



'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



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To fully understand 'Divini Illius Magistri', one must understand the primary purpose of our existence. Pope Pius XI's first concern is the salvation of souls. Back in 1929, he was acutely aware that children were being corrupted by the educational establishments of his time which thus endangered their eternal salvation. Whilst he was able to praise much of the Catholic educational efforts of his time, today's Catholic parents must lament the fall of Catholic education. The principles outlined by Pope Pius XI with regard to Catholic Education had been widely discarded by 1970 and probably earlier. Following on from his denunciation of co-educational schools, Pope Pius XI recalls the warning Christ gave to those who corrupt children.

"Recalling the terrible words of the Divine Master: "Woe to the world because of scandals!" (Matthew 18:7) We most earnestly appeal to your solicitude and your watchfulness, Venerable Brethren, against these pernicious errors, which, to the immense harm of youth, are spreading far and wide among Christian peoples." (Divini Illius Magistri 69)

In order to obtain perfect education, it is of the utmost importance to see that all those conditions which surround the child during the period of his formation, in other words that the combination of circumstances which we call environment, correspond exactly to the end proposed. (Divini Illius Magistri 70)

The end of which Pope Pius XI is speaking is eternal salvation which comes from striving to enter Heaven by the narrow gate. The wide way of the world leads souls to Hell and children must be trained in how to live virtuous lives from their earliest years so that they will be able to resist the temptations of the world, the flesh and the devil.

"Enter ye in at the narrow gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and many there are who go in thereat. How narrow is the gate, and strait is the way that leads to life: and few there are that find it!" (Matthew 7:13-14)

"The first natural and necessary element in this environment, as regards education, is the family, and this precisely because so ordained by the Creator Himself. Accordingly that education, as a rule, will be more effective and lasting which is received in a



well-ordered and well-disciplined Christian family; and more efficacious in proportion to the clear and constant good example set, first by the parents, and then by the other members of the household." (Divini Illius Magistri 71)

The primary purpose of Legio Sanctae Familiae is to raise an army of Traditional Catholic Families who are willing to strive with all their might to become the holy families that God desires them to be. There is no other way of creating a holy society than through these Traditional Catholic Families. Pope Pius XI recognised the importance of Catholic families for the salvation of souls.

"It is not our intention to treat formally the question of domestic education, nor even to touch upon its principal points. The subject is too vast. Besides there are not lacking special treatises on this topic by authors, both ancient and modern, well known for their solid Catholic doctrine. One which seems deserving of special mention is the golden treatise already referred to, of Antoniano, On the Christian Education of Youth, which St. Charles Borromeo ordered to be read in public to parents assembled in their churches. (Divini Illius Magistri 72)

"Nevertheless, Venerable Brethren and beloved children, We wish to call your attention in a special manner to the present-day lamentable decline in family education. The offices and professions of a transitory and earthly life, which are certainly of far less importance, are prepared for by long and

careful study; whereas for the fundamental duty and obligation of educating their children, many parents have little or no preparation, immersed as they are in temporal cares. The declining influence of domestic environment is further weakened by another tendency, prevalent almost everywhere today, which, under one pretext or another, for economic reasons, or for reasons of industry, trade or politics, causes children to be more and more frequently sent away from home even in their tenderest years. And there is a country where the children are actually being torn from the bosom of the family, to be formed (or, to speak more accurately, to be deformed and depraved) in godless schools and associations, to irreligion and hatred, according to the theories of advanced socialism; and thus is renewed in a real and more terrible manner the slaughter of the Innocents. **(Divini Illius Magistri 73)**

It is no exaggeration to state that the corruption of children by means of a false education is worse than the slaughter of the Innocents. The Innocent children who were slaughtered in Bethlehem, committed no sin. Those who are led astray by erroneous teachings will probably fall into mortal sin, and if they die in this state, they will spend eternity in Hell. Modern man is wary of such talk and the doctrinal teachings of the Catholic church on Hell are dismissed by many Catholics. It is one of the reasons why mortal sin is not only prevalent in our modern societies but is actually celebrated.

