

# *MATER ET MAGISTRA*

## ENCYCLICAL OF POPE JOHN XXIII ON CHRISTIANITY AND SOCIAL PROGRESS

MAY 15, 1961

*To His Venerable Brethren the Patriarchs, Primates, Archbishops, Bishops, and all other Local Ordinaries that are at Peace and in Communion with the Apostolic See, and to the Clergy and Faithful of the entire Catholic World.*

*Venerable Brethren and Dearest Sons, Health and Apostolic Benediction.*

Mother and Teacher of all nations—such is the Catholic Church in the mind of her Founder, Jesus Christ; to hold the world in an embrace of love, that men, in every age, should find in her their own completeness in a higher order of living, and their ultimate salvation. She is "the pillar and ground of the truth." (1) To her was entrusted by her holy Founder the twofold task of giving life to her children and of teaching them and guiding them—both as individuals and as nations—with maternal care. Great is their dignity, a dignity which she has always guarded most zealously and held in the highest esteem.

2. Christianity is the meeting-point of earth and heaven. It lays claim to the whole man, body and soul, intellect and will, inducing him to raise his mind above the changing conditions of this earthly existence and reach upwards for the eternal life of heaven, where one day he will find his unflinching happiness and peace.

### *Temporal and Eternal*

3. Hence, though the Church's first care must be for souls, how she can sanctify them and make them share in the gifts of heaven, she concerns herself too with the exigencies of man's daily life, with his livelihood and education, and his general, temporal welfare and prosperity.

4. In all this she is but giving effect to those principles which Christ Himself established in the Church He founded. When He said "I am the way, and the truth, and the life," (2) "I am the light of the world," (3) it was doubtless man's eternal salvation that was uppermost in His mind, but He showed His concern for the material welfare of His people when, seeing the hungry crowd of His followers, He was moved to exclaim: "I have compassion on the multitude." (4) And these were no empty words of our divine Redeemer. Time and again He proved them by His actions, as when He miraculously multiplied bread to alleviate the hunger of the crowds.

5. Bread it was for the body, but it was intended also to foreshadow that other bread, that heavenly food of the soul, which He was to give them on "the night before He suffered."

### *Teaching and Example*

6. Small wonder, then, that the Catholic Church, in imitation of Christ and in fulfillment of His commandment, relies not merely upon her teaching to hold aloft the torch of charity, but also upon her own widespread example. This has been her course now for nigh on two thousand years, from the early ministrations of her deacons right down to the present time. It is a charity which combines the precepts and practice of mutual love. It holds fast to the twofold aspect of Christ's command to give, and summarizes the whole of the Church's social teaching and activity.

### *The Impact of Rerum Novarum*

7. An outstanding instance of this social teaching and action carried on by the Church throughout the ages is undoubtedly that magnificent encyclical on the Christianizing of the conditions of the working classes, *Rerum Novarum*, published seventy years ago by Our Predecessor, Leo XIII.  
(5)

8. Seldom have the words of a Pontiff met with such universal acclaim. In the weight and scope of his arguments, and in the forcefulness of their expression, Pope Leo XIII can have but few rivals. Beyond any shadow of doubt, his directives and appeals have established for themselves a position of such high importance that they will never, surely, sink into oblivion. They opened out new horizons for the activity of the universal Church, and the Supreme Shepherd, by giving expression to the hardships and sufferings and aspirations of the lowly and oppressed, made himself the champion and restorer of their rights.

9. The impact of this remarkable encyclical is still with us even today, so many years after it was written. It is discernible in the writings of the Popes who succeeded Pope Leo. In their social and economic teaching they have frequent recourse to the Leonine Encyclical, either to draw inspiration from it and clarify its application, or to find in it a stimulus to Catholic action. It is discernible too in the subsequent legislation of a number of States. What further proof need we of the permanent validity of the solidly grounded principles, practical directives and fatherly appeals contained in this masterly encyclical? It also suggests new and vital criteria by which men can judge the magnitude of the social question as it presents itself today, and decide on the course of action they must take.

### I. RERUM NOVARUM AND AFTERWARDS

10. Leo XIII spoke in a time of social and economic upheaval, of heightening tensions and actual revolt. Against this dark background, the brilliance of his teaching stands out in clear relief.

#### *Social Conditions in Leo's Time*

11. As is well known, the outlook that prevailed on economic matters was for the most part a purely naturalistic one, which denied any correlation between economics and morality. Personal gain was considered the only valid motive for economic activity. In business the main operative principle was that of free and unrestricted competition. Interest on capital, prices—whether of goods or of services—profits and wages, were to be determined by the purely mechanical

application of the laws of the market place. Every precaution was to be taken to prevent the civil authority from intervening in any way in economic matters. The status of trade unions varied in different countries. They were either forbidden, tolerated, or recognized as having private legal personality only.

12. In an economic world of this character, it was the might of the strongest which not only arrogated to itself the force of law, but also dominated the ordinary business relationships between individuals, and thereby undermined the whole economic structure.

13. Enormous riches accumulated in the hands of a few, while large numbers of workingmen found themselves in conditions of ever-increasing hardship. Wages were insufficient even to the point of reaching starvation level, and working conditions were often of such a nature as to be injurious alike to health, morality and religious faith. Especially inhuman were the working conditions to which women and children were sometimes subjected. There was also the constant spectre of unemployment and the progressive disruption of family life.

14. The natural consequence of all this was a spirit of indignation and open protest on the part of the workingman, and a widespread tendency to subscribe to extremist theories far worse in their effects than the evils they purported to remedy.

#### *Preparing the Way for a New Order*

15. It was at such a time and under pressure of such circumstances as these that Leo XIII wrote his social encyclical, *Rerum Novarum*, based on the needs of human nature itself and animated by the principles and spirit of the Gospel. His message, not unnaturally, aroused opposition in some quarters, but was received by the majority of people with the greatest admiration and enthusiasm.

#### *A Complete Synthesis*

It was not, of course, the first occasion on which the Apostolic See had come out strongly in defense of the earthly interests of the poor; indeed, Leo himself had made other pronouncements which in a sense had prepared the way for his encyclical. But here for the first time was a complete synthesis of social principles, formulated with such historical insight as to be of permanent value to Christendom. It is rightly regarded as a compendium of Catholic social and economic teaching. (5a)

#### *No Solution Apart from Religion and Church*

16. In this Leo XIII showed his complete mastery of the situation. There were those who presumed to accuse the Church of taking no interest in social matters other than to preach resignation to the poor and generosity to the rich, but Leo XIII had no hesitation in proclaiming and defending the legitimate rights of the workers. As he said at the beginning of his exposition of the principles and precepts of the Church in social matters: "We approach the subject with

confidence, and in the exercise of the rights which manifestly appertain to Vs, for no practical solution of this question will be found apart from the counsel of religion and of the Church." (6)

17. You know well enough, Venerable Brethren, the basic economic and social principles for the reconstruction of human society enunciated so clearly and authoritatively by this great Pope.

#### *Work—a Specifically Human Activity*

18. They concern first of all the question of work, which must be regarded not merely as a commodity, but as a specifically human activity. In the majority of cases a man's work is his sole means of livelihood. Its remuneration, therefore, cannot be made to depend on the state of the market. It must be determined by the laws of justice and equity. Any other procedure would be a clear violation of justice, even supposing the contract of work to have been freely entered into by both parties.

#### *Private Property and Its Social Aspect*

19. Secondly, private ownership of property, including that of productive goods, is a natural right which the State cannot suppress. But it naturally entails a social obligation as well. It is a right which must be exercised not only for one's own personal benefit but also for the benefit of others.

#### *The State's Role*

20. As for the State, its whole *raison d'être* is the realization of the common good in the temporal order. It cannot, therefore, hold aloof from economic matters. On the contrary, it must do all in its power to promote the production of a sufficient supply of material goods, "the use of which is necessary for the practice of virtue." (7) It has also the duty to protect the rights of all its people, and particularly of its weaker members, the workers, women and children. It can never be right for the State to shirk its obligation of working actively for the betterment of the condition of the workingman.

21. It is furthermore the duty of the State to ensure that terms of employment are regulated in accordance with justice and equity, and to safeguard the human dignity of workers by making sure that they are not required to work in an environment which may prove harmful to their material and spiritual interests. It was for this reason that the Leonine encyclical enunciated those general principles of rightness and equity which have been assimilated into the social legislation of many a modern State, and which, as Pope Pius XI declared in the encyclical *Quadragesimo Anno*, (8) have made no small contribution to the rise and development of that new branch of jurisprudence called labor law.

#### *Right to Enter into Associations*

22. Pope Leo XIII also defended the worker's natural right to enter into association with his fellows. Such associations may consist either of workers alone or of workers and employers, and

should be structured in a way best calculated to safeguard the workers' legitimate professional interest. And it is the natural right of the workers to work without hindrance, freely, and on their own initiative within these associations for the achievement of these ends.

### *Human Solidarity and Christian Brotherhood*

23. Finally, both workers and employers should regulate their mutual relations in accordance with the principle of human solidarity and Christian brotherhood. Unrestricted competition in the liberal sense, and the Marxist creed of class warfare; are clearly contrary to Christian teaching and the nature of man.

24. These, Venerable Brethren, are the basic principles upon which a genuine social and economic order must be built.

25. The response of good Catholics to this appeal and the enterprise they showed in reducing these principles into practice is hardly surprising. But others too, men of good will from every nation in the world, were impelled, under pressure of human necessity, to pursue the same course.

26. Hence, the Leonine encyclical is rightly regarded, even today, as the *Magna Charta* (9) of social and economic reconstruction.

### *The Encyclical Quadragesimo Anno*

27. Forty years after the appearance of this magnificent summary of Christian social principles, Our Predecessor, Pius XI, published his own encyclical, *Quadragesimo Anno*. (10)

28. In it the Supreme Pontiff confirmed the right and duty of the Catholic Church to work for an equitable solution of the many pressing problems weighing upon human society and calling for a joint effort by all the people. He reiterated the principles of the Leonine encyclical and stressed those directives which were applicable to modern conditions. In addition, he took the opportunity not only to clarify certain points of this teaching which had given rise to difficulties even in the minds of Catholics, but also to reformulate Christian social thought in the light of changed conditions.

29. The difficulties referred to principally concerned the Catholic's attitude to private property, the wage system, and moderate Socialism.

### *Private Property; the Wage System*

30. With regard to private property, Our Predecessor reaffirmed its origin in natural law, and enlarged upon its social aspect and the obligations of ownership.

31. As for the wage system, while rejecting the view that it is unjust of its very nature, he condemned the inhuman and unjust way in which it is so often implemented, and specified the terms and conditions to be observed if justice and equity are not to be violated.

32. In this connection, as Our Predecessor clearly points out, it is advisable in the present circumstances that the wage-contract be somewhat modified by applying to it elements taken from the contract of partnership, so that "wage-earners and other employees participate in the ownership or the management, or in some way share in the profits." (11)

33. Of special doctrinal and practical importance is his affirmation that "if the social and individual character of work be overlooked, it can be neither justly valued nor equitably recompensed." (12) In determining wages, therefore, justice demands that account be taken not only of the needs of the individual workers and their families, but also of the financial state of the business concern for which they work and of "the economic welfare of the whole people." (13)

#### *On Socialism*

34. Pope Pius XI further emphasized the fundamental opposition between Communism and Christianity, and made it clear that no Catholic could subscribe even to moderate Socialism. The reason is that Socialism is founded on a doctrine of human society which is bounded by time and takes no account of any objective other than that of material well-being. Since, therefore, it proposes a form of social organization which aims solely at production, it places too severe a restraint on human liberty, at the same time flouting the true notion of social authority.

