



# The Holy See

---

## ***RERUM OMNIUM PERTURBATIONEM***

ENCYCLICAL OF POPE PIUS XI

ON ST. FRANCIS DE SALES

TO OUR VENERABLE BRETHREN THE PATRIARCHS, PRIMATES,

ARCHBISHOPS, BISHOPS, AND OTHER ORDINARIES

IN PEACE AND COMMUNION WITH THE APOSTOLIC SEE.

1. In Our recent encyclical We examined the disorders with which the world today struggles for the purpose of discovering a sure remedy for such great evils. At that time We pointed out that the roots of these evils lie in the souls of men and that the sole hope of curing them is to have recourse to the assistance of the Divine Healer Jesus Christ by the means which He has placed at the disposal of His Holy Church. The great need of our day is to curb the unmeasured desires of mankind, desires which are the fundamental cause of wars and dissensions, which act, too, as a dissolving force in social life and in international relations. It is no less necessary to turn back the minds of men from the passing things of this world to those which are eternal, which latter unhappily are too often neglected by the great majority of mankind. If every individual would resolve faithfully to live up to his obligations, a great social improvement would be realized almost immediately. Such an improvement is precisely the objective of the teachings and ministry of the Church, for her special mission is to instruct mankind by the preaching of truths which have been divinely revealed and to sanctify them by means of the grace of God. By the use of these methods she hopes to call back civil society to ways conformable to the spirit of Christ which once upon a time we followed. This she feels impelled to do as often as she finds society straying from the paths of righteousness.

2. The Church is most successful in this work of sanctification when it is possible for her, through the mercy of God, to hold up to the imitation of the faithful one or other of her dearest children who has made himself conspicuous by the practice of every virtue. This work of sanctification is of the very genius of the Church, since she was made by Christ, her Founder, not only holy herself but the source of holiness in others. All who accept the guidance of her ministry should, by the command of God, do everything in their power to sanctify their own lives. As St. Paul says, "This is the will of God, your sanctification." (I *Thess.* iv, 3) Christ Himself has taught what this sanctification consists in - "Be ye therefore perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect." (*Matt.* v, 48)

3. We cannot accept the belief that this command of Christ concerns only a select and privileged group of souls and that all others may consider themselves pleasing to Him if they have attained a lower degree of holiness. Quite the contrary is true, as appears from the very generality of His words. The law of holiness embraces all men and admits of no exception. The great number of souls of every condition in life, both young and old, who as history informs us have reached the zenith of Christian perfection, these saints felt in themselves the weaknesses of human nature and had to conquer the selfsame temptations as we. So true is this that as St. Augustine has so beautifully written, "God does not ask the impossible of us. But when He does order us to do something He, by His very commands, admonishes us to do that which we are able to do and to ask from Him for assistance in that which we are not of ourselves able to do." (*de Natura et Gratia*, Chap. 43, No. 50.)

4. The solemn commemoration last year of the third centenary of the canonization of five great saints - Ignatius Loyola, Francis Xavier, Philip Neri, Teresa of Jesus, and Isidore the Farmer - helped greatly, Venerable Brothers, toward reawakening among the faithful a love for the Christian life. We are now happily called upon to celebrate the Third Centenary of the entrance into heaven of another great saint, one who was remarkable not only for the sublime holiness of life which he achieved but also for the wisdom with which he directed souls in the ways of sanctity. This saint was no less a person than Francis de Sales, Bishop of Geneva and Doctor of the Universal Church. Like those brilliant examples of Christian perfection and wisdom to whom We have just referred, he seemed to have been sent especially by God to contend against the heresies begotten by the Reformation. It is in these heresies that we discover the beginnings of that apostasy of mankind from the Church, the sad and disastrous effects of which are deplored, even to the present hour, by every fair mind. What is more, it appears that Francis de Sales was given to the Church by God for a very special mission. His task was to give the lie to a prejudice which in his lifetime was deeply rooted and has not been destroyed even today, that the ideal of genuine sanctity held up for our imitation by the Church is impossible of attainment or, at best, is so difficult that it surpasses the capabilities of the great majority of the faithful and is, therefore, to be thought of as the exclusive possession of a few great souls. St. Francis likewise disproved the false idea that holiness was so hedged around by annoyances and hardships that it is inadaptable to a life lived outside cloister walls.

