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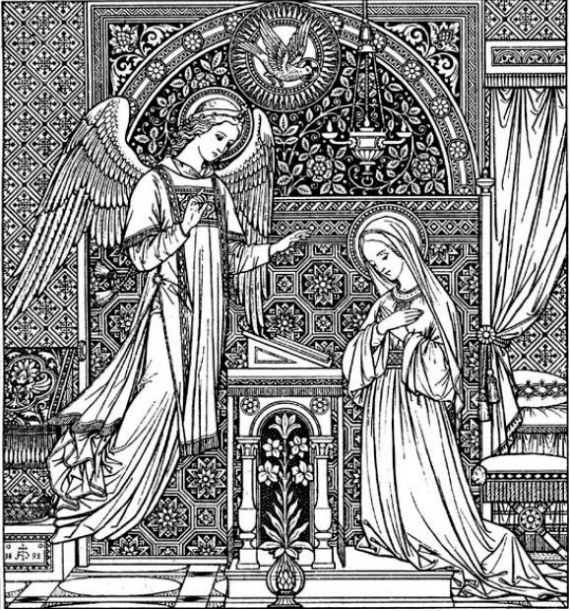


**TRUE SOURCE
OF
THE SODALITY SPIRIT**

Rev. Fr. Hugo Rahner, S.J.

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MMVII



Dixit autem Maria ecce ancilla Domini fiat mihi secundum verbum tuum. Luc., i, 38.

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

BY birth Father Hugo Rahner is a native of Baden (Germany) where he was born in May 1900. At the age of nineteen he entered the Upper German Province of the Society of Jesus. For many years, both as a student and as a professor of Patrology and Church History, his name has been closely linked with Innsbruck in the Austrian Tyrol, where in addition to his teaching he has held two important administrative posts, that of Rector of the University, and Dean of the Faculty of Theology.

In scholarly circles, both in Europe and in America, Fr. Rahner's reputation is one of wide and genuine esteem. The books, the many monographs and articles which have appeared under his name have solidly established him as a theological thinker of originality of depth.

Because of the close parentage in thought between Fr. Hugo Rahner and his younger brother, Fr. Karl Rahner, also a Jesuit, and a renowned professor of Dogmatic Theology at Innsbruck, one is sometimes mistaken for the other.

Father Hugo Rahner's *Ignatius von Loyola und das geschichtliche Werden seiner Frömmigkeit*, available to English readers under the title of "The Spirituality of St. Ignatius of Loyola", has been held as a masterly contribution to Ignatian studies. It is his competence as an historian and as a master of Ignatian spirituality that makes the worth of the present study on the Sodality spirit.

INTRODUCTION

MANY pamphlets have been published on Sodality matters. Many articles in various Sodality magazines, especially after the publication of Pope Pius XII's *Magna Charta* of the Sodalities, have dealt with the essential features of the true Sodality in modern times, from a manifold standpoint; historical, theological, canonical, spiritual and technical. Many of these have contributed much towards the contemporary Sodality revival.

Towering above all these, is Fr. Hugo Rahner's present essay on the "TRUE SOURCE OF THE SODALITY SPIRIT", which does not only stir up some artificial enthusiasm from without, but recaptures its inner meaning from within, by re-sourcing it in its true source, the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius.

That the spirit of the Sodality is the very spirit of the Ignatian Spiritual Exercises, Fr. Rahner shows convincingly, stressing five salient features on the make-up of the Exercises. Their basic inspiration is the loftiest ideal of always seeking for the 'more' and the 'better'; this spirit, so typical of St. Ignatius, admirably suits the Sodality, which appeals to the spiritual élite. In that search for the 'greater' glory of God, like St. Ignatius, the Sodalist must make his quick decision in the war of the spirits. Having taken sides with Christ, the Sodalist's life, like the first Manresa retreatant's, is one of generosity, a crucified one in the likeness and the service of Christ. Out of this generosity is born in the Sodalist and in the retreatant alike the burning itch to conquer the world with Christ that makes all apostles. This zeal,

however, according to the practical Ignatian spirit, does not burn itself out in empty enthusiasm, but materializes in sober, humble service in the Church of Christ, under the hierarchy. These five features are not only essential to the Exercises, but they also constitute the true youthful and Marian spirit. That is why the Sodality, like the Exercises, is primarily appealing to youth for generosity in the following of Christ, under Mary's mantle. This explains why the true Sodality, no less than the true Spiritual Exercises, is meant for the élite only.

No wonder then that both the *Bis Saeculari* and the Common Rules of the Sodality insist so much on the Sodalists making the Spiritual Exercises. Rule 9 states: "There shall be a retreat every year of some days, closing with a general Communion...Certainly the most fruitful retreat is the kind called 'closed'. If this cannot be done, and if not even the entire day can be given to the Exercises, it is well to have the retreat last 6 days, with as least two periods daily, morning and evening, with spiritual reading, meditation, conference, Holy Mass and Beads as the principal exercises." And Pope Pius XII ranks first, among the most useful helps to form perfect and wholehearted followers of Christ, the Spiritual Exercises and the practice of daily meditation. It is from the observance of the Rules, much more than from the increase in its membership, that he expects the Sodality to provide the Church with "tireless heralds of the Virgin Mother of God and fully trained propagators of the kingdom of Christ".

Would Sodality Directors, for whom Fr. Rahner's study should prove particularly inspiring,

understand that there is not question here simply of faithful observance of just one more rule among many, but that the very life of their Sodality is at stake! Both historically and spiritually the Sodality depends on the Spiritual Exercises. There can be no more true Sodality without the retreat, than there can be an Ignatius without Manresa. The spirit of the Sodality is the spirit of the Spiritual Exercises. In any Sodality, therefore, renewal can be had only at the spring, through closed retreats.

Facts prove that this is not an Utopian ideal. In November 1952 the Sodality Rally of Wurtzburg University students patronized the closed retreat of no less than 5 days. In 1953 a group of 76 student Sodalists from John Carroll University of Cleveland (Ohio, U.S.A.) made an 8-day retreat in complete silence, after which a good many asked for the privilege of making the full 30-day-long retreat! Austria, Switzerland and Canada are now emulating with them. Besides, for many years past, Sodalities in various countries proved the best promoters of the Retreat Movement. The Retreat Section of the Young Men's Sodality, Bombay, shines as an example in India.

Here, therefore, lies the secret of the revitalization of all Sodalities, by re-sourcing them to their true Spring: The Spiritual Exercises. Allow Fr. Rahner to convince you of this.

We are greatly indebted to the West Baden Sodality Academy (U.S.A.) for having given us the free use of the English translation prepared by their members.

RETURN TO THE ORIGINS

EVALUATED in the light of its history, its internal structure and its aims, the Sodality of Our Lady is an organisation of great importance in the life of the Catholic Church. At the same time, the Sodality has undergone a strange distorted interpretation in the minds and feelings of many Christians of our day who have come to regard it merely as an association of pious prayer founded mostly for women. For this reason it will be profitable to try to describe the meaning of the Sodality from two points of view – the spiritual as well as the historical. To understand the nature of any historical organisation which in the course of time has evolved, divided and subdivided, and so, as it has aged, become exceedingly complex, we must go back and examine its origins for the valuable information which such a study will yield.

The Sodality is a movement of the Society of Jesus; it has its conception and birth, its supervised growth within the Order. Eventually the hierarchical Church identified itself with the movement and assumed its full guidance. This step, made necessary by the suppression of the Jesuit Order in 1773, bears witness in a significant, though indirect, way to the importance of the Sodality in the eyes of the Church. The Jesuit beginnings of the Sodality are now only remote history. The universal Church has completely absorbed the Sodality. It is still imperative, however, that we return in our thinking to the Sodality's origins so that we may delineate more accurately the Sodality ideal.

THE SPIRIT OF ST. IGNATIUS

Always “the More” and “the Better”

WE shall start with the fundamental fact that all apostolic forces at work in the nascent Society of Jesus can be explained by the Spiritual Exercises that book authored by St. Ignatius, which has left its impress upon history. This small volume is a remarkable summary of all those forces which made the Founder of the Society of Jesus a saint of the Church even in his own day.

The life of St. Ignatius discloses that basic Christian phenomenon, clearly traceable in the documents, which is at the very heart of the life of grace and which emanates from Christ Himself; the new and constant transition from the good to *the better* that takes place in the individual human heart and soul is the driving force of Christian ‘discontent’ something of that fire which never says: “It is enough.”¹ It is a perception experienced only in a conversion of seismic proportions - one which results in the transformation of a man’s whole life into nothing less than a passion for what is *always the greater*. It is the insight, which preserves the creative, the compelling force inherent in the Christian message.

Theologically we can sum up the ideal of the Spiritual Exercises in a simple word and a phrase precious to the heart of the Ignatius from the first

¹ Prov., 30, 16.

moment of his conversion to God: the word “more” and the phrase “to promote the salvation of souls”.

In the Exercises, “more” means an ever closer identification with the crucified Christ who by this means alone conquered the world. “To promote the salvation of souls” means to be gifted with an insight into the staggering truth that Christ has made the outcome of His salvific work and the destiny of His Church dependent upon man’s co-operation. It means an interior realization that the success of God’s work is also (though not entirely) measured by that joyful, selfless eagerness to serve so characteristic of those who heed and understand the call of the King of the world and who discern in His summons the challenge to do more in the future.

We may call this theology of the comparative. Cast in plainer, less compact language, it is an affirmation of the Christian phenomenon that in the Church’s life there must always be an elevation above the ordinary in order that there may be some gradation. Christian life flows only if the sources of that life are found high in the mountains. As a consequence there can never be established a common level of the “merely Christian” which all can attain unless everything Christian is to perish in an ephemeral and worldly normality and mediocrity.

