

Bull of Clement XIII.
Canonization of Blessed Jerome Emiliani
Founder of the Congregation of the Clerics Regular from Somasca
July 16, 1767

Clement, Bishop, Servant of the Servants of God in Perpetual Memory.

1. Holiness is a characteristic element of the city of God, which is the Roman Catholic Church, and includes all the virtues united by the same bond. However, the manifold grace of God arranges the will of his servants in such a way that each one acquires a particular virtue and distinguishes himself in cultivating and exercising it. Thus, there arises that marvelous variety by which star differs from star and the different vocations of men present their own model to be imitated. The merciful God is pleased to be and to be invoked as the Father of mercies; he is pleased with works of mercy; he prefers men who are particularly dedicated to this virtue and devoted to alleviating human miseries. Since one of the saddest afflictions is that of orphaned children, deprived of one or both parents, Providence chose from among its servants some who would take care of these children and look after not only their food and sustenance but also their education and formation.

2. The almighty divine Providence gave to his Church the Blessed Jerome Emiliani, whose specific mission was the education of orphans; from a noble family and initiated to high civil and military offices, he did not disdain to attend to humble and abject offices in the eyes of men in order to fulfill the divine call. The divine goodness, origin and source of all holiness, which always aroused in the Church new imitators of its merciful charity, enriched Blessed Jerome Emiliani with virtues and, so that he might be an example to the Christian people, added the distinguished testimony of miracles. We, having weighed up everything, with the advice of our Venerable Brother Cardinals of Holy Roman Church, the Patriarchs, Archbishops and Bishops of the Curia, and having implored the light of the Holy Spirit, ascribe Blessed Jerome Emiliani to the glory of the Saints, and proclaim and decree that he be venerated with the same worship as is accorded to the Saints in Heaven.

3. Blessed Jerome Emiliani was born in 1481 of illustrious parents of the patrician nobility. It has already been sufficiently said how much grace can do in changing any character for the better. From nature and from the example of his ancestors he had inherited a courageous audacity, therefore, it seemed very opportune to propose him to defend a stronghold besieged by the enemies. The scarcity of soldiers, however, although supported by the value of Jerome, could not support the number and the preponderant strength of the enemies. Won and thrown in jail, bound with handcuffs, shackles and chains, he was forced to suffer the penalty of his obstinacy, too long had resisted with a small number of soldiers. If the enemy was not benevolent, Heaven was, and very much so.

4. The young Jerome with a fighting spirit, tamed by the misfortune and made aware of the instability of human things, turns to Mary, the Mother of God, our greatest hope after Jesus, and vows to devoutly visit the famous sanctuary of Treviso if he will receive the grace requested in such a dangerous situation. The Mother of mercy listens to the ardent prayer sprung from the soul of the prisoner and with her hands loosens his chains and gives him the keys to the prison.

Jerome takes with him the chains and the stone ball that he had hung on his neck forcing him to keep his head bent to the ground. Then, again with the help of the Virgin, he opens the prison door and exits the prison. Having to pass in the midst of enemies, still uses the help of the Virgin who benign leads him by the hand, then immediately goes safe and sound where he had established. Prostrate before the altar of his august rescuer, shedding tears of joy, thanking her more with his heart than with his mouth, he lays on the altar chains, handcuffs, shackles, ball, all in memory of the freedom regained through the Virgin. All these things can still be seen today, visiting the sanctuary of Treviso.

