

Quo Graviora

On Secret Societies

Pope Leo XII - March 13, 1826

For the perpetual remembrance of the matter.

1. Blessed Peter, Prince of Apostles, and his Successors have been given the Power and Care of Feeding and Ruling the flock of Christ, Our God and Savior. Hence, the more grave the evils threatening the flock, the greater the solicitude the Roman Pontiffs ought to employ in preventing them. For, those who have been placed in the topmost Watch Tower of the Church can discern from afar the artifices which the enemies of the Christian family undertake to destroy the Church of Christ: (which they will never achieve) they can point them out and expose them to the faithful, who may then guard against them; they can drive away and remove them by their Authority. Our Predecessors, the Roman Pontiffs, understanding this most Grievous Duty imposed upon them, have unceasingly kept the watches of a good Shepherd, and by Exhortations, Doctrines, Decrees, and by their very life given for their sheep, have been solicitous about restraining and utterly abolishing the sects threatening the complete ruin of the Church. Neither is the memory of this Pontifical solicitude able to be drawn only from the age of Ecclesiastical Annals. What things have been carried out in our time and in the age of Our Fathers by the Roman Pontiffs, how they opposed themselves to secret factions of men contriving maliciously against Christ, clearly demonstrate such. For when Clement XII, Our Predecessor, saw that the sect de` Liberi Muratori or des Francs-Macons, or otherwise named, was increasing every day and that they were acquiring new strength, which he knew with certainty from many proofs to be not only suspect but even altogether inimical to the Catholic Church, condemned it with his magnificent Constitution, beginning with *In eminenti*, published on the 28th of April 1738, the text of which is supplied:

BISHOP CLEMENT, SERVANT OF THE SERVANTS OF GOD

Health and Apostolic Benediction to all Christ's Faithful

2. "Stationed on the prominent Watch Tower, although with inferior merits, in the disposition of Divine Mercy, in accord with the Duty of Pastoral Providence entrusted to Us We direct with a continual zeal for solicitude, (insofar as it is granted from on High) Our attention to those things through which, once the access to errors and vices has been shut off, the Integrity of Orthodox Religion may be principally preserved, and the dangers of disturbances may be driven off from the whole Catholic world in these most difficult times.

“To be sure, even as the very voice of the public testifies, it has become known to Us that spreading far and wide and each day gaining strength are some societies, assemblies, meetings, gatherings, fellowships, or associations commonly called de` Liberi Muratori or Francs–Macons, or identified by whatever other designation according to the variety of idioms in which men of any religion and sect whatsoever, satisfied by a certain feigned appearance of natural honesty, are mutually united by a strict as well as impenetrable covenant according to the laws and statues established by them, and which at the same time they both secretly dedicate themselves to by a strict oath administered on the Sacred Bible, and which under the accumulation of severe penalties they are bound to conceal by an inviolable silence.

“But since such is the nature of a crime, that it betrays its very self, and emits a cry as a herald of itself, on this account the societies or associations mentioned above have impressed upon the minds of the faithful a powerful suspicion to such an extent, that to enroll in these same fellowships is, before prudent and likewise approved men, absolutely the same as incurring the mark of depravity and perversion. For if they were not acting wickedly, they would never have such great hate for the light. Which voice has continually become more frequent, that in many regions the above mentioned societies have appeared for a long time to be outlawed by the secular authorities as being in adverse to the security of the realms and providentially banned.

“Consequently, We, reflecting upon the most serious damages, which generally are inflicted not only on the tranquility of the temporal State, but also on the spiritual health of souls from societies and associations of this kind, and for this reason, at least, in order to be in harmony with both civil and Canonical Sanctions, We, as Commander of the family of the Lord after the manner of the faithful and prudent Servant, ought to teach with Divine Eloquence by day and night, that a vigil must be kept lest the class of men of this type as thieves break into the house, and lest, in Truth, like foxes strive to destroy the vineyard, they corrupt the hearts of the simple ones, and shoot the innocent ones with arrows in hidden ways. In order to obstruct the broadest path which could possibly be opened to accomplish with impunity their wickedness, and from other just and reasonable causes known to Us, We have established and Decreed, that from the counsel of several of Our Brother Cardinals of the Holy Roman Church, and especially by Our own motion and from the fullness of Apostolic Power, those same societies, assemblies, meetings, gatherings, fellowships, or associations commonly called de` Liberi Muratori or Francs–Macons, or called by any other name whatever, must be condemned and prohibited, as by Our present Constitution, perpetually valid, We condemn and prohibit them.

“Wherefore, We admonish severely and in Virtue of Holy Obedience each and every faithful of Jesus Christ, of any state, grade, condition, order, dignity, and pre-eminence whatever, be it laity, or Clerics, both secular and regular, likewise those worthy of specific and individual mention and expression, that anyone

under whatever pretext or special condition may not dare or presume to enter or to propagate, or foster, and thus to receive and hide them in their dwellings or homes or anywhere else, the aforementioned societies de` Liberi Muratori or Francs–Macons, or otherwise named, to be enrolled in, to adhere to, or to take part in them, or to give opportunity or convenience that may allow them to convene in any place, to furnish them with anything, or otherwise offer counsel, aid or good will, openly or secretly, directly or indirectly, per se or through others in any way whatever. Likewise no one may dare or presume to exhort, induce, provoke, or persuade others to be inscribed in, to be reckoned as part of or be among these societies of whatever kind, or to help and support them in any way whatever. On the contrary, they are by all means obliged to abstain totally from those very societies, assemblies, meetings, gatherings, fellowships, or associations under pain of excommunication to be incurred ipso facto without any declaration by all those offending as above, from which no one is able to obtain the favor of absolution except through Us, or the Roman Pontiff reigning at the particular time, save one who has been determined to be at the point of death.