It is according to this basic sociological structure that grace is communicated in the Church of Him who has redeemed us by the superabundance of His love.² Such “discontent” dominated St Paul when

² John 13, 1.

he wrote: “Not that I have made perfect, but I press on hoping that I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has laid hold of me”.³ The theological foundation is rooted in the deepest essence of God who reveals Himself in Christ. According to St Augustine, God is the *Deus semper major*: “Always He is greater, no matter how much we have grown.”⁴ No aspirations of love, however great, can measure up to Him; the measure of our love is always the love of Christ, which knows no limit.

We must realise, too, that the process of salvation operative within the Church presses forward to its goal with ever more vehemence, so that the call given to all members of the Mystical Body of Christ to co-operate in the salvation of mankind becomes ever more emphatic and urgent.

Yet this can be accomplished only by certain souls – those who have come to understand that, ultimately, this salvation is not effected by the masses, nor by an organization, nor is it assured even by the normal and ordinary government of the Church alone. It is achieved only by those souls who have understood what that one little word *magis* means: something more, something greater, something better, something done with more love.

To these men of the *magis* Ignatius belongs. Through the Exercises he would bring men to a living appreciation of the core-meaning of *magis* – all for the greater glory of God – so that their whole life would be stamped by it. The first Jesuits in all

³ Phil. 3, 12.

⁴ *Enarr. In Psalmos* 62, 16.

humility determined to be a community of such men – men of whom Jesus Christ had laid hold. This was the spirit with which they undertook their first apostolic labours.

In the historical development of the modern Church the Exercises are of first-rank importance. They have captured and kept within reasonable limits the spirit that has shaped modern times. It was the humanistic renaissance that made the tumultuous discovery of the personal “I”; and from this, one fact has become increasingly evident: the conquest of the world for Christ only and always happens at one decisive point – where God’s grace meets the soul already aware that it has the power of decision to determine its eternity. To that extent and only in so far as Christ, the Lord of this World, finds souls who will surrender with an unreserved love to the demanding *magis* of God’s word, will the return of the world to God become a reality.

A Youthful Spirit

WITHOUT doubt, it is characteristic of a youthful attitude of soul to be always more receptive to that which is greater, to remain forever one who grows (since God is never attained), never to say “it is enough”. For all those moulded in the spirit of the Exercises that one word *more*, so full of youthful energy, is the criterion of genuineness. What is common to all Sodalities at all age levels is Christian “growing”. This is a tending toward a state of life still unattained; it is, in simple Christian terms, the striving for the fullness of Christ, a maturing in grace.

In 1610 Father Spinelli remarked that the Sodality strives not only to accomplish faithfully what divine law commands, but also to labour zealously that all Sodalists may the more distinguish themselves day by day in their efforts after piety.⁵ We see at once that every Sodality must be a group of Christians who, far from “retiring”, are still wide awake, who are still receptive to the *more*, (that is, of these constantly increasing demands of Christianity), who are not the drab uninspired citizens, the complacent bourgeois of God’s kingdom.

Without question there are many excellent definitions of the Sodality. They attempt to sketch concisely the essential notes of this organization. But all of them, it would seem, are too much concerned with the “static” elements alone, the Sodality’s statutes. See, for example, Fr. Wernz’s definition set down in the first section of the general Rules. Rather let us try to grasp the “dynamic” nature of the Sodality by going back to the fundamental structure of the Exercises. We must remove the Sodality from the static framework of a mere association and attempt to observe and to analyse some of the youthful enthusiasm which in its first beginnings made the Sodality so great. We shall grasp this ideal of the Sodality most easily if we try to develop in greater detail the fundamental structure of the Exercises.

⁵ Josef Miller, S.J., “Die Marianischen Kongregationen im 16. und 17. Jahrhundert”, *Zeitschrift für katholische Theologie* 58 (1934), p. 85.

DECISION IN THE WAR OF THE SPIRITS

United under Christ's Standard

AT the outset of his own conversion to God the first realization that struck St. Ignatius was an insight into the secret conflict between the spirits that direct and determine all history, an insight into the struggle between Christ and Satan. In a gripping and sharply defined illumination Ignatius discerned that some terrible force is at large in the world, but first and last in the depths of the human soul. His autobiography has this to say of his experience: "In this way he gradually came to distinguish between the spirit of Satan and the spirit of God. This was the first discovery he made about divine things. Later on, after making the Spiritual Exercises, he began to draw light from this experience for his teaching on the discernment of spirits."⁶

The Sodality, then, is an association of souls who, like Ignatius, realize that, though it is in the disguise of purely visible earthly, political and social affairs, there is a secret struggle of tremendous consequence taking place in this world: the struggle between Christ and Satan, the epic drama of Redemption from the death of Our Lord to His visible and second coming. The Sodality is a union of souls who understand that "the Devil is at large"⁷ and "the Good Friend is present" every day unto the end of time. The world is secretly and forever marching under two standards. "Babylon" and "Jerusalem" are

⁶ *Monumenta Historica Societatis Jesu, Monumenta Ignatiana*; series IV, tome I, pp. 41-42.

⁷ C.f. Apoc. 20, 3.

clashing in open battle. The purpose of the Sodality is to unite under one standard those souls who in the heat of combat have come to realize that mere conformism, self-complacency and unaggressiveness will never win the victory.

Ever Alert

FROM a realization of this truth stems one of the essential principles of the Sodality: its membership must be selective; it must be formed from the spiritual élite. Even more today than in the past, the Sodality must be a union of Christians who embody the whole cast of mind, the spirit of the first Christians so often stressed in the Gospels, which is called “watchfulness” or “alertness”.⁸ “Be sober and watch, because your adversary the Devil goes about as a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour.”⁹

This “alertness” is something ever new. It is a readiness to lend a hand whenever something is “awry”. This alertness for everything is an instinct native to youth. If a Sodality is alive and genuine, it fosters this instinct. But in this way youth’s ardour is, so to speak, baptized and devotes itself to those causes worthy of a wholehearted dedication. Every educator of youth will testify how surprisingly alert all youth worthy of its salt is for the great drama, the enrapturing power of the struggle, which Christ the King has inaugurated on this earth with the sword of His spirit. Conversely, every Sodality, even made up of mature Christians, will remain faithful to its spirit only in proportion as its members comprehend by an

⁸ C.f. Mark, 13, 35; 1 Cor., 16, 13; Apoc., 16, 15.

⁹ 1 Peter, 5, 8.

ever-new alertness for the irreconcilability between Christ and Satan which poses constantly new problems for all living Christians.

With Mary at Our Side

SOMEHOW or other the Sodalist must be like the youthful Ignatius who on his sick bed awoke from his mediocre frame of mind to an awareness of the one necessary decision to be made. Both in his autobiography and in the Exercises it is in this connection that Ignatius first speaks of Our Lady. At the vision of her sublime appearance the spirits began to discriminate, to take sides within his soul. "He received such unusual and great consolation and yet remained filled with such a disgust for his entire past life, in particular for the things of the flesh, that it seemed to him as if all the images which once filled his soul had vanished from it."¹⁰

With remarkable clarity these words disclose when and *how* in the secret history of the saint's soul Mary sets into operation that work which in the economy of salvation belongs to her in a singular way as Mother of God. From the Proto-Gospel¹¹ to the twelfth chapter of the Apocalypse she is the sublime Lady of Discernment of Spirits; the great sign of battle between the Word and the Serpent. Whenever there is a question of another crucial turning-point in the battles of God, she is always present. That is why she appears, naturally enough, in the Exercises at the point when the exercitant must make his first real decision: the clear-cut and interior decision to turn

¹⁰ *Mon. Hist., S.J., Mon. Ignat.:* series IV, t. I, p. 42.

¹¹ Gen., 3, 15

away from all that is sinful, deepening into an intimate knowledge of what is sinful, what is worldly, what is opposed to God in its very roots. “The first colloquy will be with our Blessed Lady, that she may obtain from her Son grace for me [of] a deep knowledge of my sins... [and that] I may put away from me all that is worldly and vain.”¹² Immediately afterwards, when the exercitant is confronted with the possibility that he can go to hell and when the all-embracing conviction ripens in him that the history of all created spirits is determined by the Incarnation,¹³ there, too, the great Lady enters in as a decisive figure. It was she who made possible for us the coming of Christ.

This is, therefore, the first great aspect under which the Sodality presents to its members the image of the Mother of God. Every true Sodalist must become one of those total Christians who has made his decision, who fully appreciates what is involved and what is expected of him. Mary must become for him in very truth the *Domina Mundi*: the Mistress of the world. Above all, he must look upon her and love her as the Conqueror of the Serpent. She is Our Lady of the Discernment of Spirits.

¹² *The Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius*, trans. Louis J. Puhl, Newman Press, 1951, No. 63. References are to the marginal numbers as given there and in other more recent editions.

¹³ C.f. *ibid.*, No. 71.

FOLLOWING THE CRUCIFIED KING

Bearing His Likeness

THE second thing which St. Ignatius perceived from the very beginning was the burning realization that they alone can claim the victory in this battle who want to distinguish themselves in the service of Christ the King. To do this they must imitate Christ in the way He chose, which is victory by means of the Cross.

When in the Exercises Ignatius has Christ the King say: "It is My will to conquer the whole world and all My enemies, and thus to enter into the glory of My Father",¹⁴ then Ignatius' immediate yet amazing conclusion is this: "Those who wish to give *greater* proof of their love, and to distinguish themselves in the service of their eternal King and Lord of all...will act against their sensuality and carnal and worldly love."¹⁵

The corollary to this joyous and noble self-surrender, this offering of loyal service beneath the Standard of Christ the King, is the insight that Christ's victory must begin in the depths of one's own soul. First of all, we must be victorious in defending the frontiers of our own hearts if we would fight side by side with Christ in His conquest of the world for God. In short, we must become men of the *magis* possessed of a single passion (in those words, which echo the Foundation): "Our one desire and choice should be what is more conducive to the end for

¹⁴ Ibid., No. 95.

