

*Dilecto Filio
Luciano Rubio*

Moderatori Generali Ordinis Fratrum S. Augustini

Paulus P. VI

*Dilecte Fili,
salutem et Apostolicam benedictionem.*

*Gregorii Mendel hoc anno singularis recolenda
recurrat memoria, quae, provido a te, dilecte Fili, capto consi-
lio, apud Sodales tuos, et sponte passim apud viros doctrinis exc-
cultos dignis honorabitur obsequiis.*

*Ab his celebritatibus Nos alienos esse non patimur, quin
etiam pro iusto et pergrato Nostro officio inclitata ingenia et virtu-
tes praeconio laudis extollendi, gaudemus et cupimus Gregorii
Mendel nomen collustrare.*

Die VIII proximi mensis Martii implebitur saeculum, ex

quo religiosus ille sodalis e coenobio vestro urbis Brunnae in Bohemia Societati rebus naturae investigandis, quae ibidem constituta erat, alteram et postremam relationem exhibuit - priorem mentem ante protulerat - a se Versuche über Pflanzenhybriden nuncupatam.

Spectabat haec felices certosque exitus experimentorum, quae per decennium in coenobii sui horto is peregerat, seligendo et copulando varietates multigenas herbae, quae pisum sativum appellatur, via et ratione nova, diligentia constanti, interpretatione sagaci et tutissima, quippe quae algebraicis formulis esset expressa.

Numerus, sapientium iudicio, legem detegit et indicat; cumque is adest, commentitiae hypotheses, ei obstantes, licet studiosae elaboratae et communem favorem assecutae, prorsus faecessunt.

Gregorium Mendel, ut in indagationibus suis numerum insectaretur et hanc sibi proponeret metam, certe celsitudo mentis adegit, et mathesis, qua erat peritissimus, validum ei praebuit praesidium. Attamen putandum est a vero non deerare opinantes ipsum hoc corpusse sciendi iter, sententiis

motum beati Patris Augustini, qui amabat in detegendis et diligendis numeris rerum, tum grandium, tum tenuium, rimari et mirari numerosam condentem Divinam Sapientiam.

« Quoniam... in divinis libris de sapientia dicitur, quod attingit a fine usque ad finem fortiter et disponit omnia suaviter (Sap. 8,1), ea potentia qua fortiter a fine usque ad finem attingit, numerus fortas et dicitur: ea vero, qua disponit omnia suaviter sapientia proprie iam vocatur, cum sit utrumque unius eiusdemque sapientiae » (De lib. arbitrio, II, 30).

Gregorii Mendel autem inventa tunc prope universo silentio praetergressa sunt. Multo vero postea quasi resecta sunt, et ex sibi indita vi manifesto prodiderunt plurimum sibi inesse rationis et efficientiae ad inquirendas vias, quae hereditatis tramite per generationum lineas traducuntur et certum quo eae transeunt modum. Enimvero huius saeculi initio tres in Europa ex variis nationibus naturae speculatores, scientia peritissimi (Hugo de Vries, Ericus von Tschermak-Seysenegg, Carolus Correns) sua reperta cum Gregorii Mendel inventis conferentes, incunctanter declararunt, ei, quia tempore antecesserat, primas partes tribuendas esse. Gothae disciplina, quae

hereditarii generis elementa legesque exquirat, genetica vocata, auctioribus usque incrementis adolevit, et sive ad herbas, sive ad animalia, sive ad corpus hominis suos campos finesque protendit.

Præterea physicae leges, a Gregorio Mendel enuntiatæ, directo vel indirecto ad usum normalis biologiae et pathologiae applicatae sunt. Singularis denique biologia, ea quae scilicet ad hominem sanum et ad hominem aegrum pertinet, valide inde in suis progressa est studiis et raram adeptæ est cognitionum suppellectilem novasque invenit rationes viasque, quibus hereditarii morbi et nonnullæ hereditariae ad morbos proclivitates non tantum patescant, sed etiam præveniendo amoveantur et aptæ curationis eis adhibeatur medela.

Quocirca iure merito rerum naturalium investigatores et medici unanimo consensu huic plaudunt viro, cui acies ingenii par fuit utilitatibus summi momenti ex inventis eius profectis et cumulationibus fortasse in posterum manaturis. Ipse profecto præclare consistit in consensu exultorum, exquisita doctrina hominum, qui in natura rerum secretissima patefecere arcana et abditissimas Creatoris adierunt officinas; et

ob emolumentum, quod inde devenit, iure universum genus humanum eius honoris et beneficii res particeps.

