

THE ENCYCLICAL OF LEO XIII PROVIDENTISSIMUS DEUS

In November 1893, Pope Leo XIII penned his most famous encyclical, entitled Providentissimus Deus. It was addressed to priests and bishops throughout the world, on the study of Sacred Scripture by the laity. It included the following passages: "1. DOCTRINAL.—Among the reasons for which the Holy Scripture is so worthy of commendation—in addition to its own excellence and to the homage which we owe to God's Word—the chief of all, is the innumerable benefits of which it is the source; according to the infallible testimony of the Holy Ghost Himself, who says: 'All Scripture, inspired of God, is profitable to teach, to reprove, to correct, to instruct in justice: that the man of God may be perfect, furnished to every good work' (2 Timothy 3:16-17). "a. Words and Example of Christ. That such was the purpose of God in giving the Scriptures to men is shown by the example of Christ our Lord and of His apostles. For He Himself who 'obtained authority by miracles, merited belief by authority, and by belief drew to Himself the multitude' was accustomed, in the exercise of His divine mission, to appeal to Scriptures. He uses them at times to prove that He is sent by God, and is God Himself. From them He cites instructions for His disciples and confirmation of His doctrine. He vindicates them from the calumnies of objectors; He quotes them against Sadducees and Pharisees and retorts from them upon Satan himself when he dares to tempt Him. At the close of His life His utterances are from the Holy Scriptures, and it is the Scriptures that He expounds to His disciples after His resurrection, until He ascends to the glory of His Father." Pope Leo XIII in his encyclical further states that Christ made use of the Scriptures and that He is our example: "We, therefore, should follow His example by being conversant with the Holy Scriptures." The pope even granted an indulgence for reading the Bible: " 'Pope Leo XIII grants to the faithful who shall read for at least a quarter of an hour the books of the Sacred Scripture with the veneration due to the

Divine Word and as spiritual reading, indulgence of 300 days.' "—Providentissimus Deus, 645.

THE ENCYCLICAL OF BENEDICT XV SPIRITUS PARACLITUS

Pope Benedict XV wrote his encyclical, Spiritus Paraclitus (September 15, 1920), on the importance of regular study of Holy Scripture by everyone. These excerpts are worthy of prayerful consideration by every Catholic: "The Holy Spirit, the Comforter, had bestowed the Scriptures on the human race for their instruction in Divine things. He also raised up in successive ages saintly and learned men whose task it should be to develop the treasure and so provide for the faithful plenteous 'consolation afforded by the Scriptures' (Romans 15:4). Foremost among these teachers stands St. Jerome . . . The responsibility of our Apostolic office impels us to set before you his wonderful example and so promote the study of Holy Scripture in accordance with the teachings of our predecessors, Leo XIII and Pius X. "And none can fail to see what profit and sweet tranquillity must result in well-disposed souls from such devout reading of the Bible. Whoever comes to it in piety, faith and humility, and with a determination to make progress in it, will assuredly find therein and will eat the 'bread that comes down from heaven' (St. John 6:50). "Hence, as far as in us lies, we, Venerable Brethren, shall, with St. Jerome as our guide, never desist from urging the faithful to read daily the Gospels, the Acts and the epistles, so as to gather thence food for their souls . . . But what, in his view, is the goal of such study? First, that from the Bible's pages we learn spiritual...

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MOBILE: 0404 881 885. INTERNATIONAL: 61 404 881 885. WEB SITE:

www.freeliteraturemultimedia.org EMAIL: freeliteraturemultimedia@gmail.com

POSTAL ADDRESS: P.O. BOX 220, MUNDARING, WESTERN AUSTRALIA, 6073.



There are in use today several approved Roman Catholic versions of the Holy Scriptures, but the primary one is the Rheims-Douai (commonly known as the Douai or Douay). Only Church-approved versions are used throughout this book. Unless otherwise stated, Scripture quotations are taken from the Rheims-Douai. References within brackets (generally referring to verses in the book of Psalms) indicate verse locations in other Church-approved translations. "For God so loved the world, as to give His only begotten Son; that whosoever believeth Him, may not perish, but may have life everlasting." — St. John 3:16. **DEDICATION TO ALL THOSE WHO LOVE THE BLESSED VIRGIN WHO BORE OUR LORD AND SAVIOUR. MAY THE BLESSING OF THE ALMIGHTY REST ON THOSE WHO READ THE BOOK AND DRAW COMFORT AND STRENGTH FROM ITS PAGES. THE SONG OF THE BLESSED**