“For the love of Our Saviour Jesus Christ, therefore, we implore pastors of souls, by every means in their power, by instructions and catechisms, by word of mouth and written articles widely distributed, to warn Christian parents of their grave obligations. And this should be done not in a merely theoretical and general way, but with practical and specific application to the various responsibilities of parents touching the religious, moral and civil training of their children, and with indication of the methods best adapted to make their training effective, supposing always the influence of their own exemplary lives.

The Apostle of the Gentiles did not hesitate to descend to such details of practical instruction in his epistles, especially in the Epistle to the Ephesians, where among other things he gives this advice: “And you, fathers, provoke not your children to anger.” (Ephesians 6:4) This fault is the result not so much of excessive severity, as of impatience and of ignorance of means best calculated to effect a desired correction; it is also due to the all too common relaxation of parental discipline which fails to check the growth of evil passions in the hearts of the younger generation.

Parents therefore, and all who take their place in the work of education, should be careful to make right use of the authority given them by God, whose vicars in a true sense they are. This authority is not given for their own advantage, but for the proper up-bringing of their children in a holy and filial “fear of God, the beginning of wisdom,” on which foundation alone all respect for authority can rest securely; and without which, order, tranquillity and prosperity, whether in the family or in society, will be impossible. **(Divini Illius Magistri 74)**



The Slaughter of the Innocents
Léon Cogniet - (1794 - 1880)

Modern societies seem to have completely lost the correct understanding of authority as coming from Almighty God. If man does not respect God his creator, he will not respect any earthly authority and will only obey out of fear of punishment. Evil men will also desire to have authority over others on account of the power and wealth it may offer to them. These societies will naturally tend towards decadence. Pope Pius XI speaks about the remedy to such ills.

“To meet the weakness of man’s fallen nature, God in His Goodness has provided the abundant helps of His grace and the countless means with which He has endowed the Church, the great family of Christ. The Church therefore is the educational environment most intimately and harmoniously associated with the Christian family.” **(Divini Illius Magistri 75)**

“This educational environment of the Church embraces the Sacraments, divinely efficacious means of grace, the sacred ritual, so wonderfully instructive, and the material fabric of her churches, whose liturgy and art have an immense educational value; but it also includes the great number and variety of schools, associations and institutions of all kinds, established for the training of youth in Christian piety, together with literature and the sciences, not omitting recreation and physical culture. And in this inexhaustible fecundity of educational works, how marvellous, how incomparable is the Church’s maternal providence! So admirable too is the harmony which she maintains with the Christian family, that the Church and the family may be said to constitute together one and the same temple of Christian education. **(Divini Illius Magistri 76)**

Many of the Catholic educational establishments of our time have fallen prey to modernism. They are Catholic in name only and no longer meet the requirements necessary to be truly Catholic. When the existence of Hell and eternal damnation are doubted, this is followed by a laxity and a casualness in the spiritual life. If nobody goes to Hell, then we do not need to worry too much about how we live our lives. As long as we don’t become murderers and suchlike, we will be admitted to the Heavenly Kingdom. Those who think like this are blinded to the reality of just how evil modern societies have become. Murder is now justified if a pregnant woman simply does not want her child because of the inconvenience. Those

emerging from the modern Catholic educational establishments are very much in favour of abortion. This failure of the Catholic schools has yet to be addressed by the hierarchy.

