

SS CLEMENS XIII A QUO DIE

ON UNITY AMONG CHRISTIANS

A Quo Die

Encyclical of Pope Clement XIII promulgated on September 13, 1758.

Venerable Brothers, Greetings and Apostolic Blessing.

Since that day when the unbelievable and unexpected happened, when God took Our unworthiness and placed it in the Holy See of St. Peter, the summit of all the churches, We have been troubled by a bitter and constant concern. A much heavier burden of sorrow has been placed on Us than We are able to bear. We would certainly have given Ourselves over to weeping if something had not deterred Us from this excessive sadness-something similar to what happened to the most holy prophet, the dynamic leader of Israel. Moses exclaimed to the Lord: "Why do you treat your servant so badly? And why have you placed the weight of all this people on me? I am not able to carry this nation by myself; the weight is too much for me." [1] In order that Moses might not fail in spirit and that he might bear the burden he had assumed, God commanded him to gather seventy men from the elders of Israel. He granted the spirit of Moses to them so that they could be teachers of the people and share the burden with Moses. That same consolation alone sustains Us now, Venerable Brothers. God himself chose you much sooner from among the multitude of the faithful to care for souls. He gave you to Us as Our helpers and assistants. When you were ordained to the episcopacy, He abundantly filled you with His own spirit so that We might be confident in the aid and excellence of God and supported by your singular wisdom. You are on fire to fulfill your duties, and We conclude that much of Our sorrow and concern has been removed. Therefore, in order to find encouragement in our mutual faith [2] and to arouse your sincere mind to remembrance, [3] We write this letter to you. We know that you are ardent and upright against the foul enemy of the human race and have organized yourselves as in a battle line. Nevertheless We exhort you to meet the enemy more quickly and courageously, to wage the war well. Standing in battle, may you fight for the house of Israel. [4]

2. In so many and such dangerous battles, the hope of victory is that much better and that much more certain if we preserve unity in the close bond of peace. [5] Therefore, Venerable Brothers, may your love in all its strength remove from the hearts of the faithful the seeds of any kind of dissension. It is your responsibility that everybody seeks peace, [6] that everybody searches for the elements of peace. [7] The Lord Jesus, a short time before He gave himself up to die, said to His apostles, "Peace I give you; my own peace I give you." [8] He does not leave the inheritance of peace only to the apostles, but also to us. He says "Not only for these but for those also who through their words will believe in me. May they all be one, Father, may they be one in us as you are in me and I am in you." [9] Venerable Brothers, see to it that by eliminating spiritual dissensions, we constantly and continually preserve so great and so precious an inheritance which the Lord Jesus transmitted to us. The apostle says that the Holy Spirit is a pledge of this inheritance. When we place ourselves before Him and beseech Him to make holy the sacrifice of the Church, we ask nothing more than that the bond of love be preserved unbroken in the Church by spiritual grace. It is good for us all to remember that when the Lord asked "who do men say the Son of Man is" and whom the disciples believed He was, they answered that there were various opinions about Him. But St. Peter confessed that He was the son of the living God, not revealed by flesh and blood but by the Father. [10]

3. From this, you can easily see that there is a difference between the sons of light and the sons of the world. The latter disagree among themselves with various and diverse opinions, while the former, initiated into the mysteries of unity, profess the one faith of all by the mouth of one, through the head of all. Therefore, concentrate all your attention on increasing peace among the faithful. Uproars, contentions, rivalries, animosities, and dissensions should be silenced. [11] In this way those who go by the name of Catholic can all be perfect in the same sense, in the same opinion, [12] saying the same thing together, [13] knowing the same thing and understanding it thoroughly. They should understand that if they want to be members of Christ, they cannot have concord with the head if they want to be in disagreement with the members. Nor can those who have not lived in fraternal love be counted as brothers by the Almighty Father.