#### *Other Problems of the Day*

35. Pius XI was not unaware of the fact that in the forty years that had supervened since the publication of the Leonine encyclical the historical scene had altered considerably. It was clear, for example, that unregulated competition had succumbed to its own inherent tendencies to the point of practically destroying itself. It had given rise to a great accumulation of wealth, and, in the process, concentrated a despotic economic power in the hands of a few "who for the most part are not the owners, but only the trustees and directors of invested funds, which they administer at their own good pleasure." (14)

36. Hence, as the Pope remarked so discerningly, "economic domination has taken the place of the open market. Unbridled ambition for domination has succeeded the desire for gain; the whole economic regime has become hard, cruel and relentless in frightful measure." (15) As a consequence, even the public authority was becoming the tool of plutocracy, which was thus gaining a stranglehold on the entire world.

#### *The Remedy*

37. Pius XI saw the re-establishment of the economic world within the framework of the moral order and the subordination of individual and group interests to the interest of the common good

as the principal remedies for these evils. This, he taught, necessitated an orderly reconstruction of society, with the establishment of economic and vocational bodies which would be autonomous and independent of the State. Public authority should resume its duty of promoting the common good of all. Finally, there should be co-operation on a world scale for the economic welfare of all nations.

38. Thus Pius XI's teaching in this encyclical can be summed up under two heads. First he taught what the supreme criterion in economic matters ought not to be. It must not be the special interests of individuals or groups, nor unregulated competition, economic despotism, national prestige or imperialism, nor any other aim of this sort.

39. On the contrary, all forms of economic enterprise must be governed by the principles of social justice and charity.

40. The second point which We consider basic in the encyclical is his teaching that man's aim must be to achieve in social justice a national and international juridical order, with its network of public and private institutions, in which all economic activity can be conducted not merely for private gain but also in the interests of the common good.

#### *Pius XII's Radio Address*

41. For all that he did to render more precise the Christian definition of social rights and duties, no small recognition is due to Our late Predecessor, Pius XII. On Pentecost Sunday, June 1st, 1941, he broadcast his message "to call to the attention of the Catholic world a memory worthy of being written in letters of gold on the Church's Calendar: the fiftieth anniversary of the publication of the epoch-making social encyclical of Leo XIII, *Rerum Novarum*," (16) and "to render to Almighty God from the bottom of Our heart, Our humble thanks for the gift, which... He bestowed on the Church in that encyclical of His vicar on earth, and to praise Him for the lifegiving breath of the Spirit which through it, in ever-growing measure from that time on, has blown on all mankind." (17)

#### *The Church's Competence*

42. In that broadcast message the great Pontiff claimed for the Church "the indisputable competence" to "decide whether the bases of a given social system are in accord with the unchangeable order which God our Creator and Redeemer has shown us through the Natural Law and Revelation." (18) He confirmed the perennial validity and inexhaustible worth of the teaching of *Rerum Novarum*, and took occasion "to give some further directive moral principles on three fundamental values of social and economic life. These three fundamental values, which are closely connected one with the other, mutually complementary and dependent, are: the use of material goods, work, and the family." (19)

#### *The Use of Material Goods*

43. Concerning the use of material goods, Our Predecessor declared that the right of every man to use these for his own sustenance is prior to every other economic right, even that of private property. The right to the private possession of material goods is admittedly a natural one; nevertheless, in the objective order established by God, the right to property cannot stand in the way of the axiomatic principle that "the goods which were created by God for all men should flow to all alike, according to the principles of justice and charity" (20)

#### *Work*

44. On the subject of work, Pius XII repeated the teaching of the Leonine encyclical, maintaining that a man's work is at once his duty and his right. It is for individuals, therefore, to regulate their mutual relations where their work is concerned. If they cannot do so, or will not do so, then, and only then, does "it fall back on the State to intervene in the division and distribution of work, and this must be according to the form and measure that the common good properly understood demands." (21)

#### *The Family*

45. In dealing with the family the Supreme Pontiff affirmed that the private ownership of material goods has a great part to play in promoting the welfare of family life. It "secures for the father of a family the healthy liberty he needs in order to fulfill the duties assigned him by the Creator regarding the physical, spiritual and religious welfare of the family." (22) It is in this that the right of families to migrate is rooted. And so Our Predecessor, in speaking of migration, admonished both parties involved, namely the country of departure and the country receiving the newcomers, to seek always "to eliminate as far as possible all obstacles to the birth and growth of real confidence" (24) between the nations. In this way both will contribute to, and share in, the increased welfare of man and the progress of culture.

#### *Subsequent Changes*

46. But in the twenty years which have elapsed since the changing economic climate noted at that time by Pius XII the economic scene has undergone a radical transformation, both in the internal structure of the various States and in their relations with one another.

#### *Science, Technology, Economics*

47. In the field of science, technology and economics we have the discovery of nuclear energy, and its application first to the purposes of war and later, increasingly, to peaceful ends; the practically limitless possibilities of chemistry in the production of synthetic materials; the growth of automation in industry and public services; the modernization of agriculture; the easing of communications, especially by radio and television; Faster transportation and the initial conquest of interplanetary space.

#### *The Social Field*



48. In the social field we have the development of social insurance and, in the more economically advanced communities, the introduction of social security systems. Men in labor unions are showing a more responsible awareness of the major social and economic problems. There is a progressive improvement in basic education, a wider distribution of essential commodities, greater opportunities for advancement in industry and the consequent breaking down of class barriers, and a keener interest in world affairs shown by people of average education. At the same time, however, this assessment of the increased efficiency of social and economic systems in a growing number of communities serves also to bring to light certain glaring discrepancies. There is, in the first place, a progressive lack of balance between agriculture on the one hand, and industry and public services on the other. Secondly, there are areas of varying economic prosperity within the same political communities. Finally—to take a world view—one observes a marked disparity in the economic wealth possessed by different countries.

### *The Political Field*

49. To turn to the political field, We observe many changes. In a number of countries all classes of citizens are taking a part in public life, and public authorities are injecting themselves more each day into social and economic matters. We are witnessing the break-away from colonialism and the attainment of political independence by the peoples of Asia and Africa. Drawn together by their common needs nations are becoming daily more interdependent. There is, moreover, an ever-extending network of societies and organizations which set their sights beyond the aims and interests of individual countries and concentrate on the economic, social, cultural and political welfare of all nations throughout the world.

### *The Reasons for This New Encyclical*

50. As We pass all this in review, We are aware of Our responsibility to take up this torch which Our great predecessors lighted, and hand it on with undiminished flame. It is a torch to lighten the pathways of all who would seek appropriate solutions to the many social problems of our times. Our purpose, therefore, is not merely to commemorate in a fitting manner the Leonine encyclical, but also to confirm and make more specific the teaching of Our predecessors, and to determine clearly the mind of the Church on the new and important problems of the day.

## II. THE TEACHING OF RERUM NOVARUM

51. It should be stated at the outset that in the economic order first place must be given to the personal initiative of private citizens working either as individuals or in association with each other in various ways for the furtherance of common interests.

52. But—for reasons explained by Our predecessors—the civil power must also have a hand in the economy. It has to promote production in a way best calculated to achieve social progress and the well-being of all citizens.

### *Personal Initiative and State Intervention*

53. And in this work of directing, stimulating, coordinating, supplying and integrating, its guiding principle must be the "principle of subsidiary function" formulated by Pius XI in *Quadragesimo Anno*. (24) "This is a fundamental principle of social philosophy, unshaken and unchangeable. . . Just as it is wrong to withdraw from the individual and commit to a community what private enterprise and industry can accomplish, so too it is an injustice, a grave evil and a disturbance of right order, for a larger and higher association to arrogate to itself functions which can be performed efficiently by smaller and lower societies. Of its very nature the true aim of all social activity should be to help members of the social body, but never to destroy or absorb them." (25)

54. The present advance in scientific knowledge and productive technology clearly puts it within the power of the public authority to a much greater degree than ever before to reduce imbalances which may exist between different branches of the economy or between different regions within the same country or even between the different peoples of the world. It also puts into the hands of public authority a greater means for limiting fluctuations in the economy and for providing effective measures to prevent the recurrence of mass unemployment. Hence the insistent demands on those in authority—since they are responsible for the common good—to increase the degree and scope of their activities in the economic sphere, and to devise ways and means and set the necessary machinery in motion for the attainment of this end.

55. But however extensive and far-reaching the influence of the State on the economy may be, it must never be exerted to the extent of depriving the individual citizen of his freedom of action. It must rather augment his freedom while effectively guaranteeing the protection of his essential personal rights. Among these is a man's right and duty to be primarily responsible for his own upkeep and that of his family. Hence every economic system must permit and facilitate the free development of productive activity.

56. Moreover, as history itself testifies with ever-increasing clarity, there can be no such thing as a well-ordered and prosperous society unless individual citizens and the State co-operate in the economy. Both sides must work together in harmony, and their respective efforts must be proportioned to the needs of the common good in the prevailing circumstances and conditions of human life.

57. Experience has shown that where personal initiative is lacking, political tyranny ensues and, in addition, economic stagnation in the production of a wide range of consumer goods and of services of the material and spiritual order—those, namely, which are in a great measure dependent upon the exercise and stimulus of individual creative talent.

58. Where, on the other hand, the good offices of the State are lacking or deficient, incurable disorder ensues: in particular, the unscrupulous exploitation of the weak by the strong. For men of this stamp are always in evidence, and, like cockle among the wheat, thrive in every land.

### *Ramifications of the Social Process*

59 . Certainly one of the principal characteristics which seem to be typical of our age is an increase in social relationships, in those mutual ties, that is, which grow daily more numerous and which have led to the introduction of many and varied forms of associations in the lives and activities of citizens, and to their acceptance within our legal framework. Scientific and technical progress, greater productive efficiency and a higher standard of living are among the many present-day factors which would seem to have contributed to this trend.

60. This development in the social life of man is at once a symptom and a cause of the growing intervention of the State, even in matters which are of intimate concern to the individual, hence of great importance and not devoid of risk. We might cite as examples such matters as health and education, the choice of a career, and the care and rehabilitation of the physically and mentally handicapped.

It is also partly the result, partly the expression of a natural, well-nigh irresistible urge in man to combine with his fellows for the attainment of aims and objectives which are beyond the means or the capabilities of single individuals. In recent times, this tendency has given rise to the formation everywhere of both national and international movements, associations and institutions with economic, cultural, social, sporting, recreational, professional and political ends.

#### *Advantages and Disadvantages*

61. Clearly, this sort of development in social relationships brings many advantages in its train. It makes it possible for the individual to exercise many of his personal rights, especially those which we call economic and social and which pertain to the necessities of life, health care, education on a more extensive and improved basis, a more thorough professional training, housing, work, and suitable leisure and recreation. Furthermore, the progressive perfection of modern methods of thought-diffusion—the press, cinema, radio, television—makes it possible for everyone to participate in human events the world over.

62. At the same time, however, this multiplication and daily extension of forms of association brings with it a multiplicity of restrictive laws and regulations in many departments of human life. As a consequence, it narrows the sphere of a person's freedom of action. The means often used, the methods followed, the atmosphere created, all conspire to make it difficult for a person to think independently of outside influences, to act on his own initiative, exercise his responsibility and express and fulfil his own personality. What then? Must we conclude that these increased social relationships necessarily reduce men to the condition of being mere automatons? By no means.

#### *Creation of Free Men*

63. For actually this growth in the social life of man is not a product of natural forces working, as it were, by blind impulse. It is, as we saw, the creation of men who are free and autonomous by nature—though they must, of course, recognize and, in a sense, obey the laws of economic development and social progress, and cannot altogether escape from the pressure of environment.

64. The development of these social relationships, therefore, can and ought to be realized in a way best calculated to promote its inherent advantages and to preclude, or at least diminish, its attendant disadvantages.

#### *Proper Balance Necessary*

65. To this end, a sane view of the common good must be present and operative in men invested with public authority. They must take account of all those social conditions which favor the full development of human personality. Moreover, We consider it altogether vital that the numerous intermediary bodies and corporate enterprises—which are, so to say, the main vehicle of this social growth—be really autonomous, and loyally collaborate in pursuit of their own specific interests and those of the common good. For these groups must themselves necessarily present the form and substance of a true community, and this will only be the case if they treat their individual members as human persons and encourage them to take an active part in the ordering of their lives.

