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## The Modern Papacy

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## The Modern Papacy

BY CARL S. MEYER

UNDER the caption "The Modern Papacy" the popes of the last century are included. A span of a hundred years (112 to be exact) is long enough to permit one to see and evaluate the main events, to delineate the chief movements and trends, and to point out the main currents of thought. We suffer in part from contemporaneity, but the contemporary within the perspective of a century may not be in too distorted a focus.

### THEIR "HOLINESSES"

Pius IX (1846—78) has been hailed as "the creator of the Modern Papacy."<sup>1</sup> He became pope during the days and years of the Risorgimento, as the movement to unify Italy was called. The revolution of 1848, the efforts of Cavour and Victor Emmanuel, of Mazzini and Garibaldi, to unify Italy, and the intransigence of the pope thrust the Roman question into the foreground. The Franco-Prussian War forced the final withdrawal of French troops from the Patrimony of St. Peter, and the pope became "the prisoner of the Vatican." The loss of the temporal power of the papacy, however, would not make Pio Nono the first of the modern popes. The reaction to this loss and the strength of ultramontanist resulted in a heightened insistence on spiritual power. The Vatican decree of 1870 compensated in subsequent history for the loss of

<sup>1</sup> E. E. Y. Hales, *Pio Nono: A Study in European Politics and Religion in the Nineteenth Century* (New York: P. J. Kenedy & Sons, 1954), p. xiii.

James A. Corbett gives this distinction to Leo XIII: "The pontificate of Leo XIII (1878—1903) inaugurated a new age in the history of the papacy." *The Papacy: A Brief History*. An Anvil Original (Princeton, N. J.: D. Van Nostrand Co., Inc., 1956), p. 77.



temporal power.<sup>2</sup> This was only one of the measures during the long pontificate of the ninth Pius that made him the founder of the papacy for the modern age.

His successor, Leo XIII (1878—1903), still "prisoner of the Vatican," took cognizance of the Industrial Revolution, the rise of modern social problems, the labor movement, and socialism. The relationship between church and state, the interrelationships within the social order, and the philosophic basis for the teachings of the Roman Catholic Church alike concerned him. Of him it has been said: "He is one of the greatest of all the popes, and his 86 encyclicals constitute a collection of statements on various modern problems that is the most important single contribution to Catholic doctrine since the Middle Ages."<sup>3</sup>

His successor, Pius X (1903—14), now canonized, condemned Modernism, encouraged frequent Communion, and furthered sacred music. The concern with strengthening the spiritual authority of the papacy is evident in his decrees and encyclicals.

The Pope of the First World War, Benedict XV (1914—22), however, showed that Rome was still intent upon being the arbiter of the nations. World peace was the theme of his outstanding pronouncements.

"The peace of Christ in the reign of Christ," was the motto which Pius XI (1922—39) chose for himself when he became pope. Totalitarianism was the dominant issue which he had to face. The record of his concordats with various states is impressive. The hold of the Roman Church on nations and rulers and peoples was strengthened by him in the face of intense ideological struggles. Perhaps Pius XI is known best as the "Pope of Catholic Action."<sup>4</sup>

His successor, the present Pope, Pius XII, had served as his secretary of state. He is regarded as a "political" rather than a "reli-

<sup>2</sup> Carl Conrad Eckhardt, *The Papacy and World Affairs*, as reflected in the secularization of politics (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1937), pp. 245—249.

<sup>3</sup> Anne Fremantle, ed. *The Papal Encyclicals in Their Historical Context*. A Mentor Book (New York: The New American Library of World Literature, 1956), p. 156.

<sup>4</sup> Joseph Schmidlin, *Papstgeschichte der neuesten Zeit* (Munich: Verlag Kösel-Pustet, 1939), IV, 67—79.



gious" pope,<sup>5</sup> although his concern for furthering Mariolatry, the liturgical movement, and Roman Catholic solidarity cannot lightly be brushed aside. It may be that in the catalog of popes, now numbering 262, according to the *Annuario Pontificio*, Pius XII will be just one more name, but in the judgment of historians one of the most influential of all popes.

Pius XII and Leo XIII will perhaps rank with Gregory VII (1073—85), Alexander III (1159—81), Innocent III (1198 to 1216), and Boniface VIII (1294—1303) among the really noteworthy popes.

#### DEFINING THEOLOGICAL ISSUES

It was Boniface VIII who in 1302 had issued the bull *Unam sanctam*. The last sentence of this bull reads: *Porro subesse Romano pontifici omni humanae creaturae declaramus, dicimus, diffinimus et pronunciamus, omnino esse de necessitate salutis.*<sup>6</sup> Pius IX in an allocution on December 9, 1854, made the same claim that the Roman Church is the only-saving church.

Tenendum quippe ex fide est, *extra apostolicam Romanam ecclesiam saluum fieri neminem posse . . . sed tamen pro certo pariter habendum est, qui verae religionis ignorantia laborent, si ea sit invincibilis, nulla ipsos obstringi huiusce rei culpa ante oculos Domini. Nunc vero quis tantum sibi arroget, ut huiusmodi ignorantiae designare limites queat iuxta populorum, regionum, ingeniorum aliarumque rerum tam multarum rationem et varietatem?* (Mirbt, No. 597, p. 447)

The last 17 words of the *Unam sanctam* (1302) are regarded as among the infallible utterances of the pope, given *ex cathedra*.<sup>7</sup> The different repetitions of this dogma by Pius IX, therefore, must

<sup>5</sup> William Hubben, "The Next Pope," *The Christian Century*, LXXIV (June 5, 1957), 704.