5. Our esteemed Predecessor, Benedict XV, referring to the five saints We have spoken of, also made mention of the approaching Centenary of the death of Francis de Sales and expressed the hope of writing particularly of him in an encyclical addressed to the whole world. Gladly We will try to fulfill this as well as the other wishes of Our Predecessor, for We look upon them as a sacred heritage left Us by him. In this particular matter We follow his desires all the more willingly since We expect from this Centenary no less marvelous fruits than those which accompanied the feasts which have preceded it.

6. Whoever attentively reviews the life of St. Francis will discover that, from his earliest years, he was a model of sanctity. He was not a gloomy, austere saint but was most amiable and friendly with all, so much so that it can be said of him most truthfully, "her conversation (wisdom) hath no bitterness, nor her company any tediousness, but joy and gladness." (*Wisdom*, viii, 16) Endowed with every virtue, he excelled in meekness of heart, a virtue so peculiar to himself that it might be considered his most characteristic trait. His meekness, however, differed altogether from that artificial gentility which consists in the mere possession of polished manners and in the display of a purely conventional affability. It differed, too, both from the apathy which cannot be moved by any force and from the timidity which does not dare to become indignant, even when indignation is required of one. This virtue, which grew in the heart of St. Francis as a

delightful effect of his love of God and was nourished by the spirit of compassion and tenderness, so tempered with sweetness the natural gravity of his demeanor and softened both his voice and manners that he won the affectionate regard of everyone whom he encountered.

7. No less well known are the ease and amiability with which he received everyone. Sinners and apostates especially flocked to his house in order, with his help, to become reconciled to God and to amend their lives. He was most partial to unfortunate prisoners whom he, by a hundred artifices of charity, sought to console during his frequent visits to the prisons. He likewise showed great kindness to his own servants, whose sloth and gaucheries he bore with heroic patience. His kindness of heart never varied, no matter who the persons were with whom he had to deal, the hour of the day, the trying circumstances he had to meet. Not even heretics, who often proved themselves very offensive, ever found him a bit less affable or less accessible. Indeed, his zeal was so great that during the first year of his priesthood, he attempted, despite the opposition of his own father, to reconcile the people of La Chablais to the Church. In this he was gladly seconded by Granier, the Bishop of Geneva. To accomplish this work, he refused no duty whatsoever, he fled no danger, not even that of possible death. His imperturbable kindness stood him in better stead in effecting the conversion of so many thousands of people than even the broad learning and wonderful eloquence which characterized his performance of the many duties of the sacred ministry.

8. He was accustomed to repeat to himself, as a source of inspiration, that well known phrase, "Apostles battle by their sufferings and triumph only in death." It is almost unbelievable with what vigor and constancy he defended the cause of Jesus Christ among the people of La Chablais. In order to bring them the light of faith and the comforts of the Christian religion, he was known to have traveled through deep valleys and to have climbed steep mountains. If they fled him, he pursued, calling after them loudly. Repulsed brutally, he never gave up the struggle; when threatened he only renewed his efforts. He was often put out of lodgings, at which times he passed the night asleep on the snow under the canopy of heaven. He would celebrate Mass though no one would attend. When, during a sermon, almost the entire audience one after another left the Church, he would continue preaching. At no time did he ever lose his mental poise or his spirit of kindness toward these ungrateful hearers. It was by such means as these that he finally overcame the resistance of his most formidable adversaries.

9. One would err, however, if he imagined that such a character as St. Francis de Sales possessed was a gift of nature, bestowed on him by the grace of God "with the blessing of meekness," as we so often read to have been the case of other blessed souls. On the contrary, Francis naturally was hot-tempered and easily aroused to anger. Since he had vowed to take as his model Jesus Who has said, "Learn of me, because I am meek, and humble of heart" (*Matt. xi, 29*) so, by means of constant watchfulness over himself and of violence to his own will, he succeeded in learning how to curb and to control to such an extent the promptings of nature that he became a living likeness of the God of Peace and Meekness. This fact is proven amply by the testimony of the physicians who prepared his body for burial for when, as we read, they embalmed the body, they found his bile turned into stone which had been broken up into the smallest imaginable particles. They knew from this strange occurrence what terrible efforts it must have cost our Saint, over a period of fifty years, to conquer his naturally irritable temper.

