

The Catholic Catechism on Freemasonry

Lecture Series on Freemasonry Through the Light of Catholicism

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Session Eight – Officio Sanctissimo

The objective of this eighth lecture is to ground the student in the focus of Pope Leo XIII's *Officio Sanctissimo*; where he uses the principle of subsidiarity to offer *Humanum Genus* to the local community of Bavaria and will detail precisely how it is that Freemasons have used the principles of Freemasonry to infiltrate and plot against the State so that it can be manipulated and used as a tool to supplant the Catholic Church.

CATHOLIC
CATECHISM ON
FREEMASONRY
LESSON EIGHT -
MOST SACRED DUTY

Officio Sanctissimo

Historical Background of Papal Encyclical

Areas of Major Contribution & Legacy

OFFICIO SANCTISSIMO – FAST FACTS

- **Author:** Pope Leo XIII (1878 – 1903)
- **Promulgated:** 1887
- **Focus:** Paragraph 12
- **Purpose:** Since Pope Clement XII's *In Eminenti*, the formal objection to Freemasonry has been both theological and temporal; that is, Freemasonry plots against both the Church and the State. Pope Leo XIII's central contribution to the theological threat of Freemasonry was expressed in *Humanum Genus*, where he expanded the charge of indifferentism against Freemasonry to include naturalism as well. Here in *Officio Sanctissimo* and his later encyclicals, Leo XIII will detail precisely how it is that Freemasons have used the principles of Freemasonry to infiltrate and plot against the State so that it can be manipulated and used as a tool to supplant the Catholic Church.

OFFICIO SANCTISSIMO- HISTORICAL CONTEXT

- In 1887, the Kingdom of Bavaria was a federal state belonging to the unified German Empire. In 1850, following the 1848 revolution, relations were looking better after the new Prussian constitution allowed for freedom of religion, but from about 1872 to 1878, a fresh wave of Catholic persecution swept across the Kingdom of Prussia in what was called Kulturkampf (i.e., culture struggle). These new laws were primarily targeted at taking education out of the hands of the Catholic Church and putting it into the hands of the government, and putting the state in control of ecclesial appointments and determining the qualifications of clerics.
- The belief of Leo XIII was that the Freemasons and the philosophy of Freemasonry, in general, was responsible for this spreading “contagion.” To be sure, Kulturkampf was just a lighter version of the demonic hostility that the Catholic Church had experienced during the Reign of Terror in France (1789 – 1799), and the hostility that it would still endure there until a separation between Church and State would be established in 1905.
- Bavaria, as well, had in recent history persecuted Protestants. Yet now, during the Regency of Prince-Regent Luitpold, Pope Leo XIII notes in this encyclical that due to the affairs of the Catholic Church in Prussia being “somewhat improved,” the relationship between the Churches in these two kingdoms should begin to flourish.
- Altogether, this encyclical is Papal walk through how he views the history of Catholicism in the Kingdom of Bavaria, its current state, and a warm offering of words of guidance, admonishment, and encouragement to the Church of Bavaria to persevere in defending the faith and to stand firm in the authority of the Church that Christ established on earth.

OFFICIO SANCTISSIMO - AREAS OF CONCERN

Major Points in Paragraph 12:

- There is spiritual harm when the State is separated from the authority of the Church.
- Warns Bavaria against the dangers of state-run educational systems that is devoid of religious and moral formation – blames the contagion of Freemasonry.
- Advises study of *Humanum Genus* – get educated on the dangers of Freemasonry
- Admonishes them to focus on the youth from being indoctrinated in Freemasonry
- Expresses regret that the zeal of Catholics regarding this topic is not able to be matched by the influence of the Catholic Church in the world. Yet, he believes that the zeal of the faithful is enough to win the battle “if properly guided and with perseverance. . . . If all unite their efforts as energetically and actively as they ought, there will, by God’s grace, be reason to rejoice at the happy results of their zeal.”

OFFICIO SANCTISSIMO - CONTRIBUTION & LEGACY

- The importance of Officio Sanctissimo is not that anything about Freemasonry was said here that was not already elucidated upon in *Humanum Genus*, but, rather simply in the continuity of Papal prohibitions against Freemasonry that it continues. Freemasonry was active in Bavaria, and given that the country was where the Illuminati was founded, the Bavarians know well the history of infiltration and subversion of secret societies like these. In this way, Pope Leo XIII's simple message is a timeless message for the Church; that is, the Catholic Church needs to stay awake and alert to the dangers that are clear and present, as well as those that are more subtle and pretentious.

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Session Nine – Dall'alto dell'Apostolico Seggio

The objective of this ninth lecture is to ground the student in the focus of Pope Leo XIII's *Dall'alto dell'Apostolico Seggio*, where he continues to explain how the principles of Freemasonry have inspired Freemasons to infiltrate and plot against the State so that it can be easily manipulated and used as a tool to supplant the Catholic Church.