

The Holy See definitively approves the Congregation and the Constitutions for ten years (July 4, 1906)

This approval was the fruit of a long and difficult journey. Let us recall the main stages. The first Constitutions of 1878 were overwhelmed by the storm of the *Consumatum est*. After the decree of March 28, 1884, which reconstituted the Institute by keeping it within the limits of the diocese, the Founder drafted new Constitutions, which were approved by Bishop Thibaudier of Soissons, on August 2, 1885. With the *Decretum Laudis*, dated February 25 1888, the Holy See granted a first general recognition, with a decidedly favorable tone, to the resurrected Institute, postponing the approval of the Institute itself and its Constitutions to a more appropriate time. At the same time it indicated 21 points of suggested adjustments to the existing Constitutions.

Having implemented these suggestions, the Constitutions, written in French, were drawn up in Latin after the General Chapter of September 1899. In the meantime, the Founder asked for approval for the Congregation and its Constitutions, but did not obtain it.

Fr. Dehon wrote in his Diary: "We are stuck with the approval because of the old stories of the Holy Office of 1883. How to get out of it ...? Today, (February 7, 1906), I have carried out a kind of attack. I spoke to Bishop Della Chiesa: he showed himself benevolent and advised me to send the good Father Lepidi to speak with the Sub-Commissioner (Father Pasqualigo). I accepted the advice and went to see Father Lepidi, who promised me to do so. He also saw Father Pie di Langogne, who took the case seriously. He will speak on Monday with the councilor (Bishop Lugari) and will try to eliminate the old obstacles".

On February 14, Father Dehon had an audience with the Pope, at the end of which he wrote: "I spoke with him about his approval and our little difficulties: He reassured me completely. He will speak with the councilor at the Holy Office and the matter will be resolved".

Thanks to this personal intervention of Pius X, the Congregation was given definitive approval and the Constitutions approved *ad experimentum* for 10 years.

Father Dehon's thoughts:

"The Gospel, like the Holy Eucharist, is the sacrament of the Heart of Jesus. This divine Heart is there, among the words, hidden within his love and his treasures of grace; his words are the spirit of life. We must love and study all the Gospels, but we must be passionate about one in particular: that of St. John. Therefore, to be effective in preaching, the important thing is not to study Massillon, Bourdaloue and Bossuet, and even less the completely secular authors such as Cicero or Quintilian. We must study the Sacred Heart in the Gospel: everything is there."¹

¹ CAM 1/213.

You are God, Te Deum Laudamus

You are God: we praise you;
You are the Lord: we acclaim you;
You are the eternal Father:
All creation worships you.

To you all angels, all the powers of heaven,
Cherubim and Seraphim, sing in endless praise:
Holy, holy, holy, Lord, God of
power and might,
heaven and earth are full of your glory.

The glorious company of apostles praise you.
The noble fellowship of prophets praise you.
The white-robed army of martyrs praise you.

Throughout the world the holy Church
acclaims you:
Father, of majesty unbounded,
your true and only Son, worthy
of all worship,
and the Holy Spirit, advocate and guide.

You, Christ, are the king of glory,
the eternal Son of the Father.
When you became man to set us free
you did not spurn the Virgin's womb.

You overcame the sting of death,
and opened the kingdom of heaven
to all believers.
You are seated at God's right hand in glory.

We believe that you will come, and
be our judge.
Come then, Lord, and help your people,
bought with the price of your own blood,
and bring us with your saints
to glory everlasting.

Save your people, Lord, and bless
your inheritance.
Govern and uphold them now and always.
Day by day we bless you.

We praise your name for ever.

Keep us today, Lord, from all sin.
Have mercy on us, Lord, have mercy.
Lord, show us your love and mercy;
for we put our trust in you.

In you, Lord, is our hope:
and we shall never hope in vain.