<sup>6</sup> Carl Mirbt, *Quellen zur Geschichte des Papsttums und des Römischen Katholizismus*; vierte verbesserte und wesentlich vermehrte Auflage (Tübingen: Verlag von J. C. B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1924), No. 372, p. 211.

<sup>7</sup> H. Burn-Murdoch, *The Development of the Papacy* (London: Faber & Faber, Ltd., 1954), p. 396. The four most generally accepted *ex cathedra* decisions are: the last 17 words of *Unam sanctam*; *Ineffabilis Deus* on the Immaculate Conception; the *Constitutio dogmatica*, including the decree on infallibility; and the *Munificentissimus Deus* on the Corporeal Assumption.



be thought of as a reiteration of a basic and fundamental doctrine of the modern Roman Catholic Church.<sup>8</sup>

The successors of Pius IX, moreover, were entirely consistent when they, for instance, repudiated the validity of Anglican orders. Leo XIII declared: "We pronounce and declare that ordinations performed according to the Anglican rite are utterly invalid and altogether void."<sup>9</sup> They have been consistent with this point of view in repudiating the entire ecumenical movement. The informal Malines Conversations between Cardinal Mercier and Lord Halifax and others did not meet with favor from Pius XI.<sup>10</sup> His encyclical *Mortalium animos*, of January 6, 1928, declared:

There is but one way in which the unity of Christians may be fostered, and that is by furthering the return to the one true Church of Christ of those who are separated from it; for from that one true Church they have in the past fallen away. . . .

Furthermore, in this one Church of Christ no man can be or remain who does not accept, recognize, and obey the authority and supremacy of Peter and his legitimate successors.<sup>11</sup>

Schism and heresy and apostasy separate, or sever, a person from the body of the church, Pius XII declared.<sup>12</sup>

*Decreta dogmatica concilii vaticani de fide Catholica et de ecclesia Christi*, A. D. 1870, set forth the teachings of the Roman Church on God, revelation, faith, faith and reason, and the church. The *Constitutio dogmatica de fide Catholica* has been lost sight of, especially by Protestants, because of the *Constitutio dogmatica prima de ecclesia Christi*. In four chapters in this second document Pius IX, "with the approval of the sacred council, for an everlasting remembrance," set forth the Roman Catholic teachings on the apostolic primacy of the apostle Peter, the perpetuity of the

<sup>8</sup> E.g., in the encyclical *Quanto conficiamur* on August 10, 1853. See Fremantle, pp. 131 f.; Mirbt, No. 601, p. 450.

<sup>9</sup> H. Bettenson, *Documents of the Christian Church*; Galaxy edition (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1943), p. 385; Mirbt, No. 635, pp. 491 f.

<sup>10</sup> G. K. A. Bell, *Christian Unity: The Anglican Position* (London: Religious Book Club, 1948), pp. 71—77; Schmidlin, IV, 193 and 194.

<sup>11</sup> G. K. A. Bell, ed. *Documents on Christian Unity: A selection from the First and Second Series* (London: Oxford University Press, 1955), No. 113, pp. 198 and 199.

<sup>12</sup> Pius XII, *Mystici corporis*, On the Mystical Body of Christ, June 29, 1943, as given by Fremantle, p. 272.



primacy of Peter in the Roman pontiffs, the power and nature of the primacy of the Roman pontiff, and the infallible teaching of the Roman pontiff.<sup>13</sup> Chapter IV reads in part:

This gift, then, of truth and never-failing faith was conferred by Heaven upon Peter and his successors in this chair, that they might perform their high office for the salvation of all; that the whole flock of Christ, kept away by them from the poisonous food of error, might be nourished with the pasture of heavenly doctrine; that the occasion of schism being removed, the whole Church might be kept one and, resting on its foundation, might stand firm against the gates of hell. . . .

Therefore faithfully adhering to the tradition received from the beginning of the Christian faith, for the glory of God, our Saviour, the exaltation of the Catholic religion, and the salvation of Christian people, the sacred Council approving, we teach and define that it is a dogma divinely revealed: that the Roman Pontiff, when he speaks *ex cathedra*, that is, when in discharge of the office of pastor and doctor of all Christians, by virtue of his supreme Apostolic authority, he defines a doctrine regarding faith or morals to be held by the universal Church, by the divine assistance promised to him in blessed Peter, is possessed of that infallibility with which the divine Redeemer willed that His Church should be endowed for defining doctrine regarding faith or morals; and that therefore such definitions of the Roman Pontiff are irreformable of themselves, and not from the consent of the Church.

But if any one—which may God avert—presume to contradict this our definition: let him be anathema.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>13</sup> W. E. Gladstone, *The Vatican Decrees in Their Bearing on Civil Allegiance*; and Philip Schaff, *A History of the Vatican Council*, together with the Latin and English Text of the Papal Syllabus and the Vatican Decrees (New York: Harper & Bros., 1876), pp. 131—168. Cited hereafter as *Vatican Decrees*.

The complete Latin text is found in Mirbt, No. 605 and 606, pp. 456—466. Corbett, Document No. 19, pp. 129—131, has excerpts in English.

