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OCTOBER 24, 1932

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LETTER PROPOSED FOR THE HIERARCHY

Your Eminences and Your Excellencies:

In compliance with the instructions received from the Most Reverend Emmet M. Walsh, D.D., Secretary of the meeting of the Hierarchy, dated, November 13, 1931, the Federated Colored Catholics of the United States have prepared a statement of the things that colored Catholics wish to have done to advance the true religion in their own lives and to so present our holy faith to all non-Catholic colored people that the Church may win them for Christ.

We hope to arrange to have this statement brought before the annual meeting of the Hierarchy this Fall, but we are sending you this copy so that you may give it consideration before the time for action arrives.

Encouraged by the consideration that was given to our appeal last Fall, we look to our Hierarchy for such action as is necessary to repair the rent in the seamless garment of Christ, to remove the sad division that exists in the otherwise glorious Catholic Church in this country.

Colored Catholics ask of the bishops of the country that every bishop in his own diocese shall take such steps as are necessary to remove and to prevent any rulings coming from the clergy or from religious which would deny them the same practice of all activities of their religion that is accorded to white Catholics.

They ask that in sections of the country where civil law limits the complete fulfilment of the above, the bishops and the clergy work earnestly for the repeal of all statutes limiting the full and free exercise of their religion, and that bishops and clergy enlist the help of influential white laymen in securing the repeal of such statutes.

They ask that every bishop shall see to it that no Catholic institution in his diocese, school, hospital, protectory, orphanage, college, university, or

seminary, shall be closed to colored Catholics because of the color of their skin, and that the bishop shall labor to remove any bar to this that civil law may place.

They ask that every bishop carry on in his diocese a campaign of education, among his clergy, beginning with the students in the seminary; among the Religious, beginning with the postulants and novices, especially of the teaching Orders; among the laity, in the parish church and in parish societies; and among the children of the parochial schools; this campaign to instill in all the true Catholic attitude toward the colored people, and to bring clearly home to all the terrible injury that race prejudice is doing to the Church of Christ, and the numberless souls that it is destroying.

They ask that the bishop shall see that his priests shall preach to their people that those unCatholic and prejudiced actions which make of the colored Catholic someone apart from other Catholics are seriously contrary to that second great commandment, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself."

They ask that the bishop shall see that confessors in his diocese shall make it their task to urge and to insist that their penitents shall correct these grievous sins and repair these serious injuries to their neighbor's souls and to God's holy Church.

They ask that the bishop see that in his diocese there shall be published in the diocesan periodicals or in pamphlets if periodicals be lacking, the instructions referred to above.

They ask that every bishop strive and plan, and see that his priests and sisters strive and plan to discover and to foster vocations to the priesthood and to the religious life in colored Catholic boys and girls; and that the bishop, priests and teachers give to the cultivation of vocations in colored children at least as great effort as they give to vocations in white children, inasmuch as the vocations of the colored are more needed, and are beset by more and greater

obstacles.

They ask that every bishop shall disown, correct, and if necessary, punish any open act on the part of anyone under him, or of any institution under his jurisdiction, that would deter any colored Catholic from the free enjoyment of the same share in all the life and activity, and helps of our holy religion, that other Catholics enjoy.

They ask that in matters of national institutions, such as the Catholic University, and movements, such as the N. C. W. C., all the bishops make it their personal concern that there be no exclusion of colored Catholics either in theory or in practice.

They ask that every form of Catholic Action undertaken in compliance with our Holy Father's instruction be made to include the interests of the colored as an integral and homogeneous part thereof, and that no exclusion either in theory or in fact be permitted.

They ask that on the occasion of some public and gross outrage of the rights of the colored people in general, whether Catholic or not, such as a lynching, the driving out of the colored residents from a town, or the like, that the bishop and the priests take occasion to make public the attitude of the Catholic Church to such injustices; and that in matters of which the publicity is national and N.C.W.C. News Service release articles for the Catholic and non-Catholic Press condemning such outrages.

We beg to call your attention to the fact that we have catalogued a number of specific cases upon which this plea is based, and which we shall be glad to submit as a supplement in case form.

Respectfully,

(Signed) Thomas W. Turner
President

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