traced for us, going before us and telling us to deny ourselves, or to obey, to take up the cross and follow Him;[2] He also assures us that He is the truth and the life.[3] To understand the force of these two words, you must know that man, morally considered, consists of intelligence and love, or of the faculty of understanding and the faculty of loving, faculties whose objects are truth and goodness.

These two powers have needs to be relieved or desires to be satisfied; and since God alone can satisfy them, God Himself communicates Himself to man and says to him: *Ego sum Veritas.*[4] *Deus est caritas*.[5]

Man is a compound of soul and body. To live, the body needs its bodily nourishment, and the soul its spiritual nourishment; Jesus Christ taught us to ask His Father for both kinds of nourishment when He dictated to us the prayer of the Our Father.

In the phrase we say, Give us this day our daily bread,[6] we ask not only for bread for the body, but also for bread for the soul, which is the chief thing; for, as for the body, He who takes care of the little birds of the air and the flowers of the fields will also take care of us,[7] so that in this regard we need neither fret nor be anxious,[8] because if we seek first the kingdom of God and His justice, all the rest will be given us besides.[9]

63. What we must ask for and seek continually is the bread of the soul, which is called *panis vitae et intellectus*, that is, the Eucharist and the Bible, or the divine Word.

The Eucharist is the bread of life, Jesus Christ Himself says through St. John: My Father is the one who gives you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is that which has come down from heaven and gives life to the world. Then they said to Him: "Lord, give us always this bread." To which Jesus replied: "I am the bread of life. I am the living bread that has come down from heaven. Whoever eats of this bread will live for ever; and the bread that I will give is my own flesh, which I will give for the life or salvation of the world." Then the Jews began to dispute with one another, saying: "How can this man give us his flesh to eat?" But Jesus said to them: "Truly, truly I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of man and drink His blood, you will not have life in you. Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day. As the Father who sent me lives, and I live by the Father, so whoever eats me, he too will live by me."[10] But about these so clear and decisive words of Jesus Christ we must point out to you that, just as God made use of Most Holy Mary to give us His divinity, now He makes use of the Church to give us His divinity and humanity together under the accidental veils of the Eucharist.

64. Besides the bread of life, which is the Eucharist and the object of the life of love, man needs the bread of the understanding, which is truth, and this we shall find in a particular way in the holy Bible.[11] But we must seek it as we ought, if we want to find it. As God Himself says: *Si quaeritis, quaerite*.[12] Just as God makes use of the Church to give us the divine Word incarnate and consecrated, He also wills to make use of the same Church to give us the *verbum divinum scriptum et traditum*,[13] the divine word, which is the bread of the understanding. That is why St. Paul calls the Church the pillar and support of the truth.[14] Indeed, the comparison could not be more exact: just as a thing falls if its support is removed, and arches collapse if the column on which they rest is taken away, so the truth of the holy Bible falls to the ground and collapses if it is not supported on the column of the Church. That is why St. Augustine said he would not believe the Gospel if the authority of the Church did not teach it.[15]

65. From this one can infer how mistaken are those who do not lean on that column of the Church but on their private examination. Then it ceases to be the divine word, because it is turned into human word. Just as bodily bread is bread before it is eaten, but afterwards ceases to be bread and is turned into the flesh and blood of the man, so the divine written bread, eaten and digested by private examination, no longer has any divine authority; it is all turned into the opinions and errors of men. As proof of this truth we need only look at history, and at once we find that the private judgement or examination of Müntzer discovered in the Bible that titles of nobility and large properties were an impious usurpation, contrary to the natural equality of the faithful. Then he invited his followers to examine whether this was not the truth of the matter; the sectarians examined it, and at once proceeded, by sword and fire, to the extirpation of those they called impious and to the seizure of their properties. Private judgement also believed it had discovered in the holy Bible that established laws were a permanent restriction of Christian liberty; see there John of Leiden throw down the tools of his trade, put himself at the head of a fanatical mob, take the city of Münster by surprise, proclaim himself king of Zion and commit follies by the thousand. Who can recount all that has happened on account of the private examination of the Bible, from the ferocious delirium of Fox to the methodical one of Barclay, from the formidable fanaticism of Cromwell to the foolish impiety of Praise-God Barebone?