Geddes MacGregor, *The Vatican Revolution* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1957), came to my attention only after the completion of this essay. It is an excellent presentation of the Vatican Council, with a discussion of the meaning of infallibility and of *ex cathedra*. The appendixes contain the text of the Vatican decrees with an English translation and notes as well as notes on the doctrines of the Immaculate Conception and the Assumption of Mary.

<sup>14</sup> *Vatican Decrees*, pp. 166—168; Corbett, p. 131.



It is evident that the claim of papal infallibility is part of the assertion that the Church of Rome is the universal and only-saving church.

This dogma of papal infallibility was declared to belong to the "ancient and constant faith of the universal Church" ("The first condition of salvation is to keep the rule of the true faith") and to "the revelation or deposit of faith delivered through the Apostles." The question of revelation and tradition assumes importance also in connection with the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception.

A leading Jesuit theologian, Professor Giovanni Perrone of Rome, had taught "that tradition may be a secret tradition residing in the ministry of the Church and in the general consciousness of the faithful, until at length it makes its appearance before the public" (Burn-Murdock, p. 379). The Society of Jesus and Pius IX alike concurred in these speculations of Perrone.

In the bull *Ineffabilis Deus*, issued on December 8, 1854, Pius IX declared that the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception was divinely revealed, *esse a Deo revelatam*, and was to be believed by all, *atque idcirco ab omnibus fidelibus firmiter constanterque credendam*. Those who dared to differ were branded as rebels from the unity of the church, *ab unitate ecclesiae defecisse*.<sup>15</sup>

The Virgin Mary, the bull declared, had no taint of original sin from the moment of her conception. The doctrine of the Corporeal Assumption, promulgated by Pius XII in the bull *Munificentissimus Deus*, on November 1, 1950, was likewise based on tradition in the "double" or "profound" sense and was virtually a self-evident outcome of the former doctrine.<sup>16</sup> Both the dogma of the Immaculate Conception and the dogma of the Corporeal Assumption belong to the *ex cathedra*, infallible utterances of the papacy (Burn-Murdock, p. 396). They contributed to Mariolatry; they indirectly also raised the prestige of the modern papacy and the claims of the "alleinseligmachende Kirche."

In defining theological issues, however, the popes were also intent upon warning against error. Pius IX set the pace here, too,

<sup>15</sup> Fremantle, p. 134; Mirbt, No. 596, pp. 446 and 447; Burn-Murdock, p. 376, cf. pp. 373—384.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., pp. 410—412; Fremantle, pp. 287 f.



with the *Syllabus of Errors* sent out with the encyclical *Quanta cura* on December 8, 1864, ten years to the day after the bull *Ineffabilis Deus*. That bull had virtually established his claim for infallibility; in the *Syllabus of Errors* he did not hesitate to pontificate on 80 "principal errors of our times." Pantheism, naturalism, absolute rationalism, moderate rationalism, indifferentism and latitudinarianism, socialism, communism, secret societies, Biblical societies, clerico-liberal societies—all were condemned. False teachings regarding the church and her rights, errors about civil society, considered both in itself and in its relation to the church, errors concerning natural and Christian ethics, errors concerning Christian marriage, errors regarding the civil power of the pope, and errors having reference to modern liberalism were pointed out.<sup>17</sup> In *Quanta cura* he lays claim "to the Catholic dogma of the plenary power divinely conferred on the sovereign pontiff by our Lord Jesus Christ, to guide, to supervise and to govern the Universal Church."<sup>18</sup>

Yet Modernism threatened the Roman Church. The papal concern for error was at the same time a concern for the papal office. Pius X declared:

One of the primary obligations assigned by Christ to the office divinely committed to Us of feeding the Lord's flock is that of guarding with the greatest vigilance the deposit of the faith delivered to the saints, rejecting the profane novelties of words and the gainsaying of knowledge falsely so called.<sup>19</sup>

In the decree *Lamentabili sane exitu* of July 3, 1907, he issued a new syllabus, condemning errors regarding the teaching office within the church, expositions of the Sacred Scriptures, revelation and dogma, Christology, the church, and the transformation of the Catholic Church.<sup>20</sup> In the encyclical *Pascendi Dominici gregis*, a few months later, on September 8, 1907, Pius X again attacked

<sup>17</sup> *Vatican Decrees*, pp. 109—129 (Latin and English text); Mirbt, No. 602, pp. 450—454 (Latin text); Fremantle, pp. 143—152 (English text); Sidney Z. Ehler and John B. Morrall, *Church and State Through the Centuries: A Collection of Historic Documents with Commentaries* (London: Burns & Oates, 1954), pp. 281—285 (English text, partial).

<sup>18</sup> Quoted from the translation given by Fremantle, p. 140.

