

PASTORAL LETTER

OF THE

RIGHT REV. DR. CRANE, O.S.A.

Bishop of Sandhurst,

TO THE

CLERGY AND LAITY OF THE DIOCESE OF SANDHURST

WITH THE

REGULATIONS OF LENT, 1882.

Sandhurst:

PRINTED BY J. G. EDWARDS AT "BENDIGO INDEPENDENT" OFFICE.

MDCCCLXXXII.

MARTIN,

BY THE GRACE OF GOD AND FAVOR OF THE APOSTOLIC SEE,

BISHOP OF SANDHURST.

To the Clergy and Laity of the Diocese of Sandhurst.

THE Holy Season of Lent is approaching—a season of Grace and Benediction—and if we act in conformity to the Divine will it shall be to us a season productive of those blessed results. There are seasons of Grace during which God, in an especial manner, opens wide the Treasury of Heaven, and dispenses His favours amongst us in the most liberal manner. There is no time, dearly beloved, that seems more appropriate for the generous exercise of the Divine bounty than that Holy and penitential season, during which the faithful are being invited in every Christian land to contemplate at the foot of the Cross the passion and sufferings of our Divine Lord, and to make atonement for their sins to His offended Majesty, by works of penance and prayer. The children of our Holy Mother the Catholic Church, dispersed through every part of the globe, are employed during the Holy season of Lent in the holy exercises of penance, of prayer, and of fervent supplication to the Throne of God, imploring His Divine bounty to bestow His favours with a liberal hand upon themselves, and upon the whole body of

the faithful throughout the Christian world. Wherefore, dearly beloved, our Holy Mother the Church now exhorts you most earnestly, in the words of Isaias the Prophet, 55, 6—*To seek the Lord while He may be found, and call upon Him while He is near; for, behold now is the acceptable time, behold now is the Day of Salvation* (St. Paul)—2 Corinthians, chap. 6. 7. In addition to the countless graces already bestowed upon us, we have in this call to repentance during the Holy time of Lent a new and inestimable favor, which, upon this occasion, should make our hearts overflow with gratitude to Him who is *compassionate and merciful, long suffering and plenteous in mercy; who will not always be angry, nor will he threaten for ever; who hath not dealt with us according to our sins, nor rewarded us according to our iniquities; as a Father hath compassion on his children, so hath the Lord compassion on them: that fear Him*—102nd Psalm. To encourage sinners to avail themselves of this precious opportunity of salvation, our Holy Mother the Church continually summons all her children during Lent to the foot of the Cross, and there points out to them the Sovereign Victim of the sins of the whole world, dying for the redemption of man in the midst of most excruciating torments, crying out at the same time to his Eternal Father to pardon all His enemies.—*Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do*—St. Luke, 23, 34. Let us then, dearly beloved, come with our Holy Mother the Church to the foot

of the Cross, and there we shall be enabled to *comprehend with the Saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth* of the charity of our Lord Jesus Christ, manifested in His bitter passion—Ephesians, 3, 18. We cannot honor and respect our Divine Lord's passion and death unless we abhor and detest sin—the only cause of His cruel sufferings. It was to destroy sin, and satisfy the injured justice of His Eternal Father, that He shed His most precious blood, and endured a most cruel death upon Mount Calvary, wherefore, according to the Prophet Isaias, 53—*He became despised and the most abject of men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with infirmity*, so that he might truly exclaim, in the language of the Prophet—*O, all ye that pass by the way attend and see if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow*—Lamentations, 1, 12. For *He bore our infirmities and carried our sorrows, He was wounded for our iniquities and bruised for our sins, and by His bruises we are healed*—Isaias, 53. Those, therefore, who continue in sin can have no love for our dear Lord. Those who, during this Holy time, allow themselves to be carried away by their evil passions and inclinations can have no respect for the sufferings of the Man of sorrows, no sympathy for Him who laid down His life for their salvation. Wherefore, dearly beloved, entrusted as we are with the care of your immortal souls, for which a rigorous account must one day be rendered, we exhort you, with all our zeal in the language of in-