“Moreover, We Ordain and Mandate, that as well the Bishops and Prelates, Superiors and other Ordinaries of places, as the Inquisitors Deputed for the places of heretical perversity wherever, proceed and search for grounds of accusation against transgressors, of whatever grade, state, condition, order, dignity, or pre-eminence they may be, and punish with fitting penalties and confine those strongly suspected of heresy; for We grant and impart to them, in general, and to each of them unrestricted faculty of going out and searching for grounds against, and of restraining and punishing with suitable punishments, those same transgressors, once the aid of the secular arm also has been called upon for this purpose, if there should be need.

“On the other hand, We Ordain, that absolutely the same faith which would be applied to the Original Letter, if they would be produced or shown, be applied to duplicates, likewise to printed copies, of the present letter signed by the hand of some public notary, and secured by the seal of a person constituted in Ecclesiastical Dignity.

“It is allowed to no man to falsify this Letter of Our Declaration, Condemnation, Mandate, Prohibition and Interdict, or to oppose it by a rash boldness; but if anyone presumes to attempt this, let him know that he will incur the wrath of Almighty God, and of His Blessed Apostles Peter and Paul.

“Given at Rome at Saint Mary Major in the 1738th year of the Incarnation of the Lord on the 28th day of April, in the eighth year of Our Pontificate.”

3. Nevertheless, these things were not enough for Benedict XIV Our Predecessor of celebrated memory. For it had become spread abroad by the discussions of so many that the penalty of Excommunication demanded in the Letter of Clement, having died a short while ago, had already lost its strength, because Benedict

had not clearly confirmed that Letter. It was truly absurd to maintain that the Laws of previous Pontiffs become obsolete, if they are not confirmed expressly by one's Successors, and furthermore, it was manifestly evident that the Constitution of Clement had been considered as Valid by Benedict. Nevertheless, Benedict has judged that this sophistry had to be torn away from the hands of sectarians by a new Constitution which was published, the beginning of which was Providas, on the 18th of March in the year 1751, by which Benedict confirmed the Constitution with just as many words, given to in forma specifica, which is held as the strongest and most effective of all. In fact the Constitution of Benedict is as follows:

BISHOP BENEDICT, SERVANT OF THE SERVANTS OF GOD

4. "We reckon that the Providential Laws and Sanctions of the Roman Pontiffs, Our Predecessors, not only those whose force We fear can be weakened or extinguished either by a failing of the times or by the neglect of men, but also those which maintain their initial force and full strength, must be strengthened and confirmed by a new buttressing of Our Authority when just and weighty reasons demand it.

"Reasonably, Our Predecessor of happy memory, Pope Clement XII, by his Apostolic Letter in the 1738th year of the Incarnation of the Lord, on the 28th day of April, given in the 8th year of his Pontificate, and written to all of Christ's Faithful, the beginning of which is In eminenti, has forever condemned and prohibited several societies, assemblies, meetings, gatherings, fellowships, or associations commonly called de` Liberi Muratori or Francs-Macons, or identified by whatever other designation, having been dispersed widely then in certain regions, and each day becoming more powerful, admonishing each and every one of Chris's faithful, under pain of excommunication ipso facto without any declaration needing to be incurred, from which no one would be able to be absolved by any other than the Roman Pontiff then Reigning, unless on the point of death, so that anyone might nor dare or presume to enter or propagate, or to foster, receive, conceal societies of this kind, to be inscribed in, attached to or be among them or otherwise involved according as it is contained more broadly and richly in the same Letter, the text of which is above.

"Since, however, as We have learned, there have been some who have not hesitated to declare and to boast openly that the stated penalty of excommunication imposed by Our Predecessor, as is shown above, no longer carries any force, because of the fact that the very Constitution before introduced has not been confirmed by Us, as if in fact, express confirmation of a Pontifical Successor were required for the continuation of Apostolic Constitutions published by a Predecessor.

"And since it has also been recommended to Us by some Pious and God-fearing men that it would be exceedingly expedient for destroying all the deceptions of

the calumniators, and for making public the uniformity of Our disposition with the mind and will of the same Predecessor, to add the fresh voice of Our Confirmation to the Constitution of the above mentioned Predecessor.

“Although, while We have hitherto willingly granted, not only on numerous occasions formerly, but also especially within the year of jubilee having now passed, to many of Christ’s faithful truly repenting and lamenting for having violated the laws of the same Constitution, and willingly professing that they will withdraw entirely from the condemned societies or associations of this kind and that they are in the future never going to return to those societies and those associations, or while We have communicated to the penitentiaries appointed by Us the faculty of being capable of imparting, in Our name and by Our Authority, to those types of penitents, who have recourse to them, the same absolution, also, while We have not neglected with a restless zeal for vigilance to insist earnestly that action be taken by competent Judges and Tribunals against the violators of that very Constitution according to the measure of the crime, which action in fact was often taken, We have given indeed not merely probable arguments, but clearly evident and certain arguments, from which Our disposition and steadfast and deliberate will in regard to the force and continuance of the censures imposed by Clement, Our said Predecessor, as is shown above, ought clearly enough to be concluded. But if any contrary opinion was passed around on Our account, We would be able to disregard it in all security, and to abandon our cause to the just judgment of the Omnipotent God, using those words, which it is certain had at one time been recited in the Sacred Liturgy: ‘Grant, We beseech Thee, O Lord, that we do not trouble ourselves about the contradiction of spurious minds, but once that very wickedness has been spurned let us pray that you suffer us neither to be frightened by the unjust criticisms, nor to be attracted to the insidious flatteries, but rather to love that which Thou dost command:—’ as is found in the ancient Missal, which is attributed to Saint Gelasius, and was published by the Venerable Servant of God, Joseph Maria Cardinal Thomasius, in the Mass, which is entitled *Contra obloquentes*.