66. To those who think their own judgement is enough, one can say what Jesus Christ said to the Jews: Search the scriptures, since you think to find life in them; they are what bear witness to me.[16] They are what tell you how you must behave in order to understand them. Hear St. Peter, who says: Understanding this, before all things, that no prophecy of Scripture is explained by private interpretation.[17] Let those who depart from this ordering of God know that it is not the Spirit of the Father who speaks through them,[18] but the spirit of error, or of Satan. And so that this truth may be seen more clearly, we quote the very words with which Jesus Christ charged the apostles, and they all their successors in this ministry: Go, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you. And be sure that I myself will remain with you continually until the consummation of the ages.[19]

67. There are others, beloved brothers, who seek the bread of the understanding not from God nor from the Bible but from their own reason or wit, and they are still more mistaken. They say, with very fascinating words and the most specious expressions, that religion and philosophy are two sisters. This we flatly deny, affirming on the contrary that they are two daughters of different parents. True religion is the daughter of the Father who is in heaven, and all who truly follow it it also makes children of God: He gave them power to become children of God.[20] But philosophy is the natural daughter of man's reason and reasoning; so that philosophy and all the natural sciences are called slaves or servants by the wise Solomon in the book of Proverbs:[21] *Misit ancillas suas vocare ad arcem*; servants destined to serve sacred science, or religion. That is why philosophy must not be given more value than it has and deserves. All the value of the slave belongs to his master; he must not be made equal to him, still less put before him, but after him, and then he is useful. A zero before a figure has no value, and after it, it has, and a great deal. So it is with philosophy: after divine science it helps greatly to persuade and to explain the motives of credibility; but if it is placed before, or preferred, or goes alone, it is like a zero, when it is not pernicious, as St. Paul says writing to the Colossians: Be on your guard that no one seduce you by means of a useless and deceitful philosophy and with vain subtleties, founded on the tradition of men, according to the maxims of the world and not according to the doctrine of Jesus Christ.[22]

68. Lastly, we must warn you, beloved brothers, that the world of minds will never be without doctrines, and these doctrines do not remain long without showing themselves; imperceptibly they give their shape to society and make it move to the rhythm of their inspirations, so that questions, even the most speculative ones of theology and philosophy, are always full of order or disorder, of life or death. This is why some live like Protestants without being Lutherans or Calvinists, and others who, without ceasing to call themselves Catholics, are really indifferent and *rienistes*, and form with the rest the long body of the serpent. They go crawling on their breast, committing the most shameful vileness, and relish no other food than the pleasures of the earth. This is the curse God laid on the serpent in the beginning;[23] they too will persecute the children and devotees of Mary,[24] for we already know that all who wish to live devoutly, in Jesus and in the Mother of Jesus, will suffer persecution.[25]

6. Always united to Mary as her children

69. But we must take courage, knowing that Mary is on our side, that we shall be able to do all things with the grace that will be given us, and that Mary is the tower of David, in which there is every kind of armour.[1] And it should fill us with holy enthusiasm to think that no one will be crowned except him who has fought lawfully against the enemies of the soul.[2] Let us form, then, a body united and compact by charity,[3] encouraging one another; helping one another in the needs of soul and body; praying to God and to the Most Holy Virgin for all, so that the just may persevere in grace and sinners be converted. Yes, beloved brothers, let us pray for the conversion of sinners, for so we shall offer a very pleasing homage to Mary. Have you paid attention to these words of holy Scripture: *Ipsa conteret caput tuum*, "She shall crush your head"?[4] Notice

that it does not say body, but head, because the head is the devil, who, obstinate, is already at his end and is therefore incapable of being converted; and for this reason Mary crushes his proud and obstinate head. But the body is formed of sinners, who, though it is true that by their sins they have voluntarily joined themselves to the head and make up its long body, yet the Virgin treads only on the head, and looks with pity and compassion on the body of this serpent, desiring its conversion. Let us, then, join our desires and prayers to those of the Virgin, and let us not doubt that we shall obtain this grace.

We have concluded, beloved brothers, our pastoral exhortation; it only remains for us to announce to you the festivities we have arranged throughout our diocese to give thanks and homage to the Most Blessed Trinity and to congratulate the Most Holy Virgin Mary.

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[5] Gen 3:15.

[6] Cf. Lk 2:7.