¹⁵ Ibid., No. 97.

which we are created.”¹⁶ Throughout the Exercises this *more* is revealed unequivocally as an ever greater likeness to the crucified Lord (in the famous third degree of humility,¹⁷ the summit of the Exercises) and with it the ardent yet sober realization that there is no victory for the kingdom of Christ which does not depend upon the self-denial of him who has heard the call of the king.¹⁸

From all this we draw our conclusion. The Sodality enrolls men who have written the word *more* on their standards. They should be Sodalists who in the meditation on the kingdom are called “prompt” and “diligent”, who want to lay at the feet of their King and Lord “offerings of greater value”.¹⁹ This oblation consists in a readiness to become like the king who through His labours alone brought the world back to the Father. Basically this means self-denial, one’s own sanctification through assimilation to the Crucified. Even as early as 1601 we read in the *Manuale Sodalitatis*: “The first aim of a Sodality must be the cultivation of a *more* perfect life like to the life of Christ.”²⁰

It will be, then, a challenge to a wise pedagogy to determine how to present the correct amount of *selectivity* and of the *more* in a meaningful Christian way, taking into consideration of the age, social status and education of each candidate for the Sodality. It is here, above all, that the élite are distinguished from the masses.

¹⁶ Ibid., No. 23.

¹⁷ Ibid., No. 167.

¹⁸ Ibid., No. 189.

¹⁹ Ibid., No. 97.

²⁰ Miller, S.J., op. cit., p. 106.

The pre-eminence accorded to the interior life in every genuine Sodality is based on the insight which transforms all thinking and living: the realization that all enthusiasm for the call of Christ the King must be translated into the keen readiness to struggle against the world and sensuality. In his Apostolic Constitution *Bis Saeculari*, Pope Pius XII calls this “the perfection of the spiritual life”.²¹ The Pope then lists the means which all must use if they would follow Christ perfectly and without qualification. Those means are the Spiritual Exercises, daily meditations and examinations of conscience, a fervent sacramental life and the direction and counsel of a spiritual Father.²² Is this not the way a man lives whose life has been transformed by the Spiritual Exercises? It is through the Spiritual Exercises, or, more accurately through the fundamental insight derived from the meditation on the kingdom that every Sodality must repeatedly renew itself. That insight is an interior, self-conquering willingness to conform to the Crucified, which is built up and propagated. It is through such a renovation of the spirit of the Exercises, repeatedly made, that any Sodality stands, and through its neglect that any Sodality deteriorates and ultimately collapses.

We do not go too far when we state that every genuine Sodality can compete, humbly yet with a just pride in Christ, with any other organization of the same type within the Church in this matter of

²¹ *Bis Saeculari* Acies Ordinata of The Queen’s Work edition, p. 2; Bombay edition, p.4.

²² *Ibid.*, p. 3

according a first-rank importance to the interior life and its cultivation. The spiritual life is not just another phase of the Sodality's programme; it is that thing which the Sodality through daily exercise attempts to foster and to integrate into the daily life of the Sodalist for life. Moreover, the Sodality does this by relying on principles which have withstood all change, which have proven themselves in the face of every criticism and every passing spiritual vogue. In the Church of Him who has conquered on the Cross there is no real choice between action and the interior life, between doing and praying, other than a basic "over"-emphasis on the interior life. They alone are true apostles who have realized that in a vital, prayerful way – that is to say: souls to whom the invisible, but so much more real, actuality of interior things has been revealed, souls who have experienced the genuinely lasting, the genuinely celestial things of the kingdom of Heaven. But these things are reserved only and always for those who lovingly and joyously devote themselves during the whole of life to the fundamental law of Christ the King: "You must labour with Me and so enter the glory of My Father."²³ The formation of this type of soul is the first, the basic task of the Sodality.

²³ C.f. Spir. Ex., No. 95.

Youth Answers Generously

HIGH demands of this kind strike a responsive chord in the mind and heart of youth. To belong to those who are virile lovers, to those who are ready for action, to those who do not always treat themselves delicately, who are willing to make sacrifices, to those who will begin the struggle right within themselves – this is to have the true spirit of youth. Only with this type of soul can Christ undertake anything for the advancement of His kingdom. Every reformation in the Church has always had its origin in this greater demand made on youthful generosity.

We cannot start early enough to form such an élite. This is the reason why the total hope of the Church depends on the constant, the renewed formation of such groups of faithful souls. This is the noblest commission of the Sodality.

Pope Pius XII has called this spirit, so necessary to every Sodality, *generosita*.²⁴ It is exactly what St. Ignatius in his meditation on the kingdom expects of those who, submitting to these noble super-demands upon themselves, are prepared for a joyous and faithful service of the eternal King. If the Sodality succeeds in awakening in the hearts of its members that authentically Christian and stable attitude which the election of the Exercises mentions in these words: “...that in all that concerns the spiritual life, his progress will be in proportion to his surrender of self-love and of his own will and

²⁴ *Discorsi e Radiomessagi di Sua Santità Pio XII*, vol. VI, Milan, 1946, p. 285

interests”²⁵— then something decisive has taken place in the kingdom of God.

Much has been written, much has been said regarding the question whether or not the age-old words of inspiration in the Sodality’s vocabulary such as banner, knighthood, *Acies Ordinata* still strike a responsive chord with modern youth. In Germany at least the more prevalent opinion maintains that such words secretly repel our generation. The quintessence of the Sodality’s spirit assuredly does not reside in blue ribbons, nor in fluttering banners, nor in processions and impressive world congresses. On the other hand, the Scriptural truth of the call of Christ to the battle between Jerusalem and Babylon will always retain its reality and release its driving force anew in every generation. Only the skill of the true teacher is needed to translate these fundamental truths into modern imagery for the youth of today. Again and again we will make this astounding discovery. Every Christian who is possessed by the spirit of youth finds these truths most appealing. They are basic in that structuring of the soul which is achieved through the Spiritual Exercises of the Sodality.

Mary Points the Way

SINCE in the Exercises Ignatius intends to inculcate the conviction that only the likeness to the poor, crucified Lord of the world guarantees victory, it is significant that he presents the contemplation on the Incarnation with such a loving wealth of detail, in noteworthy contrast to his usual terse style. The

²⁵ Spir. Ex., No. 189

reason is that in the manner of His “coming” Christ reveals the plan by which He wishes to save man, and by it the destiny and the fortunes of men are decided. At the very centre of this event we discover the humble person of Our Lady. Between the royal throne of the Three divine Persons and hell, in the very centre of the *Divina Commedia*, is the inner chamber of the Virgin of Nazareth, and within it the most secret decision in all human history was made: *Ecce Ancilla Domini*: Behold the handmaid of the Lord. Before her stands the exercitant struck with amazement. He begs for only one thing: “...grace to follow and imitate more closely Our Lord, who has just become man for me.”²⁶

It was no accident of history that the first Sodality in Rome was dedicated to the mystery of the Annunciation. Nor was it pure coincidence that in 1522 Ignatius at Montserrat made his own dedication to Mary on the feast of the Annunciation. On that occasion he offered his weapons to his Queen and exchanged his worldly garb for pilgrim’s dress. Under the banner of his Queen he turned away from the vanity of the world toward the poor Christ. This is the conversion, which must take place in the soul of every Sodalist. This is the realization in the spiritual order of the juridical fact that every Sodality is aggregated to the *Primaria* of the Annunciation. All real putting on of Christ, all growth into a “genuinely Catholic adulthood” within the Sodality means to imitate Mary’s *Fiat*, its design in Christ’s redemption of the world. This is the *Fiat* that accepts the Cross of Christ that challenges all that is noble in the soul, that

²⁶ Ibid., No. 109.

longs for a more perfect following of the suffering Christ. In this way the Sodalist must learn through the Sodality to love Mary as the exalted Queen of his *magis*. She is Our Lady of Christian Discontent. She will lead him to the Cross.

CONQUERING THE WORLD

True Zeal Born of Generosity

ALMOST automatically the third insight stems from the first and second. The soul that has denied itself even to the measure of selfless service, even to the desired identification with the Crucified, takes its place among those who are no longer deaf but “prompt” and “loving”.²⁷ This is to say that always and without reservation they are at the disposal of their King and those words of the First Week are ever on their lips: “What ought I to do for Christ?”²⁸ Here we find that readiness for apostolic action born of an interior life characterized by a Christ-loving self-denial, an entirely new receptiveness for world-wide co-operation in the redemptive work of Christ in the battle against the standard of Satan.

This is much more than mere ado over the Church’s external activity. It does not mean apostolic activity in the frequently derogatory connotation of that term which means organization alone, nor just a narrow concentration on a particular problem within the Church. For one who has died to himself in Christ all doors are suddenly thrown open. Only he who in self-sacrifice has offered his own heart is a follower of Christ equipped and ready for every form of apostolic endeavour. In the Exercises the interior and the apostolic life are presented in their Christian perspective, which is to say, in a balanced perspective. A man who wants only the *more* in his

²⁷ Ibid., No. 91.

²⁸ Ibid., No. 53.

interior life finds everything ready for him in exterior life. There is only one limitation: the limitless and intensely arduous love of Christ and His work.