10. The meekness of St. Francis was therefore an effect of his tremendous will power, constantly strengthened by his lively faith and the fires of divine love which burned within him. Certainly, to him We can apply the words of Holy

Scripture, "Out of the strong came forth sweetness." (*Judges xiv, 14*) Is it any wonder, then that this "pastoral kindness" which he possessed and which, according to St. John Chrysostom "is more violent than virtue" (*Homily 58 on Genesis*) possessed the power to attract hearts in that very measure of success which Christ Himself has promised to the meek - "Blessed are the meek: for they shall possess the land." (*Matt. v, 4*)

11. On the other hand, the great strength of will of this model of meekness manifested itself whenever he was compelled to stand in opposition to the powerful in order to protect the interests of God, the dignity of the Church, or the salvation of souls. Thus, on one occasion when he had received a letter in which he was threatened by the Senate of Chambery with the loss of part of his income, he lost no time in defending the immunity of the Church's rights from this act of civil interference. He not only replied to the envoy sent him in a manner befitting his own high rank, but did not cease demanding reparation for the injury done until after he had received full satisfaction from the Senate. Equally firm was he when he dared face the anger of the Prince, before whom both he and his brethren had been falsely accused. Nor was he less vigorous in resisting the interference of statesmen in the bestowing of ecclesiastical benefices. Finally, when every other method had failed, he excommunicated those who persistently refused to pay their tithes to the Chapter of Geneva. He was in the habit, too, of reproaching with evangelical frankness the vices of the people and of unmasking the hypocrisy which tried to simulate virtue and piety. Although he was more respectful than possibly anyone else toward his sovereigns, he never for an instant stooped to flatter their passions or to bow down before their haughty pretensions.

12. Let us now see, Venerable Brothers, how St. Francis, who was himself such a loving model of holiness, showed to others by his writings the sure and easy path to Christian perfection, in this also imitating Christ, Who "began to do and to teach." (*Acts i, 1*)

13. St. Francis published many works of piety, among which we may single out his two best known books, *Philothea - An Introduction to the Devout Life* and *The Treatise on the Love of God*. In the *Introduction to the Devout Life* St. Francis, after showing clearly how hardness of heart discourages one in the practice of virtue and is altogether foreign to genuine piety (he does not strip piety of that severity which is in harmony with the Christian manner of life) then sets himself expressly to prove that holiness is perfectly possible in every state and condition of secular life, and to show how each man can live in the world in such a manner as to save his own soul, provided only he keeps himself free from the spirit of the world.

14. At the same time we learn from the Saint how not only to perform the customary acts of everyday life, (with the exception, of course, of sin) but also a fact which all do not know, how to do these things correctly with the sole intention of pleasing God. He teaches us to observe the social conventions which he calls one of the charming effects of virtuous living, not to destroy our natural inclinations but to conquer them so that little by little without too much effort, like the dove, if by chance there has not been granted us the strength of the eagle, we may raise ourselves even to heaven itself. What the Saint means by this metaphor is that if we are not called to an extraordinary personal perfection, nevertheless we can attain holiness by sanctifying the actions of everyday life.

15. He wrote at all times in a dignified but facile style, varied now and then by a marvelous acuteness in thought and grace of expression, and by reason of these qualities his writings have proven themselves quite agreeable reading. After having pointed out how we must flee sin, fight against our evil inclinations, and avoid all useless and harmful actions, he

then goes on expounding the nature of those practices of piety which cause the soul to grow, as well as how it is possible for man to remain ever united to God. Following this, he shows how necessary it is to select out a special virtue for constant practice on our part until we can say that we have mastered it. He writes, too, on the individual virtues, on modesty, on moral and immoral language, on licit and dangerous amusements, on fidelity to God, on the duties of husband and wife, of widows, and of young women.

16. Finally, he teaches us how not only to conquer dangers, temptations, and the allurements of pleasure, but how every year it is necessary for each of us to renew and to rekindle his love of God by the making of holy resolutions. May it please God that this book, the most perfect of its kind in the opinion of contemporaries of the Saint, be read now as it formerly was by practically every one. If this were done, Christian piety certainly would flourish the world over and the Church of God could rejoice in the assurance of a widespread attainment of holiness by her children.

17. *The Treatise on the Love of God*, however, is a much more important and significant book than any of the others he published. In this work the saintly Doctor gives a veritable history of the love of God, explaining its origin and development among men, at the same time showing how divine love begins to cool and then to languish. He also outlines the methods of developing and of growing in the love of God. When necessary he even goes deeply into explanations of the most difficult problems as, for example, that of efficacious grace, predestination, and the gift of faith. This he does not do dryly but, by reason of the agile and well-stored mind which he possessed, in such a way that his discussions abound in most beautiful language and are filled with an equally desirable function. He was also accustomed to illustrate his thoughts by an almost infinite variety of metaphors, examples, and quotations taken from the most part from the Holy Scriptures, all of which gave the impression that what he wrote flowed no less from this heart and the depths of his being than from his intellect.

