



## **‘Legio Sanctae Familiae’ The Legion of the Holy Family**

Under the Patronage of  
The Sacred Heart of Jesus  
The Immaculate Heart of Mary  
The Most Chaste Heart of St Joseph



Tel: +353 (0)85-1208779

Web: [www.truedevotions.ie](http://www.truedevotions.ie)

E-mail: [john@truedevotions.ie](mailto:john@truedevotions.ie)

We have come to the final article in this series of articles which looks at Pope Leo XIII’s Encyclical letter ‘*Sapientiae Christianae*’ on the duties of Christians in society. At the beginning of the letter Pope Leo XIII warned us that, “For, when these principles have been disregarded, evils so vast have accrued that no right-minded man can face the trials of the time being without grave anxiety or consider the future without alarm.” (**Sapientiae Christianae 1**)

There is no doubt that we are living in evil times and that is why Pope Leo XIII wrote *Sapientiae Christianae*. He wanted to exhort Catholics to be on their guard and to work tirelessly to defend the Catholic Church and her moral teachings.

“Hence, We renew the urgent entreaty We have already made, to redouble zeal and perseverance, when addressing humble supplications to our merciful God, so that the virtues whereby a Christian life is perfected may be reawakened. It is, however, urgent before all, that charity, which is the main foundation of the Christian life, and apart from which the other virtues exist not or remain barren, should be quickened and maintained.

Therefore is it that the Apostle Paul, after having exhorted the Colossians to flee all vice and cultivate all virtue, adds: “Above all things, have charity, which is the bond of perfection.” (Colossians 3:14) Yea, truly, charity is the bond of perfection, for it binds intimately to God those whom it has embraced and with loving tenderness, causes them to draw their life from God, to act with God, to refer all to God.

Howbeit, the love of God should not be severed from the love of our neighbour, since men have a share in the infinite goodness of God and bear in themselves the impress of His image and likeness. “This commandment we have from God, that he who loves God, love also his brother.” (1 John 4:21) “If any man say I love God, and he hates his brother, he is a liar.” (1 John 4:20) And this commandment concerning charity its divine proclaimer styled new, not in the sense that a previous law, or even nature itself, had



The Good Samaritan - Balthasar van Cortbemde (1612 - 1663)

not enjoined that men should love one another, but because the Christian precept of loving each other in that manner was truly new, and quite unheard of in the memory of man. For, that love with which Jesus Christ is beloved by His Father and with which He Himself loves men, He obtained for His disciples and followers that they might be of one heart and of one mind in Him by charity, as He Himself and His Father are one by their nature.” (**Sapientiae Christianae 40**)

This charity seeks the perfection of our neighbour so that he may attain the Heavenly Kingdom. It is not a soft love which tolerates sin and division but a love which earnestly strives to help our neighbour to become holy. It is the same charity wherewith Christ laid down His life for us and allowed Himself to be crucified so that we could be saved from our sins. This is the level of charity we are called to. It can be easy to lose sight of this when we see how deeply embedded evil has become in our society. The dangers arising from this evil can turn men of good will against each other out of a certain impatience to re-conquer the world for Christ.

“No one is unaware how deeply and from the very beginning the import of that precept has been implanted in the breast of Christians, and what abundant fruits of concord, mutual benevolence, piety, patience, and fortitude it has produced. Why, then, should we

## Legio Sanctae Familiae - The Legion of The Holy Family

not devote ourselves to imitate the examples set by our fathers? The very times in which we live should afford sufficient motives for the practice of charity. Since impious men are bent on giving fresh impulse to their hatred against Jesus Christ, Christians should be quickened anew in piety; and charity, which is the inspirer of lofty deeds, should be imbued with new life. Let dissensions therefore, if there be any, wholly cease; let those strifes which waste the strength of those engaged in the fight, without any advantage resulting to religion, be scattered to the winds; let all minds be united in faith and all hearts in charity, so that, as it behooves, life may be spent in the practice of the love of God and the love of men.” (**Sapientiae Christianae 41**)

This “love of men” includes love for those impious men who seek the destruction of the Catholic Church and who seek to overturn the moral order by targeting school children with perverse ideologies that will destroy their moral character. But we must not mistake this love for something that is weak and that puts up no resistance to the plans of evil men. Pope Leo XIII, in his penultimate paragraph, addresses the fathers of families.

“This is a suitable moment for us to exhort especially heads of families to govern their households according to these precepts, and to be solicitous without failing for the right training of their children. The family may be regarded as the cradle of civil society, and it is in great measure within the circle of family life that the destiny of the States is fostered.

Whence it is that they who would break away from Christian discipline are working to corrupt family life, and to destroy it utterly, root and branch. From such an unholy purpose they allow not themselves to be turned aside by the reflection that it cannot, even in any degree, be carried out without inflicting cruel outrage on the parents.

These hold from nature their right of training the children to whom they have given birth, with the obligation super-added of shaping and directing the education of their little ones to the end for which God vouchsafed the privilege of transmitting the gift of life.

It is, then, incumbent on parents to strain every nerve to ward off such an outrage, and to strive manfully to have and to hold exclusive authority to direct the education of their offspring, as is fitting, in a Christian manner, and first and foremost to keep them away from schools where there is risk of their drinking in the poison of impiety.

Where the right education of youth is concerned, no amount of trouble or labour can be undertaken, how ever great, but that even greater still may not be called for. In this regard, indeed, there are to be found in many countries Catholics worthy of general admiration, who incur considerable outlay and bestow much zeal in founding schools for the education of youth.