66. As these mutual ties binding the men of our age one to the other grow and develop, governments will the more easily achieve a right order the more they succeed in striking a balance between the autonomous and active collaboration of individuals and groups, and the timely coordination and encouragement by the State of these private undertakings.

67. So long as social relationships do in fact adhere to these principles within the framework of the moral order, their extension does not necessarily mean that individual citizens will be gravely discriminated against or excessively burdened. On the contrary, we can hope that they will help him to develop and perfect his own personal talents, and lead to that organic reconstruction of society which Our Predecessor Pius XI advocated in his encyclical *Quadragesimo Anno* as the indispensable prerequisite for the fulfillment of the rights and obligations of social life, (26)

#### *The Remuneration of Work*

68. We are filled with an overwhelming sadness when We contemplate the sorry spectacle of millions of workers in many lands and entire continents condemned through the inadequacy of their wages to live with their families in utterly sub-human conditions. This is probably due to the fact that the process of industrialization in these countries is only in its initial stages, or is still not sufficiently developed.

69. Nevertheless, in some of these lands the enormous wealth, the unbridled luxury, of the privileged few stands in violent, offensive contrast to the utter poverty of the vast majority. In some parts of the world men are being subjected to inhuman privations so that the output of the national economy can be increased at a rate of acceleration beyond what would be possible if regard were had to social justice and equity. And in other countries a notable percentage of income is absorbed in building up an ill-conceived national prestige, and vast sums are spent on armaments.

70. In economically developed countries, relatively unimportant services, and services of doubtful value, frequently carry a disproportionately high rate of remuneration, while the diligent and profitable work of whole classes of honest, hard-working men gets scant reward. Their rate of pay is quite inadequate to meet the basic needs of life. It in no way corresponds to the contribution they make to the good of the community, to the profits of the company for which they work, and to the general national economy.

#### *Factors Determining Just Wage*

71. We therefore consider it Our duty to reaffirm that the remuneration of work is not something that can be left to the laws of the marketplace; nor should it be a decision left to the will of the more powerful. It must be determined in accordance with justice and equity; which means that workers must be paid a wage which allows them to live a truly human life and to fulfill their family obligations in a worthy manner. Other factors too enter into the assessment of a just wage: namely, the effective contribution which each individual makes to the economic effort, the financial state of the company for which he works, the requirements of the general good of the particular country—having regard especially to the repercussions on the overall employment of the working force in the country as a whole—and finally the requirements of the common good of the universal family of nations of every kind, both large and small.

72. The above principles are valid always and everywhere. So much is clear. But their degree of applicability to concrete cases cannot be determined without reference to the quantity and quality of available resources; and these can—and in fact do—vary from country to country, and even, from time to time, within the same country.

#### *Balancing Economic Development and Social Progress*

73. In view of the rapid expansion of national economies, particularly since the war, there is one very important social principle to which We would draw your attention. It is this: Economic progress must be accompanied by a corresponding social progress, so that all classes of citizens can participate in the increased productivity. The utmost vigilance and effort is needed to ensure that social inequalities, so far from increasing, are reduced to a minimum.

74. As Our Predecessor Pius XII observed with evident justification: "Likewise the national economy, as it is the product of the men who work together in the community of the State, has no other end than to secure without interruption the material conditions in which the individual life of the citizens may fully develop. Where this is secured in a permanent way, a people will be, in a true sense, economically rich, because the general well-being, and consequently the personal right of all to the use of worldly goods, is thus actuated in conformity with the purpose willed by the Creator." (27) From this it follows that the economic prosperity of a nation is not so much its total assets in terms of wealth and property, as the equitable division and distribution of this wealth.

This it is which guarantees the personal development of the members of society, which is the true goal of a nation's economy.

### *Sharing Ownership*

75. We must notice in this connection the system of self-financing adopted in many countries by large, or comparatively large firms. Because these companies are financing replacement and plant expansion out of their own profits, they grow at a very rapid rate. In such cases We believe that the workers should be allocated shares in the firms for which they work, especially when they are paid no more than a minimum wage.

76. We should recall here the principle enunciated by Pius XI in *Quadragesimo Anno*: "It is entirely false to ascribe to the property alone or to the work alone whatever has been obtained through the combined effort of both, and it is wholly unjust for either, denying the efficacy of the other, to arrogate to itself whatever has been produced." (28)

77. Experience suggests many ways in which the demands of justice can be satisfied. Not to mention other ways, it is especially desirable today that workers gradually come to share in the ownership of their company, by ways and in the manner that seem most suitable. For today, even more than in the time of Our Predecessor, "every effort must be made that at least in future a just share only of the fruits of production be permitted to accumulate in the hands of the wealthy, and that an ample sufficiency be supplied to the workers." (29)

### *The Demands of the Common Good*

78. But a further point needs emphasizing: Any adjustment between wages and profits must take into account the demands of the common good of the particular country and of the whole human family.

79. What are these demands? On the national level they include: employment of the greatest possible number of workers; care lest privileged classes arise, even among the workers; maintenance of equilibrium between wages and prices; the need to make goods and services accessible to the greatest number; elimination, or at least the restriction, of inequalities in the various branches of the economy—that is, between agriculture, industry and services; creation of a proper balance between economic expansion and the development of social services, especially through the activity of public authorities; the best possible adjustment of the means of production to the progress of science and technology; seeing to it that the benefits which make possible a more humane way of life will be available not merely to the present generation but to the coming generations as well.

80. The demands of the common good on the international level include: the avoidance of all forms of unfair competition between the economies of different countries; the fostering of mutual collaboration and good will; and effective co-operation in the development of economically less advanced communities.

81. These demands of the common good, both on a national and a world level, must also be borne in mind when assessing the rate of return due as compensation to the company's management, and as interest or dividends to investors.

### *The Structure of Industry*

82. Justice is to be observed not only in the distribution of wealth, but also in regard to the conditions in which men are engaged in producing this wealth. Every man has, of his very nature, a need to express himself in his work and thereby to perfect his own being.

83. Consequently, if the whole structure and organization of an economic system is such as to compromise human dignity, to lessen a man's sense of responsibility or rob him of opportunity for exercising personal initiative, then such a system, We maintain, is altogether unjust—no matter how much wealth it produces, or how justly and equitably such wealth is distributed.

### *Pius XII's Directive*

84. It is not possible to give a concise definition of the kind of economic structure which is most consonant with man's dignity and best calculated to develop in him a sense of responsibility. Pius XII, however, comes to our rescue with the following directive: "The small and average sized undertakings in agriculture, in the arts and crafts, in commerce and industry, should be safeguarded and fostered. Moreover, they should join together in co-operative associations to gain for themselves the benefits and advantages that usually can be gained only from large organizations. In the large concerns themselves there should be the possibility of moderating the contract of work by one of partnership." (30)

### *Artisans and Co-operative Enterprises*

85. Hence the craftsman's business and that of the family farm, as well as the co-operative enterprise which aims at the completion and perfection of both these concerns—all these are to be safeguarded and encouraged in harmony with the common good and technical progress.

86. We shall return shortly to the question of the family farm. Here We consider it appropriate to say something about artisan and co-operative enterprises.

87. First of all it is necessary to emphasize that if these two kinds of undertaking are to thrive and prosper they must be prepared constantly to adjust their productive equipment and their productive methods to meet new situations created by the advance of science and technology and the changing demands and preferences of the consumer. This adaptation must be effected principally by the workers themselves and the members of the co-operatives.

88. Both these groups, therefore, need a thoroughgoing technical and general education, and should have their own professional organizations. It is equally important that the government take the proper steps regarding their training, taxation, credit, social security and insurance.

89. Furthermore, these two categories of citizens—craftsmen and members of cooperatives—are fully entitled to these watchful measures of the State, for they are upholding true human values and contributing to the advance of civilization.

90. We therefore paternally invite Our beloved sons—craftsmen and members of cooperatives throughout the world—to realize the greatness of this task which is theirs in the State. By the force of their example they are helping to keep alive in their own community a true sense of responsibility, a spirit of co-operation, and the constant desire to create new and original work of outstanding merit.

#### *The Participation of Workers in Specific Enterprises*

91. We, no less than Our predecessors, are convinced that employees are justified in wishing to participate in the activity of the industrial concern for which they work. It is not, of course, possible to lay down hard and fast rules regarding the manner of such participation, for this must depend upon prevailing conditions, which vary from firm to firm and are frequently subject to rapid and substantial alteration. But We have no doubt as to the need for giving workers an active part in the business of the company for which they work—be it a private or a public one. Every effort must be made to ensure that the enterprise is indeed a true human community, concerned about the needs, the activities and the standing of each of its members.

92. This demands that the relations between management and employees reflect understanding, appreciation and good will on both sides. It demands, too, that all parties co-operate actively and loyally in the common enterprise, not so much for what they can get out of it for themselves, but as discharging a duty and rendering a service to their fellow men.

#### *Balancing Unity of Direction With Role of Individuals*

All this implies that the workers have their say in, and make their own contribution to, the efficient running and development of the enterprise. As Pius XII remarked, "the economic and social function which every man aspires to fulfill, demands that the carrying on of the activity of each one is not completely subjected to the others." (31)

Obviously, any firm which is concerned for the human dignity of its workers must also maintain a necessary and efficient unity of direction. But it must not treat those employees who spend their days in service with the firm as though they were mere cogs in the machinery, denying them any opportunity of expressing their wishes or bringing their experience to bear on the work in hand, and keeping them entirely passive in regard to decisions that regulate their activity.

93. We would observe, finally, that the present demand for workers to have a greater say in the conduct of the firm accords not only with man's nature, but also with recent progress in the economic, social and political spheres.

94. For although many unjust and inhuman economic and social imbalances still exist in our day, and there are still many errors affecting the activity, aims, structure and operation of economies the world over, it is an undeniable fact that, thanks to the driving impulse of scientific and technical advance, productive systems are today rapidly becoming more modernized and efficient—more so than ever before. Hence a greater technical skill is required of the workers, and more exacting professional qualifications. Which means that they must be given more



assistance, and more free time in which to complete their vocational training as well as to carry out more fittingly their cultural, moral and religious education.

95. As a further consequence, the modern youth is enabled to devote a longer time to his basic schooling in the arts and sciences.

96. All this serves to create an environment in which workers are encouraged to assume greater responsibility in their own sphere of employment. In politics, too, it is of no small consequence that citizens are becoming daily more aware of their responsibility for furthering the common good in all spheres of life.

#### *The Participation of Workers in the Economy as a Whole*

97. In modern times we have seen an extensive increase in the number of workers' associations, and their general recognition in the juridical codes of single States and on the international level. Members are no longer recruited in order to agitate, but rather to co-operate, principally by the method of collective bargaining. But it is worthwhile stressing here how timely and imperative it is that workers be given the opportunity to exert their influence throughout the State, and not just within the limits of their own spheres of employment.

#### *The More Important Decisions*

98. The reason for this is that the individual productive concerns, regardless of their size, efficiency and importance in the State, form but a part—an integral part—of a nation's entire economic and social life, upon which their own prosperity must depend.

99. Hence it is not the decisions made within the individual productive units which have the greatest bearing on the economy, but those made by public authorities and by institutions which tackle the various economic problems on a national or international basis. It is therefore very appropriate, or even necessary, that these public authorities and institutions bring the workers into their discussions, and those who represent the rights, demands and aspirations of the workingmen; and not confine their deliberations to those who merely represent the interests of management.

#### *Praise and Appreciation*

100. It is Our prerogative to be a Father, and there is a special place in Our thoughts and in Our heart for those professional groups and Christian associations of workers which exist and operate in so many parts of the world. We know the nature and extent of the difficulties under which these dearest sons of Ours are laboring, as they strive continually and effectually to promote in their own countries and throughout the world the material and moral interests of the working people.