<sup>19</sup> Pius X, *Pascendi Dominici gregis*, September 8, 1907, Fremantle, p. 197.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 202—207; Mirbt, No. 652, pp. 505—507.



the errors of the modernistic priests and teachers within the Roman Church, for, among other things, "when they treat of philosophy, history, and criticism, acting on the principle that science in no way depends upon faith, they feel no especial horror in treading in the footsteps of Luther and are wont to display a manifold contempt for Catholic doctrines, for the Holy Fathers, for the Oecumenical Councils, for the ecclesiastical Magisterium. . . ." <sup>21</sup>

#### FIXING PHILOSOPHICAL AND SCIENTIFIC TENETS

A philosophical basis for Roman Catholic theology had been stipulated by Leo XIII in the encyclical *Aeterni patris* of August 4, 1879. The object of the encyclical was "to restore the golden wisdom of St. Thomas and to spread it far and wide for the defense and beauty of the Catholic faith, for the good of society, and for the advantage of all the sciences." <sup>22</sup>

Leo XIII had set forth the teaching mission of the church ("to teach religion and contend forever against errors"); however, he said, "false conclusions concerning divine and human things, which originated in the schools of philosophy, have now crept into all the orders of the State." Advantage should be taken of human science also, he said, "in calling back the people to the paths of faith and salvation." Philosophy is "a stepping-stone to the Christian faith." Reason demonstrates the existence of God.

Again, it shows God to excel in the height of all perfections. . . .

In like manner, reason declares that the doctrine of the Gospel has even from its very beginning been made manifest by certain wonderful signs, the established proofs, as it were, of unshaken truth. . . . And of no less importance is it that reason most clearly sets forth that the Church instituted by Christ (as laid down in the Vatican Council), on account of its wonderful spread, its marvelous sanctity, and its inexhaustible fecundity in all places, as well as of its Catholic unity and unshaken stability, is in itself a great and perpetual motive of belief and an irrefragable testimony of its own divine mission. (Gilson, p. 35)

<sup>21</sup> Fremantle, p. 201; see pp. 197—201 for excerpts from the entire encyclical; Mirbt, No. 653, pp. 507—511 (Latin text).

<sup>22</sup> Etienne Gilson, ed. *The Church Speaks to the Modern World: The Social Teachings of Leo XIII*. Image Book. (Garden City, N. Y.: Doubleday & Co., 1954), p. 50.



Philosophy helps, too, he continued, "that sacred theology may receive and assume the nature, form, and genius of a true science." Philosophy is "allowed to wait upon heavenly doctrines like a handmaid and attendant." The conclusion is drawn: "Those, therefore, who to the study of philosophy unite obedience to the Christian faith, are philosophizing in the best possible way. . . . Faith frees and saves reason from error, and endows it with manifold knowledge." Thomas Aquinas is lifted up above Augustine and Anselm, Bonaventure, and other scholastics as "the chief and master of all." (Gilson, pp. 30-51, *passim*)

In a *motu proprio* of June 29, 1914, *Doctoris Angelici*, Pius X made the *Summa theologiae* of Thomas Aquinas a required textbook for the universities and theological seminaries of Italy.<sup>23</sup>

Pius X also renewed and sharpened the Catholic position on the Scriptures by requiring an oath of all *doctores in sacra scriptura* ". . . subicio et sincero animo adhaero omnibus decisionibus, declarationibus et praescriptionibus apostolicae sedis seu Romanorum pontificum de sacris scripturis. . . ." <sup>24</sup> Another *motu proprio* on September 1, 1910, implemented the encyclical against Modernism. It required an oath from varied and sundry ecclesiastics, secular and regular.<sup>25</sup> The constitution *Deus scientiarum* of May 24, 1931 (Art. 38), obligates all clerics to renew the oath before receiving an academic degree. (Schmidlin, III, 157)

Philosophy and theology were thus placed completely under the control of the papacy. A tightening of the control over the clergy, surpassing by far any Tridentine formulas, resulted. There was a struggle within the Roman Church, but Modernism disappeared and the papacy triumphed. Schmidlin summarized: "Das Ergebnis des päpstlichen Kampfes war jedenfalls ein voller Triumph desselben und das fast gänzliche Verschwinden des Modernismus." (Ibid.) Pius XII in his encyclical *Humani generis* of August 12, 1950, rejects "false evolutionary notions, with their denial of all that is absolute or fixed or abiding in human experience." He points out: "Idealism, immanentism, pragmatism, have now a rival in what is called 'existentialism.'" (Fremantle, p. 284)

<sup>23</sup> See notes to No. 616 in Mirbt, p. 474.

<sup>24</sup> Pius X, *Illibatae custodiendae*, June 29, 1910, Mirbt, No. 657, p. 515.

<sup>25</sup> Pius X, *Sacrorum antistitum*, September 1, 1910, Mirbt, No. 658, p. 515.



In this same encyclical Pius XII made a pronouncement regarding evolution. Here, too, let it be noted, the authority of the church (the papacy) was safeguarded. The pertinent section reads:

The Teaching of the Church leaves the doctrine of Evolution an open question, as long as it confines its speculations to the development, from other living matter already in existence, of the human body. (That souls are immediately created by God, is a view which the Catholic faith imposes on us.) In the present state of scientific and theological opinion, this question may be legitimately canvassed by research, and by discussion between experts on both sides. At the same time, the reasons for and against either view must be weighed and adjudged with all seriousness, fairness, and restraint; and there must be readiness on all sides to accept the arbitrament of the Church, as being entrusted by Christ with the right to interpret the Scriptures, and the duty of safeguarding the doctrines of the faith. . . .

