

P R E A C H E R S O F P E A C E

THE DISCOURSE OF HIS HOLINESS POPE PIUS XII TO THE FATHERS OF THE
DOMINICAN GENERAL CHAPTER ASSEMBLED IN AUDIENCE ON SUNDAY,
22ND OF SEPTEMBER 1946

IT is but fitting that we should receive in a joyful and loving spirit you, the Dominican brethren, who are celebrating at Rome the duly appointed assembly of your religious family, or General Chapter, the proceedings and labours of which we are following with close attention. Nor have we any doubt but that it will bring forth the good results and consequences that are desired of it, so that, with its discipline strengthened and its powers increased, your Order may more and more contribute to the saving triumphs of the Gospel.

That this expectation may indeed be realised the new Master General, chosen by your votes, inspires us to hope. It gives us joy, therefore, to greet him now present here; it gives us joy, also, to recognise publicly the abundant merits which our beloved son Martin Gillet has earned for himself during his long term of office as your supreme moderator.

While we were considering and weighing in our mind what matters we might most fittingly and usefully touch upon in our address to you, our eyes lighted upon certain words, contained in your constitutions, which seemed worthy indeed of meditation: 'Resolute in peace, assiduous in study, fervent in preaching' (No. 452). Brief in statement, but big with meaning; a narrow compass of words, but a weighty mass of precept; for therein is emblazoned the form of those special virtues which will be the promise, the goal, the guiding star of the glorious path that lies before the chosen and beloved family of Saint Dominic.

Resolute in peace. We are not speaking of that counterfeit peace, difficult to secure, easily lost, full of wiles. We mean the true, solid, sincere peace which is the daughter of charity and the mother of holy joy, as witness the word of God: 'Much peace have they that love thy law' (*Ps.* cxviii 165) and 'Joy followeth them that take counsel of peace' (*Prov.* xii 20).

This kind of peace is a most beautiful gift of Christ such as the world can neither give us nor take away from us, but can only vainly envy us, seeing that peace is Christ himself: 'For he is our peace' (*Eph.* ii 14), Christ, that is, who dwells within us and animates our breasts. Whose own we are if we live worthily. But since peace is the harmony of arduous virtues, apply yourselves eagerly to the end that, subjecting the body to the mind and the mind to God, and being filled with the grace of the Gospel, you may be

pleasing to the angels in your desires and thoughts, to men in your actions. Far be from you anything that may disturb your brotherly harmony which so properly belongs in the highest degree to religious and adorns them with the jewel of calm wisdom. Amongst you may authority be an unfailing help, obedience a common holocaust, and may your life outshine all others as a living measure and illustrious example of the Christian profession.

Assiduous in study. Your peace is no idle ease; indeed it has a task to perform that is the equal of any others in greatness and excellence. For to you it belongs to be vigorous in the study of doctrine, especially to grow richer day by day in the knowledge of things divine, meditating, illustrating, defending the God-given truths. May each one of you be moved to the attainment of an ever more abundant knowledge, allied with holiness of life, by the timely exhortations of St Jerome: 'Never let a book be out of your hands or away from your eyes; let the Psalter be learnt by heart; pray without ceasing; keep your mind alert but exclude a multiplicity of thoughts. Let body and soul alike be directed towards the Lord' (St Jer. *Ep.* 125 *ad Rusticum*, No. 11—Migne PL t.22 col. 1078).

You, who have always accorded pride of place to the cultivation of theology and philosophy, may lay claim by right and by merit to the highest praise; you have given to the Church St Thomas Aquinas, the master of both these fields of learning, whose authority, whether in the instruction of beginners or in the guidance of those who investigate more deeply the hidden truths, is unique, being now proclaimed in the form of a decree in the Code of Canon Law itself: 'Professors must pursue their studies of rational philosophy, as well as of theology, and the instruction of students in these subjects entirely according to the method, teaching and principles of the Angelic Doctor, and must hold these latter sacrosanct' (Can. 1366 §2).

How highly this precept is to be esteemed we, following the counsels and in the footsteps of our predecessors, have indicated elsewhere (cf. *Acta Apost. Sedis* 1939 pp. 246-7). In this connection, however, less importance seems to attach at this present moment to those questions in which, under the direction and auspices of the teaching authority of the Church, there has always been liberty of opinion and argument, however important these same questions are to be regarded in philosophical and theological enquiries and debates. Still less is it now a question of the conjectures and formulae of doctrines pertaining to physics or to the world of nature which belong peculiarly to an age that is past, nor of their logical implications, especially seeing that in our own days the researches and findings of human science have superseded those opinions and have advanced

far beyond them—researches and findings, be it said, which the Church, far from opposing, welcomes and, far from fearing, encourages.

But here and now it is a question of the very fundamentals of perennial philosophy and of theology, fundamentals recognised and revered by every system and department of learning that is to be reckoned as Catholic in name and in fact; it is a question of science and faith, of the nature of each and of their mutual relationship, a question of the very basis of faith which no adverse judgment can disturb; it is a question of the truths revealed by God and whether a keen mind can penetrate into them by means of definite concepts and from them gather further truths. To summarize the matter: the question is whether the edifice that St Thomas raised, an edifice outside and above any particular age and resulting from a singular composition and unification of elements stored up throughout the centuries by those who had fostered Christian wisdom, and founded on solid rock, still manifests an unflinching vigour and validity, whether it still effectively defends and safeguards the deposit of Catholic faith and is, moreover, safe to use and a trustworthy guide in the latest advances of theology and philosophy.