101. They are fully deserving of Our praise. The importance of their work must be gauged not merely by its immediate and obvious results, but also by its effect on the working world as a

whole, where it helps to spread sound principles of action and the wholesome influence of the Christian religion .

102. We wish further to praise those dear sons of Ours who in a true Christian spirit collaborate with other professional groups and workers' associations which respect the natural law and the freedom of conscience of their members.

103. We must also express here Our heartfelt appreciation of the work that is being done by the International Labor Organization—popularly known in various countries as the O.I.L. or I.L.O. Or O.I.T. For many years now it has been making an effective and valued contribution to the establishment in the world of an economics and social order marked by justice and humanity, an order which recognizes and safeguards the lawful rights of the workingman.

#### *Private Property*

104. It is well-known that in recent years in the larger industrial concerns distinction has been growing between the ownership of productive goods and the responsibility of company managers. This has created considerable problems for public authorities, whose duty it is to see that the aims pursued by the leaders of the principal organizations—especially those which have an important part to play in the national economy—do not conflict in any way with the interests of the common good. Experience shows that these problems arise whether the capital which makes possible these vast undertakings belongs to private citizens or to public corporations.

105. It is also true that more and more people today, through belonging to insurance groups and systems of social security, find that they can face the future with confidence—the sort of confidence which formerly resulted from their possession of a certain amount of property.

#### *An Advanced View of Work*

106. And another thing happening today is that people are aiming at proficiency in their trade or profession rather than the acquisition of private property. They think more highly of an income which derives from capital and the rights of capital.

107. And this is as it should be. Work, which is the immediate expression of a human personality, must always be rated higher than the possession of external goods which of their very nature are merely instrumental. This view of work is certainly an indication of an advance that has been made in our civilization.

#### *Confirmation of the Right of Ownership*

108. What, then, of that social and economic principle so vigorously asserted and defended by Our predecessors: man's natural right to own private property, including productive goods? Is this no longer operative today, or has it lost some of its validity in view of the economic conditions We have described above? This is the doubt that has arisen in many minds.

109. There is no reason for such a doubt to persist. The right of private ownership of goods, including productive goods, has permanent validity. It is part of the natural order, which teaches that the individual is prior to society and society must be ordered to the good of the individual.

Moreover, it would be quite useless to insist on free and personal initiative in the economic field, while at the same time withdrawing man's right to dispose freely of the means indispensable to the achievement of such initiative.

Further, history and experience testify that in those political regimes which do not recognize the rights of private ownership of goods, productive included, the exercise of freedom in almost every other direction is suppressed or stifled. This suggests, surely, that the exercise of freedom finds its guarantee and incentive in the right of ownership.

110. This explains why social and political movements for the harmonizing of justice and freedom in society, though until recently opposed to the private ownership of productive goods, are today reconsidering their position in the light of a clearer understanding of social history, and are in fact now declaring themselves in favor of this right.

#### *Guarantee for Both Individual and Society*

111. Accordingly, We make Our own the directive of Our Predecessor Pius XII: "In defending the principle of private ownership the Church is striving after an important ethico-social end. She does not intend merely to uphold the present condition of things as if it were an expression of the divine Will, or to protect on principle the rich and plutocrats against the poor and indigent. . . The Church aims rather at securing that the institution of private property be such as it should be according to the plan of the divine Wisdom and the dispositions of Nature." (32) Hence private ownership must be considered as a guarantee of the essential freedom of the individual, and at the same time an indispensable element in a true social order.

#### *Wages and Property*

112. Moreover, in recent years, as we have seen, the productive efficiency of many national economies has been increasing rapidly. Justice and fairness demand, therefore, that, within the limits of the common good, wages too shall increase. This means that workers are able to save more and thus acquire a certain amount of property of their own. In view of this it is strange that the innate character of a right which derives its force and validity from the fruitfulness of work should ever be called in question—a right which constitutes so efficacious a means of asserting one's personality and exercising responsibility in every field, and an element of solidity and security for family life and of greater peace and prosperity in the State.

#### *The Effective Distribution of Property*

113. But it is not enough to assert that the right to own private property and the means of production is inherent in human nature. We must also insist on the extension of this right in practice to all classes of citizens.

114. As Our Predecessor Pius XII so rightly affirmed: The dignity of the human person "normally demands the right to the use of the goods of the earth, to which corresponds the fundamental obligation of granting an opportunity to possess property to all if possible." (33) This demand arises from the moral dignity of work. It also guarantees "the conservation and perfection of a social order which makes possible a secure, even if modest, property to all classes of people." (34)

115. Now, if ever, is the time to insist on a more widespread distribution of property, in view of the rapid economic development of an increasing number of States. It will not be difficult for the body politic, by the adoption of various techniques of proved efficiency, to pursue an economic and social policy which facilitates the widest possible distribution of private property in terms of durable consumer goods, houses, land, tools and equipment (in the case of craftsmen and owners of family farms), and shares in medium and large business concerns. This policy is in fact being pursued with considerable success by several of the socially and economically advanced nations.

#### *Public Ownership*

116. This, of course, is not to deny the lawfulness of State and public ownership of productive goods, especially those which "carry with them a power too great to be left to private individuals without injury to the community at large." (35)

#### *Principle of Subsidiarity*

117. State and public ownership of property is very much on the increase today. This is explained by the exigencies of the common good, which demand that public authority broaden its sphere of activity. But here, too, the "principle of subsidiary function" must be observed. The State and other agencies of public law must not extend their ownership beyond what is clearly required by considerations of the common good properly understood, and even then there must be safeguards. Otherwise private ownership could be reduced beyond measure, or, even worse, completely destroyed.

#### *Precautions*

118. It is important, too, not to overlook the fact that the economic enterprises of the State and other agencies of public law must be entrusted to men of good reputation who have the necessary experience and ability and a keen sense of responsibility towards their country. Furthermore, a strict check should constantly be kept upon their activity, so as to avoid any possibility of the concentration of undue economic power in the hands of a few State officials, to the detriment of the best interests of the community.

#### *The Social Function of Property*

119. Our predecessors have insisted time and again on the social function inherent in the right of private ownership, for it cannot be denied that in the plan of the Creator all of this world's goods are primarily intended for the worthy support of the entire human race.

Hence, as Leo XIII so wisely taught in *Rerum Novarum*: "whoever has received from the divine bounty a large share of temporal blessings, whether they be external and corporeal, or gifts of the mind, has received them for the purpose of using them for the perfecting of his own nature, and, at the same time, that he may employ them, as the steward of God's Providence, for the benefit of others. 'He that hath a talent,' says St. Gregory the Great, 'let him see that he hide it not; he that hath abundance, let him quicken himself to mercy and generosity; he that hath art and skill, let him do his best to share the use and the utility thereof with his neighbor.'" (36)

#### *Always Vast Field For Personal Charity*

120. In recent years the State and other agencies of public law have extended, and are continuing to extend, the sphere of their activity and initiative. But this does not mean that the doctrine of the social function of private ownership is out of date, as some would maintain. It is inherent in the very right of private ownership.

Then, too, a further consideration arises. Tragic situations and urgent problems of an intimate and personal nature are continually arising which the State with all its machinery is unable to remedy or assist. There will always remain, therefore, a vast field for the exercise of human sympathy and the Christian charity of individuals. We would observe, finally, that the efforts of individuals, or of groups of private citizens, are definitely more effective in promoting spiritual values than is the activity of public authority.

#### *The Real Treasure*

121. We should notice at this point that the right of private ownership is clearly sanctioned by the Gospel. Yet at the same time, the divine Master frequently extends to the rich the insistent invitation to convert their material goods into spiritual ones by conferring them on the poor. "Lay not up to yourselves treasures on earth; where the rust and moth consume and where thieves break through and steal. But lay up to yourselves treasures in heaven; where neither the rust nor moth doth consume, and where thieves do not break through nor steal." (37) And the Lord will look upon the charity given to the poor as given to Himself. "Amen, I say to you, as long as you did it to one of these my least brethren, you did it to me." (38)

### III. NEW ASPECTS OF THE SOCIAL QUESTION

122. History shows with ever-increasing clarity that it is not only the relations between workers and managers that need to be re-established on the basis of justice and equity, but also those between the various branches of the economy, between areas of varying productivity within the same political community, and between countries with a different degree of social and economic development.

#### *The Depressed State of Agriculture*

123. First, with regard to agriculture, it would not appear that the rural population as a whole is decreasing, but it is an undeniable fact that many people are moving away from their farms into

more thickly populated areas as well as into the cities themselves. When we realize that this movement of population is going on in nearly every part of the world, often on a large scale, we begin to appreciate the complexity of the human problems involved and their difficulty of solution.

124. We know that as an economy develops, the number of people engaged in agriculture decreases, while the percentage employed in industry and the various services rises. Nevertheless, We believe that very often this movement of population from farming to industry has other causes besides those dependent upon economic expansion. Among these there is the desire to escape from confining surroundings which offer little prospect of a more comfortable way of life. There is the lure of novelty and adventure which has taken such a hold on the present generation, the attractive prospect of easy money, of greater freedom and the enjoyment of all the amenities of town and city life. But a contributory cause of this movement away from the country is doubtless the fact that farming has become a depressed occupation. It is inadequate both in productive efficiency and in the standard of living it provides.

#### *A Fundamental Problem*

125. Nearly every country, therefore, is faced with this fundamental problem: What can be done to reduce the disproportion in productive efficiency between agriculture on the one hand, and industry and services on the other; and to ensure that agricultural living standards approximate as closely as possible those enjoyed by city dwellers who draw their resources either from industry or from the services in which they are engaged? What can be done to persuade agricultural workers that, far from being inferior to other people, they have every opportunity of developing their personality through their work, and can look forward to the future with confidence?

#### *Contributing to the Solution*

126. It seems to Us opportune to indicate certain directives that can contribute to a solution of this problem: directives which We believe have value whatever may be the historical environment in which one acts—on condition, obviously, that they be applied in the manner and to the degree allowed, suggested, or even demanded by the circumstances.

#### *Some Remedies*

127. In the first place, considerable thought must be given, especially by public authorities, to the suitable development of essential facilities in country areas—such as roads; transportation; means of communication; drinking water; housing; health services; elementary, technical and professional education; religious and recreational facilities; and the supply of modern installations and furnishings for the farm residence. Such services as these are necessary nowadays if a becoming standard of living is to be maintained. In those country areas where they are lacking, economic and social progress is either prevented or greatly impeded, with the result that nothing can be done to retard the drift of population away from the land, and it even becomes difficult to make a good appraisal of the numbers involved.

### *Balanced Development of the Economy*

128. If a country is to develop economically, it must do so gradually, maintaining an even balance between all sectors of the economy. Agriculture, therefore, must be allowed to make use of the same reforms in the method and type of production and in the conduct of the business side of the venture as are permitted or required in the economic system as a whole. All such reforms should correspond as nearly as possible with those introduced in industry and the various services.

129. In this way, agriculture will absorb a larger amount of industrial goods and require a better system of services. But at the same time it will provide both industry and the services and the country as a whole with the type of products which, in quantity and quality, best meet the needs of the consumer and contribute to the stability of the purchasing power of money—a major consideration in the orderly development of the entire economic system.

130. One advantage which would result from the adoption of this plan would be that it would be easier to keep track of the movement of the working force set free by the progressive modernization of agriculture. Facilities could then be provided for the training of such people for their new kind of work, and they would not be left without economic aid and the mental and spiritual assistance they need to ensure their proper integration in their new social milieu.

### *The Need for a Suitable Economic Policy*

131. In addition, a sound agricultural program is needed if public authority is to maintain an evenly balanced progress in the various branches of the economy. This must take into account tax policies, credit, social insurance, prices, the fostering of ancillary industries and the adjustment of the structure of farming as a business enterprise.

### *Taxation*

132. In a system of taxation based on justice and equity it is fundamental that the burdens be proportioned to the capacity of the people contributing.