4. The apostle shows us remarkable signs of love and reliable pointers, so that nobody strays in a matter which contains the salvation of the human race. He says: "Love is patient and kind; it is never jealous; love is never boastful or conceited; it is never rude or selfish; it does not take offense and is not resentful." [14] From this, we should clearly understand that where love is absent, there reigns that malice which we men have brought about from the beginning of the human race. Arrogance and proud contempt, stubbornness and avarice, intolerance and ambition, envy and the inordinate desire for glory-these and other depravities of the spirit flare up from this like the torches of our soul. All of these things are produced by the corruption of lust in the world. [15]

5. Let swelling of the spirit and stubborn customs depart from episcopal government. We who say we dwell in Christ should walk just as He walked. [16] We should not seek an example anywhere else than from the Lord Jesus, whom we should imitate. For when the disagreement among the disciples arose about who should be reckoned the greatest, He said: "Among pagans it is the kings who lord it over them. This must not happen with you. No; the greatest among you must behave as the least; the leader as if he were the one who serves. Here I am among you as one who serves." [17] Therefore, just as the Lord Jesus Christ forbade the apostles to rule, we believe that we have come not to rule the Church but to serve it. May we concentrate all our thoughts, labors, and counsels to that purpose, so that we might preserve safe and sound in the Church those sheep entrusted to us by the Lord. We should desire nothing more than their welfare.

6. Therefore, elders, We speak to you in the words of the prince of the apostles: "I am an elder myself and a witness to the sufferings of Christ, and with you I have a share in the glory that is to be revealed. Be shepherds of the flock of God." [18] Watch over the sheep, not like the hired hand who sees the wolf coming, abandons them, and runs away, [19] but gladly, because God wants it. [20] Be like the shepherd who gives his life for his sheep, [21] not for sordid money but freely. [22] Do not lord over the

clergy, but become examples for the flock. There is no more offensive or dangerous poison than the desire to rule. If a bishop is corrupted by this, it is inevitable that the church entrusted to him will be shaken, if not destroyed. Therefore, a bishop should not want to be powerful, but rather to be useful. Having made himself an example for the flock, he should like a torch radiate blameless conduct, moral integrity, piety, and religion. When the people see this, they will walk happily and quickly in the way of the Lord, for they will see that they have been given a leader and not a master.

7. It is especially characteristic of love to be lifted up with joy when someone in the Church of God flourishes in piety and learning, someone who longs to save souls and fulfills his priestly duty with industry, labor and diligence. We have often thought that such a man is exposed to the envy of his neighbor.[23]. Every sane man sees that he is being destroyed by the disparagement of the envious, and it is not fitting that this happen. When Eldad and Medad were prophesying in the camp,[24] Joshua, son of Nun, warned Moses that he should prohibit them. Moses responded that he very much wanted everybody to prophesy. He said: "are you jealous on my account? If only the whole people would prophesy and the Lord gave his Spirit to them all!"[25] The love of the bishop considers it a crime to burn with anger. It does not consider the man led astray by harmful desires as an enemy but rather lays hold of him as a brother, coaxing him, encouraging him, and warning him.[26] It calls him back from error and leads him back to the path of righteousness. If something should happen which requires a more serious verbal castigation, beware lest the words cut too harshly. Let severity abstain from every affront.

8. We cannot be silent concerning the useless desire for glory which a certain bishop correctly called hidden destruction. Once it has shown itself, there is perhaps nothing more hostile to love. Servility creeps up on whatever bishop this deadly plague gets hold of and infects; it attacks his most noble part, the soul. It captures him with its poisonous flatteries and constantly besieges him. It drives the wretch to the point that he no longer seeks the glory of God but only his own, increasing enormously that distorted and excessive self-esteem by which each of us is greatly deceived. Even the Lord Jesus denied that He sought this.[27] Detraction and lying follow flattery as destructive attendants and ministers, so that nothing is left safe and sound for the eminent and virtuous men in the company of the bishop. For this reason, Solomon in his wisdom warns that it is better to be seized by wisdom than deceived by the flattery of fools.[28] He also says: "Turn your back on the mouth that misleads; keep your distance from lips that deceive." [29] Bishops should always keep this in mind: "When a ruler listens to false reports, all his ministers will be scoundrels." [30] We must stop being envious of glory.[31] Thus, glory will be the downfall of those who think earthly things are important.[32] Let us look higher-let us look upon that heavenly home of eternal glory. Let us not think that our true, solid, and serious glory comes from the lips of men.[33] We have all sinned, and we all need the glory of God. Having died to our sins,[34] we should not glory in ourselves. The Father should be glorified in the Son,[35] so that we might be filled with the fruit of justice through Jesus Christ for the glory of God,[36] to whom alone belong all glory, majesty, authority, and power.[37]