“Since however the younger generations must be trained in the arts and sciences for the advantage and prosperity of civil society, and since the family of itself is unequal to this task, it was necessary to create that social institution, the school. But let it be borne in mind that this institution owes its existence to the initiative of the family and of the Church, long before it was undertaken by the State. Hence considered in its historical origin, the school is by its very nature an institution subsidiary and complementary to the family and to the Church. It follows logically and necessarily that it must not be in opposition to, but in positive accord with those other two elements, and form with them a perfect moral union, constituting one sanctuary of education, as it were, with the family and the Church. Otherwise it is doomed to fail of its purpose, and to become instead an agent of destruction. (**Divini Illius Magistri 77**)

It could be said that the success of Catholic education in forming the minds and hearts of children, was one of the factors that led to its downfall. The secular States became jealous of this power and sought to capture it so that they could indoctrinate children with perverse ideologies. The evidence for this perverse indoctrination is now overwhelming in western societies but, as of yet, there is very little push back from those in authority in the Catholic Church. The seriousness of the current situation is only understood by a small group of Catholic parents who fear for their children’s eternal salvation. Let us pray that more and more parents recognise the dangers that the modern school poses for their children. Let us also pray that the good Lord will send us courageous shepherds who will be willing to lay down their lives rather than risk the corruption of innocent children.

“This principle we find recognized by a layman, famous for his pedagogical writings, though these because of their liberalism cannot be unreservedly praised. “The school,” he writes, “if not a temple, is a den.” And again: “When literary, social, domestic and religious education do not go hand in hand, man is unhappy and helpless.” (Niccolo Tommaseo - Sull’ Educazione) (**Divini Illius Magistri 78**)

“From this it follows that the so-called “neutral” or “lay” school, from which religion is excluded, is contrary to the fundamental principles of education. Such a school moreover cannot exist in practice; it is bound to become irreligious. There is no need to repeat what Our Predecessors have declared on this point, especially Pius IX and Leo XIII, at times when laicism was beginning in a special manner to infest the public school. We renew and confirm their declarations, as well as the Sacred Canons in which the frequenting of non-Catholic schools, whether neutral or mixed, those namely which are open to Catholics and non-Catholics alike, is forbidden for Catholic children, and can be at most tolerated, on the approval of the Ordinary alone, under determined circumstances of place and time, and with special precautions. Neither can Catholics admit that other



SULL' EDUCAZIONE

PENSIERI

NICCOLÒ TOMMASEO



MILANO
VIA DEL DUBINO, N. 27.
1864.

type of mixed school, (least of all the so-called “*école unique*,” obligatory on all), in which the students are provided with separate religious instruction, but receive other lessons in common with non-Catholic pupils from non-Catholic teachers.” (**Divini Illius Magistri 79**)

Pope Pius XI is referring to Pope Pius IX’s syllabus of errors which condemns the proposition in No 48 that - “Catholics may approve of the system of educating youth unconnected with Catholic faith and the power of the Church, and which regards the knowledge of merely natural things, and only, or at least primarily, the ends of earthly social life.”

He is also referring to several of Pope Leo XIII’s encyclicals. For example *Nobilissima Gallorum Gens* - On the Religious Question in France from 1884 which says.

“And first, as regards family life, it is of the highest importance that the offspring of Christian marriages should be thoroughly instructed in the precepts of religion; and that the various studies by which youth is fitted for the world should be joined with that of religion. To divorce these is to wish that youth should be neutral as regards its duties to God; a system of education in itself fallacious, and particularly fatal in tender years, for it opens the door to atheism, and closes it on religion. Christian parents must, therefore, be careful that their children receive religious instruction as soon as they are capable of understanding it; and that nothing may, in the schools they attend, blemish their faith or their morals.” (Pope Leo XIII - *Nobilissima Gallorum Gens* - 8th February 1884)

A different problem has arisen in our day where the curriculum in the schools that are called Catholic has been taken over by the secular State. The State mandates that programmes are taught to children which are contrary to the Catholic faith. The bishops in charge of these schools retain nominal control and, in general, they do not publicly oppose the secular programmes. This has led to a betrayal of several generations of Catholic parents who believed that their children were receiving a Catholic education. These parents are heartbroken at the general apostasy of their children and grandchildren who were corrupted by the malevolent influence of these schools and many of the teachers that taught in them. We must pray for the day when Catholic children can be once again guaranteed a Catholic education in the Catholic schools they attend.