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ASSUMPTION OF OUR LADY

At Vespers, before the Procession
of King Louis XIII's Vow

Homily of the Right Reverend Dom Jean PATEAU
Abbot of Our Lady of Fontgombault
(Fontgombault, August 15th, 2023)

Dear Brothers and Sisters,
My dearly beloved Sons,

ON MAY 15th, 1961, the holy Pope John XXIII signed the encyclical *Mater et Magistra*. This text proposed the social doctrine of the Church along the lines of *Rerum novarum*, by Leo XIII, *Quadragesimo anno* by Pius XI, and several teachings of Pius XII. St. John XXIII wrote:

MOTHER AND TEACHER of all nations—such is the Catholic Church in the mind of her Founder, Jesus Christ; to hold the world in an embrace of love, that men, in every age, should find in her their own completeness in a higher order of living, and their ultimate salvation. [...] Hence, though the Church's first care must be for souls, how she can sanctify them and make them share in the gifts of heaven, she concerns herself too with the exigencies of man's daily life, with his livelihood and education, and his general, temporal welfare and prosperity.^a

a. n. 1 and 3.

If the Church is *Mother and Teacher*, Mary is first and foremost *the* Mother and Teacher, Mother and Teacher of the Church, Mother and Teacher of her children. To her we may rightly entrust, on the day of her triumph in Heaven, our disquiet as the world, and our own country and its institutions, of-

fer less and less welcome to God's word of love in the service of life.

By these lines, still valid today, the Pope condemned:

a. n. 189. ... expedients which offend against the divinely established moral order and which attack human life at its very source,^a ... which does violence to man's essential dignity; those who propose such solutions base them on an utterly materialistic conception of man himself and his life.^b

b. n. 191. ... Separated from God a man is but a monster, in himself and toward others; for the right ordering of human society presupposes the right ordering of man's conscience with God, who is Himself the source of all justice, truth and love.^c

The Pope insisted on the importance for parents to "educate their own children to a deep sense of responsibility in life, especially in such matters as concern the foundation of a family and the procreation and education of children."^d He invited the Catholics to remain watchful, "to bear themselves as Catholics and do nothing to compromise religion and morality."^e

c. n. 215.

d. n. 195.

e. n. 239.

In the same line, St. John Paul II reminded the faithful of the authentic purpose pursued by Catholic schools:

They are called to propose freely an education project founded on the Gospel values, offering to parents — who are those primarily in charge of the education of their child — centres of study which ensure that the youth should receive a full and comprehensive education, consistent with those sound and strong Christian principles which should later guide and orient their lives of adult citizens.^f

f. JOHN PAUL II,
To the Members
of the Congregation
for Catholic teaching,
April 3rd, 1984.

Keeping faith with King Louis XIII's vow, we are going to go on a procession for the glory of Mary, Mother of God and Mother of men. We entrust her with our society, which is foundering into chaos. May Mary incline the hearts of our rulers not towards material profits, nor ill-founded ideologies that spurn the human being's reality and value, but towards welcoming and promoting the Creator's plan for human life and the universe, the sole path towards peace and justice for all, the sole source of an authentic and sustainable development of mankind.