

The 1519 Papal Bull *Religionis zelus* promulgated by Leo X

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Abstract

In 1489, the Order of St Lazarus was suppressed by Innocent VIII to supposedly augment the holdings and benefices of the Order to the Order of St John. This was strongly opposed by the grand magistracy of the Order of St Lazarus supported by the French Royal House. The relationship between the Kingdom of France and the Holy See was eventually regulated by the Concordat of Bologna of 1516 which gave the French king the right to choose and present for eventual appointment by the Holy See the French master general of the Order of St Lazarus. The king's nomination of Claude de Mareuil as master general of the Order of St Lazarus in 1519 led to the confirmation of the appointment by Leo X. This confirmation led to the repealing of previous bulls abolishing the Order.

Keywords

Papal Bull, Leo X, Order of St. Lazarus, Boigny, Claude de Mareuil.

Editorial note

On the 28 March 1489, Innocent VIII in no uncertain terms suppressed the Order of St Lazarus and passed on their properties to the Order of St John.¹ The terms of Innocent VIII's bull *Cum sollerti meditatione pensamus* were again reiterated by Julius II on 12 July 1505

¹ Innocent VIII (5.iv.1489). 'Cum sollerti meditatione pensamus', transcribed in A.F. Haudessens d'Escluseaux, *Privilèges des papes, empereurs, rois et princes de la chrétienté accordez à l'ordre Saint-Jean de Hiérusalem avec les arrests notables rendus par les cours souveraines du royaume de France* (Paris: Pierre-Augustin Le Mercier, 1700), 109-12; translated by H.C.R. Vella, 'The 1489 Bull Cum Sollerti of Pope Innocent VIII', *Acta Historiae Sancti Lazari Ordinis*, iv, (2021), 49-70.

in the bull *Romani Pontificis benignitas*.² While the 1489 Bull was drawn up within the context of the desire of Innocent VIII to have the Sultan's brother Jem, then under the protection of the Order of St John, transferred to Rome³; the latter papal bull was drawn up within the context of the Franco-Italian Wars initiated by the French King and opposed by the Holy League re-formed by Julius II to support the claims of King Ferdinand II of Aragon over the Duchy of Milan and the Kingdom of Naples.

These two papal bulls were poorly received by the major houses of the Order of St Lazarus especially the magistral house in Boigny (France). The intransigence of the magistral house received the support of the French king Louis XII who vied with the Holy See to ensure that Lazarite land holdings in their region were not arbitrarily given to an organization whose only dependence and allegiance was the Holy See. Meanwhile, the early 16th century's opposition to French interests in Italy by the Holy See gave rise to a move aiming to regulate the relations between the French King and the Holy See leading to the 1516 Concordat of Bologna between Pope Leo X and the French King Françoise I. The Concordat gave the French king the right to choose and present for eventual appointment by the Holy See all the bishops, abbots, and priors of France, including the French master general of the Order of St Lazarus.⁴ The terms of the concordat stated:

Also in purely elective monasteries and conventual priories, that is to say, in those in which it has been the custom to observe the form of the chapter 'Quia proper' and to seek solemn confirmation of elections of this kind, in the Kingdom, Delphine and the County, it shall not be possible to proceed, now and in the future, to the election or postulation of an Abbot or Prior for those convents, even if they are vacant by cession as mentioned above. But the same King, when such a vacancy occurs in those places, shall nominate to us and our successors or the same See, within a similar time of six months

² Julius II (12.vii.1505). 'Romani Pontifici benignitas', transcribed in Haudessens d'Escluseauls, 1700, *Ibid.*, 112-114.

³ C. Savona-Ventura. 'The papal bull Cum sollerti meditatione pensamus of 1489'. *Journal of the Monastic Military Orders*, ii, (2009), 21-38.

⁴ C. Savona-Ventura. The inter-relationship between the Orders of St Lazarus and of St John during the 16th century. *Melita Classica*, 8, (2022), 150-171.