inspiration—*Delay not to be converted to the Lord, and defer it not from day to day, for His wrath shall come on a sudden, and in the time of His vengeance He will destroy thee*—Eccles. 5, 8, 9. Dearly beloved, abandon sin, return to God, do penance, for these are the days of salvation, shun had company of every kind, avoid all sorts of dissipation, especially the horrid crime of drunkenness, which is the source of shame and misery to innumerable families in this world, and of the inevitable ruin of their souls in the world to come. Do not allow yourselves, therefore, to be placed in the same category with those ungrateful Christians who, by the indulgence of their evil passions, show no love, no sympathy no gratitude, no respect for the bitter sufferings of their expiring Lord. Remember the words of St. Paul to the Romans, chap. 13—*The night is past, and the day is at hand; let us, therefore, cast off the works of darkness, and put on the armour of light. Let us walk honestly as in the day, not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and impurities, not in contention and envy, but put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh in its concupiscences.* But, dearly beloved, to avoid sin and all the occasions that lead to it is not sufficient. We must do more in order to act in conformity to the Divine will. St. Paul tells us in his epistle to Galatians, 5, 24, *that we must crucify the flesh with its vices and concupiscences*, and our blessed Lord himself tells us in the Gospel, Luke 13—*Except you*

do penance, you shall all likewise perish. Wherefore, dearly beloved, as long as you remain in sin, or continue wilfully in the occasions that lead to its commission, so long you must necessarily be the enemies of God, and liable any moment to fall into the depths of hell, and whilst you are in this most deplorable condition, nothing can save you from destruction, in the ordinary ways of Providence, but penance, united at least to a desire of sacramental confession and absolution: *Come to me*, our Blessed Lord says to all sinners, *all ye that are heavily laden and oppressed, and I will refresh you*—Matt. 2, 28. We exhort you then, dearly beloved, to approach during this Holy season the sacred tribunal of penance, with hearts penetrated with true humility and sorrow, and on the part of God we promise you the pardon of sin, and the abundance of that sanctifying grace that will render you worthy to kneel at the altar of your Divine Lord, to partake of that Divine banquet, of which our Saviour Himself says (John 6, 55)—*He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood hath life everlasting, and I will raise him up on the last day.* Confess your sins with sorrow, with a firm purpose of amendment, and the God of mercy will pardon and forgive. Whilst we entreat you to receive the Holy sacraments during Lent, you are to remember that the time for complying with the Easter duty, in this diocese commences on the first Sunday of Lent, and terminates on Trinity Sunday. All the faithful, therefore,

In this diocese arrived at the years of discretion are commanded by the Church, under the severest ecclesiastical penalties, to go to confession and communion within that time. The command of the Church is delivered in the Council of Lateran in the following terms:—*Let every one of the faithful of both sexes, after they have come to the years of discretion; confess their sins faithfully, and take care to fulfil the penance enjoined them, receiving reverently the sacrament of the Eucharist, at least, at Easter; otherwise, let them be excluded out of the Church whilst living, and when they die, be deprived of Christian burial.*

There is another important duty, dearly beloved, to which we earnestly call your attention. It is the duty of assisting at the Holy sacrifice of the Mass on the Sundays and holidays of the year. This is a precept of the strictest obligation, binding under the penalty of mortal sin all the faithful who have an opportunity of complying with this great duty of religion. In this city, where there are several Masses every Sunday, as well as in other missions of the diocese, the faithful enjoy this opportunity, and consequently can never be exempt from the obligation of hearing Mass on Sundays, unless prevented by sickness, or some other grave necessity. In other parts of the diocese, where the faithful cannot have Mass every Sunday in their own respective Churches, they are obliged to sanctify the day by prayer, pious reading, and other religious practices, for the words of