133. But the common good also requires the public authorities, in assessing the amount of tax payable, take cognizance of the peculiar difficulties of farmers. They have to wait longer than most people for their returns, and these are exposed to greater hazards. Consequently, farmers find greater difficulty in obtaining the capital necessary to increase returns.

### *Credit Banks*

134. For this reason, too, investors are more inclined to put their money in industry rather than agriculture. Farmers are unable to pay high rates of interest. Indeed, they cannot as a rule make the trading profit necessary to furnish capital for the conduct and development of their own business. It is therefore necessary, for reasons of the common good, for public authorities to

evolve a special credit policy and to form credit banks which will guarantee such capital to farmers at a moderate rate of interest.

### *Social Insurance and Social Security*

135. In agriculture the existence of two forms of insurance may be necessary: one concerned with agricultural produce, the other with the farm workers and their families. We realize that agricultural workers earn less per capita than workers in industry and the services, but that is no reason why it should be considered socially just and equitable to set up systems of social insurance in which the allowances granted to farm workers and their families are substantially lower than those payable to other classes of workers. Insurance programs that are established for the general public should not differ markedly whatever be the economic sector in which the individuals work or the source of their income.

136. Systems of social insurance and social security can make a most effective contribution to the overall distribution of national income in accordance with the principles of justice and equity. They can therefore be instrumental in reducing imbalances between the different classes of citizens.

### *Price Protection*

137. Given the special nature of agricultural produce, modern economists must devise a suitable means of price protection. Ideally, such price protection should be enforced by the interested parties themselves, though supervision by the public authority cannot be altogether dispensed with.

138. On this subject it must not be forgotten that the price of agricultural produce represents, for the most part, the reward of the farmer's labor rather than a return on invested capital.

139. Hence, in *Quadragesimo Anno* Pope Pius XI rightly observed that "a proper proportion between different wages is also a matter of importance." He continued: "And intimately connected with this is a proper proportion between the prices charged for the products of the various economic groups, agricultural, industrial, and so forth." (39)

140. While it is true that farm produce is mainly intended for the satisfaction of man's primary needs, and the price should therefore be within the means of all consumers, this cannot be used as an argument for keeping a section of the population—farm workers—in a permanent state of economic and social inferiority, depriving them of the wherewithal for a decent standard of living. This would be diametrically opposed to the common good.

### *The Promotion of Ancillary Industries*

141. Moreover, the time has come to promote in agricultural regions the establishment of those industries and services which are concerned with the preservation, processing and transportation of farm products. Enterprises relating to other sectors of the economy might also be established



there. In this case the rural population would have another means of income at their disposal, a means which they could exploit in the social milieu to which they are accustomed.

### *The Structure of the Farm Unit*

142. It is not possible to determine a priori what the structure of farm life should be, since rural conditions vary so much from place to place and from country to country throughout the world. But if we hold to a human and Christian concept of man and the family, we are bound to consider as an ideal that form of enterprise which is modeled on the basis of a community of persons working together for the advancement of their mutual interests in accordance with the principles of justice and Christian teaching. We are bound above all to consider as an ideal the kind of farm which is owned and managed by the family. Every effort must be made in the prevailing circumstances to give effective encouragement to farming enterprises of this nature.

143. But if the family farm is not to go bankrupt it must make enough money to keep the family in reasonable comfort. To ensure this, farmers must be given up-to-date instruction on the latest methods of cultivation, and the assistance of experts must be put at their disposal. They should also form a flourishing system of cooperative undertakings, and organize themselves professionally to take an effective part in public life, both on the administrative and the political level.

### *The Self-Advancement of the Farming Community*

144. We are convinced that the farming community must take an active part in its own economic advancement, social progress and cultural betterment. Those who live on the land can hardly fail to appreciate the nobility of the work they are called upon to do. They are living in close harmony with Nature—the majestic temple of Creation. Their work has to do with the life of plants and animals, a life that is inexhaustible in its expression, inflexible in its laws, rich in allusions to God the Creator and Provider. They produce food for the support of human life, and the raw materials of industry in ever richer supply.

145. There is a work which carries with it a dignity all its own. It brings into its service many branches of engineering, chemistry and biology, and is itself a cause of the continued practical development of these sciences in view of the repercussions of scientific and technical progress on the business of farming. It is a work which demands a capacity for orientation and adaptation, patient waiting, a sense of responsibility, and a spirit of perseverance and enterprise.

### *Solidarity and Co-operation*

146. It is important also to bear in mind that in agriculture, as in other sectors of production, association is a vital need today—especially in the case of family farms. Rural workers should feel a sense of solidarity with one another, and should unite to form co-operatives and professional associations. These are very necessary if farm workers are to benefit from scientific and technical methods of production and protect the prices of their products. They are necessary, too, if they are to attain an equal footing with other professional classes who, in most cases, have

joined together in associations. They are necessary, finally, if farm workers are to have their proper voice in political circles and in public administration. The lone voice is not likely to command much of a hearing in times such as ours.

### *Social Responsibility*

147. In using their various organizations, agricultural workers—as indeed all other classes of workers—must always be guided by moral principles and respect for the civil law. They must try to reconcile their rights and interests with those of other classes of workers, and even subordinate the one to the other if the common good demands it. If they show themselves alive to the common good and contribute to its realizations, they can legitimately demand that their efforts for the improvement of agricultural conditions be seconded and complemented by public authority.

148. We therefore desire here to express Our satisfaction with those sons of Ours the world over who are actively engaged in co-operatives, in professional groups and in worker movements intent on raising the economic and social standards of the agricultural community.

### *Vocation and Mission*

149. In the work on the farm the human personality finds every incentive for self-expression, self-development and spiritual growth. It is a work, therefore, which should be thought of as a vocation, a God-given mission, an answer to God's call to actuate His providential, saving plan in history. It should be thought of, finally, as a noble task, undertaken with a view to raising oneself and others to a higher degree of civilization.

### *Toward a Balanced Internal Economy*

150. Among citizens of the same political community there is often a marked degree of economic and social inequality. The main reason for this is the fact that they are living and working in different areas, some of which are more economically developed than others.

Where this situation obtains, justice and equity demand that public authority try to eliminate or reduce such imbalances. It should ensure that the less developed areas receive such essential public services as their circumstances require, in order to bring the standard of living in these areas into line with the national average. Furthermore, a suitable economic and social policy must be devised which will take into account the supply of labor, the drift of population, wages, taxes, credit, and the investing of money, especially in expanding industries. In short, it should be a policy designed to promote useful employment, enterprising initiative, and the exploitation of local resources.

### *The Common Good*

151. But the justification of all government action is the common good. Public authority, therefore, must bear in mind the interests of the state as a whole; which means that it must pro

mote all three areas of production—agriculture, industry and services—simultaneously and evenly. Everything must be done to ensure that citizens of the less developed areas are treated as responsible human beings, and are allowed to play the major role in achieving their own economic, social and cultural advancement.

#### *Contribution of Private Enterprise*

152. Private enterprise too must contribute to an economic and social balance in the different areas of the same political community. Indeed, in accordance with "the principle of subsidiary function," public authority must encourage and assist private enterprise, entrusting to it, wherever possible, the continuation of economic development.

#### *International Disproportions*

153. It is not out of place to remark here on a problem which exists in quite a number of countries, namely, a gross disproportion between land and population. In some countries arable land abounds, but there is a scarcity of population; whereas in other countries the position is reversed: the population is large, arable land scarce.

#### *Surpluses and Scarcities*

154. Again, some countries use primitive methods of agriculture, with the result that, for all their abundance of natural resources, they are not able to produce enough food to feed their population; whereas other countries, using modern methods of agriculture, produce a surplus of food which has an adverse effect on the economy.

155. It is therefore obvious that the solidarity of the human race and Christian brotherhood demand the elimination as far as possible of these discrepancies. With this object in view, people all over the world must co-operate actively with one another in all sorts of ways, so as to facilitate the movement of goods, capital and men from one country to another. We shall have more to say on this point later on.

#### *The FAO*

156. Here We would like to express Our sincere appreciation of the work which the F.A.O. (39a) has undertaken to establish effective collaboration among nations, to promote the modernization of agriculture especially in less developed countries, and to alleviate the suffering of hunger-stricken peoples.

#### *Obligation of the Wealthy Nations*

157. Probably the most difficult problem today concerns the relationship between political communities that are economically advanced and those in the process of development. Whereas the standard of living is high in the former, the latter are subject to extreme poverty. The solidarity which binds all men together as members of a common family makes it impossible for

wealthy nations to look with indifference upon the hunger, misery and poverty of other nations whose citizens are unable to enjoy even elementary human rights. The nations of the world are becoming more and more dependent on one another and it will not be possible to preserve a lasting peace so long as glaring economic and social imbalances persist.

158. Mindful of Our position as the father of all peoples, We feel constrained to repeat here what We said on another occasion: "We are all equally responsible for the undernourished peoples.(40) [Hence], it is necessary to educate one's conscience to the sense of responsibility which weighs upon each and every one, especially upon those who are more blessed with this world's goods." (41)

#### *The Mystical Body of Christ*

159. The Church has always emphasized that this obligation of helping those who are in misery and want should be felt most strongly by Catholics, in view of the fact that they are members of the Mystical Body of Christ. "In this we have known the charity of God," says St. John, "because he has laid down his life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. He that hath the substance of this world and shall see his brother in need and shall shut up his bowels from him; how doth the charity of God abide in him?" (42)

160. It is therefore a great source of joy to Us to see those nations which enjoy a high degree of economic wealth helping the nations not so well provided, so that they may more effectively raise their standard of living.

#### *International Aid*

161. Justice and humanity demand that those countries which produce consumer goods, especially farm products, in excess of their own needs should come to the assistance of those other countries where large sections of the population are suffering from want and hunger. It is nothing less than an outrage to justice and humanity to destroy or to squander goods that other people need for their very lives.

162. We are, of course, well aware that overproduction, especially in agriculture, can cause economic harm to a certain section of the population. But it does not follow that one is thereby exonerated from extending emergency aid to those who need it. On the contrary, everything must be done to minimize the ill effects of overproduction, and to spread the burden equitably over the entire population.

#### *Scientific, Technical and Financial Co-operation*

163. Of itself, however, emergency aid will not go far in relieving want and famine when these are caused—as they so often are—by the primitive state of a nation's economy. The only permanent remedy for this is to make use of every possible means of providing these citizens with the scientific, technical and professional training they need, and to put at their disposal the necessary capital for speeding up their economic development with the help of modern methods.

164. We are aware how deeply the public conscience has been affected in recent years by the urgent need of supporting the economic development and social progress of those countries which are still struggling against poverty and economic disabilities.

165. International and regional organizations, national and private societies, all are working towards this goal, increasing day to day the measure of their own technical co-operation in all productive spheres. By their combined efforts thousands of young people are being given facilities for attending the universities of the more advanced countries, and acquiring an up-to-date scientific, technical and professional training. World banking institutes, individual States and private persons are helping to furnish the capital for an ever richer network of economic enterprises in the less wealthy countries. It is a magnificent work that they are doing, and We are most happy to take this occasion of giving it the praise that it deserves. It is a work, however, which needs to be increased, and We hope that the years ahead will see the wealthier nations making even greater efforts for the scientific, technical and economic advancement of those political communities whose development is still only in its initial stages.

*Some Additional Counsels*

166. We consider it Our duty to give further advice on this matter.

*Learning from the Past*

167. In the first place, those nations which are still only at the beginning of their journey along the road to economic development would do well to consider carefully the experiences of the wealthier nations which have traversed this road before them.

*Proper Balance Essential*

168. Increase in production and productive efficiency is, of course, sound policy, and indeed a vital necessity. However, it is no less necessary—and justice itself demands—that the riches produced be distributed fairly among all members of the political community. This means that everything must be done to ensure that social progress keeps pace with economic progress. Again, every sector of the economy—agriculture, industry and the services—must progress evenly and simultaneously.