“Nevertheless, so that it might not be able to be said that something, by which We could easily be able to take away kindling and shut the mouth of false accusations, had been unguardedly neglected by Us, once that the Counsel of several of Our Venerable Brothers, Cardinals of the Holy Roman Church had earlier been heard. We decided to confirm with this present Letter, in forma specifica, that same Constitution of Our Predecessor inserted above word for word, which is considered the strongest and most effective, accordingly. From certain knowledge and the fullness of Our Apostolic Authority, We confirm, strengthen, renew, that Constitution by the text of this present Letter in all things and on account of all things just as if It had been published firstly by Our own motion, by Our Authority and in Our name, and We will and Decree that it have perpetual force and efficacy.

“Furthermore, among the gravest causes of the aforementioned prohibition and condemnation reported in the Constitution inserted above, the first is that in societies and associations of this type men of any religion and sect whatever are united with each other, from which matter it is evident enough how great a destruction is able to be brought to the purity of the Catholic Religion. The next is the strict and impenetrable pledge of a secret, by which those things which are done in associations of such like are hidden, to which, therefore, that sentence is able fittingly to be applied which Caecilius Natalis cited before Municius Felix in an indisputably diverse case: Honest things always rejoice in the public, crimes are secret. The third is the oath by which they bind themselves for preserving inviolably this type of secret, as if it were allowed to someone to protect himself under cover of a promise or swearing, having been questioned by legitimate power, without being held to confess all things, whatsoever things are sought after for discerning whether something is done in meetings of this kind, which is contrary to the welfare and Laws of the State and Religion. The fourth is, that societies of this kind are known to be against Canonical not less than civil sanctions, since, namely, all colleges and sodalities united contrary to public authority are forbidden, as is to be seen in Book XLVII of the Pandects, tit. 22 de collegiis ac corporibus illicitis, and in the renowned letter of C. Plinius Caecilius Secundus,, which is XCVII, lib. X, in which he says that by his own edict in accord with the decrees of the emperor it has been forbidden that there be, (heretical sects) that is, that societies and assemblies are not able to be entered or established without the authority of the prince. The fifth is, that already in many regions the previously mentioned societies and fellowships have been proscribed by the laws of secular princes, and eliminated. The last, finally, that before prudent and approved men the same societies and fellowships were being perceived in an evil light and by their judgment whoever would enroll in the same would incur the mark of depravity and perversion.

“Finally, the same Predecessor in the Constitution inserted above rouses the Bishops and superior Prelates, and other Ordinaries of places, that they do not neglect to invoke the help of the secular branches, if there be need, for the execution of it.

“Which things, each and every, are not only approved and confirmed by Us and are commended and enjoined to the same Ecclesiastical Superiors respectively, but also We Ourselves, in accord with the Duty of the Apostolic Vigilance, invoke with this Letter the strength and aid of the Catholic Princes and of all the secular powers as to the accomplishment of the matters presented above, and We demand with earnest desire, since the same Supreme Princes and Powers have been chosen by God as the Defenders of the Faith and Protectors of the Church, and therefore it is their Duty to accomplish by every suitable means, that obedience due to the Apostolic Constitutions and consideration of every kind be rendered, which for them the Fathers of the Council of Trent, sess. 25 cap. 20, and much before, the Emperor Charles the Great had made exceedingly clear in tit. I, cap. 2 of his Capitularies, where after the observance of Ecclesiastical

Sanctions committed to all those subject to him, he added: 'For in no way are we able to understand how they can be faithful to us, who have shown themselves unfaithful to God and disobedient to their Priests.' Wherefore, enjoining all the rulers and ministers of his domains, that they should by all means constrain each and every one to offer the obedience due to the Laws of the Church, and also imposed the gravest penalties against those who neglect to render this, supplying among other things: 'But whoever will have been found in these things (that it be absent!) at least neglecting and disobeying them, let them know that neither do they retain any honors in our empire, although they will have even been our sons, nor a place in our palace, neither do they have either any association or communication with us, but rather let them undergo penalties in difficulty and dryness.'

"We will, however, that absolutely the same faith which would be applied to the original Letters, if it would be produced or shown, be applied to duplicates, likewise to printed copies, of the present letter signed by the hand of some public notary, and secured by the seal of a person constituted in Ecclesiastical Dignity.

"It is allowed to no man to falsify this letter of Our confirmation, renewal, approbation, commission, invocation, the demand of Our Decree and will, or to oppose it by a rash boldness. But if anyone presumes to attempt this, let him know that he will incur the wrath of Almighty God, and of His Blessed Apostles Peter and Paul.

"Given at Rome in Saint Mary Major, in the 1751st year of the Incarnation of the Lord, on the 18th day of March, in the 11th year of Our Pontificate."

5. Would that those who were in charge of matters then had assumed these Decrees to be of such value as the salvation of both the Church and the State was demanding! Would that they had convinced themselves that they ought to respect in the Roman Pontiffs, Successors of Blessed Peter, not only the Universal Pastors and Teachers of the Church, but also the Vigorous Defenders of their Dignity, and the most diligent heralds of the dangers which threaten! Would that they had used that power of theirs for dismembering the sects whose pernicious devices had been exposed to them by the Apostolic See! Already from that time they had plainly put into effect their cause. And because they judged that this cause was needing to be treated with indifference or at least treated very trivially, whether by the deceit of the sectarians cunningly hiding their affairs, whether by the imprudent counsels of some, from those old Masonic sects which have never languished, very many others have arisen much more dangerous and more audacious than the former. The sect of the Carbonari, which was considered the leader of all the others in Italy and in some other regions, was considered to embrace as if in its bosom all these, and having divided into, as it were, various branches diverse in name only, undertook to fight most vehemently against the Catholic Religion and every topmost legitimate civil power. Which being a disaster, so that he might free Italy and other regions, indeed even the

very Pontifical Domain. (into which, because the Pontifical Government had been obstructed for so long a time, the sect had insinuated itself) Pius VII of happy memory, in whose place We have been chosen, condemned with the gravest penalties the sect of the Carbonari, or with the passage of time by whatever other name it might be called according to the diversity of places, of idioms and of men, by a Constitution published on the 13th of September in the year 1821 whose beginning is: Ecclesiam a Jesu Christo. We deem that the Original of this must also be inserted in Our Letter.