5. Returned to Venice, very different from how he had left, he neglected the honors decreed to him by the Republic and led a secluded life for eight years, far from society and desiring only to apply himself more freely to the worship of God and the education of his brother's children. But Jerome's charity could not be contained for too long. In Venice there was a great shortage of food and a terrible epidemic was raging. On that occasion, Jerome, without any delay, manifested all his merciful charity. He did not allow the corpses of those who had been cut down by hunger or plague to remain abandoned and unburied, but at night he carried them on his shoulders and buried them. He rounded up the children who wandered the crossroads in search of food, clothing or shelter, and took them into a rented house. As the number of poor people grew, so did the charity in his heart, especially towards children without parents. After having sold all his possessions to feed them, although he came from a noble family, he was not ashamed to beg for them in the streets of the city. His main concern was to instruct them in Christian doctrine and educate them in good habits. He was concerned to have each one learn a trade so that as adults each could earn his own bread. However, Jerome's charity gave the most beautiful proof of itself when, as an affectionate mother, he cared for the children who were sick with impetigo or other foul diseases, and sometimes, to overcome the natural disgust, he went beyond maternal love and kissed those purulent wounds.

6. Such a perfect charity could not remain in Venice. He reaches the nearby islands; he welcomes orphans and the poor in two houses, which he then moves to the Incurables hospital, whose administration he had accepted when offered by the direction of the institute. He also founded a house in Verona and Brescia and left a written rule for orphans. While with the same purpose he goes towards Bergamo, he meets some workers of the land who were harvesting wheat. He too took up the scythe, made friends with those peasants who had no religious culture, taught them the main truths of the faith, turned them away from those profane and unpretentious songs and urged them to sing the holy Christian prayers. As he had done in Venice, when he arrived in Bergamo, he started and easily accomplished the work of charity, giving a singular proof of virtue that became more manifest when, lacking any kind of food and entering the refectory, for the prayer of Jerome and the orphans, he found the table well prepared by Providence. In the city of Bergamo, he carried out another work, as useful as it was difficult; he won back to God the women of the streets; he led them to penance by inviting them to lead a life as recluses according to some rules he himself had formulated. Due to the continuous incursions of foreign soldiers, many vices had taken over in those lands. Desirous of the salvation of souls, he tried to find a remedy. Choosing among the orphans some whom he considered more capable for piety and intelligence, preceded by the cross, he traveled together with them through towns and villages; he gathered the people around him teaching them the main truths of faith; he depicted in their eyes the eternal punishments prepared for the wicked; he distanced them from

vices, incited them to penance; in all these apostolic activities, his speech was easy and clear, proposed with great enthusiasm. In Como, too, after having gone through the surroundings of the city, with the same solicitude he established two orphanages and nominated as leaders there some men full of his spirit and whom he had associated to his mission.

7. He wandered through the valley of Bergamo and came to Somasca, a village of the Venetian Republic. More than any other, this place seemed to him suitable for penance because of its harshness, suitable for contemplation because of its solitude, and for the salvation of souls because of the roughness of the population. There, he decided to establish his abode because there he wished to remain longer and more willingly. Here, he gathered the companions of his apostolic labors and established some rules of good government for the youth and the Servants of the Poor. From this place derived the name of the Congregation of Regular Clerics that Jerome, by divine inspiration, established for the benefit of the Christian people. In Milan, he received a large sum of money that the Duke had sent him to prove his holiness. He easily obtained the help and a house where to put the orphans. Here, a field of merits greater than elsewhere challenged his charity. In that time, in Milan, a terrible epidemic that spared very few, was spreading. Jerome, for nothing scared by the continuous spectacle of death, visited the sick, supported the poor, urged everyone to prayer and penance. The reward for this charity seems to be the fact that none of the orphans and those, not a few, in charge of the orphanage were affected in the midst of such a death of citizens - and this is to be considered a miracle. As Jerome's reputation for holiness spread, many noble and wealthy families embraced his way of life, following in his footsteps. Even in Pavia he founded a house for orphans. Then, he returned to Somasca and, there, happened a truly memorable event. While two brothers were quarreling among themselves, speaking offensive words not only to each other, but also to God, not succeeding in obtaining anything by persuasion, he began to eat mud to satisfy with this small punishment the offense they had made to God; he thus forced them to ask God's forgiveness and to find peace among themselves again.