Tanto concentui laudum Nos quoque libenter consortem adiungimus vocem, hac etiam de causa, quod in Gregorio Men- del augustinianae religiosae familiae vident sodalem, qui in- telligenti iudicio, integra fide, monasticae professionis observan- tia erituit. Quod quidem ex documentis et testimoniis vitae eius sine dubitatione constat, et inde quoque percipi id potest, quod nequiquam eius coenobii sodales concordibus suffragiis eum abbatem suum delegissent, nisi eundem conspexissent reli- gione et prudentia eximium, quemadmodum accurata et per- fecta scientia insigniter erat notabilis.

Clarum quod reliquit exemplum multis valido incita- mento sit oportet, ut eam, quam signavit ipse viam, eodem studii ardore ineant, catholicum nomen, quo censentur, ita pariter no- bilitaturi. Hoc sane congruit hortationibus et optatis, quae in En- cyclicis Litteris Decessoris Nostri Joannis XXIII fel. rec. a verbis incipientibus «*Pacem in terris*» continentur: «*neque minus iidem (catholici) christiana luce illustrati caritateque ducti, contendant opus est, ut instituto sive ad res oeconomicas, sive ad*

res sociales, sive ad doctrinas civilemque cultum pertinentia
adeo homines non impediunt, sed etiam adiuvant ad se meliores
faciendos in ordine tum rerum naturalium, tum rerum quae su-
pra naturam sunt» (pars V).

Ex quo fit, ut causam inveniamus occasionemque nan-
ciscamur propitiam valde gratulandi, quod Romae a carissimo
nobis Aloisio Gedda conditum est Institutum honori et memo-
riae Gregorii Mendel dicatum, ubi geneticæ medicæ et gemel-
lologiae studia excoluntur et secundum recentis disciplinae prae-
cepta provebuntur, quod quidem Institutum prosperis nunc incre-
mentis floret et de se iubet potiora portendi.

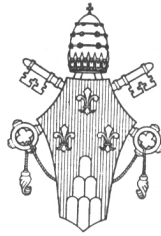
Multo magis autem oportet de Gregorio Mendel Ordinem,
cui tu digne moderaris, gloriaris, veluti de claro lumine et decore.
Nos autem valde gavisii, quod ex nobis hoc existit nitidum sidus,
flagrantia omnia facimus, ut saecularis eius memoria, dum me-
rita eius recensenda curat, excitet quam plurimos ad sequenda
tantae virtutis exempla et animis quam diutissime inhaerens dul-
ces et uberes fructus edat.

Naec dum imo ex pectore ominamur tibi, Dilecte Fili,
sodalibusque tuis et universis, qui Gregorii Mendel celebritates

*instaurant vel eis intersunt, Apostolicam Benedictionem per-
amanter impertimus. ⁂*

*Datum Romae, apud Sanctum Petrum, die XX men-
sis Februarii anno MCMLXV, Pontificatus Nostri secundo.*

Paulus P. VI-



To Our Beloved Son
Luciano Rubio
Prior General of the Order of St. Augustine

Paulus PP. VI

Beloved Son,
Greetings and Our Apostolic Benediction.

The particularly significant anniversary of Gregor Mendel in this year will be celebrated by your brethren according to your wise dispositions as well as, spontaneously, by all scientists.

We do not wish to remain indifferent to these celebrations and, since praising lofty and virtuous minds is also Our fitting and welcome task, We are glad and willing to add splendour to Gregor Mendel's name.

On the eighth day in the coming month of March a century will have passed since this great and pious brother-member of your monastery at Brünn in Bohemia, precisely where he had been studying natural phenomena, having submitted a report to the Society for Natural Science Research founded there, presented another and conclusive one a month later, entitled «Versuche über Pflanzenhybriden».

This report dealt with the felicitous and unchallengeable results of the experiments he had been carrying out for a decade in the garden of his monastery by selecting and crossing varieties of a plant called *pisum sativum* in a new and different manner, with constant diligence, and by means of the wise and very reliable interpretation he expressed in algebraic formulae.

According to scientists, calculations disclose and indicate laws. When these are available, hypotheses contrasting with them are erroneous, even when they are the fruit of careful elaboration and are widely accepted, and hence lose all credit.