It is highly desirable that such noble example may be generously followed, where time and circumstances



Stella Maris Primary School  
A Private Catholic School in Limerick, Ireland

demand, yet all should be intimately persuaded that the minds of children are most influenced by the training they receive at home. If in their early years they find within the walls of their homes the rule of an upright life and the discipline of Christian virtues, the future welfare of society will in great measure be guaranteed.” (**Sapientiae Christianae 42**)

Catholic parents should never underestimate the grave responsibilities they have to provide a Catholic education for their children and to protect their children from all who would harm them through an improper or faulty education. Catholic parents must become aware of the forces that are working to destroy their children’s lives and their families.

Pope Leo XIII, writing in 1890, one hundred and thirty three years ago, issued a warning to Catholic fathers alerting them to the fact that there is an organised effort to destroy the Catholic family “utterly, root and branch”. Those who seek the destruction of the Catholic family now control governments and government departments right around the world. Think for a moment about how synchronised the abortion movement is. Think about those who are promoting the homosexual agenda. It is being organised on a global scale with operatives in every country in the world. The transgender ideology has risen from nowhere and now most western nations are telling very young children that boys can become girls and that girls can become boys simply by declaring it. There is a global movement that seeks to make the teaching of this ideology mandatory in all the schools of the world and they are succeeding.

Catholic fathers need to lead the charge against these corrupting ideologies in order to protect their children. Catholic fathers protect and guide their families. In doing this duty, Catholic fathers also form the basis for a moral and upright society. It is easy to complain about the ills of our society, but the primary duty for correcting these problems lies with the fathers of families.

The solution is quite simple, but it is not an easy task. Father’s must lead their families in the Catholic faith and teach them to become holy, to become saints. They cannot do this if they are not trying to become a saint themselves. Catholic fathers are not meant to work alone. God established the order within marriage with the man as the head and the woman working alongside her husband to raise saints for the Heavenly Kingdom.

Our bishops are called to be spiritual fathers. They need to step up and to reform the Catholic schools in their dioceses otherwise these schools should be stripped of the title Catholic and parents should be alerted to the dangers that exist within these schools where children will imbibe “the poison of impiety”. The dangers that the false ideologies pose for our children and for our society cannot be underestimated. They are capable of destroying whole civilisations and they are already deeply embedded into the fabric of western societies. It will take generations to recover our societies from these evil ideologies and that is why we must begin now, to firmly oppose those who promote these false and dangerous ideologies.

Pope Leo XIII then concludes *Christianiae Sapientiae*.

“And now We seem to have touched upon those matters which Catholics ought chiefly nowadays to follow, or mainly to avoid. It rests with you, venerable brothers, to take measures that Our voice may reach everywhere, and that one and all may understand how urgent it is to reduce to practice the teachings set forth in this Our letter.

The observance of these duties cannot be troublesome or onerous, for the yoke of Jesus Christ is sweet, and His burden is light. If anything, however, appear too difficult of accomplishment, you will afford aid by the authority of your example, so that each one of the faithful may make more strenuous endeavour, and display a soul unconquered by difficulties. Bring it home to their minds, as We have Ourselves oftentimes conveyed the warning, that matters of the highest moment and worthy of all honour are at stake, for the safeguarding of which every most toilsome effort should be readily endured; and that a sublime reward is in store for the labours of a Christian life.

On the other hand, to refrain from doing battle for Jesus Christ amounts to fighting against Him; He Himself assures us “He will deny before His Father in heaven those who shall have refused to confess Him on earth.”(Luke 9:26) As for Ourselves and you all, never assuredly, so long as life lasts, shall We allow Our authority, Our counsels, and Our solicitude to be in any wise lacking in the conflict. Nor is it to be doubted but that especial aid of the great God will be vouchsafed, so long as the struggle endures, to the flock alike and to the pastors.

Sustained by this confidence, as a pledge of heavenly gifts, and of Our loving kindness in the Lord to you, venerable brothers, to your clergy and to all your people, We accord the apostolic benediction.”  
**(Sapientiae Christianae 43)**

One of the great difficulties for Catholics in our day, is the confusion that emanates from certain quarters of the Catholic Church. In Germany, the bishops are calling for blessings for homosexual couples and those living in adulterous relationships. Catholic Church

**The rules of good parenting,  
Do not change with time.  
They are as timeless as God Himself.  
Who issued them!**



teaching against contraception is neither proclaimed or enforced. We are witnessing a great apostasy away from the Catholic faith and the solution being offered by many clerics is for the Catholic Church to become more worldly, so that those of the world will more readily accept her. This is to strip the Catholic Church of the cross of Jesus Christ. It will not rebuild the Catholic Church but will only further weaken her influence in the world.

The long term solution to all of these problems is to build networks of strong Catholic families who are willing to suffer and to die for the Catholic faith. It is Holiness that attracts people to the Catholic Church. Hypocrisy drives them away. It is the primary duty of Catholic fathers to build up their families and to help to build these networks of families seeking the Heavenly Kingdom. I urge Catholic fathers to take on board the words of Pope Leo XIII and to remember that Catholic fathers are responsible for building a society that puts God in first place and that also serves our neighbours.

“This is a suitable moment for us to exhort especially heads of families to govern their households according to these precepts, and to be solicitous without failing for the right training of their children. The family may be regarded as the cradle of civil society, and it is in great measure within the circle of family life that the destiny of the States is fostered.”