8. On the mountain above Somasca, he built a small house for himself and his own, acting as architect, mason and helper. For the sick, he built a small house halfway up the mountain because it seemed the most suitable place, being close to Somasca, so that he could visit the sick orphans every day. There was no water. After praying, a spring gushed forth from the cliff, healthy not only for the thirsty but also for the sick. With a sign of the cross, he turned the wolves away and healed a farmer who had been seriously injured while cutting wood. He multiplied bread and wine. He performed all these wonderful works, but he was so humble and attributed everything to the piety and innocence of children. Very devoted to the Blessed Virgin Mary, he tried to instill and cultivate this devotion in others. Great was his devotion to the Holy Eucharist and to the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Returning on foot to Venice, he visited the hospitals. He stopped for some time in Verona, Brescia and Bergamo, always animated by the same charity and poverty. The city of Bergamo offered him some houses to host the young girls and others to welcome the children without parents, he obtained a convent for the converts and a monastery for the Capuchin fathers. Finally, having asked for the last blessing from the Bishop of Chieti, who was then in Verona, he returned to Somasca. There, presaging the now near death, he lives, as never before, in solitude and penance. He scourges himself, fasts, suffers from thirst, sleeps very little and on the bare stone. At night and during the day, he nourishes and restores his

spirit with prayer. But He, who had lived devoted to continuous works of charity, could not end his life except with a work of charity.

9. When the plague spread to Somasca, he bore witness to what an ardent love is capable of doing for one's neighbor. One can hardly say what and how many labors he endured visiting the plague victims, helping the dying in some way, and carrying the dead to burial on his shoulders. A noble victim of charity, he never desisted from these pitiful works except when, undermined by the same illness, he was on the point of dying. On his deathbed, he exhorted his companions and those of the valley with pious and holy counsels, received the Sacraments, sweetly repeated the names of Jesus and Mary, and happily and serenely rendered his spirit to his Creator and Savior on February 8, 1537. Great was the gathering of people at his body; all considered him as a father; even came from neighboring countries and, to give everyone the opportunity to venerate it, the burial had to be postponed several days. The miracles performed before and after his death led to esteem and invoke Jerome as a saint. St. Charles Borromeo, when he was in Somasca, incensed his bones that emanated a very sweet smell. In addition to the prodigies reported in 1630 by the auditors of the Cause of the Apostolic Palace, as was the custom at that time, to our predecessor Urban VIII of happy memory, memory and reports of others were made in the acts of the process celebrated by apostolic authority in Somasca, in 1678.

10. Furthermore, after having heard the opinion of the Cardinals of S.R.C., who preside over the Congregation of Rites, and of the Consultors, our predecessor Clement XII declared the heroic quality of Jerome's virtues in a decree of 25 August 1747. As for the miracles worked by God through the intercession of Jerome, Benedict XIV of happy memory, in order to open the way to the Beatification, with the decree of April 23, 1742, among others, judged two worthy of approval. The first miracle was performed in Venice in 1737 in favor of Girolama Duringhella. Sick for several years of scurvy and consequent malignant ulcers, suffering from convulsions and other ills, already bedridden for four years, after invoking Jerome, suddenly healed. The other instantaneous and unnatural healing was in favor of the child Antonio Bianchini, seven years old and suffering from incurable epileptic disease from which he had been suffering since the cradle: This miracle occurred in 1738. So, our predecessor Benedict XIV, on August 5, 1747, read the decree of the "Tuto" for which it was possible to proceed to beatification. The ceremonies were solemnly celebrated in the Vatican Basilica on the 29th of the same month.