18. The principles of the spiritual life which are treated in the above-mentioned two books were also turned to the profit of souls by his daily ministry, the spiritual direction which he gave, and by the admirable *Letters* which he wrote. He applied the selfsame spiritual principles to the direction of the Sisters of the Visitation, which institution founded by him has preserved most faithfully, even to our own times, his spirit. The atmosphere of this particular religious community is one of moderation and loving kindness in all things. It was organized to receive young women, widows, and married women who, because of their weakness, illness, or advanced age, are physically unequal to the tasks which their religious fervor would gladly impose on them. For this reason they are not obligated to long vigils or to the changing of the holy office, neither are they required to undergo strict penances and mortifications. They are only held to the observance of their rule which is so mild and easy that all the Sisters, even those in poor health, are able to follow it.

19. But this very mildness and simplicity which characterize their rule ought to inspire the observance of it with such great love of God that the Sisters who glory in their title, Daughters of St. Francis de Sales, may become known for their perfect abnegation of self and for their humble obedience at all times. They, therefore, should do everything possible to acquire a solid and not a merely superficial virtue and to die always to themselves in order to live only for God. Is there anyone who cannot recognize in their manner of life that union of strength and meekness which is so much to be admired in St. Francis himself, their holy Founder?

20. It is necessary to pass over in silence many of the other writings of St. Francis in which however we may no less

discover "that heaven-sent doctrine which, like a stream of living water, has watered the vineyard of the Lord . . . and has helped greatly in achieving the well-being of the people of God." (*Apostolic Letter* of Pius IX, 16 Nov. 1877) But, We cannot afford not to speak of his work entitled *Controversies*, in which unquestionably there is to be found a "full and complete demonstration of the truth of the Catholic Religion." (*Apostolic Letter* of Pius IX, 16 Nov. 1877)

21. The circumstances surrounding the mission of St. Francis to La Chablais are well known to you, Venerable Brothers, for when, towards the close of 1593, as we learn from history, the Duke of Savoy concluded a truce with the inhabitants of Berne and Geneva, nothing was thought more important in order to reconcile the population to the Church than to send them zealous and learned preachers who, by the persuasive force of their eloquence, would slowly but surely win back these people to their allegiance to the Faith.

22. The first missionary sent deserted the held of battle, either because he despaired of converting these heretics or because he feared them. But St. Francis de Sales who, as We have pointed out, had already offered himself for missionary work to the Bishop of Geneva, started on foot in September, 1594, without food or money, and accompanied by no one except a cousin of his, to take up this work. It was only after long and repeated fasts and prayers to God, by Whose aid alone he expected his mission to be successful, that he attempted to enter the country of the heretics. They, however, would not listen to his sermons. He sought then to refute their erroneous doctrines by means of loose leaflets which he wrote in the intervals between his sermons. These leaflets were distributed about in great quantities and passed from hand to hand with the object of having them find their way into the possession of the heretics.

23. This work of spreading about leaflets, however, gradually decreased and ceased altogether when the people of these parts in large numbers began to attend his sermons. These leaflets, written by the hand of the holy Doctor himself, were lost for a time after his death. Later, they were found and collected in a volume and presented to Our Predecessor, Alexander VII, who had the happiness, after the customary process of canonization, of ascribing St. Francis first among the blessed, and later among the saints.

24. In his *Controversies*, although the holy Doctor made large use of the polemical literature of the past, he exhibits nevertheless a controversial method quite peculiarly his own. In the first place, he proves that no authority can be said to exist in the Church of Christ unless it had been bestowed on her by an authoritative mandate, which mandate the ministers of heretical beliefs in no way can be said to possess. After having pointed out the errors of these latter concerning the nature of the Church, he outlines the notes of the true Church and proves that they are not to be found in the reformed churches, but in the Catholic Church alone. He also explains in a sound manner the *Rule of Faith* and demonstrates that it is broken by heretics, while on the other hand it is kept in its entirety by Catholics. In conclusion, he discusses several special topics, but only those leaflets which treat of the Sacraments and of Purgatory are not extant. In truth, the many explanations of doctrine and the arguments which he has marshaled in orderly array, are worthy of all praise. With these arguments, to which must be added a subtle and polished irony that characterizes his controversial manner, he easily met his adversaries and defeated all their lies and fallacies.

