*Acerba Animi*, encyclical letter of Pope Pius XI addressed to the Bishops of Mexico, “on Persecution of the Church in Mexico,” September 29, 1932. It begins:

The concern and sorrow which We feel at the present sad plight of human society at large in no way lessen Our special solicitude for Our beloved sons of the Mexican nation and for you, Venerable Brethren, who are the more deserving of Our paternal regard because you have been so long harassed by grievous persecutions.

2. From the beginning of Our Pontificate, following the example of Our Venerable Predecessor, We endeavoured with all Our might to ward off the application of those constitutional statutes which the Holy See had several times been obliged to condemn as seriously derogatory to the most elementary and inalienable rights of the Church and of the faithful. With this intent We provided that Our Representative should take up his residence in your Republic.

3. But whereas other Governments in recent times have been eager to renew agreements with the Holy See, that of Mexico frustrated every attempt to arrive at an understanding. On the contrary, it most unexpectedly broke the promises made to Us shortly before in writing, banishing repeatedly Our Representatives and showing thereby its animosity against the Church. Thus a most rigorous application was given to Article 130 of the Constitution, against which, on account of its extreme hostility to the Church, as may be seen from Our Encyclical *Iniquis afflictisque* of November 18, 1926, the Holy See had to protest in the most solemn manner. Heavy penalties were then enacted against the transgressors of this deplorable article; and, as a fresh affront to the Hierarchy of the Church, it was provided that every State of the Confederation should determine the number of priests empowered to exercise the sacred ministry, in public or in private.

4. In view of these unjust and intolerant injunctions, which would have subjected the Church in Mexico to the despotism of the State and of the Government hostile to the Catholic religion, you determined, Venerable Brethren, to suspend public worship, and at the same time called on the faithful to make efficacious protest against the unjust procedure of the Government. For your apostolic firmness, you were nearly all exiled from the Republic, and from the land of your banishment you had to witness the struggles and martyrdom of your priests and of your flock; whilst those very few amongst you who almost by miracle were able to remain in hiding in their own dioceses succeeded in effectively encouraging the faithful with the splendid example of their own undaunted spirit. Of these events We took occasion to speak in solemn allocutions, in public discourses, and more at length in the above-mentioned Encyclical *Iniquis afflictisque*, and We were comforted by the world's admiration for the courage displayed by the clergy in administering the Sacraments to the faithful, amid a thousand dangers and at the risk of their lives, and for the like heroism of many of the faithful, who at the cost of unheard-of sufferings and enormous sacrifices, gave valiant assistance to their priests.

5. Meanwhile We did not forbear to encourage with word and counsel the lawful Christian resistance of the priests and the faithful, exhorting them to placate by penance and prayer God's Justice, that in His merciful Providence He might shorten the time of trial. At the same time We invited Our sons throughout the world to unite their prayers to Ours in behalf of their brethren in Mexico; and wonderful were the ardour and whole-heartedness with which they responded to Our appeal. Nor did We neglect to have recourse besides to the human means at Our disposal, in order to give assistance to Our beloved sons. Whilst addressing Our appeal to the Catholic world to give help, and generous alms, to their persecuted Mexican brethren, We urged the Governments with whom We have diplomatic relations to take to heart the abnormal and grievous condition of so many of the faithful.

Source: [www.vatican.va](http://www.vatican.va) Link to:

http://www.vatican.va/holy\_father/pius\_xi/encyclicals/documents/hf\_p-xi\_enc\_29091932\_acerba-animi\_en.html