Only those souls of the more (who are this way in all Christian simplicity) are in a position to feel called to every kind of service for the salvation of their fellow man, the authentic apostolic work of Christ the King, who is ever present in the Church militant. This readiness to co-operate in the work of Christ is vitally necessary for every Sodality; otherwise the Sodality would remain what it already is in the eyes of many, a pious spectre, that type of organization which Pius XII, in his address of January 21, 1945, described thus: "The Sodality is no pious organization for the cultivation of serene and inactive piety, no refuge for pious souls, no quiet haven where there is no combat and no cross."²⁹

The Sodality should verify that fundamental law of all spiritual life within the Church: in proportion to the degree to which a man puts himself at the disposal of Christ the King with a joyful live and heartfelt intimacy does he become fit to be a witness, to give testimony for the living, the demanding, the fighting Christ. He is ready, alert enough to take his place in the line of battle wheresoever he may be needed, with the strong, sure hands which only they possess who have first sacrificed their hearts.

Again it is our present Holy Father who proposed this ideal of apostolic readiness to the

²⁹ *Discorsi*, vol. VI, p. 282.

Sodality when he addressed the International Congress at Barcelona on December 7, 1947. The Pope said: "This should be the distinguishing mark of the Sodality, that each day it adapts itself anew and with agility to the many-sided problems of the Church and to the most diverse circumstances of the present day and nevertheless remains ever faithful to the essential requirements of its spirituality and its apostolate."³⁰ Here, in this ideal of the Sodality, we discern the true, the correct balance between piety and activity. The Sodality should cultivate, the Pope goes on to say in the same address, no mere interior and timid piety incompatible with Our Lord's words: "I have come to cast fire upon the earth!"³¹ Again, in another passage the Holy Father applies to the Sodality's genuine enthusiasm for action the words of Scripture: "Can a man hide fire in his bosom and his garments not burn?"³²

Youthful Initiative

THE urge to independent action, to perfect oneself and others by one's own initiative is a fundamental trait of youthfulness. In 1610 Fr. Coster had this to say in his *Libellus Sodalitatis*: "It is really not difficult to keep young men faithful to duty while they are under the supervision of their teachers. But we must make provision, first of all, that they make piety so much their own that they will remain faithful to virtue, not because of any one form of coercion or another, nor from the mere ambition to distinguish themselves, nor for any other reason, but that they

³⁰ Ibid., vol. IX, Rome, 1949, p. 375.

³¹ Luke 12, 49

³² Prov., 6,27.

make the fear of God their own and devote themselves to study because of an ardent love of God; that they do not serve to the eye, but remain true to the faith in the secret depths of their hearts as well as in public. This was a subject on which the Fathers of the Society of Jesus reflected intensively. They asked themselves: How can we bring the young men entrusted to us to this point? They came to the conclusion that it is very important to unite them in a Sodality governed by pious and holy laws and in which they would bind themselves interiorly to live a just and holy life.”³³

It is in this way, as Fr. Joseph Miller notes, that the Sodality becomes part of a genuinely educative process. The Sodality captures youth’s urge for independence. This is to adopt a cardinal principle of modern pedagogy, namely, that all efforts on behalf of youth must lead it to an independent acceptance of the world of values.

What we have said about student Sodalities also applies to every genuine Sodality. Guidance toward responsibility must be a core principle, that attentive listening for the call to collaboration in the kingdom of God, that prudent, and at the same time, courageous carrying out of convictions form a secrecy of the soul into public life, and even “...by promoting in national assemblies and as heads of states, laws that are in keeping with Gospel principles and social Justice”, as Pius XII says in his *Bis Saeculari*.³⁴ In this sense every Sodalist must be young. He is young who can always start to do something from the

³³ Miller, S.J., op. cit., p. 84.

³⁴ *Bis Saeculari*, p.4; Bombay edition, p.6.

beginning. In the eternally new kingdom of Christ every achievement is a new beginning and every beginning is already a secret victory. Only with such persons can Christ ever begin to do anything.

Mary Present at Every Crisis

ALREADY in the very first week the exercitant stands before the Cross of his King and asks himself the question: "What ought I to do for Christ?"³⁵ But this Christ who has descended and has "come" is He who has come through Mary. Thus, as the exercitant of the second week kneels with Mary and Joseph before the new-born Babe of Bethlehem in the stable, there is enkindled in him the same noble readiness to help Christ and to do something for Him: "I will make myself a poor little unworthy slave, and as though present, look upon them, contemplate them, and serve them in their needs with all possible homage and reverence."³⁶ That is an authentically Christian dramatization of the story of salvation which here and now he can immediately translate into action. Even to this present day Jesus needs my help and I shall always be an 'unprofitable servant'³⁷ before Jesus who is present in the Church. In this matter Mary is my model, for I am to see her and St. Joseph "labouring that Our Lord might be born in extreme poverty *in order that* (what a bold expression!) after many labours, after hunger, thirst, heat and cold, after insults and outrages, He might die on the Cross, and all that for me".³⁸ This appeal grows

³⁵ Spir. Ex., No. 53.

³⁶ Ibid., No. 114.

³⁷ Luke 17, 10

³⁸ Spir. Ex., No. 116.

stronger and stronger until the very climax of the Exercises when the exercitant makes his decision to choose the *better* means to help Christ. The exercitant is now ready to take his place beneath the Standard of the poor and crucified Christ. Mary once again steps to the forefront: "...to obtain for me from her Son and Lord [the grace] to be received under His Standard."³⁹ She is Our Lady of the Election. Mary stands at the crossroads where the way of heroism opens before the exercitant in the contemplations which he is simultaneously making on the life of Christ, where he sees how Christ Our Lord "...left His...Mother to devote Himself exclusively to the service of His eternal Father".⁴⁰

The Exercises draw a distinctive portrait of Mary in which she is presented under a dual aspect. First she is the humble woman of the Gospels. She is forever disappearing into the background only to re-emerge suddenly at some critical stage in the moulding the exercitant. Now she becomes the noble Lady, assuming her queenly rôle in the life of the Christian. She collaborates as she did in the life of her Son. After her example we must fashion all our own collaboration in the kingdom of God.

³⁹ Ibid., No 147.

⁴⁰ Ibid., Nos. 135 and 273

HUMBLE SERVICE IN THE VISIBLE CHURCH

At One with the Hierarchy

WHAT we have thus far said still requires further clarification. The Exercises conclude with the rules “to foster the true attitude of mind which we ought to have in the Church militant (= serving Church)”.⁴¹ This is no accident. If it is to be and to remain authentic, this passion for a limitless love of Christ must be given direction, controlled, so to speak, by God’s salvific will visible in His Church.

The *more* of the willingness to serve and the readiness for greater things must be tested. Obedience to the hierarchical Church and humble, ordinary service in the visible Church constitute the infallible test. Our enthusiasm for Christ must be governed by the concrete demands of our everyday apostolic life. ‘To help souls’ – for Ignatius and his first companions that meant, precisely because of the strength of their enthusiasm, a sober service in the Church of the Pope of Rome threatened by so many storms (as it was) and burdened with so many needs. They united to form a new Order. For they realized that all apostolic enthusiasm must take definite form, if it is to endure, that the *more* of their ardent willingness needed the constitutions of a Society, if it were to remain authentic and to have within itself the power of a perpetual renewal.

In the Sodality, too, the lofty concepts of the Standard, the Legion in the service of the King can

⁴¹ Ibid., No. 352.

easily degenerate into mere catchwords. The readiness for all kinds of service can deteriorate into a diffuse, multi-sided activity, into that type of apostolic activity against which even the Pope has warned, calling it the *heresy of action*.⁴² Nothing is more difficult, nothing more noble than to keep real enthusiasm chaste, watchful and sober.

The participation of the Sodality in Catholic Action must retain its unmistakable characteristic. This characteristic originates from the ideal of “thinking with the Church”, and in the Spiritual Exercises it has found its classic expression. To put it in a phrase of St. Ambrose, it is the ideal of *sobria ebrietas* - a sober intoxication. It means to be always ready to do every-thing for Christ, to spend all for Him, but in quiet fidelity, in a sober labour and love of details, in co-operation without empty talk and, above all, in docile subjection to the hierarchical direction of the Church.

In some sense or other these words of Pius XII must be verified in every Sodality: “From its very beginning the Sodalities of Our Lady took to themselves as their rallying cry the Rules ‘for thinking with the Church’. Moreover, Sodalities seem to have fostered that natural inclination to obey the directives of those whom the Holy Spirit has placed over the Church, i.e. the bishops. Hence Sodalities have been and shall continue to be a most powerful ally of the bishops in spreading the kingdom of Christ.”⁴³ Moulded by this spirit of the Exercises, the

⁴² AAS XXXVI, 1944, p 239. Also *Discorsi*, XI, p.376

⁴³ *Bis Saeculari*, pp. 6-7; Bombay edition, pp. 7-8.

Sodality becomes a true *Acies Ordinata*: an Army set in battle array.

Youth Resents Mere Theory

YOUTHFUL enthusiasm must be tempered for the requirements of daily service in the visible Church. This final aspect of the ideal proposed by the Exercises corresponds to a tendency found in youth, especially modern youth, which has seen quite enough of visionary plans and hollow slogans. The kingdom of God on earth, however, is fortunately not just an airy scheme, a theoretical programme, pure and simple; it is an actuality right here and now. It is an unquestioned, an undeniable growing up into maturity, such as the mustard seed undergoes, despite all the theorizing of the spiritual botanists about the possibilities of this growth. He who still has youthful eyes sees each day new tasks in the Church, often small and modest without glamour.

The authentic Sodality trains its members to open their eyes to the Church, militant and suffering, in its earthly pilgrimage. To put this more accurately and in a more Christian way; the Sodality must become a brave friend of Our Lord Jesus Christ visible in the modern Church, Christ who here and now wants to carry on the fight with the help of His faithful friends who understand His needs and see Him in their neighbour. Because of its origins the Sodality must be an association that remains forever young in spirit, that sets itself to the task at hand and wants to produce some tangible, concrete good, that can obey and subordinate itself to something bigger than itself.