BISHOP PIUS, SERVANT OF THE SERVANTS OF GOD
For the perpetual remembrance of the matter.

6. "The Church founded by Jesus Christ Our Savior upon a firm Rock, and against which Christ Himself has promised that the gates of hell will never prevail, has been so often assaulted, and by such dreadful enemies, that unless that Divine and Unchangeable Promise had intervened, it might seem that it must be feared that the Church itself, besieged by it by their power, their crafts, or their cunning, might entirely perish. But that which has happened in previous times, such also has been done and especially in this certainly sorrowful time of ours, which seems to be that end time foretold by the Apostles so long ago, during which time (Jude v. 18.) mockers will come walking according to their own desires in ungodliness. For It is not concealed from anyone how great the multitude of wicked men will have joined together in these most difficult times against the Lord and against His Anointed One, who are especially solicitous, once the faithful have been ensnared by Philosophy and vain deceit (Col 2:8.) and torn away from the Doctrine of the Church, for weakening and overturning the same Church, although by a useless effort. But in order to succeed more easily, the greater number of them have formed secret groups and clandestine sects, from which they were hoping that they might induce many into the fellowship of their conspiracy and crime.

"A long time ago this Holy See, once these sects had been discovered, cried with a great and unbridled Voice against them, and exposed their plans, which had been devised secretly by them against Religion, indeed against civil society. Long ago it called forth the attentiveness of all, that they might beware lest it be allowed to these sects to attempt that which they were heinously contemplating. Indeed it must have grieved these endeavors of the Holy See not to have answered that destruction, which It was observing, and that wicked men had not desisted from their acknowledged plan; whence they at long last attained to those evils which We Ourselves have perceived; indeed, men whose arrogance has always mounted, have dared to begin new secret societies.

"Mention must be made in this place of a society, recently born and propagated far and wide in Italy and in other regions, which although it has been divided into several sects, and according to their variety it sometimes assumes names among themselves different and distinct, nevertheless because the entity is a

communion of opinions and crimes, and because a certain pact has been entered into, is one, and is generally accustomed to go under the name of the Carbonari. Indeed, they simulate a singular respect and a certain extraordinary zeal toward the Catholic Religion and toward the Person and Doctrine of Jesus Christ Our Savior, Whom at times they also impiously dare to call the Rector and great Teacher of this society. But these ways of speaking, which are seen to be more slippery than oil, are nothing other than darts employed by crafty men, who come in sheep's clothing but are ravenous wolves inside, for more securely wounding the too little cautious.

“Surely that most severe oath, by which, imitating for the most part the ancient Priscillianists they promise that they at no time ever, or in no case, either are going to expose to men not enrolled in the society anything which regards the society, or are going to share with those who are in the lower degrees anything which pertains to the higher decrees. In addition, those clandestine and furthermore illegitimate assemblies, which they have, after the manner employed by many heretics, and the selection of men of whatever religion and sect into their society, even if other things were not available, sufficiently convince that it is necessary to have no confidence in their related discourses.

“But it is not necessary by conjectures and indications, that it be judged such concerning their sayings, as it was pointed out above. Books published by these very types in which the procedure is described, which is accustomed to be used in the meetings, especially of the higher degrees; their catechisms, statutes, and other authentic and credible documents, and in fact the testimony of those who, when they had abandoned that society to which they had previously adhered, revealed its errors and frauds to Legitimate Judges, have declared openly, that the Carbonari particularly incline in such a way that they give to each one great license for devising by his own genius and from his own ideas for himself a religion which he may practice, once indifference to religion has been introduced, than which hardly anything more destructive can be contrived, such that they profane and defile the passion of Jesus Christ by certain of their impious ceremonies, that they despise the Sacraments of the Church (for which they seem to substitute other new things invented by themselves through their supreme wickedness) and despise the very mysteries of the Catholic Religion and that they overthrow this Apostolic See against which, because on it the Sovereignty of the Apostolic Chair has always flourished, (S. Aug. Epist. 43.) they are roused by a certain unparalleled hate and they devise every dangerous destructive plot.

“And the precepts concerning morals, which the society of the Carbonari hand on, are not, as it is certain from their monuments, less wicked, although it boasts confidently that it demands from its own followers, that they cultivate and exercise charity and every kind of virtue, and abstain from every vice. Therefore, it promotes sensual pleasure most shamelessly, it teaches that it is licit to kill those who have not kept the trust offered concerning the secret, which was

mentioned above; and although Peter, the Prince of the Apostles, Decrees, that Christians (1 Pet. 2:13.) be subject to every human creature on account of God, whether to the king as pre-eminent, whether to the magistrates as ambassadors to them, etc., and although Paul the Apostle (Tit. 3:1.) commands that every soul be subject to Higher Powers: nevertheless that society teaches that it is allowed, once revolts have been provoked, to deprive of their power kings and other rulers, whom most unjustly it dares indiscriminately to call tyrants.