*reckoned from the day of the vacating of these monasteries and priories, a religious of the same Order who has reached the age of twenty-three years at least, and the person nominated by the King to a monastery vacant in this way shall be provided to it by ourselves and our successors or the same See; a priory also should be conferred on the person nominated by the same King.*⁵

Following the 1516 Concordat, Françoise I in 1519 nominated Claude de Mareuil as *magistro generali Militiae Sancti Lazari Jerosolimitani*, a nomination that was approved and confirmed by Leo X with the bull *Religionis zelus* on the 30 May 1519. The bull furthermore gave a special dispensation to the terms of the appointment since Claude de Mareuil was only aged 15 years and had as yet not reached the required age of 23 years and thus was counter to the terms dictated by the Concordat:

*But if the King should nominate a secular priest, or a religious of another Order, or a person less than twenty-three years of age, or otherwise unsuitable, to us or our successors or the same See within the aforesaid six months, such a nominated person ought to be rejected and not provided to the benefice.*⁶

This bull thus gave a new lease of life to the Order of Saint Lazarus by repealing the prior papal bulls. The bull *Religionis zelus* is currently available in the *Registro Vaticano 1192* in the Archivo Segreto of the Vatican and has been transcribed by Rafaël Hyacinthe.⁷ The English translation presented herein is based on this transcription as revised by the author H.C.R. Vella.

⁵ Leo (1516). *Concordato con La Francia sotto Leone X*, translated in: *Concordat of Bologna between Pope Leo X and Francis I, King of France, August 18, 1516*. In: Ehler, S.Z. and Morrall, J.B. (1967). *Church and State Through the Centuries: A Collection of Historic Documents with Commentaries*, New York: Biblio & Tannen Publishers, 134-144.

⁶ Ehler & Morrall, 1967, *Ibid.*, 140.

⁷ Leo X (30.v.1519). 'Religionis zelus', in *Registro Vaticano 1192*, (Ms. Archivo Segreto, Vatican, 1519), f. 196v – 198, transcribed in R. Hyacinthe (2003). *L'Ordre de Saint-Lazare de Jérusalem au Moyen Age*, (Bez-et-Esparon: Études & Communication Édition, 2003), doc. xvi, 219-220.

Latin transcript - Religionis zelus (30.v.1519)

Leo etc[etera]. Dilecto filio Claudio de Mareul magistro generali militi<a>e Sancti Lazari Hierosolymitani ⁸, salutem etc[etera].

Religionis zelus, vit<a>e ac morum honestas aliaque laudabilia probitatis et virtutum merita super quibus apud nos fide digno commendaris testimonio nos inducunt, ut tibi reddamus ⁹ ad gratiam liberales, dudum siquidem omnes magistratus ceteraque beneficia ecclesiastica secularia et militiarum quarumcumque regularia, apud sedem apostolicam tunc vacantia et in antea vacatura. Collationi et dispositioni nostr<a>e reservavimus decernentes ex tunc ¹⁰ irritum et inane si secus super hijs a quoquam quavis auctoritate scienter vel ignoranter contingeret attemptari.

Cum itaque postmodum magistratus generalis militi<a>e Sancti Lazari Hierosolymitani ¹¹, per liberam resignationem dilecti filii Aniani de Mareul nuper ipsius militi<a>e magistri generalis de illo ¹², quem tunc obtinebat per dilectum filium Bonacursium de Oritellariis clericum Florentinum, procuratorem suum ad hoc ab eo specialiter constitutum, in manibus nostris sponte factam et per nos admissam apud sedem pr<a>edictam vacaverit et vacet. Ad pr<a>esens nullusque de illo pr<a>eter nos ac vice disponere potuerit sive possit reservatione et decreto obsistentibus supradictis, Nos tibi qui ut asseris in quinto decimo vel circa tu<a>e <a>etatis anno constitutus ac dict<a>e militi<a>e frater existis, ac pro quo carissimus in Christo filius noster Franciscus Francorum rex christianissimus nobis per suas litteras humiliter supplicavit pr<a>emissorum meritorum tuorum intuitu, specialem gratiam facere volentes teque a quibusvis [...] etc[etera] censentes magistratum pr<a>edictum ad quem consuevit quis per electionem assumi ac cuius et pr<a>eceptor<a>e sive domus generalis et conventualis qu<a>e caput pr<a>eceptoriarum et domorum dict<a>e militi<a>e citra et ultra mare existit eiusdem Sancti Lazari de Bogniaco ¹³ militi<a>e

