

DECRETAL OF POPE LEO XIII ON THE CHURCH IN BOHEMIA AND MORAVIA

Leo XIII

The notices which daily come to Us about the state of your dioceses and the departure of large numbers from the rites and practices of Catholicism cause Us great sorrow and grief. Certainly We do not doubt that you strenuously apply every argument to repair the misfortunes of the flock entrusted to you and to prevent losses from becoming worse with each day. If the enemies of the faith spare neither labor nor money, and strain with all their might to destroy your flock, you, whom Christ wished to be Pastors, must not be idle; you must use every available means to defend your flock. However, the magnitude of the danger persuades Us to goad the willing. We know, to be sure, that not all of your dioceses are in the same circumstances with regard to the security of the faith; therefore the same means of assistance for preserving the faith cannot be applied everywhere. However, since the danger is a common one, and it is a common fatherland which calls for defense, We think that the very best resolution would be for you to communicate with each other and with united opinion to provide for what must be accomplished and what must be avoided. Therefore it is Our wish that all of you Bishops of Bohemia and Moravia hold a meeting as soon as possible to deliberate concerning the defense of the faith among your countrymen. Naturally you will see to it that the nature of the deliberations and decisions which take place be referred to Us so that they may be sanctioned by the apostolic approval. Moreover, We do not wish to let this opportunity go by without commending to you again most strenuously that you take care to extirpate totally the partisan zeal which causes the holy clergy among you to be split apart; this divides and enervates the forces of those whose union is greatly needed, now especially, for the defense of the faith. May the aid of divine grace be with you in these tasks. As a token of Our love receive the Apostolic Blessing which We most lovingly in the Lord impart to you and your flock.

Given in Rome at St. Peter's, 22 November 1902, in the 25th year of Our Pontificate.

LEO XIII

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Source: vatican.va