“These and other dogmas and precepts of this society are the ones from which those crimes newly committed by the Carbonari have emerged, which have brought such intense grief to honest and pious men. We, therefore, who have been constituted as the Guardian of the House of Israel, which is Holy Church, and who in accord with Our Pastoral Office ought to beware lest the Lord’s flock divinely entrusted to Us suffer any harm, consider in a case so serious that We cannot abstain from repressing the filthy undertakings of men. We are also moved by the example of Clement XII and Benedict XIV, our Predecessors of happy memory, of whom the one on the 28th day of April of the year 1738 by the Constitution *In Eminenti*, the other on the 18th day of March 1751 by the Constitution *Providas*, have condemned and proscribed the societies de` *Liberi Muratori*, or *Francs-Macons*, or called by whatever other name according to the variety of regions and idioms, of which societies the society of the Carbonari, must be considered perhaps the offspring or certainly the imitation. And although We have already gravely prohibited this society with two Edicts published through Our Secretary of State; nevertheless, following Our above mentioned Predecessors, We think that severe penalties must be Decreed with a formality indeed more Solemnly against this society, especially since the Carbonari indiscriminately maintain that they are not included in those two Constitutions of Clement XII and Benedict XIV, and that they are not subject to the judgments and penalties proposed in them.

“Therefore, now that the select Congregation of Our Venerable Brothers of the Cardinals of the Holy Roman Church has been heard, indeed from its Counsel, and also by Our own motion and from Our certain knowledge and mature deliberation, indeed from the fullness of Our Apostolic Power, We have Decreed and Ordained that the society of the Carbonari mentioned above, or called by any other name whatever, its assemblies, meetings, gatherings, fellowships, or associations must be condemned and prohibited, accordingly as We condemn and proscribe by Our present Constitution forever Valid.

“Wherefore We Order strictly and in Virtue of Holy Obedience each and every faithful of Christ of whatever state, grade, condition, order, dignity and pre-eminence, be they the laity or Clerics, both Seculars and Regulars and even those worthy of specific and individual mention, that anyone under whatever pretext, or special condition not dare or presume to join or propagate, to foster, the society of the Carbonari mentioned above, or otherwise named, and to admit and hide in their dwellings, or their homes, or any other place, to be enrolled in,

to adhere to or to take part in it, indeed whatever degree of it, or to give opportunity or convenience that it may be convened in any place, to furnish it with anything, or otherwise to offer counsel, aid or good will, openly or in secret, directly or indirectly, per se or through others in any way whatever. Likewise no one may dare or presume to exhort, induce, provoke or persuade others to be inscribed in, be reckoned as part of or be among a society of this kind, or any degree of it, nor are they to help and thus support it in any way whatever. On the contrary they must absolutely abstain themselves from the same society and its assemblies, meetings, fellowships, or associations under pain of Excommunication needing to be incurred ipso facto without any declaration by all those offending as above, from which no one is able to obtain the favor of Absolution through anyone except Us, or the Roman Pontiff Reigning at that time, save one determined to be at the point of death.

“Furthermore We Order all under the same pain of Excommunication reserved to Us and Our Successors, the Roman Pontiffs, that they are held to declare to the Bishops, or to others whom it pertains all those whom they know to have joined in this society or to have defiled themselves by any one of the crimes mentioned above.

“Finally, that every danger of error may efficaciously be prevented, We condemn and We proscribe that all, as they call them, catechisms and books of the Carbonari, and We forbid, under the same pain of Major Excommunication reserved in the same way, every one of the faithful to read or to possess the books mentioned above, and We command that they hand over those materials, either to the Ordinaries, or to others, to whom the right of receiving them pertains.

“We Will, however, that absolutely the same Faith which would be applied to the Original Letter, if they would be produced or shown, is to be applied to duplicates, likewise printed copies, of the present Letter signed by the hand of some public notary, and secured by the seal of a person Constituted in Ecclesiastical Dignity.

“It is allowed to no man to falsify this Letter of Our Declaration, Condemnation, Mandate, Prohibition and Interdict, or to oppose it by a rash boldness; but if anyone presumes to attempt this, let him know that he will incur the wrath of Almighty God, and of His Blessed Apostles Peter and Paul.

“Given at Rome in Saint Mary Major, in the 1821st year of the Incarnation of the Lord, on the 13th day of September, in the twenty-second year of Our Pontificate.”

7. Not long after the Constitution published by Pius VII, We were elevated to the topmost Chair of Blessed Peter by no merits of Ours; and immediately We turned Our attention to exposing what the state of clandestine sects was, what their

number was, what their poser was. Inquiring about these things We easily understood that their arrogance had grown principally on account of the multitude of them, increased by the new sects. From which sects that one must especially be mentioned which is called Universitaria, because it has a seat and domicile in many universities of learning, in which the young are informed, initiated to, and fashioned for every crime by some teachers, who are zealous not to teach them, but to pervert them by the mysteries of the same sect which ought to be called most truly the mysteries of iniquity.

From this it indeed appears that even after so long a time since the flames of revolution were enkindled and spread abroad, indeed after the remarkable victories reported by the powerful Princes of Europe, by which those flames were expected to be extinguished, their wicked undertakings still have not known an end. For in these very regions in which the early storms seem to have quieted, what fear there is of new disturbances and seditions, which those sects continually devise! Such dread of the impious daggers, which they secretly fix in the bodies of those whom they assign to death! How many and how grave the things, even against their will, are they who rule with power over the same ones not rarely forced to decree for safeguarding public peace?

From this the most painful calamities come forth by which the Church is everywhere fiercely plagued, and which We are not able to relate without pain, without deep sorrow. Its Holy Dogmas and Precepts are fought against most shamelessly; Its Dignity is diminished; and that peace and happiness which It ought to enjoy by a certain right of Its own, was not only being disturbed, but is totally destroyed.