The genuine Sodality must always be suspicious of mere theorizing, just as it is suspicious of all merely theoretical criticisms of certain elements in the Church, distressing though these features may be.

Even the smallest, the most hidden acts of charity, a cheering word for those in distress, a duty of daily life better performed, are more than mere words, for it is only in this way that God's mysterious kingdom takes possession of our earth.

The Church Resembles Mary

THE fourth week of the Exercises, during which the Lord of Glory who founded the Church exercises His Office of "Consoler"⁴⁴ lays the foundation for this finishing touch of the Exercises, namely, to muster all the enthusiasm for the fight under the Standard of the Crucified and to direct it to the everyday service of the Church. Christ appears first to His Mother.⁴⁵ Against seemingly wise objections St. Ignatius insists on this. Through prayer we are to realize that Mary is also present when the glorification of the redeemed world, which is perpetuated in the Church, takes its beginning. In the embrace of the Risen Saviour and His Mother that grace begins to be operative which will effect the soul of the exercitant when our "Creator and Lord in person communicates Himself to the devout soul..., inflames it with love of Himself, and disposes it for the way in which it can *better* serve God in the

⁴⁴ Spir. Ex., No. 224.

⁴⁵ Ibid., Nos. 219 and 299.

future”.⁴⁶ This is a mystery, and hence, this taking up of the world into the arms of divine love remains hidden in the earthly force of the Church militant.

As it was with Mary, so it is with the Church. The mystery of her first meeting occurs in the littleness of her earthly surroundings. The Church amid the tumult of the city of this world is the humble oratory of Mary. The Church is the bride of Christ in whom swells the same spirit that is in Christ⁴⁷ - our “Holy Mother, the hierarchical Church”.⁴⁸ In this indissoluble combination of humility and glory the church is precisely like Mary. If a man were to grasp this truth, he would penetrate to the real mystery of the Church. For him the Church is mother and queen; mother in her earthly form of humility, queen in her secret glory. And thus to do and to suffer everything in the Church, no matter how small, unspectacular, or menial, is really worthy of his wholehearted dedication. Every Sodalist must be such a Christian. If he is, what the Pope has said will be verified: “Sodalities can most rightly be called Catholic Action under the auspices and inspiration of the Blessed Virgin Mary.”⁴⁹

With extraordinary dogmatic sense for what is fitting and correct, Ignatius has the Blessed Virgin appear and disappear throughout the Exercises. This should be our model in solving all questions about the place which devotion to Mary should assume in the Sodality. The centre of salvation is Christological.

⁴⁶ Ibid., No. 15.

⁴⁷ C.f. Ibid., No. 365.

⁴⁸ Ibid., No. 353.

⁴⁹ *Bis Saeculari*, p. 7; Bombay edition, p. 8.

Of what we must never lose sight. Because she is the handmaid of the Lord, Mary is always our Queen. So it must be in the spiritual formation of the Sodalist. Mary leads us to Jesus, yet we understand Jesus only as the Son of Mary. The profound theology of the Exercises, which is concerned with Mary and Jesus as “mediators” in the ascent to the glory of the Father, originates in the very depths of Ignatian Mysticism. It is the best model to point out to us just how the Sodality should shape and sculpture the genuinely Catholic soul. Form the place which the Mother of Jesus occupies in the history of salvation we come to realize that the dedication which the Sodalist makes of his life is in reality his reception under the Standard of Christ. Pope Pius XII in his allocution of January 21, 1945, says as much: “...a complete dedication (gift) of one self for the whole of life and for eternity; it is not a matter of pure formality nor of sentimentality; it is an effective consecration that consists in an intensely Christian, Marian life, an intensely apostolic life.”⁵⁰

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⁵⁰ *Discorse*, Vol. VI, p. 281.

MARY'S RÔLE IN THE SODALITY

LET us say one more word about the place of devotion to Mary in the Sodality. By design we have throughout our paper put the Marian element in last place. Our reason was this. We desired to trace the inner structure of the Sodality back to its source, that is, the fundamental truths of the Spiritual Exercises. We were anxious to define first the theological and then the psychological background against which devotion to Mary assumes great importance and a new significance. Through this approach we found it more easy to avoid the pitfalls into which very recent writers on the Sodality have sometimes fallen, namely the controversy concerning what place devotion to Mary should hold, which can so readily become a pseudo-problem.

This is particularly true if we begin to reflect only on whether devotion to Mary is a means or an end and whether there is a difference between veneration and consecration or patronage, whether Mary is to be considered more from a subjective point of view rather than from her place in the economy of salvation. All these questions can be discussed with profit, but only after more weighty matters have been clarified.

Our starting-point is the formula of *Bis Saeculari*, the apostolic constitution, which is obligatory for all Sodalities.

“These sodalities are to be called Sodalities of Our Lady not only because they take their name from the Blessed Virgin Mary, but especially be-cause each

Sodalist makes a profession of special devotion to the Mother of God and dedicates himself to her by a total consecration, under-taking, though not under the pain of sin, to strive by every means and under the standards of the Blessed Virgin for his own perfection and eternal salvation, as well as for that of his neighbours.”⁵¹

From these words it would be an obvious misinterpretation to conclude that the Sodality is primarily an organisation to honour Our Lady.

Article XI states to the contrary: “Among the *primary* ends of Sodalities is to be reckoned every kind of apostolate, especially the social apostolate for the propagation of the kingdom of Christ and the defence of ecclesiastical rights.”

And Article X: “It is the duty of Sodalities of Our Lady to train their members...so that they can be proposed as models to their companions of Christian life and of apostolic endeavour.”⁵²

These are not two contradictory propositions. According to an express declaration of Very Reverend Wlodimir Ledochowski, Father General of the Society of Jesus until his death in 1941, veneration of Mary in the Sodality has exactly the same place that it occupies in Catholic thought, prayer and piety. This is to not a quasi-dynamic principle capable of change in our veneration of Mary. We are all aware and bear happy witness to the fact that Mariology and devotion

⁵¹ *Bis Saeculari*, Art. VIII, P. 11; Bombay edition, pp. 11-12

⁵² *Ibid.*, Art. X, p.12; Bombay edition, p.12.

to Mary are at the present time moving into the forefront in the whole Church.

In the unfolding plan of salvation and in the progress which apostolic revelation is constantly making toward greater explicitness, this development must be integrated ascetically. Mariology is more and more emerging into our conscious understanding of the faith, or, to put it more accurately, it is moving in the direction of its Christological centre. In so doing it is disclosing with even greater clarity its relationship to the Church, so the Sodality will also give to Mariology that position of importance which has constantly become clearer in the mind of the modern Church.

CONCLUSION

IN this sketchy outline wherein we have attempted to derive from the Spiritual Exercises the spiritual significance of the Sodality we might further show, and with profit, how a reconsideration of the Sodality's origins can provide a constantly new revitalization of any Sodality. Wherever a Sodality has returned to its first beginnings (its first spirit), an amazing new life appears. Just as the Exercises moulded men in the Society of Jesus who have experienced through the discernment of spirits a titanic battle between Christ and Satan; men who have understood through their identification with the crucified Christ that victory in this battle belongs only to those who follow Jesus in a spirit of prayer and total self-denial; men who come from their retreat fired for every type of service on behalf of their King, who want to conquer the whole world; men who know how to concretise their enthusiasm through a brave and a humble surrender to the Church; - so the authentic Sodality must mould Christians who, filled with a holy discontent, are ardent followers of the Cross and valiant servants of the Church. Their ideal is Our Lady who has crushed the serpent's head, who stood beneath the Cross and who epitomises the Church.

APOSTOLIC CONSTITUTION⁵³

ON THE SODALITIES OF OUR LADY

PIUS BISHOP

SERVANT OF THE SERVANTS OF GOD

AS A LASTING MEMORIAL

1. **ON** the happy occasion of the second centenary of the date when Benedict XIV in the Golden Bull “Gloriosæ Dominæ” confirmed with new privileges the Sodalities of Our Lady which had been erected and perpetually constituted by Gregory XIII⁵⁴, We consider it part of Our Apostolic office not merely to congratulate paternally the directors and members of these Sodalities, but also, on account of their numerous and great services to the Church; **to declare ratified and solemnly confirmed the privileges and great favours which in course of almost four centuries many of Our Predecessors⁵⁵, and We Ourselves, have bestowed.**

⁵³ Text taken from *The Madonna*, January – March, 1949.

⁵⁴ The Bull *Omnipotentis Dei*, 5th December, 1584.

⁵⁵ Sixtus V, the Bull *Superna dispositione*, 5th January, 1587; the Bull *Romanum decet*, 29th September, 1587. – Clement VIII, the Brief *Cum sicut nobis*, 30th August, 1602 – Gregory XV, the Bull *Alias pro parte*, 15th April, 1621. – Benedict XIV, the Brief *Præclaris Romanorum Pontificum*, 24th April, 1748; the Golden Bull *Gloriosæ Dominæ*, 27th September, 1748; the Brief *Quæmadmodum Presbyteri*, 15th July, 1749; the Brief *Quo Tibi*, 8th September, 1751; the Brief *Laudabile Romanorum*, 15th February, 1758. – Clement XIII, the Bull *Apostolicum*, 7th January, 1765. – Pius VI, the Decree of 2nd May, 1775, Dez. 1775, 20th March, 1776. – Leo XII, the Brief *Cum multa*, 17th May, 1824. – Bl. Pius IX, Decree of 8th July, 1848; the Brief *Exponendum*, 10th February, 1863. – Leo XIII, the Brief *Frugiferas*, 27th May, 1884; the Brief *Nihil adeo*, 8th January, 1886. – St. Pius X, the Decrees of 10th May, 1910 and 21st July, 1910. – Benedict XV, the Discourse of 19th December, 1915, *On the Fortieth Anniversary of his Reception into the Sodality*. – Pius XI *Præsertim*: the Discourse of 30th March, 1930; the Discourse of 29th August, 1935.