9. Among the fruits of justice, mercy to the poor should certainly be considered the most important. That justice which comes from faith belongs to Jesus Christ.[38] It is true that "if one of the brothers or one of the sisters is in need of clothes and has not enough food to live on, and one of you says to them, 'I wish you well; keep yourself warm and eat plenty' without giving them these bare necessities of life, then what good is that?" [39] Thus, the apostle James questions all Christians. Every faithful person, especially everyone who is a little more wealthy than the others, should out of mercy come to the assistance of the poor. They require our generosity as their principal right, for we hold the goods of the Church, which are the prayers of the faithful, the price of sins, and the inheritance of the poor, not as our own but as if in trust. It is not justifiable to use it for ourselves in such a way that nothing remains for those who could rightfully cry out, "What you spend is ours!" Where does such a great abundance of things come to us from, if not from the gifts of the Church? Like a bride, we should be content [40] with the good things we receive, that is, food and shelter,[41] considering piety with sufficiency as a great profit. It is certainly a special gift when it replenishes more abundantly those things which we need to protect, nourish, and embellish the bride. It is certainly everybody's great gain, because we obtain grace from God by almsgiving. Our blind mind is illuminated by it and we who are broken and fallen with a natural weakness are raised up and supported. When we pour forth our souls in desire and replenish our afflicted spirit, our light will rise in the darkness and our shadows will become like noon, for the Lord will fill our souls with his splendors.[42]

10. Actually to obtain light for the mind from God and to obtain the grace and devotion without which the episcopal duties would languish, almsgiving has great power. But it is no more efficacious than prayer and the most holy sacrifice of the Mass. The apostle orders us to pray without interruption and to give thanks to God in everything because it is the will of God that we not extinguish the spirit of faith and love.[43] This spirit helps us in our weakness and expresses our plea through groans that could never be put into words.[44] If a certain bishop needs wisdom, he should ask God for it and God will give it to him.[45] Let him not hesitate to seek anything in faith. He should ask that God arouse in his soul as great a faith as Moses had when he saw the invisible God.[46] It is necessary to have humility to attain that faith. David cried: "I am poor and needy. God help me." [47] These words of the Lord show us how great is the power of perseverance and persistence in prayer: "It is necessary to pray always without ceasing." [48] In that constancy and perseverance, let us wait for the majesty of God if there is a delay: it will appear and will not deceive us because it comes gradually.[49] We should not be concerned only about our weaknesses, but we should also consider that the problems of others afflict us and are on the same level as our own. Our prayers should be addressed more ardently and more perseveringly to God. It is through this prayer that we obtain from the Lord, as a decisive intermediary of the Church's faithful, the faith, hope, and love of all-virtues which are necessary for each and every one of us and for all the faithful in the world. The holy sacrifice of the Eucharist will build the road for us to beseech God and will open the way to obtain anything we want. For this reason, entangled in the great preoccupations of our office, we shall not refuse to offer the holy body and blood of Jesus Christ frequently to God. We do not think that we have been given any greater task than to offer repeatedly a sacrifice of appeasement to God the Father for our sins and those of the faithful.