There are other conjectures, about polygenism (as it is called), which leave the faithful no such freedom of choice. Christians cannot lend their support to a theory which involves the existence, after Adam's time, of some earthly race of men, truly so called, who were not descended ultimately from him, or else supposes that Adam was the name given to some group of our primordial ancestors. It does not appear how such views can be reconciled with the doctrine of original sin, as this is guaranteed to us by Scripture and tradition, and proposed to us by the Church. Original sin is the result of a sin committed, in actual historical fact, by an individual man named Adam, and it is a quality native to all of us, only because it has been handed down by descent from him. . . .<sup>26</sup>

#### USING THE LITURGICAL MOVEMENT

As the papacy tightened its control on the philosophical and theological and even scientific teachings within the Roman Church, so it controlled also other movements within that body. One of these was the Liturgical Movement. A detailed presentation of this movement cannot be made at this time. Leo XIII was responsible for the first of the Eucharistic congresses in 1881 at Lisle (Schmidlin, II, 390). In the encyclical *Mirae caritatis* on

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., p. 287. See also Michael Chinigo, *The Pope Speaks: The Teachings of Pius XII* (New York: Pantheon Books, Inc., 1957), pp. 133—148.



May 28, 1902, he commended "to all Christians, more earnestly than heretofore, the all-holy Eucharist" (Fremantle, p. 161). Already in 1885 he had furthered the use of the Gregorian chant (Schmidlin, II, 557). Pius XI encouraged the use of Latin in the sacred rites.<sup>27</sup> Pius XII has allowed the use of the vernacular. However, here, too, papal power was strengthened and not abated. In the encyclical *Mediator Dei*, dated November 20, 1947, "On the Sacred Liturgy," he declared:

The use of the Latin language, customary in a considerable portion of the Church, is a manifest and beautiful sign of unity, as well as an effective antidote for any corruption of doctrinal truth. In spite of this, the use of the mother tongue in connection with several of the rites may be of much advantage to the people. But the Apostolic See alone is empowered to grant this permission. It is forbidden, therefore, to take any action whatever of this nature without having requested and obtained such consent, since the sacred Liturgy, as We have said, is entirely subject to the discretion and approval of the Holy See. (Fremantle, p. 280)

#### ORDERING THE SOCIAL ORDER

Equally significant is the role which the modern papacy has found for itself in pronouncements on the social, economic, political, and international spheres. Not that the popes have at any time in the past been too hesitant about legislating in these areas. Modern developments, however, make their pronouncements in these areas the more significant. The Industrial Revolution and its resultant effects had to be dealt with. The rise of the proletariat, the mass of exploited labor, big business, capitalism and socialism, the labor union movement, Marxism, democracy and totalitarianism, social mobility and mass communication, popular education, mixed marriages—all of these sociological and economic and ideological factors had to be reckoned with.

It was Leo XIII primarily who spoke to the modern world.<sup>28</sup> The encyclical *Rerum novarum*, promulgated on May 15, 1891, has been called "the Church's complete answer to *Das Kapital* of Marx, and, indeed, to Communism and Socialism in whatever

<sup>27</sup> Pius XI, *Unigenitus Dei Filius*, March 19, 1924, *Mirbt*, No. 669, pp. 528 f.

<sup>28</sup> Gilson, *passim*; Schmidlin, II, 365—383.



forms."<sup>20</sup> In the 64 paragraphs of this letter socialism is condemned. The obligations of the state to uphold the rights of parents and the concern of the church for the temporal and earthly interests of her adherents are postulated. More important, it set forth the doctrine of a living wage and sanctioned trade unions.

Three points in this encyclical can be emphasized. Regarding wages:

Let the working man and the employer make free agreements, and in particular let them agree freely as to the wages; nevertheless, there underlies a dictate of natural justice more imperious and ancient than any bargain between man and man, namely, that wages ought not to be insufficient to support a frugal and well-behaved wage-earner. (Gilson, Art. 45, pp. 229 f.)

Regarding private property:

The right to possess private property is derived from nature, not from man; and the State has the right to control its use in the interest of the public good alone, but by no means to absorb it altogether. (Gilson, Art. 47, p. 231)

Regarding labor unions Leo XIII taught that it was permissible to unite in associations within the body politic. "To sum up, then," he says:

We may lay it down as a general and lasting law that workingmen's associations should be so organized and governed as to furnish the best and most suitable means for attaining what is aimed at, that is to say, for helping each individual member to better his condition to the utmost in body, soul, and property. It is clear that they must pay special and chief attention to the duties of religion and morality. . . . The offices and charges of the society should be apportioned for the good of the society itself. . . . The common funds must be administered with strict honesty. . . . The rights and duties of the employers, as compared with the rights and duties of the employed, ought to be subject to careful consideration. . . . At the time being, the condition of the working classes is the pressing question of the hour, and nothing can be

<sup>20</sup> Fremantle, p. 166.

The encyclical is found *ibid.*, pp. 166—195; Gilson, pp. 200—244; Corbett, No. 22, pp. 143—148; see also Philip Hughes, *The Pope's New Order: A Systematic Summary of the Social Encyclicals and Addresses, from Leo XIII to Pius XII* (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1944), pp. 206—225.



of higher interest to all classes of the State than that it should be rightly and reasonably settled. (Gilson, Art. 57—60, pp. 236 to 238)

The designation "The Worker's Charter" has sometimes been given to this encyclical. An important restatement of this letter was made on the 40th anniversary of the *Rerum novarum* by Pius XI's encyclical, *Quadragesimo anno*, "On Reconstructing the Social Order," May 15, 1931. In it he warns against individualism and collectivism. The tremendous growth of capitalism in the generation which spanned the two papal pronouncements called for condemnation of irresponsible capitalism ("an immense power and despotic economic dictatorship") and the conflicts which it engendered, without condoning the suppression of all property rights. Individual well-being and the common good were twin responsibilities within society, founded on a Christian social philosophy.<sup>30</sup>

