

Doctor Mellifluus
Encyclical Letter on Bernard of Clairveaux
by Pope Pius XII 24 May 1953

“...31. And here it is well, Venerable Brethren, to bid you all consider a page in praise of Mary than which there is perhaps none more beautiful, more moving, more apt to excite for her, more useful to stir devotion and to inspire imitation of her virtuous example: "Mary . . . is interpreted to mean 'Star of the Sea.' This admirably befits the Virgin Mother. There is indeed a wonderful appropriateness in this comparison of her with a star, because as a star sends out its rays without harm to itself, so did the Virgin bring forth her Child without injury to her integrity. And as the ray does not diminish the brightness of the star, so neither did the Child born of her tarnish the beauty of Mary's virginity. She is therefore that glorious star, which, as the prophet said, arose out of Jacob, whose ray enlightens the whole earth, whose splendor shines out for all to see in heaven and reaches even unto hell. . . She, I say, is that shining and brilliant star, so



much needed, set in place above life's great and spacious sea, glittering with merits, all aglow with examples for our imitation. Oh, whosoever thou art that perceiveth thyself during this mortal existence to be rather drifting in treacherous waters, at the mercy of the winds and the waves, than walking on firm ground, turn not away thine eyes from the splendor of this guiding star, unless thou wish to be submerged by the storm! When the storms of temptation burst upon thee, when thou seest thyself driven upon the rocks of tribulation, look at the star, call upon Mary. When buffeted by the billows of pride, or ambition, or hatred, or jealousy, look at the star, call upon Mary. Should anger, or avarice, or fleshly desire violently assail the frail vessel of thy soul, look at the star, call upon Mary. If troubled on account of the heinousness of thy sins, distressed at the filthy state of thy conscience, and terrified at the thought of the awful judgment to come, thou art beginning to sink into the bottomless gulf of sadness and to be swallowed in the abyss of despair, then think of Mary. In dangers, in doubts, in difficulties, think of Mary, call upon Mary. Let not her name leave thy lips, never suffer it to leave thy heart. And that thou mayest more surely obtain the assistance of her prayer, see that thou dost walk in her footsteps. With her for guide, thou shalt never go astray; whilst invoking her, thou shalt never lose heart; so long as she is in thy mind, thou shalt not be deceived; whilst she holds thy hand, thou canst not fall; under her protection, thou hast nothing to fear; if she walks before thee, thou shalt not grow weary; if she shows thee favor, thou shalt reach the goal."[50]

32. We can think of no better way to conclude this Encyclical Letter than in the words of the "*Doctor Mellifluus*" to invite all to be more and more devout to the loving Mother of God, and each in his respective state in life to strive to imitate her exalted virtues. If at the beginning of the twelfth century grave dangers threatened the Church and human society, the perils besetting our own age are hardly less formidable. The Catholic faith, supreme solace of mankind, often languishes in souls, and in many regions and countries is even subjected to the bitterest public attacks. With the Christian religion either neglected or cruelly destroyed, morals, both public and private, clearly stray from the straight way, and, following the tortuous path of error, end miserably in vice.

33. Charity, which is the bond of perfection, concord and peace, is replaced by hatred, enmities and discords.

34. A certain restlessness, anxiety and fear have invaded the minds of men. It is indeed to be greatly feared that if the light of the Gospel gradually fades and wanes in the minds of many, or if - what is even worse, - they

utterly reject it, the very foundations of civil and domestic society will collapse, and more evil times will unhappily result.

35. Therefore, as the Doctor of Clairvaux sought and obtained from the Virgin Mother Mary help for the troubles of his times, let us all through the same great devotion and prayer so strive to move our divine Mother, that she will obtain from God timely relief from these grave evils which are either already upon us or may yet befall, and that she who is at once kind and most powerful, will, by the help of God, grant that the true, lasting, and fruitful peace of the Church may at last dawn on all nations and peoples...”