How the Seminarians Return to England, and What They Do There

In such a spirit do these stout soldiers of the Lord return to England; with such goals they undertake their invasion. They return in disguise, because the laws of the land are so brutal and executed with such extreme rigor; because there are innumerable guards, spies, dogs, and informers; because the reward for exposing this prey is so great, the risk of concealing them so dire, that they cannot enter save in false garb, whether as soldiers, or merchants, or seamen, or something similar, nor travel through the country in any other fashion lest they be recognized and fall into the heretics’ hands, forfeiting their own lives and those of the Catholics who have received and sheltered them. Saint Eusebius, bishop of Samosata, did this in the time of the Arian Emperor Constantius, traveling in the guise of a soldier to visit the churches of the Catholics and strengthen and encourage them, and ultimately dying as a glorious martyr of Christ, as is related in the Martyrologium Romanum.¹

One of their principal instructions on arrival in England is not to get involved in the secular politics of the kingdom, whether things go well or ill, so as not to give the heretics their foes an opportunity any shred of evidence for what they presently proclaim with such mendacity: that these men are traitors and rebels, killed and executed for this reason. Accordingly, they busy themselves with edifying the people by their saintly lives, teaching the ignorant, inspiring the weak, supporting the strong, extending a hand to the fallen, confounding the heretics, and consoling and encouraging all Catholics by demonstrating to them that God permits this extreme and barbarous persecution to prove them, to refine them in virtue, and to give them a crown as glorious as their battles and struggles have been fierce and long; that it will soon come to an end; and that in the meantime the same Lord that allows it will give them the strength to endure and overcome it. Since they are the first to expose themselves to troubles and dangers, to torture, to the gallows, and to the knife, their words have considerable force and weight with their hearers. They preach in public when they can, and in secret oratories when they cannot, admonishing and encouraging their listeners with spiritual discourses not to despair, nor, amid

¹ In the margin: “Martyrologium Romanum, June 21.”
Baronio, Martyrologium Romanum, 270.
the length and terror of so horrific a storm, to lose the anchor of trust in the Lord. They say Mass for them, hear their confessions, administer communion to them, and bless them; if they have any doubts, these are made clear, and if there are any disputes or conflicts among them, these are straightway resolved, for the Catholics have such love and respect for them that they leave everything in their hands. Besides this, when the Lord enlightens and touches the heretics’ hearts, so that they come to themselves and return to the path of truth (as frequently happens), the priests teach and instruct them in what they are to believe and to hold, according to our sacred Catholic, apostolic, and Roman faith, and reconcile them, so that with the favor of the Holy Spirit the servants and slaves of Satan become children of God, incorporated as limbs of the mystical body of Jesus Christ our Savior, which is the holy Church, his bride.

These are the English seminaries that have been established in France, Italy, and Spain. This is the end and aim to which the pope, the Catholic King, and all the other good people who have supported and support them turn their eyes. These are the qualities of the young men received therein, this is the oath they take, these are the occupations in which they spend their time, in the colleges and subsequently in England. This is the spirit with which they go, this the caution and prudence with which they live, this the fruit they have produced, this the war that a few, seemingly weak priests wage against sin, heresy, and hell, to the extreme perturbation and terror of the queen and her ministers, who are trembling and terrified, exhausting themselves in seeking some means of resisting them, and, not finding any in passing bloodstained, barbaric laws against them, vainly hoping to scare them with punishment and force. But let us consider what the queen says in her edict against these assured and proven truths about the seminaries.

First, she claims that to undermine England the Catholic King (against whom the edict is principally directed), exploiting the power of his ally the pope, has negotiated with several seditious rabble-rousers and churlish subjects of hers, low, base men, who have gathered a band of degenerate youths who, partly because they have nothing to eat, and partly because of the crimes they committed, have fled their homeland and become fugitives, rebels, and traitors. That such men, after the seminaries have schooled them in how to subvert the kingdom of England, return with ample powers from the Roman pontiff, to persuade the queen’s subjects to abandon their obedience, offering them hopes of fabulous wealth if the Spanish invade England. And they extract

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2 Deut. 14:1; John 1:12; Rom. 8:14, 8:16, 8:19; Gal. 3:26.
3 Rom. 12:5; 1 Cor. 6:15, 12:12, 12:17; Eph. 5:30; Col. 1:18.
4 2 Cor. 11:2; Eph. 5:25–27; Rev. 19:7–9.