2. WE fully realize that not only in the past, to use the words of Benedict XIV in the aforementioned Golden Bull, “what utility has been derived from this praiseworthy and pious organisation for men in every walk of life”⁵⁶; but also with what zeal and energy these serried ranks of Our Lady following closely in the footsteps of their predecessors and exactly observing their rules are seeking under the leadership and guidance of the ecclesiastical Hierarchy, the first place for themselves in undertaking and every promoting works for the Greater Glory of God and the good of souls. **Indeed in propagating, spreading and defending Catholic doctrine they must be considered among the most powerful spiritual forces**⁵⁷; and that for several reasons.

3. WHEN we look at the history of the Sodality of Our Lady we must admit that although it has always flourished in perfectly disciplined ranks, its members cannot compare numbers with those of the present, although they do compare in the fervour of their apostolate. In former centuries in fact the increase of Sodalities affiliated to the *Prima Primaria* never exceeded ten in a year, but from the beginning of the XXth century these yearly affiliations are counted in thousands.

⁵⁶ Benedict XIV, the Golden Bull *Gloriosæ Dominæ*, 27th September, 1748.

⁵⁷ Pius XII, Letter to Cardinal Leme, 21st January, 1942.

4. **BUT** it is of the greatest importance that the observance of the rule and constitutions of the Sodalities should be considered of much more importance than the numbers of Sodalists, for through them the members are perfectly lead to that perfection of spiritual life⁵⁸ from which they can scale the heights of sanctity and especially by means of those steps which are most useful in forming perfect and wholehearted followers of Christ. These helps are the Spiritual Exercises⁵⁹ and the daily practice of meditation upon things divine; examination of conscience⁶⁰; the frequentation of the Sacraments⁶¹; child-like docility in their relations with a definite spiritual director⁶²; the total and continual dedication of oneself as a client of the Virgin Mother of God⁶³; and the firm determination to devote oneself to the promoting of one's own perfection and that of others⁶⁴.

5. **ALL** these helps naturally tend to fan those flames of divine love in the Sodalists of Our Lady and to nourish and strengthen that interior life which is so necessary in our times when – as with sorrow We have given warning elsewhere – such vast numbers of men are afflicted “with barrenness of soul and grave spiritual need.”⁶⁵

⁵⁸ C.f., *Common Rules of the Sodalities of Our Lady*, 1, 33.

⁵⁹ C.f., *ibid.*, 9.

⁶⁰ C.f., *ibid.*, 34.

⁶¹ C.f., *ibid.*, 37, 38, 39.

⁶² C.f., *ibid.*, 36.

⁶³ C.f., *ibid.*, 27,1, 40, 43.

⁶⁴ C.f., *ibid.*, 1.

⁶⁵ Pius XII, the Encyclical *Summi Pontificatus*, 20th October, 1939; *AAS* 31, p. 415.

6. **THAT** these things are not only contained in its most wise rules but are admirably brought into the daily life of the Sodality of Our Lady is evidently proved from the fact that wherever Sodalities are in a flourishing condition – holiness of life and solid attachment to religion readily grow and flourish. Besides, under divine guidance, there spring forth numerous groups of Sodalists sincerely seeking Christian perfection for themselves and others, either in the ecclesiastical state or within the cloister, and there are not a few who with some flight reach the arduous heights of sanctity⁶⁶. From this fervent zeal of the interior life results an apostolic training which almost spontaneously flourishes and which is adapted to the now and ever-varied human needs and circumstances, to that We do not hesitate to assent that the perfect, such as the Sodality of Our Lady has been accustomed to envisage from the very beginning, is not less in keeping with the needs of former times than our own, since there is, perhaps greater need now than before of man solidly formed in the Christian life⁶⁷.

7. **HENCE**, beholding from the See of Peter, as if from a lofty watch-tower of the entire world, the wonderful zeal of the faithful everywhere in protecting, defending, and promoting the Faith, We consider as deserving special praise the worthy members of the Sodalities of Our Lady, who from the very beginning have looked on as their own and completely according to their rules⁶⁸ to undertake individually or collectively any apostolic work

⁶⁶ Pius XII, *Discourse to the Sodalities of Our Lady*, 21st January, 1945.

⁶⁷ *ibid.*

⁶⁸ Pius XII, *Discourse to the Sodalities of Our Lady*, 30th March, 1930.

approved by the Church⁶⁹ and under the leadership of their Pastors⁷⁰. The repeated and lucid pronouncements of the Roman Pontiffs have eloquently proved how well they have fulfilled this task and with what happy results for the advancement of religion⁷¹. In this present age, disturbed by so many upheavals, it is a great consolation for Us to contemplate the Sodalities of our Lady all over the world working strenuously and effectively in every field of apostolate, either stirring up people of every social rank, youths especially and workers, by means of the Spiritual Exercises to the practice of virtue and the desire of a deeper Christian life, or in coming to the help of those in grave corporal or spiritual need.; this they do not merely in a private capacity and from a kindly disposition but also by promoting in national assemblies and as heads of states, laws that are in keeping with the Gospel principles of social justice.⁷²

⁶⁹ C.f. Pius XII, Letter to Fr. Daniel Lord, S.J., 24th January, 1948.

⁷⁰ Cf. Pius XII, Letter to Cardinal Leme, 21st January, 1942.

⁷¹ C.f., *Common Rules of the Sodalities of Our Lady*, 1, 12, 43. - Benedict XIV, the Golden Bull *Gloriosæ Dominæ*, 27th September, 1748. - Benedict XV, *Discourse to the Sodalities of Our Lady*, 19th December, 1915. - Pius XI, *Letter to the Apostolic Administrator of Oeniponte*, 2nd August, 1927; *Letter to the Sodalities of Our Lady of Alemanha*, 8th September, 1928. - Pius XII, Apostolic Letter *Nostris profecto*, 6th July, 1940; *Discourse to Italian Catholic Action*, 4th September, 1940; Letter to Cardinal Leme, 21st January, 1942; Letter to Fr. S. Illundáin, 26th August, 1946; Radio Message to the Congress in Barcelona, 7th December, 1947: *AAS* 39, p. 364.

⁷² C.f. Pius XII, Letter to Fr. Daniel Lord, S.J., 24th January, 1948; Message to the Sodalities of Our Lady of the *Conférence Olivaint*, 27th March, 1948.

8. NOR must We pass over in silence associations promoted or helped by the Sodalities of Our Lady that aim at putting a stop to bad plays and films and to protect morals from the flood of evil literature, nor the many free schools for the young and for adults of the poorer classes, technical institutes to give workers fuller training in their trades,⁷³ and especially in getting a more expert knowledge of the different arts and professions.⁷⁴ These forms of apostolate so necessary in present day conditions are adopted by many Sodalities, especially inter-parish Sodalities, for the benefit of groups of similar work or employment.⁷⁵

9. MANY of these activities are of the greatest benefit to the Catholic cause. The Sodalities of Our Lady are to be praised in this matter because they have always desired, particularly in recent times, to co-operate harmoniously with other Catholic associations and thus, with united forces and under the authority and guidance of the hierarchy, they gain greater results for the kingdom of Christ by their united efforts; moreover, as We have noted elsewhere in speaking of Italian Catholic Action,⁷⁶ the first groups of this kind were started by Sodalists; others afterwards followed in their footsteps and gave their earnest support to Catholic Action, thus showing that in reality Sodalists are rightly to be considered among the chief promoters of Catholic Action.

⁷³ C.f. Pius XII, Letter to Fr. Daniel Lord, S.J., 24th January, 1948.

⁷⁴ C.f. Pius XII, *Discourse to the Sodalities of Our Lady*, 21st January, 1945.

⁷⁵ *ibid.*

⁷⁶ *ibid.*

10. BESIDES, since the entire force of Catholics united into one army in battle-array consists in obedience to the authority of their Pastors, who does not see how opportune as instruments of apostolate the Sodalities of Our Lady should be considered on account of their unflinching and fervent devotion in a spirit of humble submission and docile obedience not only to this Apostolic See, which is the source and foundation of all ecclesiastical jurisdiction,⁷⁷ but also, in keeping with their character and scope, to the decrees and counsels of the Bishops?⁷⁸

11. ANYONE who has thoroughly examined the internal constitution of the Sodality can easily see that some are governed by Bishops and Parish Priests, others, through special privilege, by Us, and in virtue of Our delegated power, by the General of the Society of Jesus: but all, in undertaking and continuing apostolic works, are subject to the authority of the local Bishops or even sometimes of the Parish Priest. Hence, since they are accepted by the Ecclesiastical Hierarchy among the forces of the militant apostolate, they fully depend on the Hierarchy in undertaking and carrying out their work, and by every right and title, as We have noted elsewhere,⁷⁹ should be called co-operators in the hierarchical apostolate. This almost natural “reverence and deference of Sodalists of Our Lady towards their holy Pastors” is of necessity to be drawn from their very rules, in accordance with which it is a sacred duty to make profession in their life and morals of whatever the Catholic Church teaches,

⁷⁷C.f. Conc. Vat., Sess. IV, Const. I, “*De Ecclesia Christi*”.

⁷⁸C.f. Pius XII, Letter to Cardinal Leme, 21st January, 1942.

⁷⁹Pius XII, *Discourse to Italian Catholic Action*, 4th September, 1940: AAS 32, p. 369.