the decalogue are addressed to all without exception—*Remember that thou keep holy the Sabbath Day.* We entreat you, therefore, dearly beloved, never to forget this great obligation. Parents should, on those days especially, instruct their children in the catechism, and by their own good example bring them up in the fear of God and knowledge of religion. Let them be instructed as to the nature and efficacy of the Holy sacraments, and especially as to the great sacrament of the altar, in which we adore the real presence of the body and blood, soul and divinity, of our Lord Jesus Christ. We recommend that the Rosary of the B. V. M. be devoutly recited, not only on Sundays, but on all days of Lent, by the members of each family gathered together for this purpose. By this pious practice you will inspire your children with a loving veneration for the Blessed Mother of God, and, under the protection of her whom the Church calls the refuge of sinners and comfortress of the afflicted, you and your children may expect to obtain from her Divine Son all the graces necessary for your salvation. Teach your children by your own example the great duty of prayer, bearing in mind these words of our Saviour—*Where there are two or three assembled together in my name, I am in the midst of them.* Pray, not only for yourselves and your children, but pray for your enemies; pray for the conversion of sinners; pray for peace and concord amongst Christian kings and nations; pray for the welfare of the Church; and especi-

ally for our Most Holy Father Leo XIII., persecuted as he now is by the open enemies of God and religion. Unite your prayers now to those of the faithful throughout the Christian world, and, no matter how great may be your trials and afflictions, you will to a certainty obtain assistance and relief. Ask, says our Divine Redeemer, *and you shall receive; seek, and you shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you*—St. Matt. 7—7.

But, dearly beloved, whilst attending to prayer and the other great duties of religion, you must not fail to manifest the greatest zeal for the education of the rising generation. Christian parents are bound to give their children a virtuous and Christian education. This is a truth so self-evident that it carries immediate conviction to the mind. They should educate them, not for this miserable world only, but they should educate them for Heaven. It is not enough to provide them with food and raiment, and to establish them in the world; their supernatural welfare must be provided for also, so that they may be disposed to answer the end for which the Almighty created them, and that end is the eternal enjoyment of Himself in Heaven. It is strange, dearly beloved, that truths so manifest and self-evident as these are, are so little attended to by many unhappy parents. Of them we may justly complain, in the language of St. Paul:—*If any man, says the Apostle, have not care of his own, and especially of those of his house, he hath denied the faith, and is*

worse than an infidel. In these words there is no exaggeration, for they were spoken by the Spirit of God, through the mouth of the Apostle. Parents, therefore, and heads of families, who neglect the moral and religious training of their children, act in direct opposition to the Divine law, and to the principles of the Holy religion they profess. Whilst they manifest such criminal indifference as to the eternal welfare of their children, they betray the cause of God, and clearly show that the faith of Jesus Christ is dead in their souls. Parents, therefore, guilty of such conduct, shall one day have to render a terrible account before the Tribunal of the Eternal God. But what shall we say of those wicked parents, who not only neglect the education of their children, but also, by their bad example and scandalous conduct, lead them on in the paths of crime. And, though they may not commit any gross crime in the presence of their children, still, by the continual neglect of their own duty, absenting themselves from Mass upon every trivial pretext, and for years from the Holy Sacraments of the Church, they withdraw their children from the service of God, and bring them up in the service of the devil. *Woe to that man*, says our Blessed Saviour, *by whom scandal cometh, woe to him who scandalizes one of these little ones that believe in me. It were better for him that a millstone were about his neck, and that he were cast into the depth of the sea*—St. Matthew, 18. How many woes then will be pronounced on the last day against

