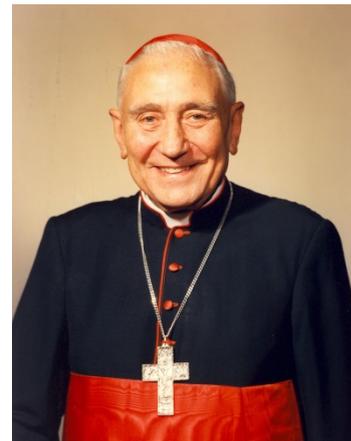


# SPIRITUAL TESTAMENT

Card. Eduardo Francisco Pironio



In the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen!

**Magnificat!**

I was baptised in the name of the Blessed Trinity; I firmly believed in it, by God's mercy; I experience its loving presence in the littleness of my soul (I felt myself inhabited by the Trinity). Now I enter "into the joy of my Master", into direct "face to face" contemplation of the Trinity. Up to now "from afar I have wandered towards the Lord", now "I will see Him as He really is". I am happy. Magnificat!

"I came from the Father and have come into the world and now I am leaving the world to go to the Father". Thanks, my Lord and my God, most merciful Father, because you call and await me. Because you embrace me in the joy of your forgiveness.

Do not cry for my departure! "If you loved me, you would be glad that I am going to the Father". I ask you only to keep on accompanying me with your affection and your supplication and to pray much for my soul.

Magnificat! I entrust myself to the heart of Mary, my good Mother, the Faithful Virgin, so that she helps me to give thanks to God and to ask forgiveness for my numberless sins.

Magnificat! I give thanks to you, Father, for the gift of life. How beautiful it is to live! You have made us, o Lord, for life. I love it, I offer it, I wait for it. You are my Life, as you have always been my Truth and my Way.

Magnificat! I give thanks to you, Father, for the priceless gift of my Baptism which made me God's child and Trinity's living temple. I regret for not having well fulfilled my baptismal vocation to sanctity.

Magnificat! I thank the Lord for being a priest. I felt extraordinarily happy to be a priest and I would like to communicate this deep joy to the young people of today, as my best testament and legacy. The Lord was good to me. That the souls that received the presence of Jesus through my priestly ministry pray for my eternal rest! I ask forgiveness, with all my heart, for the good I omitted to do as a priest. I am fully aware that there were many sins of omission in my priesthood, for not having been generously what I ought to be before God. Perhaps now, by dying, I will begin to be really useful; if "a wheat grain fallen into the earth...dies, it yields a reach harvest". My priestly life was always characterised by three loves and presences: the Father, Mary most holy and the Cross...

Magnificat! I thank God for my service in the Episcopate. How much God was good to me! I wanted to be "father, brother and friend" of the priests, of the men and women religious and of the whole People of God. I wanted to be a simple presence of "Christ, Hope of Glory". I wanted to be so always, in the different services that God asked of me as Bishop: Auxiliary of La Plata, Apostolic Administrator of Avellaneda, General Secretary of CELAM, Bishop of Mar de la Plata and then, by Paul IV's appointment, Prefect of the Congregation for Religious and Secular Institutes and at last,

by benign call of the Pope John Paul II, President of the Pontifical Council for the Laity.

I regret for not having been more useful as Bishop, for having deceived the hopes of many people and the trust of my beloved Fathers, the Popes Paul VI and John Paul II. Yet I accept my poverty with joy. I want to die with an inward poor soul.

I wish to express my thanks to the Holy Father, John Paul II, for having trusted me, last april 1984, the animation of the lay faithful. They are responsible, in an immediate way, for building the "civilization of love". I love them intensely, I embrace them and I bless them; and I thank the Pope for his trust and affection.

Magnificat! I thank God who, through the Holy Father Paul VI, called me to serve the Universal Church in the privileged field of the consecrated life. How I love men and women religious and all the consecrated lay people in the world! How I pray to Mary most holy for them! How joyfully I offer my life today, that they may be faithful! I am Cardinal of the Holy Church. I thank the beloved Holy Father Paul VI for this undeserved appointment.

