

Bull of Alexander III to the Christian people on the function of the Order of Santiago

Translated from the edition in the appendix of documents in Jose Luis Martin, Origines de la Orden Militar de Santiago (1170-1195) (=Anuario de estudios medievales, 6). (Barcelona, 1974). pp.255–56.

Bishop Alexander, servant of the servants of God, to our venerable brothers, the archbishops and bishops, and to our beloved sons, the abbots, and to all the clergy and people whom this letter shall reach, greetings and the blessings of the apostles.

In Hispania there have arisen against the nefarious race of the pagans men fearful of the Lord and zealous for the Lord's law, namely the brothers of St. James who, in defense of the Christian faith, expose themselves to extreme danger, and, clothed in the hauberk (*lorica*) of the faith and belted with manifold virtue, they protect the boundaries of Christendom (*Christianitas*) from the incursions of the pagans. Certainly we approach their purpose with due thanksgiving to the Lord and ascribe to Him, from Whom all good things come, the fact that in our time there has arisen in that region a way of life (religio) which is pleasing (as we undoubtedly believe) and acceptable to God, and very necessary to Christianity. For those who adopt this way of life work especially and with the zeal of their whole attention for this purpose, namely that they may, with His help, confound the enemies of the cross of Christ and may protect and defend the boundaries of Christendom in Hispania from their attacks. Consequently, since it befits all who are reckoned with the name "Christian" to love with fervent love and for God's sake such brave athletes of Christ and to revere the sign which they wear on their breasts and by which they show themselves to be always armed for the protection of our faith, we ask, admonish, beseech in the Lord, and enjoin upon all of you (*vestra universitas*) for the remission of sins that if, at some point, one of the aforementioned brothers happens to see you, you take care to receive them with kindness out of your love of Christ and your reverence for St. James whose knights they claim to be, and that you take care to show them feelings of love and humanity for Christ's sake. And most strongly do we forbid any of you to dare to offend them in either their persons or property. For since, after considering the order of religion which they have adopted, we have accepted them and their house under the protection of St. Peter and ourselves because of the duty of our office, if they unduly suffer any trouble or oppression from anyone, the contempt of the Roman Church shall fall upon [that person] for any offense to the divine.

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