*Respecting a Nation's Individuality*

169. The developing nations, obviously, have certain unmistakable characteristics of their own, resulting from the nature of the particular region and the natural dispositions of their citizens, with their time-honored traditions and customs.

170. In helping these nations, therefore, the more advanced communities must recognize and respect this individuality. They must beware of

making the assistance they give an excuse for forcing these people into their own national mold.

### *Offering Disinterested Aid*

171. There is also a further temptation which the economically developed nations must resist: that of giving technical and financial aid with a view to gaining control over the political situation in the poorer countries, and furthering their own plans for world domination.

172. Let us be quite clear on this point. A nation that acted from these motives would in fact be introducing a new form of colonialism—cleverly disguised, no doubt, but actually reflecting that older, outdated type from which many nations have recently emerged. Such action would, moreover, have harmful impact on international relations, and constitute a menace to world peace.

173. Necessity, therefore, and justice demand that all such technical and financial aid be given without thought of domination, but rather for the purpose of helping the less developed nations to achieve their own economic and social growth.

174. If this can be achieved, then a precious contribution will have been made to the formation of a world community, in which each individual nation, conscious of its rights and duties, can work on terms of equality with the rest for the attainment of universal prosperity.

### *Respecting the True Hierarchy of Values*

175. Scientific and technical progress, economic development and the betterment of living conditions, are certainly valuable elements in a civilization. But we must realize that they are essentially instrumental in character. They are not supreme values in themselves.

176. It pains us, therefore, to observe the complete indifference to the true hierarchy of values shown by so many people in the economically developed countries. Spiritual values are ignored, forgotten or denied, while the progress of science, technology and economics is pursued for its own sake, as though material well-being were the be-all and end-all of life. This attitude is contagious, especially when it infects the work that is being done for the less developed countries, which have often preserved in their ancient traditions an acute and vital awareness of the more important human values, on which the moral order rests.

177. To attempt to undermine this national integrity is clearly immoral. It must be respected and as far as possible clarified and developed, so that it may remain what it is: a foundation of true civilization.

### *Contribution of the Church*

178. The Church is by divine right universal. History itself bears this out, for the Church is present everywhere on earth, doing all that she can to embrace all peoples.

179. Now, in bringing people to Christ, the Church has invariably—both now and in the past—brought them many social and economical advantages. For true Christians cannot help feeling

obliged to improve their own temporal institutions and environment. They do all they can to prevent these institutions from doing violence to human dignity. They encourage whatever is conducive to honesty and virtue, and strive to eliminate every obstacle to the attainment of this aim.

#### *Never an Alien*

180. Moreover, in becoming as it were the life-blood of these people, the Church is not, nor does she consider herself to be, a foreign body in their midst. Her presence brings about the rebirth, the resurrection, of each individual in Christ; and the man who is reborn and rises again in Christ never feels himself constrained from without. He feels himself free in the very depth of his being, and freely raised up to God. And thus he affirms and develops that side of his nature which is noblest and best.

#### *Unity, not Uniformity*

181. "The Church of Jesus Christ," as Our Predecessor Pius XII observed with such penetration, "is the repository of His wisdom; she is certainly too wise to discourage or belittle those peculiarities and differences which mark out one nation from another. It is quite legitimate for nations to treat those differences as a sacred inheritance and guard them at all costs. The Church aims at unity, a unity determined and kept alive by that supernatural love which should be actuating everybody; she does not aim at a uniformity which would only be external in its effects and would cramp the natural tendencies of the nations concerned. Every nation has its own genius, its own qualities, springing from the hidden roots of its being. The wise development, the encouragement within limits, of that genius, those qualities, does no harm; and if a nation cares to take precautions, to lay down rules, for that end, it has the Church's approval. She is mother enough to befriend such projects with her prayers." (43)

#### *Role of Catholic Citizens*

182. It is a source of profound satisfaction to Us to see the prominent part which is being played by Catholic citizens of the less wealthy countries in the economic and social development of their own State.

183. Then, too, the Catholics of the wealthier States are doing all they can to increase the effectiveness of the social and economic work that is being done for the poorer nations. We would give Our special approval to the increasing assistance they are giving, in all sorts of ways, to African and Asian students scattered throughout the universities of Europe and America; and to the care that is being devoted to the training of those persons who are prepared to go to the less wealthy areas in order to engage in work of technical and professional nature.

184. To these Our beloved sons in every land who, in promoting genuine progress and civilization, are a living proof of the Church's perennial vitality, We wish to extend Our kind and fatherly word of appreciation and encouragement.

### *Population Increase and Economic Development*

185. How can economic development and the supply of food keep pace with the continual rise in population? This is a question which constantly obtrudes itself today—a world problem, as well as one for the poverty-stricken nations.

186. As a world problem, the case is put thus: According to sufficiently reliable statistics the next few decades will see a very great increase in human population, whereas economic development will proceed at a slower rate. Hence, we are told, if nothing is done to check this rise in population, the world will be faced in the not too distant future with an increasing shortage in the necessities of life.

187. As it affects the less developed countries, the problem is stated thus: The resources of modern hygiene and medicine will very shortly bring about a notable decrease in the mortality rate, especially among infants, while the birth rate—which in such countries is unusually high—will tend to remain more or less constant, at least for a considerable period. The excess of births over deaths will therefore show a steep rise, whereas there will be no corresponding increase in the productive efficiency of the economy. Accordingly, the standard of living in these poorer countries cannot possibly improve. It must surely worsen, even to the point of extreme hardship. Hence there are those who hold the opinion that, in order to prevent a serious crisis from developing, the conception and birth of children should be secretly avoided, or, in any event, curbed in some way.

### *The Problem Examined*

188. Truth to tell, we do not seem to be faced with any immediate or imminent world problem arising from the disproportion between the increase of population and the supply of food. Arguments to this effect are based on such unreliable and controversial data that they can only be of very uncertain validity.

189. Besides, the resources which God in His goodness and wisdom has implanted in Nature are well-nigh inexhaustible, and He has at the same time given man the intelligence to discover ways and means of exploiting these resources for his own advantage and his own livelihood. Hence, the real solution of the problem is not to be found in expedients which offend against the divinely established moral order and which attack human life at its very source, but in a renewed scientific and technical effort on man's part to deepen and extend his dominion over Nature. The progress of science and technology that has already been achieved opens up almost limitless horizons in this held.

190. As for the problems which face the poorer nations in various parts of the world, We realize, of course, that these are very real. They are caused, more often than not, by a deficient economic and social organization, which does not offer living conditions proportionate to the increase in population. They are caused, also, by the lack of effective solidarity among such peoples.



191. But granting this, We must nevertheless state most emphatically that no statement of the problem and no solution to it is acceptable which does violence to man's essential dignity; those who propose such solutions base them on an utterly materialistic conception of man himself and his life.

*Only Possible Solution*

192. The only possible solution to this question is one which envisages the social and economic progress both of individuals and of the whole of human society, and which respects and promotes true human values. First consideration must obviously be given to those values which concern man's dignity generally, and the immense worth of each individual human life. Attention must then be turned to the need for worldwide co-operation among men, with a view to a fruitful and well-regulated interchange of useful knowledge, capital and manpower.

*Respect for the Laws of Life*

193. We must solemnly proclaim that human life is transmitted by means of the family, and the family is based upon a marriage which is one and indissoluble and, with respect to Christians, raised to the dignity of a sacrament. The transmission of human life is the result of a personal and conscious act, and, as such, is subject to the all-holy, inviolable and immutable laws of God, which no man may ignore or disobey. He is not therefore permitted to use certain ways and means which are allowable in the propagation of plant and animal life.

194. Human life is sacred—all men must recognize that fact. From its very inception it reveals the creating hand of God. Those who violate His laws not only offend the divine majesty and degrade themselves and humanity, they also sap the vitality of the political community of which they are members.

*Education Toward Sense of Responsibility*

195. It is of the utmost importance that parents exercise their right and obligation toward the younger generation by securing for their children a sound cultural and religious formation. They must also educate them to a deep sense of responsibility in life, especially in such matters as concern the foundation of a family and the procreation and education of children. They must instill in them an unshakable confidence in Divine Providence and a determination to accept the inescapable sacrifices and hardships involved in so noble and important a task as the co-operation with God in the transmitting of human life and the bringing up of children.

To the attainment of this end nothing can be more effective than those principles and that supernatural aid which the Church supplies. On this score alone the right of the Church to full liberty in the exercise of her mission must be recognized.

*Science in the Service of Life*

196. Genesis relates how God gave two commandments to our first parents: to transmit human life—"Increase and multiply" (44)—and to bring nature into their service—"Fill the earth, and subdue it." (45) These two commandments are complementary .

197. Nothing is said in the second of these commandments about destroying nature. On the contrary, it must be brought into the service of human life.

198. We are sick at heart, therefore, when We observe the contradiction which has beguiled so much modern thinking. On the one hand we are shown the fearful specter of want and misery which threatens to extinguish human life, and on the other hand we find scientific discoveries, technical inventions and economic resources being used to provide terrible instruments of ruin and death.

199. A provident God grants sufficient means to the human race to find a dignified solution to the problems attendant upon the transmission of human life. But these problems can become difficult of solution, or even insoluble, if man, led astray in mind and perverted in will, turns to such means as are opposed to right reason, and seeks ends that are contrary to his social nature and the intentions of Providence.

#### *Worldwide Co-operation*

200. The progress of science and technology in every aspect of life has led, particularly today, to increased relationships between nations, and made the nations more and more dependent on one another.

201. As a rule no single commonwealth has sufficient resources at its command to solve the more important scientific, technical, economic, social, political and cultural problems which confront it at the present time. These problems are necessarily the concern of a whole group of nations, and possibly of the whole world.

202. Individual political communities may indeed enjoy a high degree of culture and civilization. They may have a large and industrious population, an advanced economic structure, great natural resources and extensive territories. Yet, even so, in isolation from the rest of the world they are quite incapable of finding an adequate solution to their major problems. The nations, therefore, must work with each other for their mutual development and perfection. They can help themselves only in so far as they succeed in helping one another. That is why international understanding and co-operation are so necessary.

#### *The Effects of Mutual Distrust*

203. Yet although individuals and nations are becoming more and more convinced of this twofold necessity, it would seem that men in general, and particularly those with high responsibility in public life, are showing themselves quite incapable of achieving it. The root of such inability is not to be sought in scientific, technical or economic reasons, but in the absence of mutual trust. Men, and consequently States, are in mortal fear of each other. Each fears that

the other harbors plans of conquest and is only waiting for a favorable moment to put these plans into effect. Hence each organizes its own defense and builds up munitions of war as a deterrent against the would-be aggressor.

204. The result is a vast expenditure of human energy and natural resources on projects which are disruptive of human society rather than beneficial to it; while a growing uneasiness gnaws at men's hearts and makes them less responsive to the call of nobler enterprises.

#### *Failure to Acknowledge the Moral Order*

205. The root cause of so much mistrust is the presence of ideological differences between nations, and more especially between their rulers. There are some indeed who go so far as to deny the existence of a moral order which is transcendent, absolute, universal and equally binding upon all. And where the same law of justice is not adhered to by all, men cannot hope to come to open and full agreement on vital issues.

206. Yes, both sides speak of justice and the demands of justice, but these words frequently take on different or opposite meanings according to which side uses them. Hence, when rulers of nations appeal to justice and the demands of justice, they not only disagree on terms, but often increase the tension that exists between their States. And so the belief is engendered that if a nation is to assert its rights and pursue its own interests, there is only one way open to it: to have recourse to violence; ignoring the fact that violence is the source of the very greatest evils.

#### *God, the Foundation of the Moral Order*

207. Mutual trust among rulers of States cannot begin nor increase except by recognition of, and respect for, the moral order.