[7] Cf. Rom 8:23; Gal 4:5.

[8] Cf. Jn 20:17.

[9] Mt 6:9.

[10] 1 Jn 3:1.

[11] Cf. Tit 3:5.

[12] Cf. 2 Pet 1:4.

[13] 1 Jn 3:1–2.

[14] Cf. Rom 8:29; 1 Cor 15:49; 2 Cor 3:18; Jas 3:9.

[15] 1 Jn 3:3.

[16] 1 Jn 3:4.

[17] 1 Jn 3:5.

[18] Cf. Rom 6:3–5; Col 1:22; 1 Jn 1:7; Rev 7:14.

[19] 1 Jn 3:6.

[20] 1 Jn 3:7.

[21] Cf. Acts 10:35; 1 Jn 2:28.

[22] 1 Jn 3:7–8.

[23] 1 Jn 3:9–13.

[24] DS n. 800.

[25] St. Thomas, *Summa theol.* I q. 63 a. 1.

[26] Cf. 1 Cor 8:6; Jn 1:3.

[27] Is 14:13.

[28] St. Augustine, *De quaestionibus Veteris et Novi Testamenti* q. 113: PL 35, 2345; cf. *Summa theologica cum commentariis Thomae de Vio Card. Caietani* (Rome 1773) vol. 2 p. 142.

[29] St. Thomas, *Summa theol.* I q. 63 a. 3c.

[30] St. Anselm, *De casu diaboli* c. 4: PL 158, 332. Cited by St. Thomas, ibid.

[31] St. Thomas, *Summa theol.* I q. 63 a. 2.

[32] Cf. Mt 25:41.

[33] Cf. Wis 2:24; St. Augustine, *De Genesi ad litteram* bk. 11 c. 14: PL 34, 436; St. Thomas, *Summa theol.* I q. 63 a. 2.

[34] Cf. Gen 3:1–5.

[35] Cf. Gen 3:16–19.

[36] Cf. Gen 3:1–4.

[37] Cf. St. Thomas, *Quaest. disp. de malo* q. 1 a. 3.

[38] Cf. Mt 11:30.

[39] Mt 25:41.

[40] Cf. Ráulica, V., *La Madre de Dios, Madre de los hombres* (Madrid 1853) p. 93.

[41] Lk 1:38.

[42] Cf. Lk 1:41–44.

[43] Cf. Lk 1:41–44.

[44] Cf. Lk 2:22–24.

[45] Cf. Jn 19:25.

[46] Cf. Gen 3:1.

[47] Cf. Gen 3:15.

[48] Cf. Lk 1:31–32.

[49] Cf. Gen 3:5.

[50] Jn 1:12, 14.

[51] Phil 2:6–11.

[52] Cf. Phil 2:5.

[53] Cicero, *Paradoxa* V; *De legibus*.

[54] Cf. Gen 3:2–3.

[55] Lk 2:51.

[56] Cf. Jn 8:31; 15:14.

[57] Cf. Jn 14:6.

[58] Cf. Mt 16:24; Mk 8:34; Lk 9:23.

[59] Cf. Jn 14:6. Cf. *Aut.* n. 694.

[60] Jn 14:6.

[61] God is charity (1 Jn 4:8, 16).

[62] Mt 6:11; Lk 11:3.

[63] Cf. Mt 6:26; Lk 12:24, 27.

[64] Cf. Mt 6:25; Lk 12:22.

[65] Cf. Mt 6:33; Lk 12:31.

[66] Jn 6:32–35, 51–58.

[67] Cf. *Aut.* n. 549. Cf. *Pastoral al clero* \[Santiago 1852\] p. 32.

[68] If you seek, seek (Is 21:12).

[69] The divine word written and handed on (cf. DS n. 3011).

[70] 1 Tim 3:15.

[71] PL 42, 176.

[72] Jn 5:39.

[73] 2 Pet 1:20.

[74] Cf. Mt 10:20.

[75] Mt 28:19–20.

[76] Jn 1:12.

[77] Prov 9:3.

[78] Col 2:8.

[79] Cf. Gen 3:14.

[80] Cf. Rev 12:17.

[81] Cf. 2 Tim 3:12.

[1] Cf. Song 4:4.

[2] Cf. 1 Tim 3:15.