25. Although at times his language appears to be somewhat strong, nevertheless, as even his opponents admitted, his writings always breathe a spirit of charity which was ever the controlling motive in every controversy in which he engaged. This is so true that even when he reproached these erring children for their apostasy from the Catholic Church,

it is evident that he had no other purpose in mind than to open wide the gates by which they might return to the Faith. In the *Controversies* one readily perceives that same broad-mindedness and magnanimity of soul which permeate the books he wrote with the purpose of promoting piety. Finally, his style is so elegant, so polished, so impressive that the heretical ministers were accustomed to warn their followers against being deceived and won over by the flatteries of the missionary from Geneva.

26. After this brief resume of the work and writings of St. Francis de Sales, Venerable Brothers, it only remains to exhort you to celebrate his Centenary as worthily as possible in your dioceses. We do not wish that this Centenary should become a mere commemoration of certain events of history which would turn out a purely sterile function, neither that it should be restricted to a few selected days. We do desire that, throughout the whole year and up to the twenty-eighth of December, the day when St. Francis passed from earth to heaven, you do everything possible to instruct the faithful in doctrines and virtues which characterized the holy Doctor.

27. First of all, you should make known and even explain with all diligence this encyclical both to your clergy and to the people committed to your care. Particularly We are most desirous that you do all in your power to call back the faithful to their duty of practicing the obligations and virtues proper to each one's state in life, since even in our own times the number is very large who never think of eternity and who neglect almost totally the salvation of their souls. Some are so immersed in business that they think of nothing but accumulating riches and, by consequences, the spiritual life ceases to exist for them. Others give themselves up entirely to the satisfaction of their passions and thus fall so low that they, with difficulty if at all, are able to appreciate anything which transcends the life of sense. Finally, there are many who give their every thought to politics, and this to such an extent, that while they are completely devoted to the welfare of the public, they forget altogether one thing, the welfare of their own souls. Because of these facts, Venerable Brothers, do you endeavor, following the example of St. Francis, to instruct thoroughly the faithful in the truth that holiness of life is not the privilege of a select few. All are called by God to a state of sanctity and all are obliged to try to attain it. Teach them, too, that the acquisition of virtue, although it cannot be done without much labor (such labor has its own compensations, the spiritual consolations and joys which always accompany it) it is possible for everyone with the aid of God's grace, which is never denied us.

28. The meekness of St. Francis should be held up to the faithful in a very special way for their imitation, for this virtue recalls to our minds so well and expresses so truly the kindness of Jesus Christ. It possesses, too, in a remarkable degree the power to bind souls one to another. This virtue, wherever it is practiced among men, tends primarily to settle the differences both public and private which so often separate us. Likewise can we not hope that, through the practice of this virtue which we rightly call the external sign of the inner possession of divine love, there will result perfect peace and concord both in family life and among nations?

29. If human society were motivated by meekness, would this not become a powerful ally to the apostolate, as it is called, of the clergy and laity which has for its end-purpose the bettering of the world?

30. You can easily see, therefore, how important it is for the Christian people to turn to the example of holiness given by St. Francis, so that they may be edified thereby and may make his teachings the rule of their own lives. It would be impossible to exaggerate the value of his books and pamphlets, of which We have written, to attain this purpose. These

books ought to be distributed as widely as possible among Catholics, for his writings are easy to understand and can be read with great pleasure. They cannot but inspire in the souls of the faithful a love of true and solid piety, a love which the clergy can develop with most happy results if they but learn to assimilate thoroughly the teachings of St. Francis and to imitate the kindly qualities which characterized his preaching.

31. Venerable Brothers, history informs us that Our Predecessor, Clement VIII, in his time, anticipated Our conclusion that it would be a wonderful aid to the furthering of piety if the sermons and writings of St. Francis were brought to the attention of Christian peoples. This Pontiff, in the presence of Cardinals and other learned personages, after having gone deeply into the extent of the theological knowledge of St. Francis, who was then a bishop - elect, was seized with such admiration for him that he embraced him with great affection and addressed him in the following words: "Go, Son, 'drink water out of thy own cistern, and the streams of thy own well; let thy fountains be conveyed abroad, and in the streets divide thy waters'." (*Prov. v, 15, 16*)

32. In fact, St. Francis preached so well that his sermons were but "an exposition of the grace and power which dwelt within his own soul." His sermons, since they were largely made up of the teachings of the Bible and of the Fathers, became not only a source of sound doctrine but were agreeable and persuasive to his hearers as well by reason of the sweetness of the love which filled his heart. It is not surprising then that such a great number of heretics returned to the Church because of his work and that, following the guidance of such a teacher, so many of the faithful have, during the last three hundred years, attained a truly high degree of perfection.