those fathers and mothers who scandalize their children, and who, instead of endeavoring to save their souls by good example, plunge them, by bad example, into eternal ruin? Wherefore, dearly beloved, we exhort you with all our zeal, not only to edify your children by your own good example, but also to impart to them a sound, moral, religious education. What will become of them when they grow up, if they shall have no religious principles to direct them? Corrupt nature, the inheritance of our first parents, will lead them to sin, bad example of other vicious children will hurry them into it, and education without religion will complete their misery. Send your children, therefore, to those schools where religion is taught, where they will receive, not only that instruction that will fit them for the world, but also that moral and religious instruction necessary for their salvation. Enable your pastors, by your generous offerings, to support your own schools. This is a duty that God demands of you, and for which you shall have to render a rigorous account at a future day. You will risk the salvation of your children if you send them to schools from which religion is excluded, and where they are forbidden to mention the adorable name of Jesus. *Blessed for ever be His Holy name.* Do not, therefore, be so cruel to your children, who are so dear to you, being a part of your own flesh and blood, as to expose them to the danger of losing in those Godless schools, that priceless gift of Divine Faith which

they received at baptism. If you do, what answer will you make to Jesus Christ when he will put this question to you, on the last day—What have you done with those children whom I purchased by my blood, stamped with the seal of baptism, and enriched with the choicest gifts of Heaven? Give them back to me adorned with that robe of purity and innocence with which they were invested when I consigned them to you. Where are they now? They were formerly pure and holy, the living temples of the Holy Ghost, but now I repudiate them, now I know them not; for, notwithstanding their former purity, they are this moment so many dens of unclean spirits. They were formerly the objects of my love; they are now the victims of my wrath and indignation. O, unhappy parents, you have destroyed the faith of your children by the bad education you gave them. You have destroyed in their souls the efficacy of the Grace of God, and the merits of your Saviour's sufferings. You are, therefore, accountable to God for the blood of your children, whom you have spiritually murdered. Wherefore, dearly beloved, that you may escape this appalling calamity, we entreat you with all our zeal to attend earnestly to this important duty that we have so strongly laid before you. See that your children and all those entrusted to your care receive that education that will enable them to love God above all things, and their neighbor as themselves. By this means you will have every reason to hope that you and your children shall

ation in the law of abstinence, we exhort the faithful to attend most assiduously to the duty of prayer, to recite daily the Rosary of the B.V.M., to meditate on the passion of our Blessed Lord, to pray for the welfare of the Church and of Holy Father, Pope Leo XIII., and to receive the Holy Sacraments of Penance and the Eucharist within the Paschal time. May the Almighty, during these days of mercy, bestow upon you the abundance of Heavenly graces, and may the peace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all.—Amen.



MARTIN,

Bishop of Sandhurst.

Given at our Episcopal Residence,

St. Kilian's, Sandhurst,

January the 17th, 1882.

be united for ever in the enjoyment of the beatific vision of God.

In conclusion, dearly beloved, we have to remind you that the precept of the Lenten Fast has been observed from the days of the Apostles. The Church now invites you to perform works of penance and self-denial in atonement for your sins. The Almighty calls upon you in the words of the Prophet Joel 2, 12—*Turn to me in fasting, mourning, and weeping, and rend your hearts, and not your garments.* Without interfering with the law of Fast, which we wish should remain in its full vigour, we deem it advisable, in consequence of the circumstances of this country, to grant every possible relaxation in the law of abstinence. Wherefore, in virtue of the powers received from Rome, we grant the following dispensations:—Flesh meat is allowed on all days in Lent, Wednesdays and Fridays excepted. Eggs are also allowed on all the days of Lent, Ash Wednesday and Good Friday excepted. Meat is allowed at all meals on Sundays; on all other days it is allowed once only, and at the principal meal. Eggs allowed at every meal on Sundays, and once only, and at the principal meal, on all other days. Butter forbidden on Ash Wednesday and Good Friday, except at the principal meal. Young people under 21 years of age, those who are arrived at old age, as also those who are subject to hard labour, or suffering from sickness, are exempt from the general law of fasting. In consequence of this great relax-