The broadcast *La Solennità della Pentecoste* on Whitsunday, June 1, 1941, by Pius XII commemorated the golden jubilee of the *Rerum novarum*. Pius XII maintained that the church's role in social questions is paramount, that man's natural right to the use of material goods is a fundamental right ("The native right to the use of material goods offers man a secure material basis that is of the highest importance, for it is on this basis that he rises to the fulfillment of his moral duties"), that labor is both personal and necessary, and that the main function of private property is the existence and development of the family. (Hughes, pp. 249 to 259)

Family life, too, the modern papacy has taught, is the basis of national well-being. In the encyclical *Arcanum divinae sapientiae*, February 10, 1880, however, Leo XIII did not lose the opportunity to assert the primary role of the church in regulating marriage. "Christ, therefore," he said, "having renewed marriage to such and so great excellence, commended and entrusted all the discipline bearing upon these matters to His Church." In marriage the contract and the sacrament are inseparable. The function of marriage is not only the propagation of the human race but also

<sup>30</sup> Fremantle, pp. 228—235; Hughes, pp. 225—249 (see fn. 29 above).



the bringing forth of children for the Church. Marriage remains indissoluble; mixed marriages should not be entered into easily.<sup>31</sup>

Fifty years and some months later, on December 31, 1930, Pius XI issued his encyclical on Christian marriage, *Casti connubii*. He says that his encyclical is meant to supplement the pronouncement made by Leo XIII. The blessings of marriage are threefold: children; mutual faithfulness, monogamy, chastity, and loving subordination; and the Sacrament, indissolubleness and grace. Attacks have been made on the Christian ideal of marriage; abortion, unlawful sterilization, birth control ("it is not against nature if the marriage act is done 'in the proper manner' but under circumstances—'either of time or of certain defects'—that make conception impossible"); extramarital "affairs," "emancipation"; divorces, civil marriages, and mixed marriages. As appropriate remedies Pius XI proposed a saturation with the notion of duty toward God, of reverence for God, and a due regard for the Moral Law. Incidentally, he points, too, to the duty of the state to protect marriage and not to neglect the needs of married people and their families.<sup>32</sup>

A reformation of family life and loyalty to the Roman Catholic ideals of marriage was one of the three fundamental duties of Roman Catholics which Leo XIII set forth in his first encyclical, *Inscrutabili* (April 21, 1878). Loyalty to Rome and loyalty to the ideal of religious education were the other two duties. He writes: "It is your duty, venerable brothers, sedulously to strive that the seed of heavenly doctrine be sown broadcast in the field of God, and that the teachings of the Catholic faith may be implanted early in the souls of the faithful, may strike deep root in them, and be kept free from the ruinous blight of error." The first duty for the Christian education of children is laid upon the home ("... must find its beginning from an early stage within the circle of home life").<sup>33</sup>

In the encyclical *Rappresentanti in terra*, on December 31, 1929, on the Christian education of youth, Pius XI called the education of children an inalienable right and a strict obligation of parents,

<sup>31</sup> Gilson, pp. 86—109; see also Hughes, pp. 165—175.

<sup>32</sup> Fremantle, pp. 235—243; see also Hughes, pp. 174—192.

<sup>33</sup> Gilson, pp. 277—288; see also Hughes, pp. 1—8.



which the state is bound to respect. The church has supernatural rights in this same realm of Christian education. The legitimate and necessary interests of the state supplemented, but did not absorb, the rights of the family and the church. The church has the indispensable duty and the inalienable right "to watch over the entire education of her children, in all institutions, public, or private, not merely in regard to the religious instruction there given, but in regard to every other branch of learning and every regulation insofar as religion and morality are concerned." Civic education, knowledge necessary for political and civic duties, "a certain degree of physical, intellectual and moral culture" may be imparted by the state.<sup>34</sup> In an address to the Union of Italian Teachers on September 4, 1949, Pius XII stated very emphatically that the See of Peter would not yield to state usurpation in the field of education. (Powers, No. 155, pp. 98 f.)

#### PRONOUNCING ON THE POLITICAL ORDER

Education was the point at which conflict between the Roman Church and state could and did arise. These conflicts helped, at least in a measure, to shape the thought and actions of the Roman pontiffs of the past century.

The details of the German *Kulturkampf*, centering in the "Falk" or "May Laws" of 1873, regulating the training and placement of the clergy,<sup>35</sup> must be passed over. Approximately the same time, between 1879 and 1889, the struggle for the schools took place in France. The Masonic program—*l'obligation, la gratuité, la laïcité*—was opposed to the program of the Roman Church. The Falloux Laws culminated the campaign against "clericalism."<sup>36</sup> Later the Law of December 9, 1905, which provided for separation of church and state in France, said: "... religious instruction cannot be given children between the ages of six and thirteen years, enrolled

<sup>34</sup> Francis J. Powers, ed. *Papal Pronouncements on the Political Order* (Westminster, Md.: The Newman Press, 1952), No. 148, 151, 152, pp. 92—96; Fremantle, pp. 224—227; see also Hughes, pp. 193—205.

<sup>35</sup> Ehler and Morrall, pp. 291—297; see also Mirbt, pp. 471—473, and the references there cited; Schmidlin, II, 179—190, 455—474.