⁸ Jerosolimitani, ms.

⁹ reddamur, ms.

¹⁰ extunc, ms.

¹¹ Jerosolimitani, ms.

¹² ille, ms.

¹³ Bongniaco, ms.

English translation - *Religionis zelus* (30.v.1519)

Leo etc. To (Our) dear Claude de Mareul, General Master of the Military Order of Saint Lazarus of Jerusalem, greetings, etc.

Zeal of the Religion, honesty of life and manners, and other praiseworthy (qualities) which merit modesty and virtues, concerning which you are recommended by us with a testimony worthy of trust, induce us to restore to you as a favour openhandedly, since indeed a little while ago we reserved to our conferment and disposition all the Magistracies and the rest of the Ecclesiastical Benefices, secular and regular ones, of whatever Military Orders which, within the Apostolic See, were then vacant and which will become vacant in the future, while deciding from now onward (to consider) as invalid and void whatever may by chance be attempted to the contrary, knowingly or unconsciously, by whomever with whatever authority over these (Magistracies and Benefices).

Since therefore afterwards the General Magistracy of the Military Order of Saint Lazarus of Jerusalem will be vacated and is being vacated through the free resignation, (a resignation) made spontaneously and accepted by us, of (our) dear Son Anianus de Mareul, lately General Master of the Military Order itself regarding that (Magistracy) which he was then holding through (Our) dear Son Bonacursius de Oritellariis, a Cleric from Florence, his own Procurator, specially appointed by him for this for the present, and (since) at present nobody could in future and at present dispose regarding that (Magistracy) for this particular occasion except Us, with reservation and decree, notwithstanding the things said above, We, wishing to make a special favour to you, you who assert that you are in your fifteenth year of age or thereabout, and who serve as a Brother of the mentioned Military Order, and for whom our dearest Son in Christ, Francis, the Most Christian King of the Franks, has humbly petitioned us through his letter, by (our) understanding of your already mentioned merits etc., deciding that you (be given) by whatever persons etc. the already mentioned Magistracy which one was wont to receive ¹⁴ by election, and that of the Preceptory De Bogniaco or the General House and Convent which exits as Head of the Preceptories and Houses of the mentioned Military Order on this side of and beyond the sea, of the same Military Order of St Lazarus De Bogniaco

¹⁴ Lit.: "be assumed".

huiusmodi Aurelianensis diocesis, ac aliorum eidem magistratui forsan annexorum, insimul fructus redditus et proventus quinquaginta ducatorum auri de camera secundum commune existimationem¹⁵ valoris annui ut etiam asseris non excedunt, sive pr<a>emisso sive alio quovismodo quem etiam si ex eo qu<a>evis generalis reservatio etiam in corpore juris clausa resultet pr<a>esentibus pro expresso haberi.