33. It is Our wish that the greatest fruits should be gained from this solemn Centenary by those Catholics who as journalists and writers expound, spread, and defend the doctrines of the Church. It is necessary that they, in their writings, imitate and exhibit at all times that strength joined always to moderation and charity, which was the special characteristic of St. Francis. He, by his example, teaches them in no uncertain manner precisely how they should write. In the first place, and this the most important of all, each writer should endeavor in every way and as far as this may be possible to obtain a complete comprehension of the teachings of the Church. They should never compromise where the truth is involved, nor, because of fear of possibly offending an opponent, minimize or dissimulate it. They should pay particular attention to literary style and should try to express their thoughts clearly and in beautiful language so that their readers will the more readily come to love the truth. When it is necessary to enter into controversy, they should be prepared to refute error and to overcome the wiles of the wicked, but always in a way that will demonstrate clearly that they are animated by the highest principles and moved only by Christian charity.

34. Since St. Francis, up to this time, has not been named the Patron of Writers in any solemn and public document of this Apostolic See, We take this happy occasion, after mature deliberation and in full knowledge, by Our Apostolic authority, to hereby publish, confirm and declare by this encyclical, everything to the contrary notwithstanding, St. Francis de Sales, Bishop of Geneva and Doctor of the Church, to be the Heavenly Patron of all Writers.

35. In order that the celebrations attending this Centenary should turn out to be both splendid and fruitful, Venerable Brothers, it would be well that there should be supplied to your flocks all those pious helps which will lead them to honor, with the veneration which is due him, this great light of the Church. May they, by his intercession, their souls purified from the stain of sin and fed at the table of the Eucharist, be led gently but forcefully to the acquiring of holiness, and that in a



very short time. See to it, therefore, that in your episcopal cities and in every parish of your dioceses that some time during the course of this year, up to December twenty-eighth inclusive, a triduum or a novena be held, during which sermons should be preached, for it is all-important that the people be well instructed in those truths which, under the guidance of St. Francis, cannot but raise the level of their spiritual lives. We leave it to your zeal to commemorate in any other way you think best the good works of this saintly bishop.

36. Meanwhile, for the good of souls, We grant, from the treasury of holy indulgences confided by God to Our custody, to all those who assist piously at the functions celebrated in honor of St. Francis, an indulgence of seven years and seven quarantines daily. On the last day of these functions, or on any other day one may choose, We grant, under the customary conditions, a plenary indulgence. In order to bestow a very special mark of Our affection on the Convent of the Sisters of the Visitation at Annecy, where the body of St. Francis rests - on the very altar over his body We have with great spiritual joy celebrated Mass - and on the Convent of Treviso where his heart is preserved, and on all other Visitation Convents, We grant during the functions which they will hold every month in thanksgiving to God, and over and above these days, on the twenty-eighth of December, but only for this particular year, to all who make the customary visits to their churches, the plenary indulgence, provided they confess and receive Holy Communion and pray according to Our intention.

37. We ask that you, Venerable Brothers, exhort your flocks to pray to the Holy Doctor for Us. Grant, O God, whose pleasure it is that We should govern His Church in these perilous times, that, under the patronage of St. Francis de Sales, who was gifted with a truly remarkable love and reverence for this Apostolic See and who, in the *Controversies* defended most valiantly its rights and its authority, it may happily come to pass that as many as are separated from the law and love of Christ shall return to the green pastures of the life eternal, that thus there may be given Us the opportunity to embrace them in unity and in the kiss of peace.

38. In the meanwhile, as a pledge of everlasting favors to come and in testimony of Our fatherly affection, We impart most lovingly to you, Venerable Brothers, to all your clergy, and to your people, the Apostolic Blessing.

Given at Rome, at St. Peter's, the twenty-sixth day of January, in the year 1923, the first of Our Pontificate.

**PIUS XI**

*© Copyright - Libreria Editrice Vaticana*