11. When other miracles occurred, the way to canonization was opened. By apostolic authority, new processes were instituted and their validity was sanctioned by the Congregation of Rites on May 7, 1763, and by Us on the 14th of the same month. Having ascertained the validity of the processes, the miracles were dealt with in two meetings, the anti-preparatory on February 5, 1765, and the preparatory on March 4, 1766. In the General Congregation celebrated before Us on May 13 of the same year, two miracles were considered worthy of approval. We, however, took some more time to invoke the Father of lights and, on the 25th of the same month, we made our pronouncement on the truthfulness of the two miracles. The first one, in June 1748, in favor of Sister Maria Geltrude Pocobella who, through the intercession of Blessed Jerome, was healed in a supernatural way from the putrefaction of the flesh of the tarsus bone of her left foot. The second miracle, again through the intercession of Blessed Jerome, took place in April 1754 with the healing and the instantaneous return of strength in favor of Elisabetta Zandaniglia, by then dying of nephritis and other ailments. In the General Congregation held before us on September

23, 1766, the question was raised whether, given the approval of the miracles, we could proceed to the solemn canonization of Blessed Jerome Miani. Although we had obtained the favorable opinion of the Cardinals and the Consultors, before issuing the decree, we deemed it necessary to turn again to God with prayers and supplications. Finally, on October 12 of last year, we decided that the Decree of the Canonization of Blessed Jerome Emiliani be published and reported in the Acts of the Sacred Congregation of Rites.

12. Once this Decree had been issued, some Christian Princes and above all the beloved sons, the Doge and the Republic of Venice presented us with new petitions as they had already addressed them to the Apostolic See at the beginning of this cause. The Congregation of the beloved sons, the Regular Clerics of Somasca, did not cease to address their humble and trusting supplications, so that we might publish the much desired decree of Canonization. We ordered that a compendium of the life, virtues, and miracles of Blessed Jerome be collected, printed, and distributed to the Cardinals from among those examined and approved by the Sacred Congregation. On April 27 of this year, we called a secret Consistory and in it a synthesis of the virtues and miracles of Blessed Jerome was presented to the Cardinals. We turned to them and asked each one if we should proceed to the canonization of the Blessed who, among other virtues he practiced in a heroic way by the grace of God, had distinguished himself above all for the exercise of charity towards his neighbor by dedicating himself entirely to the love and care of orphans and the needy. We welcomed with great joy the consent of the Cardinals who authorized us to proceed and, according to the praiseworthy custom of the Apostolic See, we also informed our brother Archbishops and Bishops of Italy of our purpose; we urged them to help us with prayer and advice when they would be in Rome on the appointed day. We wanted them to be given a copy of the compendium of the life, virtues and miracles so that they might be aware of the course of the entire cause of Blessed Jerome and of the virtues and miracles approved by the Apostolic See. On May 9, we convened before Us a public Consistory in which, in addition to the Cardinals, the Patriarchs, Archbishops and Bishops of Rome also took part; in this Consistory, having asked for permission, our beloved Son Giulio Cesare Fagnani, Consistorial Advocate, gave an appropriate speech in support of the Canonization of Blessed Jerome. Given the importance of the matter, we exhorted the Cardinals, Archbishops and Bishops present to intercede with prayers and fasting to Him who gives abundant graces to all. In the semi-public Consistory convened on June 15, in addition to the Cardinals, Patriarchs, Archbishops and Bishops, we also invited the Notaries of the Apostolic See and the two senior auditors of the Cause to participate. We ourselves spoke to those present and asked each of them to grant Blessed Jerome the worship and honor of a saint. Not only did they all approve of the canonization of the Blessed with adequate reasons, but they considered it right and proper and their consent was most grateful to Us.

13. In order to implore greater mercy from the Lord, we instituted a three-day fast in Rome and designated three patriarchal basilicas in which the Blessed Sacrament would be exposed to public veneration for three days. We exhorted all the faithful that, purified by sacramental confession and nourished by the Body of Christ, they should join us in prayer and fasting to invoke the Almighty Lord so that he might bestow his wisdom upon us and in whose shining light we might know his will; for this reason we also granted indulgence and plenary remission of sins. We, in addition to the private and assiduous prayers of each day performed with humble trust, on the three appointed days went to visit the said three basilicas and with great exultation

of our hearts saw flowing there with great devotion a great multitude of the Roman people who bore in their faces and eyes the desire to see the Blessed glorified among the Saints.