VIRGIN ET AIT MARIA MAGNIFICAT ANIMA MEA DOMINUM ET EXULTAVIT SPIRITUS MEUS IN DEO SALUTARI MEOQUIA RESPEXIT HUMILITATEM ANCILLAE SUAE ECCE ENIM EX HOC BEATAMME DICENT OMNES GENERATIONES QUIA FECIT MIHI MAGNA QUI POTENS EST ET SANCTUM NOMEN EIUS ET MISERICORDIA EIUS IN PROGENIES ET PROGENIES TIMENTIBUS EUM FECIT POTENTIAM IN BRACHIO SUO DISPERSIT SUPERBOS MENTE CORDIS SUI DEPOSUIT POTENTES DE SEDE ET EXALTAVIT HUMILES ESURIENTES IMPLEVIT BONIS ET DIVITES DIMISIT INANES SUSCEPIT ISRAHEL PUERUM SUUM MEMORARI MISERICORDIAE SICUT LOCUTUS EST AD PATRES NOSTROS ABRAHAM ET SEMINI EIUS IN SAECULA ST. Luke 1:46-55 LATIN VULGATE, A.D. 405 CONTENTS

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"Behold a Virgin shall be with child, and bring forth a Son, and they shall call His name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us." — St. Matthew 1:23 "And may my God supply all your want, according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus." — Philippians 4:19 "He that spared not even His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how hath He not also, with Him, freely given us all things?" — Romans 8:32 "The Lord is good and giveth strength in the day of trouble: and knoweth them that hope in Him." — Nahum 1:7 "For I am sure that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor might, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." — Romans 8:38-39 "Knowing that the trying of your faith worketh patience . . . Blessed is the man that endureth temptation; for when he hath been proved, he shall receive the crown of life, which God hath promised to them that love Him." — James 1:3, 12 "My help is from the Lord, who made heaven and earth . . . The Lord is thy keeper, the Lord is thy protection upon thy right hand." — Psalm 119:2, 5 [Psalm 120:2, 5]

THE CHURCH DIRECTS US TO SCRIPTURE

The Church directs us to the Holy Scriptures. As we study it, the Sacred Writings direct us to our Lord. Coming to Him, we praise Him for His marvelous mercy to the children of men.

"The Church of Jesus Christ, by virtue of her divinely endowed infallibility, vouches for the

divine origin of the Sacred Scriptures, and as such we respectfully, but confidently, submit them to the public." — His Eminence James Cardinal Gibbons, Preface, p. 2, of the Holy Bible, Douay Version

"To be ignorant of the Scripture is not to know Christ." — St. Jerome, Isaiah Prologue

"A man who is well grounded in the testimonies of the Scripture is the bulwark of the Church." — St. Jerome, Isaiah 54:12

"Often read the divine Scriptures; yea, let holy reading be always in thy hand; study that which thou thyself must preach . . . Let the speech of the priest be ever seasoned with Scripture reading." — St. Jerome, in Epistle to Nepotian S. Hier. de vita cleric, ad Nepot

"Those who are zealous in the work of preaching must never cease the study of the written Word of God." — St. Gregory the Great M. Regul. past. ii. 11 (al. 22) Moral. xvii. 26 (al. 14)

"For I know the thoughts that I think towards you, saith the Lord, thoughts of peace, and not of affliction, to give you an end and patience." — Jeremias 29:11 "He that feareth man shall quickly fall. He that trusteth in the Lord, shall be set on high." — Proverbs 29:25 "As many as received Him, He gave them power to be made the sons of God, to them that believe in His name." — St. John 1:12 "The meek shall inherit the land, and shall delight in abundance of peace . . . The salvation of the just is from the Lord, and He is their protector in the time of trouble. And the Lord will help them and deliver them." — Psalm 36:11, 39-40 [Psalm 37:11, 39-40]

TWO IMPORTANT ENCYCLICALS

Two important papal encyclicals demand our attention. The first encyclical was written by Pope Leo XIII (February 20, 1878 - July 20, 1903) in the fifteenth year of his reign. It is a profound document, full of meaning. The second was penned by Pope Benedict XV (September 3, 1914 - January 22, 1922) in the sixth year of his papacy. This significant document, from the papal chair, should be viewed with the deepest interest.