Nor must it be thought that all these evils, and others which have been omitted by Us are attributed to these clandestine sects surely through calumny. Books which they do not hesitate to write about Religion and the State, have been published in their name, with which they scorn dominion, blaspheme majesty; moreover they declare repeatedly that Christ is either a scandal or foolish; indeed, not rarely, that there is no God, and they teach that the soul of man dies together with the body: the codes and statutes, by which they explain their goals and ordinances openly declare that all the things which We have already mentioned, and which pertain to the overthrowing of Legitimate Rulers and totally destroying the Church come forth from them. And this has been ascertained and must be considered as certain, that these sects, although in name different, nevertheless have been joined among themselves by an impious bond of filthy goals.

Since matters are in such a state, We judge it to be the Character of our Office to Condemn these clandestine sects again, and in such a manner indeed that no one of them can boast that they are not encompassed by Our Apostolic Pronouncement, and under this pretext lead careless and less sagacious men into error. Therefore, from the Counsel of Our Venerable Brethren, the Cardinals

of the Holy Roman Church, and also by Our own motion indeed with Our certain knowledge and mature consideration, We forbid forever under the same penalties which are contained in the Letters of Our Predecessors already reported in this Our Constitution, which Letters We expressly confirm, that all secret societies, those which now are and those which perhaps will afterwards sprout out, and which propose to themselves against the Church and against the highest civil powers those things which We have mentioned above, by whatever name they may finally be called.

Wherefore We Order strictly and in virtue of Holy Obedience each and every faithful of Christ of whatever state, grade, condition, order, dignity and pre-eminence, be they the laity or Clerics, both Seculars and Regulars and even those worthy of specific and individual mention, that anyone, under whatever pretext or special condition, may not dare or presume to join or propagate, or to foster, the societies mentioned above, or by whatever name they may be called, and to admit and hide, in their dwellings, or their homes, or any place, to be enrolled in, to adhere to or to take part in them, indeed to whatever degree of the same, or to give opportunity or convenience that they may be assembled in any place, to furnish the same with anything, or otherwise to offer counsel, aid or good will, openly or in secret, directly or indirectly, per se or through others in any way whatever. Likewise no one may dare or presume to exhort, induce, provoke or persuade others to be inscribed in, be reckoned as part of or be among societies of this kind, or any degree of the same, nor are they to help and thus support them in any way whatever. On the contrary they must absolutely abstain from the same societies and their assemblies, meetings, fellowships, or associations under pain of Excommunication to be incurred ipso facto without any declaration by all those offending as above, from which no one is able to obtain the favor of absolution through anyone except Us, or the Roman Pontiff Reigning at that time, save one determined to be at the point of death.

Furthermore We order all under the same pain of Excommunication reserved to Us and Our Successors, the Roman Pontiffs, that they are held to declare to the Bishops, or to others whom it concerns, all those whom they know to have joined this society, or to have defiled themselves by any one of the crimes just mentioned above.

In fact, We explicitly condemn and declare invalid particularly that clearly impious and accursed oath, by which they bind those who are received into these sects that they will reveal to none those things which pertain to those sects, and that they will strike with death all those members who expose those things to their superiors, either Ecclesiastics or laity. For what reason? Is not an oath, which must be sworn in justice, in order to establish, as it were, a contract by which someone obliges himself to an unjust murder, and in order to despise the Authority of those, who, when they regulate either the Church or Legitimate civil society, have the right of discerning those things in which the salvation of those societies consists, contrary to Divine Law? Isn't it the most unjust and the

greatest indignity to call God as a witness and surety of crimes? Most recently the Fathers of the Lateran Council III have said (Can. 3): "For they must not be called oaths, but rather perjuries, which are taken against Ecclesiastical utility and the Ordinances of the most Holy Fathers." And the shamelessness and madness of the ones among these men who when they say not just in their heart, but also openly and in their public writings: "There is not a God," dare nevertheless demand an oath from all those whom they select for their sects.

These things have been established for suppressing and condemning all these ravaging and criminal sects. But now We not only request but demand your service, Venerable Brothers, the Catholic Patriarchs, Primate, Archbishops, and Bishops. Be attentive for yourselves and for the Universal flock over which the Holy Ghost has placed you as Bishops to Rule the Church of God. Devouring wolves indeed will seize upon you not sparing the flock: but do not fear, not consider your life more precious than yourselves. Maintain that Sacred Truth that the constancy of the men entrusted to you in Religion depends for the most part on you and on things done rightly. For although we may live in those days which are evil, and in that time in which many do not maintain sound Doctrine, nevertheless the Obedience of very many faithful to their Pastors endures, whom they receive with reason as Ministers of Christ and dispensers of His mysteries. Use, therefore, this Authority for the advantage of your sheep, which you maintain over their souls by an imperishable Honor of God. Make known through yourselves the deceits of the sects and with how much diligence they must guard against them and their social intercourse. Let them dread their perverse doctrine which mocks the Most Holy Mysteries of our Religion and the most pure Precepts of Christ, and which attacks every Legitimate Power, while you act as their models and teachers. And finally let Us exhort you with the words of Our Predecessor, Clement XII, in his Encyclical Letter to all the Patriarchs, Primate, Archbishops, Bishops of the Catholic Church of the 14th day of September of the year 1758: "Let Us be filled, I pray, with the Power of the Spirit of the Lord, with discernment and with virtue, lest just as dumb dogs not having the power to bark, We suffer Our flocks to be as pillage and Our sheep forage for the beasts of the field. And let not anything detain Us from giving ourselves up to all battles for the Glory of God and the salvation of souls. Let Us consider Him, who underwent such great contradiction against Himself by sinners. But if We fear the boldness of those wicked ones, it has been from the force of the Episcopate, and from the sublime and Divine Power of Governing the Church; but neither are We able to remain much longer or be any longer Christians, if it has come to this point that We are terrified at the threats or the artifices of the destroyers."