11. As We are in a certain manner intermediaries between God and mankind, We offer to God the prayers of the people, and in the same way We communicate the will of God to them. This is the will of God: Our sanctification.[50] Thus it is Our duty to proclaim and reveal the mystery of Christ,[51] just as it is fitting for Us to speak. It is necessary, first of all to teach this to the people: The body of Christ was similar to ours, with the exception of sin. It is not only but also sanctifying, capable of suffering, exposed to death, and able to stand in the stead of all of us. Christ offered his body, and us at the same time, to satisfy divine

justice.[52] He handed himself -- and us at the same time -- to all the torments which our crimes merited. He was condemned to the sorrows of death and suffered the curse given to sinners by the law: death under the harshest tortures. He satisfied the law, for the death and burial of Jesus Christ abolished all sin. The Lord Jesus rose from the grave with the same flesh but it was stripped of its mortality and adorned with glory of eternity. In order that they may be justified, it is necessary for sinners to die with Christ, who died in their place and in their name. Then they must enter the grave with Christ, in order to leave behind the flesh defiled by sin. They must hand over the old man to the wrath of God and to the death of the sinner, so that by baptism a new man might return to life in us and live again with Christ in immortality and eternal glory. Therefore all Christians should think about that eternal life and not this brief one. They should remove from their hearts the desire for pleasures and riches which are the instruments of pleasure. Cast off pride, in which all harmful desires are contained. The world is passing away, as well as what it craves for; however, he who keeps the will of God will endure forever.[53]

12. You can easily see, Venerable Brothers, how important it is for you yourselves to teach the people these and all other things which pertain to God's mysteries. Therefore, you should carefully consider that those whom you choose to exercise the priestly ministry and to teach the people the fundamentals of Christianity should possess great purity of life, moral integrity, chastity, justice, piety, and devotion. How serious it would be if something bad, if something vicious, if something perverse were to infect their character with bad habits. Cautiously and prudently remove this danger from the pastors. Help and instruct each of your neighbors with salutary advice. Give the soul of the faithful wings with which to fly from the earth to contemplate heavenly matters; once it is snatched away from the world, give that soul to God and recall the divine image in it to its original purity. On the other hand, it should not be said that pastors who ask to give an account of their lives cannot themselves bear this scrutiny. Nor should they reproach the character of another, so that they themselves must be contradicted. The learning which is perceived as worthy of a clergyman should attain pure and holy habits. They should have a knowledge of the Scriptures: "All Scripture is inspired by God and can profitably be used for teaching, for refuting error, for guiding people's lives and teaching them to be holy that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work." [54] They should go to both testaments of the Bible, to the traditions of the Church, and to the writings of the holy fathers, as if they were going to springs from which pours forth a pure and undefiled teaching of faith and character. They should read often and reflect upon the Roman Catechism, the summation of Catholic teaching, which provides holy sermons to give to the faithful.

13. In considering someone's suitability for the ministry, do not rely only on individual enthusiasm or on someone's recommendation. You should consider as best suited to be a faithful minister and to receive a part of the Lord's flock the man whose timid virtue shirks the ministry. "Do not be too quick to lay hands on any man" [55] which happens if we do not consider and test the men over and over again. Lest we pay the price to God for imprudent rashness and share in another's sin, [56] let him be tested carefully and accurately and judged severely. It should not weary you if we dwell a little longer on this matter which requires great attention. In whatever manner the priests behave, the majority of the people will behave in the same way. Everyone looks upon them -- especially if they are parish priests -- as if in a mirror. For this reason, nobody deserves anything more destructive from the Church than evil priests, who infect the people with their vices and so corrupt the Church that they seem to harm it more by their example than by their sin.