208. But the moral order has no existence except in God; cut off from God it must necessarily disintegrate. Moreover, man is not just a material organism. He consists also of spirit; he is endowed with reason and freedom. He demands, therefore, a moral and religious order; and it is this order—and not considerations of a purely extraneous, material order—which has the greatest validity in the solution of problems relating to his life as an individual and as a member of society, and problems concerning individual states and their inter-relations.

209. It has been claimed that in an era of scientific and technical triumphs such as ours man can well afford to rely on his own powers, and construct a very good civilization without God. But the truth is that these very advances in science and technology frequently involve the whole human race in such difficulties as can only be solved in the light of a sincere faith in God, the Creator and Ruler of man and his world.

#### *Spiritual and Moral Values*

210. The almost limitless horizons opened up by scientific research only go to confirm this truth. More and more men are beginning to realize that science has so far done little more than scratch

the surface of nature and reality. There are vast hidden depths still to be explored and adequately explained. Such men are appalled when they consider how these gigantic forces for good can be turned by science into engines of destruction. They realize then the supreme importance of spiritual and moral values, if scientific and technical progress is to be used in the service of civilization, and not involve the whole human race in irremediable disaster.

211. Furthermore, the increasing sense of dissatisfaction with worldly goods which is making itself felt among citizens of the wealthier nations, is rapidly destroying the treasured illusion of an earthly paradise. Men, too, are becoming more and more conscious of their rights as human beings, rights which are universal and inviolable; and they are aspiring to more just and more human relations with their fellows. The effect of all this is to make the modern man more deeply aware of his own limitations, and to create in him a striving for spiritual values. All of which encourages us in the hope that individuals and nations will one day learn to unite in a spirit of sincere understanding and profitable cooperation.

#### IV. THE REBUILDING OF A SOCIAL ORDER

212. After all this scientific and technical progress, and even because of it, the problem remains: how to build up a new order of society based on a more balanced human relationship between political communities on a national and international level?

##### *Incomplete and False Ideologies*

213. The attempt to find a solution to this problem has given birth to a number of theories. Some of these were little more than ephemeral; others have undergone, and are still undergoing, substantial change; others again are proving themselves less and less attractive to modern man.

Why is this? It is because these ideologies do not take account of the whole man, nor even of his most important part. In particular, they take little account of certain inevitable human weaknesses such as sickness and suffering, weaknesses which even the most advanced economic and social systems cannot completely eliminate. Finally, they fail to take account of that deep-rooted sense of religion which exists in all men everywhere, and which nothing, neither violence nor cunning, can eradicate.

214. The most fundamental modern error is that of imagining that man's natural sense of religion is nothing more than the outcome of feeling or fantasy, to be eradicated from his soul as an anachronism and an obstacle to human progress. And yet this very need for religion reveals a man for what he is: a being created by God and tending always toward God. As we read in St. Augustine: "Lord, you have made us for yourself, and our hearts can find no rest until they rest in you". (46)

##### *The Real Source of Justice, Truth and Love*

215. Let men make all the technical and economic progress they can, there will be no peace nor justice in the world until they return to a sense of their dignity as creatures and sons of God, who

is the first and final cause of all created being. Separated from God a man is but a monster, in himself and toward others; for the right ordering of human society presupposes the right ordering of man's conscience with God, who is Himself the source of all justice, truth and love.

216. Here is a spectacle for all the world to see: thousands of Our sons and brothers, whom We love so dearly, suffering years of bitter persecution in many lands, even those of an ancient Christian culture. And will not men who see clearly and compare the superior dignity of the persecuted with that refined barbarity of their oppressors, soon return to their senses, if indeed they have not already done so?

*"Unless the Lord Build the House. . ."*

217. The most perniciously typical aspect of the modern era consists in the absurd attempt to reconstruct a solid and fruitful temporal order divorced from God, who is, in fact, the only foundation on which it can endure. In seeking to enhance man's greatness, men fondly imagine that they can do so by drying up the source from which that greatness springs and from which it is nourished. They want, that is, to restrain and, if possible, to eliminate the soul's upward surge toward God. But today's experience of so much disillusionment and bloodshed only goes to confirm those words of Scripture: "Unless the Lord build the house, they labor in vain that build it." (47)

*The Enduring Validity of the Church's Social Teaching*

218. The permanent validity of the Catholic Church's social teaching admits of no doubt.

*The Fundamental Principle*

219. This teaching rests on one basic principle: individual human beings are the foundation, the cause and the end of every social institution. That is necessarily so, for men are by nature social beings. This fact must be recognized, as also the fact that they are raised in the plan of Providence to an order of reality which is above nature.

220. On this basic principle, which guarantees the sacred dignity of the individual, the Church constructs her social teaching. She has formulated, particularly over the past hundred years, and through the efforts of a very well informed body of priests and laymen, a social doctrine which points out with clarity the sure way to social reconstruction. The principles she gives are of universal application, for they take human nature into account, and the varying conditions in which man's life is lived. They also take into account the principal characteristics of contemporary society, and are thus acceptable to all.

*Must be Studied, Applied, Taught*

221. But today, more than ever, it is essential that this doctrine be known, assimilated, and put into effect in the form and manner that the different situations allow and demand. It is a difficult

task indeed, yet a most noble one. To the performance of it We call, not only Our own sons and brothers scattered throughout the world, but also men of goodwill everywhere.

222. First, We must reaffirm most strongly that this Catholic social doctrine is an integral part of the Christian conception of life.

223. It is therefore Our urgent desire that this doctrine be studied more and more. First of all it should be taught as part of the daily curriculum in Catholic schools of every kind, particularly seminaries, although We are not unaware that in some of these latter institutions, this has been done for a long time now and in an outstanding way. We would also like to see it added to the religious instruction programs of parishes and of Association of the Lay Apostolate. It must be spread by every modern means at our disposal: daily newspapers, periodicals, popular and scientific publications, radio and television.

224. Our beloved sons, the laity, can do much to help this diffusion of Catholic social doctrine by studying it themselves and putting it into practice, and by zealously striving to make others understand it.

225. They should be convinced that the best way of demonstrating the truth and efficacy of this teaching is to show that it can provide the solution to present-day difficulties. They will thus win those people who are opposed to it through ignorance of it. Who knows, but a ray of its light may one day enter their minds.

#### *Christian Education*

226. It is not enough merely to formulate a social doctrine. It must be translated into reality. And this is particularly true of the Church's social doctrine, the light of which is Truth, Justice its objective, and Love its driving force.

227. It is vitally important, therefore, that Our sons learn to understand this doctrine. They must be educated to it.

#### *Theory and Practice*

228. No Christian education can be considered complete unless it covers every kind of obligation. It must therefore aim at implanting and fostering among the faithful an awareness of their duty to carry on their economic and social activities in a Christian manner.

229. The transition from theory to practice is of its very nature difficult; and it is especially so when one tries to reduce to concrete terms a social doctrine such as that of the Church. There are several reasons why this is so; among them We can mention man's deep-rooted selfishness, the materialism in which modern society is steeped, and the difficulty of determining sometimes what precisely the demands of justice are in a given instance.

230. Consequently, a purely theoretical instruction in man's social and economic obligations is inadequate. People must also be shown ways in which they can properly fulfill these obligations.

231. In Our view, therefore, formal instruction, to be successful, must be supplemented by the students' active co-operation in their own training. They must gain an experimental knowledge of the subject, and that by their own positive action.

232. It is practice which makes perfect, even in such matters as the right use of liberty. Thus one learns Christian behavior in social and economic matters by actual Christian action in those fields.

#### *Lay Apostolate's Role In Social Education*

233. The Lay Apostolate, therefore, has an important role to play in social education—especially those associations and organizations which have as their specific objective the Christianization of contemporary society. The members of these associations, besides profiting personally from their own day to day experience in this field, can also help in the social education of the rising generation by giving it the benefit of the experience they have gained.

#### *Christian Spirit—Not Hedonism*

234. But We must remind you here of an important truth: the Christian conception of life demands of all—whether highborn or lowly—a spirit of moderation and sacrifice. That is what God calls us to by His grace.

235. There is, alas, a spirit of hedonism abroad today which beguiles men into thinking that life is nothing more than the quest for pleasure and the satisfaction of human passions. This attitude is disastrous. Its evil effects on soul and body are undeniable. Even on the natural level temperance and simplicity of life are the dictates of sound policy. On the supernatural level, the Gospels and the whole ascetic tradition of the Church require a sense of mortification and penance which assures the rule of the spirit over the flesh, and offers an efficacious means of expiating the punishment due to sin, from which no one, except Jesus Christ and His Immaculate Mother, is exempt.

#### *Practical Suggestions*

236. There are three stages which should normally be followed in the reduction of social principles into practice. First, one reviews the concrete situation; secondly, one forms a judgment on it in the light of these same principles; thirdly, one decides what in the circumstances can and should be done to implement these principles. These are the three stages that are usually expressed in the three terms: look, judge, act.

237. It is important for our young people to grasp this method and to practice it. Knowledge acquired in this way does not remain merely abstract, but is seen as something that must be translated into action.

### *When Differences Arise...*

238. Differences of opinion in the application of principles can sometimes arise even among sincere Catholics. When this happens, they should be careful not to lose their respect and esteem for each other. Instead, they should strive to find points of agreement for effective and suitable action, and not wear themselves out in interminable arguments, and, under pretext of the better or the best, omit to do the good that is possible and therefore obligatory.

239. In their economic and social activities, Catholics often come into contact with others who do not share their view of life. In such circumstances, they must, of course, bear themselves as Catholics and do nothing to compromise religion and morality. Yet at the same time they should show themselves animated by a spirit of understanding and unselfishness, ready to cooperate loyally in achieving objects which are good in themselves, or can be turned to good. Needless to say, when the Hierarchy has made a decision on any point Catholics are bound to obey their directives. The Church has the right and obligation not merely to guard ethical and religious principles, but also to declare its authoritative judgment in the matter of putting these principles into practice.

### *The Layman's Responsibility*

240. These, then, are the educational principles which must be put into effect. It is a task which belongs particularly to Our sons, the laity, for it is their lot to live an active life in the world and organize themselves for the attainment of temporal ends.

241. In performing this task, which is a noble one, they must not only be well qualified in their trade or profession and practice it in accordance with its own proper laws, they must also bring their professional activity into conformity with the Church's social teaching. Their attitude must be one of loyal trust and filial obedience to ecclesiastical authority.

They must remember, too, that if in the transaction of their temporal affairs they take no account of those social principles which the Church teaches, and which We now confirm, then they fail in their obligations and may easily violate the rights of others. They may even go so far as to bring discredit on the Church's teaching, lending substance to the opinion that, in spite of its intrinsic value, it is in fact powerless to direct men's lives.

### *Matter and Spirit*

242. As We have noted already, modern man has greatly deepened and extended his knowledge of nature's laws, and has harnessed the forces of nature, making them subservient to his ends. The magnitude of his achievements deserves ungrudging admiration; nor is he yet at the end of his resources.

Nevertheless, in his striving to master and transform the world around him he is in danger of forgetting and of destroying himself. As Our Predecessor, Pope Pius XI, lamented in *Quadragesimo Anno*: "And so bodily labor, which even after original sin was decreed by



Providence for the good of man's body and soul, is in many instances changed into an instrument of perversion; for from the factory dead matter goes out improved, whereas men there are corrupted and degraded." (48)

243. Similarly, Our Predecessor, Pius XII, rightly asserted that our age is marked by a clear contrast between the immense scientific and technical progress and the fearful human decline shown by "its monstrous masterpiece . . . transforming man into a giant of the physical world at the expense of his spirit, which is reduced to that of a pygmy in the supernatural and eternal world." (49)

244. And so the words of the Psalmist about the worshippers of false gods are strikingly verified today. Men are losing their own identity in their works, which they admire to the point of idolatry: "The idols of the Gentiles are silver and gold, the works of the hands of men." (50)

#### *True Hierarchy of Values*

245. In Our paternal care as universal Pastor of souls, We earnestly beg Our sons, immersed though they be in the business of this world, not to allow their consciences to sleep; not to lose sight of the true hierarchy of values. 246. Certainly, the Church teaches—and has always taught—that scientific and technical progress and the resultant material well-being are good things and mark an important phase in human civilization. But the Church teaches, too, that goods of this kind must be valued according to their true nature: as instruments used by man for the better attainment of his end. They help to make him a better man, both in the natural and the supernatural order.

