

# Acta Sanctæ Sedis

## Pope Pius XII

### Encyclical Letter *Sempiternus Rex Christus* on the Council of Chalcedon. Numbers 38-46 (end).

**38** For our part we desire that they should always bear in mind that Our thoughts are thoughts of peace and not of affliction (cf. Jer. xxix, 11). It is well known, moreover, that we have demonstrated this by our actions. If, under the pressure we boast of this, then we boast in the Lord, who is the giver of every goodwill. For we have followed in the path of our predecessors and worked diligently to facilitate the return of the Oriental peoples to the Catholic Church. We have guarded their legitimate rites. We have promoted the study of their affairs. We have promulgated beneficent laws for them. We have shown deep solicitude in our dealings with the sacred council of the Roman curia for oriental affairs. We have bestowed the Roman purple on the patriarch of the Armenians.

**39** When the recent war was waging and producing its fruits of famine, want and disease, we made no distinction between them and those who are accustomed to call us Father, but sought everywhere to relieve the increasing misery; we strove to help widows, children, old people and the sick. We would have been happier truly had our means been equal to our desires! Let those then who, through the calamities of time, have been cut off, not be slow to pay due respect to this divinely erected and unbroken rock, this Apostolic See for whom to rule is to serve. Let them bear in mind and imitate Flavian, that second John Chrysostom, in his sufferings for justice; and the fathers of Chalcedon, those most worthy members of the Mystical Body of Christ; and Marcian, that strong, gentle and wise ruler; and Pulche-



ria, that resplendent lily of inviolate royal beauty. From such a return to the unity of the Church we foresee that there would flow a rich fountain of blessings unto the common good of the whole Christian world.

**40** Truly we are aware of the accumulation of prejudice that tenaciously prevents the happy fulfillment of the prayer offered by Christ at the last Supper to his Eternal Father for the followers of the Gospel: 'That they may be one' (John xvii, 21). But we know also that such is the strength of prayer, when those who pray are joined together in a common fervor, a strong faith, and a clear conscience, that it can lift up a mountain and cast it headlong into the sea (cf. Mark ii, 23). We desire then and we wish that all those who have at heart an earnest invitation to Christian unity --and surely no one who belongs to Christ would belittle the importance of this matter--should pour forth their united prayers and supplications to God, from whom comes all unity, order and beauty, that the praiseworthy desires of every right-thinking person may soon be brought to fulfillment. Let research be made without jealousy or anger to straighten out the path by which this good may be reached; let us bear in mind that today we are accustomed to retrace and weigh the events of bygone ages more calmly than in the past.

**41** Furthermore, there is another reason which demands the immediate coalition of all ranks under the single sign of the cross in order to oppose the turbulent attacks of the infernal enemy. Who is not horror struck at the ferocity and hatred with which the enemies of God, in many