

Benedict XV

Health and Apostolic Benediction.

That for which the whole world has long sighed, which Christianity has implored with such fervent prayer, and for which We too, interpreter of the common sorrow, have never ceased to pray with the heart of the father intent on the good of all - that has come in a moment: at last, the clash of arms has ceased. True, peace has not yet in solemn fashion brought to an end the great war, but to peace the road has been opened happily with the Armistice which has, meanwhile, suspended slaughter and devastation by land, sea and air. Many and various reasons could be given to explain the suddenness of this event; but if the supreme reason be sought there is no other way but to look above to Him who rules all events. Moved to compassion by the unceasing prayers of His servants, He now lets humanity breathe again after so many trials and sorrows. While, then, all thanks are being given to the Lord for this wondrous boon, We are glad that many imposing demonstrations of piety have taken place in the Catholic world to that end. It remains now to implore of the divine mercy that the crown be put on the great gift accorded us. Soon the delegates of the various nations will meet in solemn congress to give the world a just and lasting peace; no human assembly has ever had before it such serious and complex determinations as they will have to take.

2. Words, then, are not required to show how great need they have of being illuminated from on high that they may carry out their great task well. And, as their decisions will be of supreme interest to all humanity, there is no doubt that Catholics, for whom the support of order and civil progress is a duty of conscience, must invoke Divine assistance for all who take part in the peace conference. We desire that that duty be brought before all Catholics. Therefore, Venerable Brothers, in order that there may come from the Congress shortly to be held that great gift of heaven, true peace founded on the Christian principles of justice, that enlightenment from the Heavenly father may descend on them, it shall be your care to order public prayers in each parish of your dioceses in the way you may think most convenient. As for Us, representing, however unworthily, Jesus Christ, King of Peace, We shall exert all the influence of Our Apostolic Ministry that the decisions which are to be taken to ensure for ever in the world the tranquility of order and concord be willingly accepted and faithfully carried out by Catholics everywhere.

3. As harbinger of celestial favours and pledge of Our benevolence, to you, Venerable Brethren, and to you, clergy and people, We impart from Our heart the Apostolic Benediction.

Given at Rome at St. Peter's on the 1st day of December, 1918, the fifth year of Our Pontificate.

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