<sup>36</sup> C. S. Phillips, *The Church in France 1848—1907* (London: SPCK, 1936), pp. 184—210. Zaccaria Giacometti, *Quellen zur Geschichte der Trennung von Staat und Kirche* (Tübingen: Verlag von J. C. B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1926), pp. 107—113.



in public school, except outside school hours" (Art. 30).<sup>37</sup> In Italy the Concordat signed between Mussolini and Pius XI (February 11, 1929) extended the teaching of religion from the elementary public schools into the secondary schools under teachers approved by the ecclesiastical authorities. The universities and seminaries were to continue "to depend solely on the Holy See, without any interference on the part of the educational authorities of the Kingdom."<sup>38</sup> As a general principle the first sentence of Article 36 of this Concordat is particularly significant: "Italy considers the teaching of Christian doctrine in the form shaped by Catholic tradition as the basis and goal of public education." However, the educational clauses of the Concordat signed between Pius XI and Adolph Hitler (July 20, 1933) have recently been declared void by the Supreme Court of the West German Government. These clauses had safeguarded religious instruction in elementary and secondary schools and allowed for the establishment of confessional schools. (Ehler and Morrall, Art. 21—24, pp. 491 f.)

The demands of totalitarianism, however, were such that the papacy had to assert its own counterdemands. In the encyclical *Non abbiamo bisogno* Pius XI (June 29, 1931), inveighed against the fascist pretensions to a monopoly in education and the total control of the youth of the nation. "The sacred and inviolable rights of souls and of the Church," he declared, were opposed by "a real pagan worship of the State—the 'Statolatry' which is no less in contrast with the natural rights of the family than it is in contradiction with the supernatural rights of the Church." (Ibid., p. 475)

A conception of the State which makes the rising generations belong to it entirely, without any exception, from the tenderest years up to adult life, cannot be reconciled by a Catholic either with Catholic doctrine or with the natural rights of the family. It is not possible for a Catholic to accept the claim that the Church and the Pope must limit themselves to the external practices of religion (such as Mass and the Sacraments), and that all the rest of education belongs to the State. (Ibid., p. 477)

Similarly in the encyclical *Mit brennender Sorge* of Pius XI against

<sup>37</sup> Ehler and Morrall, p. 369; Giacometti, *Quellen*, pp. 205—209.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid., Art. 35—40, pp. 404 f.; Corbett, No. 24, p. 157.



the totalitarianism of Nazi Germany (March 14, 1937) anti-Christian education is decried. "The nominal maintenance of religious instruction, especially when controlled and fettered by incompetent people in the atmosphere of a school which in other branches of instruction works systematically and invidiously against this same religion, can never justify a faithful Christian in accepting freely such an antireligious educational system." (Ibid., p. 537)

The concordats with Mussolini and Hitler are a reminder of the vast political influence exercised by Pius XI. "Pius XI (1922—39) manipulated a steadily expanding diplomatic corps for a political influence no pope has exerted in generations."<sup>39</sup> Many of the dictators of recent years, as Nichols points out (p. 366), had Roman Catholic backgrounds: Mussolini, Hitler, Dollfuss, Schuschnigg, Tito, Franco, Salazar, Petain, Peron. The triumph of Dollfuss in Austria (1930), Salazar in Portugal (1926), Franco in Spain (1939), was not without Vatican influence.

The modern papacy has condemned political liberalism. The *Syllabus of Errors* dates back almost 100 years to 1864. It stated blandly that it is an error that "the Church should be separated from the State and the State from the Church" (Ehler and Morrall, Art. 55, p. 284). Leo XIII in his encyclical *Libertas praestantissimum* (June 20, 1888) spoke of "the fatal theory of the need of separation between Church and State."<sup>40</sup> Pius X, in the encyclical *Pascendi Dominici gregis* (September 9, 1907) stated the principle that "the State must, therefore, be separated from the Church, and the Catholic from the citizen." He feared the subjection of the church to the state.<sup>41</sup>

The relationships between church and state for the present age have been set down by Leo XIII. He has been followed by Roman Catholic political scientists. The distinction of functions, the primacy of the spiritual, and the principle of co-operation are the three principles about which the papacy has made pronouncements on the civic order.<sup>42</sup> Since these have been discussed elsewhere, the

<sup>39</sup> James Hastings Nichols, *History of Christianity 1650—1950: Secularization of the West* (New York: Ronald Press Co., 1956), p. 365.

<sup>40</sup> Gilson, p. 69; Powers, No. 174, p. 116, gives the translation as "that fatal principle of the separation of Church and State."

<sup>41</sup> Fremantle, p. 201; see Powers, No. 176, p. 118.

<sup>42</sup> Carl S. Meyer, "The Role of the Church in the Political Order," *CONCORDIA THEOLOGICAL MONTHLY*, XXVII (December 1956), 923—935.



dealings of the papacy in the international order will be discussed here in more detail. The two popes of the two world wars have made significant pronouncements. Benedict XV (1914—22) hoped to be known as the "peace pope." Pius XII (1939—) has been untiring in his efforts to bring about amity between nations.