14. Associate with distinguished men in the sacred ministry, not because we consider ourselves inadequate in the duty of preaching the gospel, but rather so that we might seem to leave in the hands of others the nets which the Lord gave to us to become fishers of men. [57] The principal duty of the bishop is to preach the word of God, for the apostle cried: "Woe to me if I do not preach the gospel. It is a duty which has been laid on me." [58] The Lord Jesus Christ did not send him primarily to baptize - even though this is a holy action -- but especially to preach the gospel. [59] We know that the ministry of the word held first place in the minds of the apostles and that these holy men did not neglect this duty. [60] For this reason they thought it fitting to entrust to deacons the rest of the charitable works toward their neighbors. St. Paul writes to Timothy: "Make use of the time until I arrive by reading to the people, preaching, and teaching." [61] If someone feels that he lacks the ability to preach or says that his talents do not measure up to the responsibility, do not allow him to neglect his duty in other matters which pertain to the word of God. Therefore, if the bishop commands the priests to teach the basics of Christian doctrine to the children, he should also give his assistance in that work. He should join himself as an assistant to the pastors in teaching the faithful, so that his duty of preaching the word might be preserved on all sides. This should make everybody hasten to fulfill his duty. Thus, he should not feel it burdensome to administer the sacraments to the faithful occasionally with his brother priests, to enter the choir in the meantime and sing the psalms with the canons, and to preside over the meetings which he has convened. From this the priests will receive a great share in the spirit of his holy ministry, just as the seventy men received the Spirit in the time of Moses. The people who witness this will be filled with the greatest esteem for divine worship, and the tainted men will be frightened away from the sacred ministry by the same venerable spectacle, so that they will not dare in the least to aspire to it.

15. Because the bishop cannot manage the Church and supervise his flock if he is away, you should not be absent from your churches for any length of time. This was solemnly ratified by natural law and by the holy canons, especially by the decrees of the Council of Trent. The bishop should visit all the places in his diocese to protect the power of their laws when they begin to fail, either through the laziness of the ministers or through the stubbornness of the faithful. If there is a serious and necessary reason for you to leave your diocese and if it is necessary to be absent for any length of time, We ask you not to allow the Church to be weakened by the desire of her pastor. Whenever you are absent, this danger is present.

16. In addition, example should accompany words. We should show ourselves in all things as an example of good works [62] so that our opponents will respect us and not have anything bad to say about us. [63] Deeds should not be silent without words, nor should the lack of deeds shame the words. In addition, we believe in our heart that the perfect leader of the Church has been furnished with the perfect goods of the greatest virtue, so that his life might be adorned by what he says and his teaching by what he lives. The home of modesty should be our own, as well as the teacher of modesty. The ecclesiastical discipline which we follow should be full of dignity and harmony. If we are not committed to anybody's will and pleasure, we will not indulge in the softness and weakness of our spirit and we will not single out anyone for special treatment. This often creates great turmoil in the administration of the Church and gives serious offense, providing contempt and envy for the bishop.

17. As for what concerns Us, We have already taken care[64] that We establish as bishops in the various countries those who bring to the episcopacy a sound doctrine, a life beyond reproach, and a mind prepared for all things for the sake of Jesus Christ. We believe that the responsibility should go to him who presides over it; let him not swell up with the greatness of the honor but diminish in humility. In scrutinizing and testing men whom We want to place over such a great responsibility, We shall use you as witnesses and authorities, trusting in the holy devotion of your testimony and in your faith. We do not doubt in the least that you will not use any human rationale, but only thoughts for Him who has called you to the work of the ministry for building up the body of Christ.[65]

18. It remains, Venerable Brothers, that We advise you concerning the fortitude and strength of spirit needed to oppose those things which are against the orthodox faith, which harm piety or which damage the integrity of moral living. Let us be strong in the spirit of the Lord, in good judgment, and in courage.[66] We should not be like dumb watchdogs unable to bark,[67] allowing our flocks to fall prey to looting and our sheep to be devoured by every wild animal in the field.[68] Nor should anything deter us from throwing ourselves into battle for the glory of God and for the salvation of souls: "Think of the way he endured such opposition from sinners." [69] If we are afraid of the audacity of worthless men, it affects the strength of the episcopacy and its sublime and divine power to govern the Church. Nor can we Christians endure or exist any longer-if it has come to that-if we become overly frightened by the snares or threats of the damned. Therefore, trusting not in ourselves but in the God who raises the dead to life,[70] we despise human affairs and cry out to the Lord: You are my hope in the day of disaster.[71] Let us never be exhausted in body or in spirit, for we are fellow workers with God.[72] The Lord Jesus is with us always even to the end of time.[73] Therefore let us not be weakened by scandal or persecution, lest we seem ungrateful for God's favor, since his assistance is as strong as His promises are true.