Volumus aut ex alterius cuiuscumque persona seu per similem dicti Aniani vel cuiusvis alterius resignationem de illo in Romana Curia, vel extra eam etiam coram notario publico et testibus sponte factam vacet etiam si tanto tempore vacaverit quod eius collatio juxta Lateranensis statuta Concilii¹⁶ ad sedem pr<a>edictam legitime devoluta ipseque magistratus dispositioni apostolic<a>e specialiter vel aliis generaliter reservatus existat et super eo inter aliquosvis cuius statum pr<a>esentibus haberi volumus pro expresso pendeat indensa dummodo eius dispositio ad nos ac vice pertineat, cum annexis pr<a>edictis ac omnibus iuribus et pertinentiis suis apostolica tibi auctoritate conferimus et de illo etiam providemus, non obstante felicis recodationis Bonifatii pap<a>e VIII pr<a>edecessoris nostri et aliis constitutionibus et ordinationibus apostolicis ac dict<a>e militi<a>e juramento confirmatione apostolica vel quavis firmitate alia roboratis statutis et consuetudinibus stabilimentis usibus et naturis contrariis quibuscumque, aut si aliqui super provisionibus sibi facientibus de magistratibus huiusmodi speciales vel aliis beneficiis ecclesiasticis in illis partibus generales dict<a>e sedis vel legatorum eius litteras impetrarint, etiam si per eas ad inhibitionem reservationem et decretum vel aliis quomodolibet sit processum quibus omnibus te in assecutione dicti magistratus volumus anteferri.

¹⁵ *extimationem*, ms.

¹⁶ *Consilii*, ms.

of this Diocese of Orléans, and of other (Preceptories and Houses) perhaps annexed to the same Magistracy, (we give you) also the annual fruits, returns and income of fifty Ducats of gold, official money, according to the common estimation of (their) value, as you also assert they do not exceed that (value) either by what has been already established, or by whatsoever other manner, even if whatever general reservation, also included in the Corpus of Law, may result to be held for that express purpose in the circumstance.

We wish that either from a person of whatever other (Military Order) or through a resignation similar to the mentioned Anianus or to whatever other (person) regarding that (Magistracy) within the Roman Curia, or (through a resignation) freely made outside it even in the presence of a Public Notary and witnesses, even if it were vacated (or) if it were to be vacated at such a time, the conferment to that man be legitimately turned to the already mentioned See according to the Statutes of the Lateran Council, and that the Magistracy itself exist as reserved to the Apostolic disposition in a special way, or to others generally, and that its status over that (magistracy) be kept among some whomsoever in the circumstances; we wish that it would expressly remain untouched as long as its disposition remains similarly (favourable) to Us, with the already mentioned annexed (titles) and all their rights and pertinences; (and) through (Our) Apostolic authority, We confirm on you and even provide (you) with that (Magistracy), notwithstanding (the decisions) of Our predecessor Pope Boniface VIII, of happy memory, and other (decisions) or Apostolic orders and Apostolic confirmation made by oath to the mentioned Military Order, or by whatever other power, by whatever endorsed statutes and traditions, assurances, customs and habits contrary (to this); or (notwithstanding) some people obtaining a letter specifically on the provisions providing them with these Magistracies, or generally with other Ecclesiastical Benefices in those parts of the mentioned See or its ambassadors, notwithstanding even a procedure being made through that (letter) for (its) refusal, reservation and decree or in whatever way possible, to which all others We wish that you be preferred in the acquisition of the mentioned Magistracy.

