

Urban II: Letter of Instruction to the Crusaders, December 1095

Urban, bishop¹, servant of the servants of God, to all the faithful, both princes and subjects, waiting in Flanders; greeting, apostolic² grace, and blessing.

Your brotherhood, we believe, has long since learned from many accounts that a barbaric fury has deplorably afflicted³ an laid waste⁴ the churches of God in the regions of the Orient. More than this, blasphemous⁵ to say, it has even grasped in intolerable⁶ servitude its churches and the Holy City of Christ, glorified by His passion and resurrection.

Grieving with pious⁷ concern at this calamity⁸, we visited the regions of Gaul and devoted ourselves largely to urging the princes of the land and their subjects to free the churches of the East. We solemnly⁹ enjoined upon them at the council of Auvergne (the accomplishment of) such an undertaking, as a preparation for the remission¹⁰ of all their sins. And we have constituted our most beloved son, Adhemar, Bishop of Puy, leader of this expedition and undertaking in our stead, so that those who, perchance¹¹, may wish to undertake this journey should comply with his commands, as if they were our own, and submit¹² fully to his loosings or bindings¹³, as far as shall seem to belong to such an office. If, moreover, there are any of your people whom God has inspired to this yow¹⁴, let them know that he (Adhemar) will set out with the aid of God on the day of the Assumption of the Blessed Mary, and that they can then attach themselves to his following.

Source:

August. C. Krey, *The First Crusade: The Accounts of Eyewitnesses and Participants*, (Princeton: 1921), 42-43

¹ an official in some Christian religions who is ranked higher than a priest and who is usually in charge of church matters in a specific geographical area

² of or relating to the pope or the 12 apostles

³ to cause pain or suffering to (someone or something)

⁴ to cause very bad damage to (something)

⁵ great disrespect shown to God or to something holy

⁶ too bad, harsh, or severe to be accepted or tolerated : not tolerable

⁷ deeply religious : devoted to a particular religion

⁸ an event that causes great harm and suffering: disaster

⁹ very serious or formal in manner, behavior, or expression

¹⁰ a period of time during a serious illness when the patient's health improves

¹¹ maybe but not definitely: perhaps

¹² to agree to do or accept something that you have been resisting or opposing

¹³ forcing or requiring someone to do something because of a promise, agreement, etc.

¹⁴ a serious promise to do something or to behave in a certain way