“praising what she praises, abhorring what she abhors, agreeing with her in everything and never being ashamed to act in public or in private as becomes a faithful and most dutiful son of such a Mother.”⁸⁰

12. IT is not contrary to the close and almost military unity of Catholics that this type of Sodality was first started by the Ignatian family and seems to be as it were an offshoot and branch of it, especially since a number of them, though not very large, is directed by priests of the Society of Jesus with Our delegation, as We have explained. Rather, from the very beginning the Sodalities of Our Lady proposed to themselves as a headline the rules “for thinking with the Church,” and seem to have developed an almost natural tendency of obeying the words of those whom “the Holy Spirit placed as Bishops to rule the Church of God” (Acts xx, 28); hence they have been and shall be in the future a most powerful help to the Bishops in spreading the kingdom of Christ. The fact that they ever had the common good of the Church at heart and not some private interest is proved by the unimpeachable witness of that most brilliant series of Sodalists to whom Mother Church has decreed the supreme honours of the Altars; their glory throws lustre not merely on the Society of Jesus but on the secular clergy and on not a few religious families, since ten members of the Sodalities of Our Lady became founders of new Religious Orders and Congregations.

⁸⁰ C.f., *Common Rules of the Sodalities of Our Lady*, 33.

13. ALL this goes to show clearly that the Sodalities of Our Lady, as their rules approved by the Church openly profess, are associations imbued with an apostolic spirit,⁸¹ which not only urge their members, who are sometimes led to the very heights of sanctity,⁸² to strive to obtain under the guidance of their Pastors,⁸³ the Christian perfection and eternal salvation of others, and to safeguard the rights of the Church,⁸⁴ but also provide tireless heralds of the Virgin Mother of God and fully trained propagators of the kingdom of Christ.⁸⁵

14. HENCE, whether one considers the rules and purpose of the Sodalities of Our Lady or what they have achieved, there is no characteristic lacking which belongs to Catholic Action since this is correctly defined, as Our Predecessor of happy memory, Pius XI, so often declared: “The apostolate of the faithful who assist the Church and to a certain extent complete its pastoral work.”⁸⁶

15. THE structure and peculiar character of the Sodalities of Our Lady are no obstacle whatever to their being called with the fullest right “Catholic Action under the auspices and inspiration of the Blessed Virgin Mary”;⁸⁷ for as they have been in the past, “they are and will continue to be a means of safeguarding and protecting the formation of

⁸¹ C.f., *ibid.*, 1, 43.

⁸² *ibid.*, 12.

⁸³ *ibid.*, 33.

⁸⁴ *ibid.*, 1.

⁸⁵ *ibid.*, 43.

⁸⁶ Pius XI, Letter to Cardinal van Roey, 15th August, 1928: *AAS* 20, p. 296; Letter to Cardinal Segura, 6th November, 1929, *AAS* 21, p. 665.

⁸⁷ Cardinal Pacelli, *Discourse to the Sodalities of Our Lady in Menzingen* (Switzerland), 22nd October, 1938.

outstanding Catholics.”⁸⁸ As has often been declared by this Apostolic See “Catholic Action is not confined within a closed circle,”⁸⁹ hemmed in, as it were, by certain rigidly determined limits that must not be transgressed, nor is it such that “it pursues its object according to a special method and system,”⁹⁰ so as to abolish or absorb the other active Catholic organisations. Rather it should consider as its duty “to join them together, to unite them in a friendly manner, making the progress of one serve towards the advantage of the others, in all concord, union, and charity.”⁹¹ For, as We have pointed out quite recently, “in this excellent zeal of the apostolate, which meets with Our highest approval, there must be avoided the error made by a certain number who desire to reduce all that is done in the interests of souls to a single pattern.”⁹² Since this attitude must be considered completely alien to the mind of the Church,⁹³ which is so far from approving such “restriction on the growth and flowering of life”⁹⁴ whereby any apostolic work is entrusted to one single organisation or to a single parish, that it actually favours a multiform unity⁹⁵ in carrying out such works, by means of a brotherly co-operation, under the guidance of the Bishops, and with their efforts

⁸⁸ Pius XI, *Discourse to the Sodalities of Our Lady*, 30th March, 1930.

⁸⁹ Pius XI, the Encyclical *Firmissimam constantiam*, to the Bishops of Mexico, 28th March, 1937: *AAS* 29, p. 210.

⁹⁰ Pius XI, Letter *Quæ Nobis* to Cardinal Bertram, 13th November, 1928: *AAS* 20, p. 386.

⁹¹ Pius XI, *Discourse to French Catholic Action*, 20th May, 1931.

⁹² Pius XII, Radio Message to the Congress in Barcelona, 7th December, 1947: *AAS* 39, p. 364.

⁹³ Pius XI, *Discourse to Italian Catholic Action*, 28th June, 1930.

⁹⁴ Pius XI, Letter *Quamvis Nostra* to the Bishops of Brazil, 27th October, 1935: *AAS*, 28, p. 160.

⁹⁵ Pius XI, *Discourse to the Sodalities of Our Lady*, 30th March, 1930.

united and directed to one end.⁹⁶ Such organisations will more easily obtain this “harmonious agreement, ordered collaboration and mutual understanding, which We have recommended time and again,”⁹⁷ when having put aside all controversy regarding priority,⁹⁸ “they love one another with brotherly affection, with honour preventing one another,”⁹⁹ and have solely God’s glory in view; then they can rest assured that they will prevail more than others, when they have learned to give to them the first places.¹⁰⁰

16. AS a result of these considerations and Our ardent desire that these schools of piety and Christian apostolate should daily increase in live and vigour,¹⁰¹ with Our Apostolic Authority We briefly indicate some points that are common to Sodalists throughout the world and should be observed with religious exactitude by all interested.

17. I. SODALITIES of Our Lady, duly affiliated to the *Prima Primaria* of the Roman College, are religious societies erected¹⁰² and established by the Church and have been enriched with the fullest privileges by her for the better fulfilment of the work entrusted to them.¹⁰³

⁹⁶ C.f. Pius XII, Letter to Fr. S. Ilundáin, 26th August, 1946.

⁹⁷ Pius XI, Letter *Quamvis Nostra* to the Bishops of Brazil, 27th October, 1935: *AAS*, 28, p. 163.

⁹⁸ C.f. Mark, xx, 26-27.

⁹⁹ C.f. Mark, ix, 33.

¹⁰⁰ Rom., xii, 10.

¹⁰¹ Pius XII, Letter to Cardinal Leme, 21st January, 1942.

¹⁰² C.f. The Bull of Gregory XIII *Omnipotentis Dei*, 5th December, 1584.

¹⁰³ C.f. the Papal documents *supra* in notes 1 & 2.

18. II. THAT only is to be considered a lawful Sodality, which has been set up by the Ordinary who has power to do so; that is to say in places belonging to the Society of Jesus or entrusted to its care, by the Father General,¹⁰⁴ in all other places by the Bishop of the place, or with his formal consent, by the aforesaid Father General.¹⁰⁵ In order that the Sodalities thus erected should enjoy all the privileges and indulgences granted to the *Prima Primaria*, it must be duly affiliated to it.¹⁰⁶ This affiliation, however, which may only be sought with the consent of the Ordinary of the place and which it is in the power only of the General of the Society of Jesus¹⁰⁷ to grant, gives neither to the *Prima Primaria* nor to the Society of Jesus any rights over such a Sodality.¹⁰⁸

19. III. SODALITIES, since they answer fully to the present day needs of the Church¹⁰⁹ must, in accordance with the will of the Sovereign Pontiffs, keep intact their laws, their character and constitution.¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁴ Sixtus V, the Bull *Romanum decet*, 20th September, 1578.

¹⁰⁵ Decree of the S. Cong. Indulgences, 23rd June, 1885.

¹⁰⁶ C.f. CIC (1917), 686; Benedict XIV, the Golden Bull *Gloriosæ Dominæ*, 27th September, 1748; Decree of Leo XII, 17th May, 1824; Decree of the S. Cong. Indulgences, 23rd June, 1885.

¹⁰⁷ C.f. Rescript of the S. Cong. Indulgences, 17th September, 1887; CIC (1917), 723; *Common Rules of the Sodalities of Our Lady*, 2.

¹⁰⁸ C.f. CIC (1917), 722 § 2; Declaration to Fr. Luis Martin, S.J., Father General of the Society of Jesus, 13th April, 1904.

¹⁰⁹ C.f. Especially Pius XII, *Discourse to the Sodalities of Our Lady*, 21st January, 1945; Letter to Fr. S. Ilundáin, 26th August, 1946; Letter to Fr. Daniel Lord, S.J., 24th January, 1948.

¹¹⁰ C.f. Especially Pius XI, *Discourse to the Sodalities of Our Lady*, 30th March, 1930; *Discourse to the Prima Primaria Sodality*, 24th March, 1935. – Pius XII, Telegram to the Congress of Italian Sodalities of Our Lady, 12th September, 1947; Radio Message to the Congress in Barcelona, 7th December, 1947: *AAS* 39, p. 634; Letter to Fr. Daniel Lord, S.J., 24th January, 1948.

20. IV. THE Common Rules, whose observance, in substance at least, is required¹¹¹ for affiliation are earnestly recommended to all Sodalists as a summary and pattern of the way of life followed by the first Sodalists and established by constant practice.¹¹²

21. V. ALL Sodalities, with a dependence that may differ in minor matters though substantially the same, are subject to the Ecclesiastical Hierarchy not less than other organisations consecrated to apostolic works.¹¹³

22. VI. WHILE following faithfully in the footsteps of those who preceded them and keeping abreast of the times, lest, in propagating the kingdom of God and defending the rights of Christian warfare, their own ranks be thrown into disorder and their forces weakened, Sodalists should be mindful of the following points:

(a) That the Local Ordinary –

(i) has power, as laid down in the Sacred Canons, saving always the prescripts and documents of the Apostolic See, over all Sodalities within his jurisdiction with regard to the external exercise of the Apostolate;

¹¹¹ C.f. Decree of the S. Cong. Indulgences, 7th March, 1825; Decree of the S. Cong. Indulgences, 23rd June, 1885; Rescript of the S. Cong. Indulgences, 17th September, 1887.