I give thanks to the Lord for making me understand that the Cardinalate is a vocation to martyrdom, a call to the pastoral service and a deeper form of spiritual fatherhood. I feel so happy to be martyr, to be Pastor, to be Father.

Magnificat! I give thanks to the Lord for the privilege of the cross. I am very happy to have suffered so much. I am only sorry for not having endured it better and for not having always relished my cross in silence. Now at least I would like my cross to begin to shine and bear fruit.

That nobody feels guilty for having made me suffer, because he was a providential instrument of a Father who loved me much. Yes, I ask forgiveness, with all my heart, because I have made so many people suffer!

Magnificat! I give thanks to the Lord because He made me understand Mary's Mystery in Jesus' Mystery and because the Virgin was so much present in my personal life and in my ministry. To Her I owe all. I avow that to Her I owe the fruitfulness of my words. My important dates - of cross and joy - were always marian dates.

Magnificat! I thank the Lord because my ministry has been running almost always, in a privileged way, at the service of the priests and of the seminarists, of the men and women religious and lately of the lay faithful. I ask the priests to whom I did some good during my long ministry, the charity of a Mass for my soul. I thank them all for the gift of their priestly friendship.

I wish the seminarists - all those that God put one day on my journey - a saint and fruitful priestly ministry: may they be souls of prayer, may they relish the cross, may they love the Father and Mary! I ask the beloved men and women religious "my glory and my crown", to live with a deep joy their consecration and their mission. The same I say to the most dear laypeople consecrated in the providential call of the Secular Institutes. I beg everybody to forgive my bad examples and my sins of omission.

Magnificat! I give thanks to God for having been able to spend my poor energies and talents in dedication to the beloved lay people, whose friendship and witness enriched me spiritually. I loved Catholic Action much.

If I did not do more it is because I could not do it. God granted me to work with the lay people starting from the peasant simplicity of Mercedes (Argentina) up to the Pontifical Council for the Laity. Magnificat!

I ask forgiveness to God for my numberless sins, to the Church for not having served her more generously, to the souls for not having loved them in a more heroic and concrete way. If I offended anybody, I ask forgiveness: I want to die with a peaceful conscience. And if anybody thinks to have offended me, I want him to prove the joy of my forgiveness and my fraternal embrace.

I thank everybody for friendship and trust. I thank my beloved parents - whom now I will meet in Heaven - for the faith they transmitted to me. I thank all my brothers and sisters for their spiritual company and their affection, especially my sister Zulema.

I love with my whole heart the Pope John Paul II, I renew him my full availability, I ask his forgiveness for anything I could not do as Prefect of the Congregation for Religious and Secular Institutes and as President of the Pontifical Council for the Laity. God bears witness to my total devotion and good will. I thank him for his delicacy and his goodness in appointing me Cardinal Bishop of the Suburbicarian diocese of Sabina-Poggio Mirteto.

I renew the beloved Servants of Christ Priest, who accompanied me for so many years, all my gratitude, my fatherly affection and my deep veneration for their specific vocation, so providentially in the Church. I love them much, I pray for them and I bless them in Christ and in Mary most holy.

I thank my dear and faithful Secretary, R.F. Fernando Vergez, Christ's Legionary, for his affection and his fidelity, for his company always so close and efficient, for his collaboration, his patience and goodness.

I beg to celebrate Masses for me and to pray for my soul and for those of so many people whom nobody remembers. In particular I beg to pray for the sanctification of the priests, of the men and women religious and of all the consecrated souls.

I wish to die in peace and serene: forgiven by the mercy of the Father, by the motherly goodness of the Church, by the affection and the comprehension of my brothers. I have no enemy, thank God; I experience neither grudge nor envy for anybody. I beg everyone to forgive me and to pray for me.

I embrace everyone with my whole heart, in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. I place them all in the heart of Mary, the poor, contemplative and faithful Virgin. Hail Mary! I ask her: "After this our exile, show unto us the blessed fruit of your womb, Jesus!".

*Rome, february 11th 1996*