14. Finally, on this day, dedicated to Our Lady of Mount Carmel, the anniversary of Our coronation, we came to the splendidly decorated Basilica of the Prince of the Apostles, in the form of a public petition, preceded by all the orders of the secular and regular Clergy, officials of the Congregations of the Curia, together with our Venerable Brothers Cardinals, Archbishops and Bishops. Having reached the altar of Confession, before the service, after the supplicating request of our beloved son Carlo Rezzonico, Cardinal of S.R.C. of the title of Saint Clemente and Camerlengo, constituted procurator for the canonization, the prayers of the Church were sung so that through the intercession of the Virgin, the Angels and the Saints, divine help might assist us. Having invoked the Holy Spirit, the Paraclete, to the honor of the Holy and Individual Trinity, to the exaltation of the Catholic Church, and to the increase of the Christian religion, with the permission of Our Lord Jesus Christ, the Blessed Apostles Peter and Paul, in the fullness of Our authority, and with the advice and consent of Our Venerable Brothers Cardinals, Patriarchs, have decreed that Blessed Jerome Emiliani, founder of the Congregation of the Regular Clerics of Somasca, is a Saint, and with him, Blessed John Canzio, Blessed Joseph Calasanzio of the Mother of God, Blessed Joseph of Cupertino, Blessed Serafino of Monte Granario, known as from Ascoli, and Blessed Giovanna Francesca Fremiot de Chantal. We ascribed him in the catalog of Saints and ordered that he be honored as a Saint, and therefore thus we hereby define, decree and declare. We establish and grant that in the whole Church churches and altars may be built in his honor, altars on which sacrifices may be offered to God; the memory of the Saint may be honored every year on February 8. By the same authority, in the usual form and in perpetuity we grant an indulgence of seven years and seven quarantines to all the faithful who visit the remains of St. Jerome on that day.

15. Having sung the hymn of praise for the due thanksgiving, granted full remission of sins and indulgence to all the faithful gathered, we solemnly celebrated the holy sacrifice of the Mass on the Confession of the Blessed Prince of the Apostles, making special commemoration of the same Saints.

16. If it is fitting to praise the Lord in his saints, for Blessed Jerome we have a special reason. Our Lord Jesus Christ outlined the badge and watchword of the Christian religion in mutual charity, and in it, at all times, the disciples of the Divine Master are recognized. This virtue shone so brightly in St. Jerome that he seems to have come close to resembling God, who is said to be the Father of Orphans. He made the Catholic Church more beautiful and left an example to those who love evangelical piety: to exercise mercy towards the poor in imitation of the Father of mercies. While we all rejoice because the Church shines ever more brightly to enlighten those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, we must also take care that those examples of virtue which are offered to us every day in the Church are not offered to us in vain.

17. And now we cannot fail to congratulate the city of Venice in which we are proud to have been born. For if it is its glory to have had in every age citizens worthy of mention for civil and military virtue, we must confess that it is much more glorious for it to have had holy men whom heroic Christian virtue has placed among the Saints in heaven; first here on earth, much more now in heaven to be the garrison and decorum of the Fatherland.

18. Having therefore completed the above, and since Cardinal Charles himself, Our appointed Procurator, asked Us to place our Apostolic Letter in the collection of Acts destined to be always remembered, We willingly acceded to his request and ordered that the present Letter be printed and published. We decreed that all copies, even printed copies, signed by one of the public notaries and bearing the seal of a dignified ecclesiastical person, should be given the same faith as if they were the same original.

19. Let no one be allowed to falsify this page of our decree or to recklessly contradict it. If anyone should dare to attempt to do so, let him know that he will incur the wrath of Almighty God and of his blessed Apostles Peter and Paul.

Given in Rome, in St. Peter, in the year of the Lord 1767, July 16, tenth year of Our Pontificate.

I, Clement, Bishop of the Catholic Church.

The signatures of 33 Cardinals follow.