247. May these warning words of the divine Master ever sound in men's ears: "For what doth it profit a man, if he gain the whole world and suffer the loss of his own soul? Or what exchange shall a man give for his soul?" (51)

#### *Making Sunday Holy*

248. Allied to what We have said so far is the question of the Sunday rest.

249. To safeguard man's dignity as a creature of God endowed with a soul in the image and likeness of God, the Church has always demanded a diligent observance of the third Commandment: "Remember that thou keep holy the Sabbath day." (52) God certainly has the right and power to command man to devote one day a week to his duty of worshipping the eternal Majesty. Free from mundane cares, he should lift up his mind to the things of heaven, and look into the depths of his conscience, to see how he stands with God in respect of those necessary and inviolable relationships which must exist between the creature and his Creator.

250. In addition, man has a right to rest a while from work, and indeed a need to do so if he is to renew his bodily strength and to refresh his spirit by suitable recreation. He has also to think of his family, the unity of which depends so much on frequent contact and the peaceful living together of all its members.

251. Thus, religion and moral and physical well-being are one in demanding this periodic rest, and for many centuries now the Church has set aside Sunday as a special day of rest for the faithful, on which they participate in the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, the memorial and application of Christ's redemptive work for souls.

252. Heavy in heart, We cannot but deplore the growing tendency in certain quarters to disregard this sacred law, if not to reject it outright. This attitude must inevitably impair the bodily and spiritual health of the workers, whose welfare We have so much at heart.

253. In the name of God, therefore, and for the sake of the material and spiritual interests of men, We call upon all, public authorities, employers and workers, to observe the precepts of God and His Church and to remember their grave responsibilities before God and society.

#### *The Christian's Work in the World*

254. We have only been able to touch lightly upon this matter, but Our sons, the laity especially, must not suppose that they would be acting prudently to lessen their personal Christian commitment in this passing world. On the contrary, We insist that they must intensify it and increase it continually.

255. In His solemn prayer for the Church's unity, Christ Our Lord did not ask His Father to remove His disciples from the world: "I pray not that thou shouldst take them out of the world, but that thou shouldst keep them from evil." (53) Let no man therefore imagine that a life of activity in the world is incompatible with spiritual perfection. The two can very well be harmonized. It is a gross error to suppose that a man cannot perfect himself except by putting aside all temporal activity, on the plea that such activity will inevitably lead him to compromise his personal dignity as a human being and as a Christian.

#### *Perfection Through Daily Work*

256. That a man should develop and perfect himself through his daily work—which in most cases is of a temporal character—is perfectly in keeping with the plan of divine Providence. The Church today is faced with an immense task: to humanize and to Christianize this modern civilization of ours. The continued development of this civilization, indeed its very survival, demand and insist that the Church do her part in the world. That is why, as We said before, she claims the co-operation of her laity. In conducting their human affairs to the best of their ability, they must recognize that they are doing a service to humanity, in intimate union with God through Christ, and to God's greater glory. And St. Paul insisted: "Whether you eat or drink, or whatsoever else you do, do all to the glory of God." (54) "All whatsoever you do in word or in work, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, giving thanks to God and the Father by him." (55)

#### *Greater Efficiency in Temporal Affairs*

257. To search for spiritual perfection and eternal salvation in the conduct of human affairs and institutions is not to rob these of the power to achieve their immediate, specific ends, but to enhance this power.

The words of our divine Master are true for all time: "Seek ye therefore first the kingdom of God and his justice; and all these things shall be added unto you." (56) The man who is "light in the Lord" (57) and who walks as a "child of the light" (58) has a sure grasp of the fundamental demands of justice in all life's difficulties and complexities, obscured though they may be by so much individual, national and racial selfishness.

Animated, too, by the charity of Christ, he finds it impossible not to love his fellow men. He makes his own their needs, their sufferings and their joys. There is a sureness of touch in all his activity in every field. It is energetic, generous and considerate. For "charity is patient, is kind; charity envieth not, dealeth not perversely, is not puffed up, is not ambitious, seeketh not her own, is not provoked to anger, thinketh no evil; rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth with the truth; beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things." (59)

## CONCLUSION

258. In conclusion, Venerable Brethren, We would remind you of that sublime truth of Catholic doctrine: our incorporation as living members in Christ's Mystical Body, the Church, "For as the body is one and hath many members; and all the members of the body, whereas they are many, yet are one body; so also is Christ." (60)

259. We most earnestly beg all Our sons the world over, clergy and laity, to be deeply conscious of the dignity, the nobility, which is theirs through being grafted on to Christ as shoots on a vine: "I am the vine; you the branches." (61) They are thus called to a share in His own divine life; and since they are united in mind and spirit with the divine Redeemer even when they are engaged in the affairs of the world, their work becomes a continuation of His work, penetrated with redemptive power. "He that abideth in men, and I in him, the same beareth much fruit." (62)

Thus is man's work exalted and ennobled—so highly exalted that it leads to his own personal perfection of soul, and helps to extend to others the fruits of Redemption, all over the world. It becomes a means whereby the Christian way of life can leaven this civilization in which we live and work—leaven it with the ferment of the Gospel.

### *Era of Immense Possibilities*

260. This era in which we live is in the grip of deadly errors; it is torn by deep disorders. But it is also an era which offers to those who work with the Church immense possibilities in the field of the apostolate. And therein lies our hope.

261. Venerable Brethren and dear sons, We began with that wonderful Encyclical of Pope Leo, and passed in review before you the various problems of our modern social life. We have given principles and directives which We exhort you earnestly to think over, and now, for your part, to

put into effect. Your courageous co-operation in this respect will surely help to bring about the realization of Christ's Kingdom in this world, "a kingdom of truth and life; a kingdom of holiness and grace; a kingdom of justice, of love and of peace," (63) which assures the enjoyment of those heavenly blessings for which we were created and for which we long most ardently.

### *Mother and Teacher*

262. For here Our concern is with the doctrine of the Catholic and Apostolic Church. She is the Mother and Teacher of all nations. Her light illumines, enkindles and enflames. No age but hears her warning voice, vibrant with heavenly wisdom.

She is ever powerful to offer suitable, effective remedies for the increasing needs of men, and the sorrows and anxieties of this present life. Her words re-echo those of the Psalmist of old—words which never fail to raise our fainting spirits and give us courage: "I will hear what the Lord God will speak in me: for he will speak peace unto his people. And unto his saints: and unto them that are converted to the heart. Surely his salvation is near to them that fear him: that glory may dwell in our land. Mercy and truth have met each other: justice and peace have kissed. Truth is sprung out of the earth: and justice hath looked down from heaven. For the Lord will give goodness: and our earth shall yield her fruit. Justice shall walk before him: and shall set his steps in the way." (64)

### *May Christ Reign*

263. For some considerable time now, Venerable Brethren, Our solicitude for the Universal Church has been directed into the writing of this letter; and We wish to conclude it by voicing the following desires: May man's divine Redeemer "who of God is made unto us wisdom and justice and sanctification and redemption," (65) reign and triumph gloriously throughout all ages, in all and over all. And, with the right ordering of human society, may all nations at last enjoy true prosperity, happiness and peace.

264. In earnest of these wishes, and as a pledge of Our fatherly goodwill, may the Apostolic Blessing, which We give in the Lord with all Our heart, descend upon you, Venerable Brethren, and upon all the faithful entrusted to your care, and especially upon those who respond with generosity to Our appeals.

*Given at Rome, at St. Peter's, on the 15th day of May, in the year 1961, the third of Our Pontificate.*

## **JOHN XXIII**

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### **NOTES**

LATIN TEXT: *Acta Apostolicae Sedis*, 53 (1961), 401-64.

ENGLISH TRANSLATION: *The Pope Speaks*, 7 (April, 1962), 295-343.

REFERENCES:

- (1) Cf. 1 *Tim.* 3:15.
- (2) *John* 14:6.
- (3) *John* 8:12.
- (4) *Mark* 8:2.
- (5) *Acta Leonis XIII*, XI, 1891, pp. 97-144.
- (6) *Ibid.* p. 107.
- (7) St. Thomas, *De regimine principum*, I, 15.
- (8) Cf. AAS 23 (1931) 185.
- (9) Cf. *ibid.* p. 189.
- (10) *Ibid.* pp. 177-228.
- (11) Cf. *ibid.* p. 199.
- (12) Cf. *ibid.* p. 200.
- (13) Cf. *ibid.* p. 201.
- (14) Cf. *ibid.* p. 210 *et seq.*
- (15) Cf. *ibid.* p. 211.
- (16) Cf. AAS 33 (1941) 196.
- (17) Cf. *ibid.* p. 197.
- (18) Cf. *ibid.* p. 196.
- (19) Cf. *ibid.* p. 198 *et seq.*
- (20) Cf. *ibid.* p. 199.
- (21) Cf. *ibid.* p. 201.

- (22) Cf. *ibid.* p. 202.
- (23) Cf. *ibid.* p. 203.
- (24) AAS 23 (1931) 203.
- (25) *Ibid.* p. 203.
- (26) Cf. *ibid.* p. 222 *et seq.*
- (27) Cf. AAS 33 (1941) 200.
- (28) AAS 23 (1931) 195.
- (29) *Ibid.* p. 198.
- (30) Broadcast message, 1 Sept. 1944, cf. AAS 36 (1944) 254.
- (31) *Allocutio*, 8 Oct. 1956; cf. AAS 48 (1956) 799-800. (TPS, III, 4, pp. 405-409.—Ed.)
- (32) Broadcast message, 1 Sept. 1944; cf. AAS 36 (1944) 253.
- (33) Broadcast message, 24 Dec. 1942; cf. AAS 35 (1943) 17.
- (34) Cf. *ibid.* p. 20.
- (35) Encyclical letter *Quadragesimo anno*; AAS 23 (1931) 214.
- (36) *Acta Leonis XIII*, XI, 1891, p. 114.
- (37) *Matt.* 6:19-20.
- (38) *Matt.* 25:40.
- (39) Cf. AAS 23 (1931) 202.
- (40) *Allocutio*, 3 May, 1960; cf. AAS 52 (1960) 465.
- (41) Cf. *ibid.*
- (42) 1 *John* 3:16-17.
- (43) Encyclical letter *Summi Pontificatus*: AAS 31 (1939) 428-29.
- (44) *Gen.* 1:28.

- (45) *Ibid.*
- (46) *Confessions* I, 1.
- (47) *Ps.* 126:1.
- (48) AAS 23 (1931) 221 *et seq.*
- (49) Broadcast message, Christmas Eve, 1953; cf. AAS 46 (1954) 10.
- (50) *Ps.* 113:4.
- (51) *Matt.* 16:26.
- (52) *Exod.* 20:8.
- (53) *John* 17:15.
- (54) 1 *Cor.* 10:31.
- (55) *Col.* 3:17.
- (56) *Matt.* 6:33.
- (57) *Eph.* 5:8.
- (58) Cf. *ibid.*
- (59) 1 *Cor.* 13:4-7.
- (60) 1 *Cor.* 12:12.
- (61) *John* 15:5.
- (62) *Ibid.*
- (63) The Preface of *Christ the King*.
- (64) *Ps.* 84:9 *et seq.*
- (65) 1 *Cor.* 1:30.

Source: [http://www.vatican.va/holy\\_father/john\\_xxiii/encyclicals/documents/hf\\_j-xxiii\\_enc\\_15051961\\_mater\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_xxiii/encyclicals/documents/hf_j-xxiii_enc_15051961_mater_en.html): Vatican Translation.

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