That is certainly what the Church maintains, being persuaded that this is a sure way of knowing and establishing truth. Thus in the Apostolic Constitution 'Deus Scientiarum Dominus', published May 24, 1931, she confirms the decree of the Canon Law already referred to. Philosophy must be presented—this is the precept here laid down—'in such a way that the hearers are instructed in a complete and coherent synthesis of doctrine in accordance with the method and principles of St Thomas Aquinas'; and in theology 'where the truths of Faith are expounded and demonstrated from sacred Scripture and tradition, the nature and inner significance of those truths are to be investigated and illustrated in accordance with the principles and teaching of St Thomas Aquinas' (Art. 29).

Where need arises it will not be difficult, as experience and practice show, to render intelligible to lay people in modern language, and to expound by verbal amplification, certain formulae (usually described as 'technical') which have ordinarily been obscure to those unskilled in this kind of learning.

Now, seeing that these matters have all the weight of a law that holds good for all Catholic schools of philosophy and theology, much more may we hope that you will so act that not only in external leadership but also in internal judgment and study you may adhere to these lofty norms which cover the whole of Catholic doctrine, not excluding matters of human rights and the social order.

Read diligently the books containing the institutions, laws and history of religion; by intelligent investigation examine the results of modern research and turn them to the use of sacred science. Let your peace, friend and companion of unruffled studiousness, glow with the heavenly truths it reflects. Thus amid the rugged peaks does the tranquil, fir-crowned lake give back the reflected image of the blue vaults of heaven.

Neither would we pass over in silence another matter dear to our heart, namely that the Leonine edition of the works of St Thomas Aquinas should be carried on with renewed zeal; for this is an undertaking that for you will be a glorious achievement, while for philosophical and theological science, whereof the Angelic Doctor is ever the most able guide and unfailing light, it will prove an unending gain to be held hereafter in unchangeable esteem.

Fervent in preaching. Preaching, dearly beloved, is a deep mystery; for while Faith is the salvation of the human race, preaching engenders Faith, as it is written: 'Faith cometh by hearing' (*Rom.* x 17). There is a close connection between the incarnation of the Word of God and preaching, a wondrous nearness and relationship. A follower of Christ, like the most blessed virgin Mary, shows Christ to men, gives and bestows him; he is a Christ-bearer. The virgin Mother Mary clothed Christ with his human form. The preacher of the Gospel clothes him with the tenuous body of human words. In both cases it is truth itself that is clothed, the truth that instructs men, that enlightens and sustains them; the mode is different, the power is the same.

But this maternal honour, this glory, this dignity, is yours by your very name. Preserve your name; preserve your service; let none of you abstain through indolence or fear from the duty of preaching. Nay rather it is yours to excel all others in this task. Let your mouth ever be at one with your way of life; reinforce your words by your example. Though it is useful to learn and to cultivate the profane sciences, so that the word of God may not be deprived of fitting adornment, nevertheless the heavenly power of the word of God lies in the grace of the Holy Spirit besought by prayer and good works. 'Our eloquent preacher functions in speaking of just and holy and good things, for he should not speak of other things; therefore he does everything in his power, in speaking of these things, to make his hearers listen intelligently, willingly and in a spirit of obedience; let him have no doubt but that he can do this, if indeed he can do it at all and to the extent of his capability, rather by his piety in the oratory than by the accomplishments of the orator, so that by praying for himself and for those he is about to address he may speak as a man of prayer rather than as a mere

speaker' (St Aug. *De Doct. Christ.* c.15 n.22—Migne PL t.34 col. 103).

Three things, then, require your unflagging care and thought to make you Dominicans in name and in reality: peace, the study of doctrine, and preaching; three things not unrelated but closely linked, not disparate but a single object of love. Safeguarded by them do honour to your profession, give aid to us in our ministry, bring succour to an age brought low indeed. 'Grace be with you, mercy, and peace from God the Father, and from Christ Jesus the Son of the Father, in truth and charity' (2 Jn. 3). As a heartfelt presage thereof we lovingly impart to you the Apostolic Blessing.

PIUS XII.

Translated by HILARY J. CARPENTER, O.P.

FATHER HUGH POPE¹

A faithful man shall be much praised.—Prov. XXVIII 20.

WE are gathered to do reverence to the memory of a great priest, a great apostle, a great Dominican. We are gathered to offer the Holy Sacrifice to God to the end that he may speedily receive into his eternal peace the soul of one who was for all who knew him an inspiration and an example, a veritable man of God, one who was for so many of us a loving father, a patient teacher, a wise counsellor and an understanding friend. It is written in Holy Scripture: *Praise not a man before his death, for a man is known by his children.* Those of us who knew Father Hugh Pope best have not been able to refrain from praising him even while he yet lived; but now there can be no withholding that praise on the part of any; for he is indeed known by his children, known by the offspring of his apostolic mind, known by the many souls he brought to God, known by the brethren of his Order whom he nurtured by his paternal care and affection.

In his recent allocution to the General Chapter of the Order of Preachers the Holy Father fastened upon the very pillars of true Dominican life when he reminded all Dominicans that, in the words of their Constitutions, they must be 'resolute in peace, assiduous in study and fervent in preaching' if they would prove themselves worthy of their honoured name and high calling. When we look back over the long course of Father Hugh's life in the Dominican Order we realise that he set himself from the outset to attain an ideal which he pursued unwaveringly to the very end.

¹ The panegyric preached at the funeral of the Ven. and Very Rev. Fr Hugh Pope, O.P., S.T.M., D.S.S., who died at Edinburgh 23rd November 1946.