Sed nullum per hoc eis quo ad assecutionem magistratum¹⁷ seu beneficiorum aliorum pr<a>e iudicium generari aut si venerabili fratri nostro patriarch<a>e Hierosolymitani¹⁸ vel quibusvis aliis communiter vel divisim ab eadem sit sede indultum quod ad receptionem vel provisionem alicuius minime teneantur et ad id compelli aut quod interdicti suspendi vel excommunicari non possint quodque de magistratibus huiusmodi vel aliis beneficiis ecclesiasticis ad eorum collationem provisionem pr<a>esentationem electionem seu quamvis aliam dispositionem communiter vel separatim spectantibus, nulli valeat provideri per litteras apostolicas non facientes plenam et expressam ac de verbo ad verbum de indulto huiusmodi mentionem et qualibet alia dict<a>e Sedis indulgentia generali vel speciali cuiuscumque tenorum existat per quam pr<a>esentibus non expressam vel totaliter non insertam effectus huiusmodi grati<a>e impediri valeat quomodolibet vel differri et de qua cuiusque toto tenore habenda sit in nostris litteris mentio specialis aut quod ad obtinendum magistratum pr<a>e dictum defectum <a>etatis pr<a>e miss<a>e in illius quinto decimo anno pr<a>e dicto vel circa constitutus ut pr<a>e fertur pateris nos eum [...] ¹⁹ ut magistratum huiusmodi vigore pr<a>esentium recipere et retinere libere et licite valeat. Defectu pr<a>e dicto ac Lateranensis Concilii et quibusvis aliis constitutionibus et ordinationibus apostolicis necnon statutis et consuetudinibus stabilimentis usibus et naturis supradictis c<a>eterisque contrariis nequaquam obstantibus, dicta apostolica auctoritate tenore pr<a>esentium de specialis dono grati<a>e dispensamus, proviso quod magistratus pr<a>e dictus debitis propterea non fraudetur obsequiis: et insuper prout est irritum decernimus et inane si secus super his a quoquam quavis auctoritate scienter vel ignoranter attemptatum forsitan est hactenus vel imposterum contigerit attemptari.

Nulli ergo etc[etera] nostr<a>e absolutionis collationis provisionis dispensationis voluntatis et decreti infringere etc[etera]. Si quis etc[etera]. Datum Rom<a>e apud Sanctum Petrum anno Incarnationis Dominic<a>e millesimo quingentesimo decimo nono, tertio kalendis junii, pontificatus nostri anno septimo.

¹⁷ magistratum, ms.

¹⁸ Jerosolimitani, ms.

¹⁹ Scriptum corruptum.

But, for the sake of this, (we wish) that no prejudice to be generated to those as far as the acquisition of Magistracies or other Benefices are concerned; or if it were to be granted to the Venerable Our Brother, the Patriarch of Jerusalem, or to whomever other persons, collectively or partially, by the same See, they would be least hindered as far as the acceptance or the provision of some (Magistracy or Benefice) is concerned, and they would not be able to have that (acceptance or provision) be compelled or interdicted, suspended or be excommunicated, and that regarding these Magistracies or other Ecclesiastical Benefices which appertain to their conferment, provision, presentation, election or whatever other disposition (given) collectively or partially. It would be of no avail (to it) to be provided by means of an Apostolic letter not making full and expressed mention, and (copying it) from word to word regarding this grant or whatever other general or special indulgence of the mentioned See under whatsoever pretension it may exist, by which (mention is) not expressed in the circumstance, or not inserted completely. The effect of this grace should (not) be impeded in whatever way, or deferred, even regarding which (grace) a special mention must be had in Our letter including the whole gist of each thing; or, as far as the obtaining of the already mentioned Magistracy is concerned, you will make allowance for the defect of the already mentioned age in his already mentioned fifteenth year or thereabout, as said above, that it may be possible (for him) to liberally and lawfully receive and retain this Magistracy by the power of these (documents). Notwithstanding the already mentioned defect and both whatever other decisions and the Apostolic orders of the Lateran Council, as well as the statutes and traditions, assurances, customs and habits mentioned above and the rest which are not at all contrary (to this), by the mentioned Apostolic authority we dispense as a gift of a special grace according to the gist of these (documents), provided that the already mentioned Magistracy is not furthermore beguiled by obliged compliances: and, above all, we decide that it is invalid and void if it has perhaps been, knowingly or ignorantly, hitherto attempted regarding these things by whoever with whatever authority, or if it will chance to be attempted in the future.

It (will be) therefore of no avail, etc., to go against (any part of) our absolution, conferment, provision, dispensation, will and decree, etc. If anyone, etc. Given in Rome at Saint Peter in the year of the Incarnation of the Lord one thousandth, five hundredth and nineteenth, the 30th May, seventh year of Our Pontificate.