



# The Holy See

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**MAGNI NOBIS**  
ENCYCLICAL OF POPE LEO XIII  
ON THE CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY OF AMERICA

*To the Archbishops and Bishops of the United States of North America.*

Of great joy to us is your zealous regard for the welfare of your dioceses by insuring protection of Catholic piety. We are especially comforted by the bulwark you are erecting for the proper education of clerical and lay youth and instruction in the divine and human sciences related to the Rule of Faith. Your most welcome letter, sent us at the beginning of last year, is truly inspiring wherein you indicate that the construction of the Lyceum or University of Studies in the City of Washington is progressing so felicitously that, due to your diligence, everything will be ready for the teaching of theology this year. From our esteemed brother, John Keane, titular bishop of Jassus and rector of this same University, whom you sent us, we have received with pleasure the statutes and laws of your University which you submitted to our judgment and authority. The wisdom of your decision is most praiseworthy to commemorate the auspicious centennial of the establishment of the American hierarchy with the opportune dedication of your University.

*Approval to Grant Degrees*

2. We, on our part, have not delayed to fulfill your desires and have entrusted the constitutions of your University to a committee of cardinals selected from the sacred Christian council, the Propaganda, for examination and evaluation. Now with their decision before us, we happily assent to your requests and with this present letter approve by our authority the laws and statutes of your University and endow it with the rights proper to a lawfully constituted University. We likewise empower your school of higher studies to confer all academic degrees upon those students whose learning has been tested and approved, and also graduate degrees in philosophy, theology and canon law and in those other departments in which the different degrees and doctorates are usually conferred, whenever those faculties will have been established.

### *Chancellor*

3. We desire, furthermore, our beloved son and venerable brothers, that you or competent bishops appointed by you vigilantly superintend the preservation of the correct system of studies and the discipline of students in your academic institution. Since, moreover, the principal See of the United States of North America is in Baltimore, We confer on the Archbishop of Baltimore and his successors the office and authority of chancellor or chief academic controller.

### *Fields of Study*

4. It is also Our wish that for a safeguard the traditional course of studies or program of disciplines of your University, and especially insofar as they pertain to philosophy and theology, be presented to this Holy See for examination to insure our consistent and valid approval. In addition, We desire that every department of learning in this same University be so constituted that clerical and lay youth may have equal opportunity to fulfill a novel desire for knowledge. We wish, moreover, that in your program of studies a school of pontifical canon law be set up, for We deem such knowledge very important and particularly in our times. We urge you all, on the other hand, to be sure that your seminaries, colleges and other Catholic institutions be affiliated with the University as suggested in its statutes, but, however, without impairment of their autonomy.

5. In order that as many as possible may enjoy more abundantly the benefits of the teaching of the University in its various faculties, let these schools of philosophy and theology devotedly serve not only those who have completed their studies according to the decrees of the Third Plenary Council of Baltimore, but also those who wish to begin or continue their studies.

### *Contributions*

6. Truly, since this great University of higher studies not only brings increased glory to your country, but promises salutary benefits in the propagation of sound doctrine and in the protection of Catholic piety, we are justly confident that the American faithful in their liberality will not disappoint you in bringing to magnificent completion the work they have so generously begun.

7. As the University at Washington is established by this letter, we desire that no other institution of this nature shall be undertaken by anyone without consulting the Apostolic See.

8. We believe that the message of this Our letter is evident proof to you of our sincere solicitude that the glorious progress of the Catholic religion increase daily in your country. We beseech most merciful God from whom comes every good endowment and every perfect gift without variation (*Jas 1.17*) to grant the prayers of your faithful and bless your project with favorable and happy issue.

9. With best wishes We lovingly impart Our Apostolic Blessing as a testimony of Our sincere love for you, Our beloved son, and you, Our venerable brothers, and the clergy and faithful whom you watch over, as a token of all heavenly gifts.

*Given at Rome, at St. Peter's, 7 March, 1889, on the feast of Thomas Aquinas in the twelfth year of Our Pontificate.*

**LEO XIII**

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