19. In the Last Judgment We shall be called to give account on behalf of everybody and before everybody who is reckoned in the name of Christ. Therefore We beseech you that if some scandal or disagreement arises which you are unable to put down, to refer it to this See of the blessed Prince of the apostles. As from the head and apex of the episcopacy, that very episcopacy and every authority which bears the same name comes from here. All waters flow from here as if from their very source, and they flow uncorrupted from a pure head through the various regions of the whole world. From here all the churches take what the water worthy of clean bodies avoids teaching and the people whom, as though fouled in unpurged filth, the water avoids washing. We trust first of all in the strength of God, then in the protection of St. Peter, whose care holds all present. We shall help you with advice, resources, and authority, for We are ready to be very near you,[74] to keep the churches and the brothers safe and sound. As for the rest, We trust in God under the weight of this burden we have received;[75] since He is the originator of this burden, He will also help us. In order that human weakness does not falter under the greatness of His grace, He who gave the dignity will also give the strength. Meanwhile in humble entreaty, beseech God in His merciful goodness to subdue now those who fight against Us, to strengthen your faith, and to increase devotion and peace. May He produce in Us, His humble servant, whom He wanted to oversee the government of His Church and to show the riches of His grace, enough strength in such a labor. May He make Us useful for your protection, and may He strive to extend to Our Papacy what was given to the age, for the profit of devotion. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you; We bless you and We greet you with a holy kiss. We lovingly impart to all of you, brother priests, and to all the faithful of your churches Our apostolic blessing.

Given in Rome at St. Mary Major on September 14, in the year 1758 in the first year of Our pontificate.

1. Nm 11.11,14.	26. 2 Thes 3.15.	51. Col 4.3.
2. Rom 1.12.	27. Jn 8.50.	52. I Pt 3.18.
3. 2 Pt 3.11.	28. Wis 7.6. 29.	53. 1 Jn 2.17.
4. Ez 13.5.	29. Prv 4.24.	54. 2 Tm 3.16-17.
5. Eph 4.3.	30. Prov 29.12.	55. 1 Tm 5.22.
6. 1 Pt 3.11.	31. Gal 5.26.	56. 1 Tm 5.22.
7. Rom 14.19.	32. Phil 3.19.	57. Mt 4.19.
8. Jn 14.27.	33. Rom 3.23.	58. 1 Cor 9.16.
9. Jn 17.20, 21.	34. I Pt 2.24.	59. 1 Cor 1.17.
10. Mt 16.14f.	35. Jn 14.13.	60. Acts 6.2,4.
11. 2 Cor 12.20.	36. Phil 1.11.	61. 1 Tm 4.13.
12. 1 Cor 1.10.	37. Jude 1.25.	62. Ti 2.7.
13. 2 Cor 13.11.	38. Phil 3.9.	63. Ti 2.8.
14. I Cor 13.4, 5.	39. Jas 2.15.	64. Ps 76.5.
15. 2 Pt 1.4.	40. 1 Tm 6.6.	65. Ept 4.12.
16. 1 Jn 2.6.	41. 1 Tm 6.8.	66. Mi 3.8.
17. Lk 22.25.	42. Is 58.10,11.	67. Is 56.10.
18. 1 Pt 5.1-2.	43. 1 Thes 5.17-18.	68. Ez 34.8.
19. Jn 10.12.	44. Rom 8. 26.	69. Heb 12.3.
20. 1 Pt 5.1-2.	45. Jas 1.5.	70. 2 Cor 1.9.
21. Jn 10.11.	46. Heb 11.27.	71. Jer 17.17.
22. 1 Pt 5.1-2.	47. Ps 70.6.	72. 1 Cor 3.9.
23. Eccl. 4.4.	48. Lk 18.1	73. Mt 28.20.
24. Nm 11.27.	49. Hab 2.3.	74. 2 Cor 12.15.
25. Nm 11.29.	50. 1 Thes 4.3.	75. 1 Thes 2.2.