¹¹² C.f. Pius XII, *Discourse to the Sodalities of Our Lady*, 21st January, 1945; Letter to Fr. Daniel Lord, S.J., 24th January, 1948.

¹¹³ C.f. Vatican Council, Session IV, Constitution *De Ecclesia Christi*, cap. 3; CIC (1917), 218 §2; Pius XII, Message to Italian Catholic Action, 4th September, 1940: *AAS* 32, p. 369; Letter to Cardinal Leme, 21st January, 1942; Radio Message to the Congress in Barcelona, 7th December, 1947: *AAS* 39, p. 364; *AAS* 39, p. 634.

(ii) he has power over all Sodalities that are erected outside of houses of the Society of Jesus and can accordingly give them rules provided the substance of the Common Rules remains intact.¹¹⁴

(b) The Parish Priest –

(i) is the normal president of parish Sodalities, which he accordingly governs as the other societies of the Parish;

(ii) he possesses over all the Sodalities engaged in apostolic work in his parish that power which has been given him by Canon Law and by legitimate diocesan statutes for the right-ordering of the external apostolate.¹¹⁵

23. VII. ANY legitimately appointed director of a Sodality, who of course must always be a priest, although he is altogether subject to his ecclesiastical Superiors, enjoys however, according to the Common Rules, complete power in the internal life of the Sodality. It is fitting that he should generally exercise this power by means of Sodalists, chosen to help him in his office.¹¹⁶

¹¹⁴ C.f. CIC (1917), 334 § 1, 335, § 1; General Statutes of the Sodalities of Our Lady, 31st August, 1885, II, 5.

¹¹⁵ C.f. CIC (1917), 464 § 1; Declaration to Fr. Luis Martin, S.J., Father General of the Society of Jesus, S.J., 13th April, 1904.

¹¹⁶ C.f. The Golden Bull *Gloriosæ Dominæ*, 27th September, 1748; the Brief *Laudabili Romanorum*, 15th February, 1758; General Statutes of the Sodalities of Our Lady, 31st August, 1885; *Common Rules of the Sodalities of Our Lady*, 16, 18, 50.

24. VIII. THESE Sodalities are to be called “*Sodalities of Our Lady*” not only because they take their name from the Blessed Virgin Mary,¹¹⁷ but especially because each Sodalist makes profession of special devotion to the Mother of God¹¹⁸ and is dedicated to her by a complete consecration,¹¹⁹ undertaking, though not under pain of sin,¹²⁰ to strive by every means and under the standard of the Blessed Virgin for his own perfection and eternal salvation as well as for that of others.¹²¹ By this consecration the Sodalist binds himself forever to the Blessed Virgin Mary, unless he is dismissed from the Sodality as unworthy, or himself through fickleness of purpose relinquishes the same.¹²²

¹¹⁷ C.f. *Common Rules of the Sodalities of Our Lady*, 3; the Golden Bull *Gloriosæ Dominæ*, 27th September, 1748.

¹¹⁸ C.f., *Common Rules of the Sodalities of Our Lady*, 1, 40.

¹¹⁹ C.f., *ibid.*, 27.

¹²⁰ C.f. Pius XII, *Discourse to the Sodalities of Our Lady*, 21st January, 1945; the *Common Rules of the Sodalities of Our Lady*, 32.

¹²¹ C.f. Pius XII, *Discourse to the Sodalities of Our Lady*, 21st January, 1945; Letter to Fr. Daniel Lord, S.J., 24th January, 1948.

¹²² C.f., *The Common Rules of the Sodalities of Our Lady*, 1, 27, 30.

25. IX. IN the enrolment of Sodalists care should be taken to choose those who are by no means satisfied¹²³ with an ordinary and common kind of life,¹²⁴ but who strive “to place the most lofty sentiments in their hearts,”¹²⁵ according to the ascetic norms and exercises of piety proposed in the Rules.¹²⁶

26. X. IT is a duty then of Sodalities of Our Lady to train their members according to the condition of each, so that they can be proposed as models to their companions of Christian life and apostolic endeavour.¹²⁷

27. XI. AMONG the primary ends of Sodalities¹²⁸ is to be reckoned every kind [omnimodo] of apostolate, especially the social apostolate for the propagation of the kingdom of Christ and the defence

¹²³ C.f., The Common Rules of the Sodalities of Our Lady, 23, 24, 26; Benedict XV, Message to the Sodalities of Our Lady, 19th December, 1915. – Pius XI, Encyclical *Ubi arcano*, 23rd December, 1922: *AAS* 14, p. 693. – Pius XII, Letter to Cardinal Leme, 21st January, 1942; Message to the Sodalities of Our Lady, 21st January, 1945; Letter to Fr. S. Ilundáin, 26th August, 1946; Telegram to the Congress of Italian Sodalities of Our Lady, 12th September, 1947; Radio Message to the Congress in Barcelona, 7th December, 1947: *AAS* 39, p. 634; *AAS* 39, p. 643.

¹²⁴ C.f., *Common Rules of the Sodalities of Our Lady*, 1, 35.

¹²⁵ C.f., *ibid.*, 12.

¹²⁶ C.f., *ibid.*, 9, 33, 45.

¹²⁷ C.f., *Common Rules of the Sodalities of Our Lady*, 14, 1, 33, 43; Pius XII, *Discourse to the Sodalities of Our Lady*, 21st January, 1945; Telegram to the Congress of Italian Sodalities of Our Lady, 12th September, 1947; Letter to Fr. Daniel Lord, S.J., 24th January, 1948; Message to the Sodalities of Our Lady of the *Conférence Olivaint*, 27th March, 1948.

¹²⁸ Benedict XIV, the Golden Bull *Gloriosæ Dominæ*, 27th September, 1748. – Benedict XV, Message to the Sodalities of Our Lady, 19th December, 1915. – Pius XI, *Letter to the Apostolic Administrator of Oeniponte*, 2nd August, 1927. – Pius XII, Letter to Cardinal Leme, 21st January, 1942; Letter to Fr. S. Ilundáin, 26th August, 1946; Radio Message to the Congress in Barcelona, 7th December, 1947: *AAS* 39, p. 633.

of ecclesiastical rights, entrusted to them¹²⁹ [demandatus] by the Ecclesiastical Hierarchy. To further this true and complete co-operation with the hierarchical apostolate¹³⁰ the norms proper to the Sodalities, determining the means of this co-operation,¹³¹ are in no way to be changed or modified.

28. XII FINALLY, the Sodalities of Our Lady are to be considered on the same level as the other organisations, dedicated to the apostolate,¹³² whether they are allied to these, or to the central organisation of Catholic Action. Moreover, since it is the duty of Sodalities, under the guidance and authority of their Pastors,¹³³ to lend their aid to every other organisation,¹³⁴ it is not required that each Sodalist should also become a member of some other organisation.¹³⁵

¹²⁹ C.f. Letter from Cardinal Pacelli to Cardinal Faulhaber, 3rd September, 1934; Pius XII, Apostolic Letter *Nostris profecto*, 6th July, 1940; Message to the Sodalities of Our Lady, 21st January, 1945; Letter to Fr. S. Ilundáin, 26th August, 1946; Letter to Fr. Daniel Lord, S.J., 24th January, 1948.

¹³⁰ Pius XII, *Discourse to Italian Catholic Action*, 4th September, 1940; *AAS* 32, p. 369; Letter to Cardinal Leme, 21st January, 1942; Cardinal Pacelli, *Discourse to the Sodalities of Our Lady in Menzingen* (Switzerland), 22nd October, 1938.

¹³¹ C.f. Pius XII, Radio Message to the Congress in Barcelona, 7th December, 1947: *AAS* 39, p. 634.

¹³² C.f. Pius XII, *Discourse to Italian Catholic Action*, 4th September, 1940: *AAS* 32, p. 368; Pius XII, Telegram to the Congress of Italian Sodalities of Our Lady, 12th September, 1947; Radio Message to the Congress in Barcelona, 7th December, 1947: *AAS* 39, p. 634.

¹³³ C.f., *inter alia*, Pius XII, Telegram to the Congress of Italian Sodalities of Our Lady, 12th September, 1947; Letter to Fr. Daniel Lord, S.J., 24th January, 1948; Letter *During recent years* to the Bishops of India, 30th January, 1948.

¹³⁴ C.f. especially Pius XI, Letter *Quamvis Nostra* to the Bishops of Brazil, 27th October, 1935: *AAS*, 28, p. 161; Message to the Sodalities of Our Lady, 30th March, 1930. – Pius XII, Message to Italian Catholic Action, 4th September, 1940: *AAS* 32, p. 369.

¹³⁵ C.F. Pius XII, Letter to Fr. S. Ilundáin, 26th August, 1946.

29. THUS We announce and proclaim, decreeing that this letter is and remains fully valid and efficacious and has full and complete effect now and for the future, and that it should abundantly favour those whom it concerns, and accordingly it must be judged and defined; and if anything contrary to this, whether knowingly or unknowingly, shall be attempted by anyone whomsoever and by whatever authority, it shall henceforth be null and void. Any thing to the contrary notwithstanding.

GIVEN at Castel Gandolfo, near Rome, 27th September, on the occasion of the second centenary of the Golden Bull “Gloriosæ Dominæ,” in the year 1948, the tenth of Our Pontificate.

PIUS POPE XII.