We demand also with great zeal your assistance, dearest sons in Christ, Our Catholic Princes, whom We love with a singular and truly Paternal love. Furthermore We call into memory the words which Leo the Great, whose Successors in Dignity and Heirs We are, although unworthy of the name, used writing to the emperor Leo: "You ought unhesitatingly to recognize that the Royal Power has been conferred to you not only for the Rule of the world, but

especially for the defense of the Church, so that by suppressing the heinous undertakings you may defend those Statutes which are good and restore True Peace to those things which have been disordered.” Although there is such an interval, the reality remains in this time, so that those sects must be restrained by you not only for defending the Catholic Religion, but also for protecting your safety and that of the people subject to your Rule. In fact, the cause of Religion especially in this time, has been so united with the health of society, that certainly in no way can one be separated from the other. For they who follow those sects, are not less enemies of Religion than of your Power. They assault each one, they devise to overthrow completely each one. But they would not however be allowed, if it were possible, to suppress either Religion or any Royal Power.

And so great is the cunning of the most calculating men that when they are seen especially to be favorable to the increasing of your Power, then they are looking chiefly for the overturning of it. Those men indeed teach very many things such that they advocate that Our Power and that of the Bishops must be diminished and weakened by those who have possession of power, and that many rights must be transferred to them, both from those which are Possessions of this Apostolic See and Principal Church, and from those which pertain to the Bishops, who have been called for a sharing of Our solicitude. But these things those men teach, not only from a most offensive hate by which they are inflamed against Religion, but also according to a plan whereby they hope that people who are subject to your Rule on observing that the limits, which Christ and the Church instituted by Him have established concerning Sacred Matters, are overturned, may be easily aroused by this example to change and destroy even the form of civil government.

Likewise We look with solicitude, by Our Special Prayer and encouragements, upon you all, O Beloved Sons, who profess the Catholic Religion. Avoid entirely men who consider light darkness, and darkness light. For what utility worthy of the name can arise from agreement with men who think that no consideration for God, no consideration for the more Sublime Powers, is needing to be had, who through intrigues and secret assemblies try to declare war on those things, and who are such that they cry even in public and everywhere that they are the greatest lovers of the public good, of the Church, and of society; nevertheless they have already declared by all their deeds that they wish to throw all things into disorder and to overturn all things. These are indeed similar to those men to whom John commands in his second Epistle (v. 10) that neither hospitality must be given no “God speed” be said, and whom our Fathers do not hesitate to call the firstborn of the devil. Beware therefore of their flatteries and of their discourses sweetened with honey, by which they will seduce you to enroll in those sects to which they have been admitted. Have it for certain that no one can be a member of those sects, without being guilty of the most serious disgraceful act; and drive away from your ears the words of those who vigorously declare that you may assent to your election to the lower degrees of their sects, that nothing is admitted in those degrees which is opposed to reason, nothing which

is opposed to Religion, indeed that there is nothing proclaimed, nothing performed which is not Holy, which is not Right, which is not Undeified. Truly that abominable oath, which has already been mentioned, and which must be sworn even in that lower echelon, is sufficient for you to understand that it is contrary to Divine Law to be enlisted in those lower degrees, and to remain in them. In the next place, although they are not accustomed to commit those things which are more serious and more criminal to those who have not attained to the higher degrees, nevertheless it is plainly evident that the force and boldness of those most pernicious societies grow on account of the unanimity and the multitude of all who enroll in them. Therefore, even those who have not passed beyond the inferior degrees, must be considered sharers of their crimes. And that passage of the Apostle to the Romans (ch. 1) applies to them: "They who do such things, but also those who consent to those doing them."

Finally, We call very lovingly to Ourselves those who had once been enlightened, and had tasted the Heavenly Gift and had been made partakers, nevertheless, then erred most miserably and follow those sects whether they are engaged in their inferior or abide in their superior degrees. For, the one standing in the place of Him Who has professed that He has not come to call the just but sinners, and Who has likened Himself to a Shepherd, Who, when He has left the remaining flock behind, carefully seeks the sheep He has lost, We exhort and implore them to turn back to Christ. For although they have defiled themselves exceedingly with crime, they ought not despair of Mercy and Clemency from God and Jesus Christ Who has suffered for them also, Who will not despise in any way their repentance, but certainly like a most loving Father, who a long time ago was waiting for his prodigal sons, will very gladly receive it. But We, in order that We may rouse them, inasmuch as it is in Our Power, and pave an easier road for them to penance, suspend for the entire interval of a year, once this Apostolic Letter of Ours has been published in the region in which they live, both the obligation of denouncing their associates in those sects, and also the reservation of censures, into which they, enrolling in those sects, have fallen, and We declare that, even if their associates have not been denounced, they are able to be absolved from those censures by any confessor whatever, provided that he is from the number of those who have been approved by the Ordinaries of the places in which they live.

Which Indulgence also We Authorize to be applied to those who perhaps live at Rome. But if anyone of them whom We address is so unyielding (because God the Father of Mercies turns away) that he acts such that that interval of time, which We have designated, passes without abandoning those sects, and being truly repentant, by that lapse of time immediately both the obligation of denouncing his associates and the reservation of censures revives for him, nor is he able to obtain absolution thereafter, unless once his associates have been denounced before, or at least once an oath has been sworn with respect to denouncing them as soon as possible. Nor is he able to be loosed from those

censures by any other than Us, or by Our Successors, or by those who will have obtained the faculty of absolving from the same by the Holy See.