#### DEALING WITH THE INTERNATIONAL ORDER

Three important documents stem from the pope of World War I. The first comes early in the war and early in the reign of Benedict XV. The encyclical *Ad beatissimi apostolorum* (November 1, 1914) pointed out the four chief causes of wars: lack of mutual love; unjust class quarrels; disregard for authority; and materialism, resulting in competition for economic prosperity (Fremantle, p. 215). His concrete proposals for peace were laid down in the *Dès le Début*, to the belligerent peoples and to their leaders, on August 1, 1917. In it he made proposals regarding international organizations and proposals relative to territorial questions.<sup>43</sup> The third document, the encyclical *Pacem Dei munus* of May 20, 1920, was a plea for peace and a promise to assist the League of Nations (Hughes, pp. 275—283).

The pope of World War II had been most eloquent in his pleas for peace and world order. "Beginning in 1939, the Christmas messages of Pius XII have been notable among papal utterances for their clear diagnosis of the causes of war and unrest and for an exposition of the principles upon which international order may be built" (Powers, p. 168). The encyclical *Communium interpretes dolorum*, issued on May 15, 1944, urged all to pray for peace. Again, the encyclical *Optatissima pax* on December 18, 1947, prescribed prayers for world peace (Fremantle, p. 309). The encyclicals *Summi maeroris* of July 26, 1950, and *Mirabile illud* of December 6, 1950, dealt with peace, the former on the conditions for establishing peace and the latter making an appeal for peace (Powers, pp. 214 and 215).

The various pronouncements of Pius XII may be given in a summary. An international society, which has as its prime objective the preservation of peace, meets with favor from the papacy.

<sup>43</sup> Ehler and Morrall, pp. 371—377; Fremantle, pp. 217—219.



Aggressive warfare is an international crime; the family of nations has the duty to take vigorous action against such aggression. International order must have a spiritual and moral foundation. World distress is caused by a repudiation of Christian virtues, "the denial and rejection of morality as well for individual and social life as for international relations." The key to peace is a return to religion, morality, and the practice of Christian virtue, the application of Christian principles in private, domestic, and public life. "A strong sense of the brotherhood of man which renders mutual contracts sacred and secure, strengthens pacts, and welds communities together" is needed in order that international organizations be not powerless. Justice and social charity must be the basis of peace, not vengeance. (Ibid., pp. 168—190)

The new world order—to continue this summary of the teachings of Pius XII on international issues—must be based on the following premises:

- (1) Victory over the hatred which divides the nations today and the disappearance of systems and actions which breed this hatred. . . .
- (2) Victory over distrust which exerts a paralyzing pressure on international law and makes all honest understanding impossible. . . .
- (3) Victory over the dismal principle that utility is the foundation and aim of law, and that might can create right. . . .
- (4) Victory over those potential conflicts arising out of the unbalanced state of world economy. . . .
- (5) Victory over the kind of egotism which, relying on its own power, aims at impairing the honor and sovereignty of nations, as well as the sound, just and ordered liberty of individuals. . . .<sup>44</sup>

A necessary condition for world order, too, is a recognition of international natural law and the establishment of an international court of some kind. The reduction of armaments, the dispelling of suspicion and mistrust, the establishing of mutual trust and fidelity to compacts, the removal of the barrier of extreme nationalism and the end of state absolutism (for totalitarianism is a grave threat to world order), a respect for the political and economic

<sup>44</sup> Fremantle, pp. 190 and 191, in the Christmas Message of 1940 by Pius XII.



rights of small nations, international economic co-operation, and freedom of communication—all of these will aid the cause of world peace (Powers, pp. 191—210). The centralization of Roman Catholic missions under the Propaganda in Rome, while adding to papal authority, increased papal concern in international affairs. (Nichols, p. 323)

The horrors of modern warfare have moved the pope in recent days to speak out against the atom and hydrogen bombs and to ask again for the limitations of armaments. (Chinigo, pp. 331—333)

### CONCLUSION

Such is a brief survey of some of the activities and pronouncements of the modern papacy. Having lost temporal sovereignty in the days of Pius IX, it has not given up its prerogative to speak to nations and peoples. "There is a saying that World War I was won militarily by the French, economically by the United States, and ecclesiastically by the Roman Catholic Church" (Nichols, p. 365). In the atom age the United States has popularly come to be looked upon as the champion of democracy and the symbol of industrial might; Russia as the champion of socialism and the symbol of armed might; the Roman Church as the champion of international morality and peace and the symbol of unity. The strength of the modern papacy has contributed much to this popular conception.

St. Louis, Mo.

### BIBLIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Primary source materials on the history of the papacy are abundant. Some have been made available in paper-back editions, well-edited and excellently translated. Besides the volumes by Fremantle (fn. 3) and Gilson (fn. 22), *The Church and the Reconstruction of the Modern World: The Social Encyclicals of Pius XI* edited by Terence P. McLaughlin, another Image Book (issued after the writing of the above article), may be noted especially. Among the other collections of sources the standard work by Mirbt (fn. 6) must be singled out; it is extremely valuable for the entire history of the papacy. Ehler and Morall (fn. 17) have documents going back to Trajan; these documents, highly selected, are usually given in their entirety, with notes. The work by Chinigo (fn. 26) has limited value, because of the lack of careful documentation. Hughes (fn. 29) has paraphrased the papal pronouncements; Powers (fn. 34) has a very usable collection of excerpts systematically arranged. Giacometti's collection (fn. 36) is valuable especially for church-state relations in France. Contemporary encyclicals can easily be obtained from almost any Roman Catholic bookstore.

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