To introduce calculations into his investigations and to set himself such an aim, Gregor Mendel certainly had to constrict the excellency of his own mind; mathematics, in which he was extremely well versed, assisted him greatly. One could, however, assume that they were not wrong who thought that he chose that particular method of research because he was led thereto by the words of the Blessed Father Augustine who took delight in discovering and assessing the numbers of things — both great and small — in order to penetrate and then to admire Divine Wisdom and the wonderful harmony of its creation.

“ Since... in the sacred writings wisdom is said to go firmly from one end to the other gently arranging everything (*Sap.* 8, 1), the power through which God firmly goes from one end to the other might be called calculation, while the virtue by which God gently arranges everything might be fittingly called wisdom, because both are parts of one and the same wisdom ” (*De lib. arbitrio* II, 30).

Gregor Mendel’s findings, however, were absolutely ignored. They were rediscovered very much later, and from the strength they contained there emerged efficacious ways both for the study of those characteristics which, through heredity, are transmitted from generations to generations and for the study of the means for such transmittance. It so happened that, at the beginning of this century, three expert naturalists from different European countries (Hugo de Vries, Erich von Tschermak-Seysenegg, and Carl Correns) confronted their findings with those of Gregor Mendel and declared without hesitation that theirs had to be attributed to him who had been their predecessor in time. Ever since then, the discipline concerned with the study of the elements and laws of heredity, called Genetics, has been constantly developing, thanks to numerous research experts, and has extended its range from plants to animals and to man himself.

Furthermore, the physical laws proclaimed by Gregor Mendel have been, either directly or indirectly, applied both to the study of normal biology and pathology. Physiology as well as pathology, then, made remarkable progress in research, acquiring a precious stock of notions and finding new means and ways not only to prevent hereditary diseases and hereditary dispositions from spreading, but also to eliminate them both by preventive measures and by establishing adequate therapies.

This is why naturalists and physicians are right in unanimously praising the man whose acute mind was equal to the full importance of the advantages deriving from his discoveries, the extent of which will probably be still more appreciated in the future. He is sure to find the place he deserves in the ranks of those great and learned men who revealed the main secrets of Nature and penetrated the most mysterious

works of the Creator. Mankind justly honours him for the benefits which later derived from his endeavour.

Gladly do We add Our voice to such a concert of praise, also because the Augustinian Order considers Gregor Mendel a brother-member who distinguished himself by his intelligence, by his sound Faith and for his way of observing the monastic profession. This really becomes clear, beyond the slightest shadow of doubt, through documents and testimonies concerning his life; it may also be deduced from the fact that the brethren of his monastery unanimously elected him their abbot, deeming him the best among themselves in religion and judgment, just as he had already distinguished himself by his accurate and lofty wisdom.

May the pattern he set be a valid incitement for the many who follow his example in the same ardent spirit of research, in the life he led, thus continuing to add splendour to the term "Catholic" which distinguishes them! This fully agrees with the exhortations and desires expressed by Our Predecessor John XXIII in the Encyclical Letter beginning with the words "Pacem in terris":

"Therefore, they (the Catholics) should endeavour, in the light of Faith and with the strength of their love, to keep the economic, cultural and political institutions from being such as to create obstacles, but to let them, on the contrary, facilitate and render less arduous for people the attainment of their perfection both in the natural and supernatural order". (Part V).

This is, hence, a reason and an auspicious occasion for Us to address cordial congratulations to Our dearest Luigi Gedda for having founded in Rome an Institute in memory and honour of Gregor Mendel, in which studies of Medical Genetics and Twin Research are carried out. Such studies are progressing in line with the teachings of the new discipline, and it is certainly for this reason that the Institute flourishes and advances towards ever higher aims.

Still greater pleasure is to be found in the splendour and glory of Gregor Mendel's Order of which you are the worthy Prior General. We are, indeed, delighted that from your midst there arose such a brilliant star, and We ardently wish that his centenary, while recalling his merits, may incite as many as possible to follow such a lofty example which, by remaining impressed as long as possible on their minds, may yield sweet and prolific fruit.

We express these wishes with all Our heart and impart to you, beloved Son, to your brethren and to all who are honouring Gregor Mendel or take part in his celebrations Our fond Apostolic Benediction.

Given in Rome, at St. Peter's, on the twentieth day of March in 1965, the second year of Our Pontificate.

PAULUS PP. VI