[3] Cf. *La canasta de Moisés* \[Vic 1846\] p. 115. Cf. *Vida buena y mala* \[Barcelona 1851\] p. 31. Cf. *El colegial* \[Barcelona 1861\] vol. 2 pp. 425–426. Cf. *La colegiala* \[Aguado, Madrid 1863\] pp. 374–375.

[4] Gen 3:15.

Conclusion: Commemorative Solemnities

70. A triduum will be celebrated in honour of the three divine persons and in homage to Mary, giving thanks to the Eternal Father for having created Mary His immaculate Daughter, giving thanks to the Son for having taken Mary as His immaculate Mother, and giving thanks to the Holy Spirit for having taken Mary as His

immaculate Spouse. This triduum will take place in all the churches of the diocese on the 13th, 14th and 15th of August of the present year. Each day there will be Mass in the morning and the holy rosary in the afternoon.[1] In this triduum the three chief points of Most Holy Mary will be recalled, which are her immaculate conception, her divine motherhood and her assumption into heaven and coronation in glory;[2] and so on the first day the Mass of the Immaculate Conception will be celebrated, and in the afternoon one part of the rosary will be said, contemplating the joyful mysteries; on the second day the Mass will be of the Annunciation, and in the afternoon the third part of the rosary, contemplating the sorrowful mysteries; and on the third day the Mass will be of the feast of the Assumption itself, and in the afternoon the third part of the rosary will be said, contemplating the glorious mysteries.

This will be common to all the parishes, with more or less solemnity according to the means of the faithful, who, we do not doubt, will all strive to honour their Mother and Lady and give proofs of the great devotion they profess for her. And to stimulate your fervour more and more, we grant eighty days of indulgence for each time you attend any of the functions mentioned; and to those of you who receive the holy sacraments of penance and communion on these three days, we grant double graces. We hope from your piety and religion that you will all prepare and dispose yourselves to receive them, for you know well that this is what most pleases Most Holy Mary.

And since we are at present in this city in the company of our venerable and esteemed chapter, we have agreed with it on the functions and feasts to be celebrated in our holy cathedral church in the following manner. On Sunday the 12th, in the afternoon, we shall go in procession to the church of St. Francis, and we shall bring the image of the Immaculate Conception of Mary, which will be placed in the cathedral, where solemn compline and the Salve will be sung with full orchestra. On the following day, the first of the triduum, we shall preach at the solemn Mass; God willing, on the two following days there will also be a sermon, and on the third day we shall celebrate pontifically. And on all three days we shall give the explanation of the mysteries of the most holy rosary in the afternoon, concluding the exercise with the litany and the Salve, with the attendance of the music chapel.

Receive meanwhile, beloved brothers, our pastoral blessing, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Given at Santiago de Cuba, on the 16th of July 1855.

Antonio María, Archbishop of Cuba

Fr. Claret was a great apostle of the Bible. In 1862 he published a fine handy edition of the Vulgate (LR \[Barcelona\] 894 pp.). In the prologue to that edition, entitled "Dialogue on the Holy Bible," he wrote: "We advise that two (chapters) be read each day in the morning and another two in the afternoon. We also note that, once these chapters have been read, we wish the verses on which we have placed a little hand to be read again, as a sign that they are very important, and we would like them to be learned by heart and always remembered." He gave all the seminaries of Spain five copies of the Bible to be given to the most diligent seminarians (cf. *Aut.* n. 779). In 1856 he made an edition of the Gospel of St. Matthew with ample notes, and in the Cuban years he had the Librería Religiosa publish the Bible translated by Fr. Scío in six volumes (Barcelona 1852–1854), which he gave to all the priests of his archdiocese (cf. *Carta pastoral al clero* \[Santiago 1853\] p. 32). The origin of this apostolate lies in his own experience. It was precisely in the Bible that he discovered his vocation as an apostolic missionary and where he always nourished his spiritual life (cf. Casals, R., *Devoción a la Sagrada Escritura*: Il. Cl. 28 \[1934\] 237–241; Peinador, M., *La edición de la Vulgata del P. Claret*: Il. Cl. 42 \[1949\] 373–385).

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[1] Cf. *Aut.* nn. 36–48.

[2] Cf. *Apuntes de un plan* \[Madrid ²1865\] pp. 191–193.