We will, however, that absolutely the same Faith which would be applied to the Original Letter, if they would be produced or shown, is to be applied to duplicates, likewise printed copies, of the present Letter signed by the hand of some public notary, and secured by the Seal of a person constituted in Ecclesiastical Dignity.

It is allowed to no man to falsify this Letter of Our Declaration, condemnations, renewal, ordered prohibition, invocation, examination, decree and will, or to oppose it by a rash boldness. But if anyone presumes to attempt this, let him know that he will incur the wrath of Almighty God, and of His Blessed Apostles Peter and Paul.

Given at Rome in Saint Peter, in the 1826th year of the Incarnation of the Lord, on the 13th day of March, in the second year of Our Pontificate.

(Papal Encyclicals Online; <http://www.papalencyclicals.net/leo12/112quoqr.htm>; accessed 10 October 2017)

- Opening paragraph again establishes authority, again takes the tone of persecution, fighting against evils and now adds the idea that there are forces (i.e. FM “or by whatever name”) that are trying to destroy the Church (also anti civil law)
- Still confuses the Carbonari with FM. Carbonari are gone by now.
- FM has now become a sect
- Repeats the first three Bulls (1721, 1751, 1821)
- Affirms that just because the previous Popes are dead, their bulls still stand.
- New Popes do not have to confirm rulings of the last Pope. It is understood that those still stand.
- Jubilee year so gave forgiveness for being a FM to penitents
- Encouraging civil judges and courts to aggressively prosecute FM as a crime
- List of “evils”
 - Men of different religions are “united together” and this is a threat to the RCC
 - Keeping secrets
 - Considers the oath as all binding and Can be used to shield against Civil law and Canonical law (confession)
 - Claims “societies of this kind are known to be against Canonical not less than civil sanctions” (The old “everybody knows this” argument)
 - Implies that FM is a “heretical sect”

- Sites civil law that you need the permission of the Prince to found a society or assembly
 - Secular princes in other areas have already banned FM
 - If you join you are deprived and perverted
- Seem to be worried about others “falsifying Our letter”
- Brings up the Carbonari again
 - Claimed the Carbonari were the “leaders of all the others in Italy and some other regions.”
 - Accused of actively fighting against the RCC and Civil authority
 - “or by any other name whatever” phrase lumps us all into Carbonari
- Using other names = big conspiracy
- “consider in a case so serious that We cannot abstain from repressing the filthy undertakings of men”
- “We think that severe penalties must be Decreed with a formality indeed more Solemnly against this society, especially since the Carbonari indiscriminately maintain that they are not included in those two Constitutions of Clement XII and Benedict XIV, and that they are not subject to the judgments and penalties proposed in them.”
- Establishes that this particular Bull will be in force in perpetuity regardless of the Pope then in charge
- Asks for anyone in possession of Carbonari material to hand it over to the RCC
- Introduces a new “sect”; Universitaria
 - “...because it has a seat and domicile in many universities of learning, in which the young are informed, initiated to, and fashioned for every crime by some teachers, who are zealous not to teach them, but to pervert them by the mysteries of the same sect which ought to be called most truly the mysteries of iniquity.”
 - Persecution complex: “From this the most painful calamities come forth by which the Church is everywhere fiercely plagued, and which We are not able to relate without pain, without deep sorrow. Its Holy Dogmas and Precepts are fought against most shamelessly; Its Dignity is diminished; and that peace and happiness which It ought to enjoy by a certain right of Its own, was not only being disturbed, but is totally destroyed.”
 - Accusations of:
 - Atheism
 - Overthrowing legitimate rulers
 - No immortal soul
- Adds a new condemnation of all “secret societies”
 - We expressly confirm, that all secret societies, those which now are and those which perhaps will afterwards sprout out, and which propose to themselves against the Church and against the highest civil powers those things which We have mentioned above, by whatever name they may finally be called.
- Really down on the oath thing again (see your presentation re oaths)

- All oaths are just an excuse to hide bad behavior. Assumption is that all oath taking is to cover crime
- “Is not an oath, which must be sworn in justice, in order to establish, as it were, a contract by which someone obliges himself to an unjust murder, and in order to despise the Authority of those, who, when they regulate either the Church or Legitimate civil society, have the right of discerning those things in which the salvation of those societies consists, contrary to Divine Law? Isn't it the most unjust and the greatest indignity to call God as a witness and surety of crimes?”
- **Changes from a request to stamp out this behavior to a DEMAND!**
 - “These things have been established for suppressing and condemning all these ravening and criminal sects. But now We not only request but demand your service, Venerable Brothers, the Catholic Patriarchs, Primates, Archbishops, and Bishops.”
- Appeal to secular authority
 - “We demand also with great zeal your assistance, dearest sons in Christ, Our Catholic Princes, whom We love with a singular and truly Paternal love. Furthermore We call into memory the words which Leo the Great, whose Successors in Dignity and Heirs We are, although unworthy of the name, used writing to the emperor Leo: “You ought unhesitatingly to recognize that the Royal Power has been conferred to you not only for the Rule of the world, but especially for the defense of the Church, so that by suppressing the heinous undertakings you may defend those Statutes which are good and restore True Peace to those things which have been disordered.”
 - Creating FUD (fear, uncertainty and doubt) for the Royalty that their power is in jeopardy. Trying to coerce them into action against FM
 - “For they who follow those sects, are not less enemies of Religion than of your Power. They assault each one, they devise to overthrow completely each one. But they would not however be allowed, if it were possible, to suppress either Religion or any Royal Power.”
 - Long paragraph that ends with suck up language to the Princes
- Calls out to FM to repent and come back in a certain time period or forever be outside the Church and no one, even the Pope, will be able to forgive them.

Notes from QC Book

- Carbonari had been tried in 1821 – 1822 and found guilty
 - See Auto de fe