

THE CHURCH'S DUTY TO MAN'S EARTHLY HAPPINESS

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GREAT crises call for restatements of fundamental principles both as a source of enlightenment and as a dynamic wellspring of heroic action. Today, when the earthly happiness of the entire human race is so gravely threatened with collapse, there would seem to be an urgent call for the thinking Catholic, and above all for the theologian, to review the relation which Christ Himself established between His Church and the earthly happiness of mankind. If, in the terrible emergency of the present, the Catholic Church has a divinely appointed task to perform even for man's earthly welfare, the first step in the performance of that duty must be a clear understanding of what the duty is.

What, actually, is the role of Christ's Church in the development and protection of mankind's earthly happiness? We are not now principally concerned with what the Church has done for that happiness, nor even with what the Church can do for it. Our principal concern is with what Christ enjoined the Church to do for the temporal welfare of the human race. Is there in the very mission itself of the Church a duty to be performed for the earthly well-being of mankind? If there is such a duty involved in the Church's Christ-given mission to the world, what is the nature of that duty in detail?

A theologian's first hope, when faced with such a question, would be for an answer direct from the Holy See itself. Most fortunately, such a hope can be abundantly realized. More fortunately still, we have the answer to that question framed by the Holy See in terms of this very crisis in which we are at present involved. More than half a century ago it was given, in the providence of God, to Pope Leo XIII to foresee the social tragedy¹ which has since come to pass and to chart the course which should guide God's Church through the

¹ "... a mortal disease has infected the very core of society, gives it no rest, and forbodes for the future still further upheavals and, in the end, catastrophe." *Inscrutabili Dei*, ASS, X, 585-86.

storm. Fruit of his genius was the brilliant Christian social synthesis in which he forecast the only order in which the new social forces which had come into the world could be joined in Christian harmony. The new situation of the working-man, considered in the Encyclical *Rerum Novarum*, was only one element in the much larger unity of the whole Leonine synthesis. The dynamic relationship of the Church to man's earthly happiness and well-being was yet another element in that synthesis. It is this element which we shall endeavor to present.

First, two cautions. Pope Leo XIII was no starry-eyed unrealist in his concern for the earthly happiness of the whole race of his fellow-men. Still less was he unaware of the implications of our Savior's words, "In the world you will have affliction" (John 16:33). Perfect earthly happiness among men is, even in the light of a purely natural philosophy, a manifest contradiction in terms. The human heart seeks for happiness without limit; it will always, therefore, hunger for a yet greater happiness than that which is at any time its actual lot. What is more, God has Himself set limits, as a consequence of human sin, to the earthly happiness which can actually be achieved by man in this present life. Sin brought into the world forces which are of their very nature destructive of human happiness. The divine economy of our redemption did not provide for the utter and immediate elimination of all these forces from the earthly scene. As a matter of fact, it is only in the light of what our Savior did not do in this respect that we can adequately understand the wisdom and the purpose of His actual institutions. Many of the essential elements of Christianity have as their immediate function the subjugation of those dynamic consequences of sin which it did not please the merciful God to remove in the process of our redemption.

There is, therefore, this caution to be placed at the head of any investigation of the problem of human happiness on earth. Even after the accomplishment of our redemption by Christ "there survives in each one of us a certain weakness, moral infirmity and tendency to evil." Constant struggle is required to save "the dignity itself of human nature" from going down in unhappy slavery to the "cupidities" of that tendency to evil.² These vestiges of the race's sin will constantly circumscribe man's actual earthly happiness and

² *Tametsi Futuræ*, ASS, XXXIII, 277-78.

will always constitute a corrosive element within the happiness which he does achieve in this present life. As the Pontiff himself expresses it: "Man can no more make for himself a life devoid of sorrow and replete with unalloyed happiness than he can circumvent the design of God the Creator who has willed that consequences of the ancient sin should remain until the end of the world."³

But, in the avoidance of one extreme, it would be wrong to go instead to the other. The impossibility of a life which is "devoid of sorrow and replete with unalloyed happiness" does not imply a life that is barren of joy. The God who put in man his capacity for unlimited happiness is not indifferent to the exercise of that capacity now in this earthly life. The whole tenor of our Savior's words and action reveal His tender concern even for the temporal well-being of His fellow-men. The divine re-establishment which He wrought was directly and most of all concerned with the restoration of mankind to the supernatural order of grace. Yet we must not be blind to the truth that the "priceless and saving fruits" of that re-establishment "have overflowed abundantly into the natural order as well."⁴ Christ's will was that there should endure among men, as long as the world should last, not only the supernatural restoration He had wrought but also the overflow of the fruits of His redemption into "the natural order." This will of our Redeemer, as we shall see, is reflected in the very nature and mission of the Church. Echoing a passage from St. Augustine which had impressed him deeply, Pope Leo XIII alluded to this characteristic of the Church in words which repetition can only serve to make more striking: "It would seem impossible" for the Church of Christ "to contribute more to prosperous and happy living even if it had been born for the sole purpose of conferring or making more abundant the useful things and the conveniences of this mortal life."⁵

With these two cautions—against expecting too much, and against expecting too little of the relationship of the Church to man's earthly happiness—we are in a position to begin an analysis of the teaching of the Holy See, in the person of Pope Leo XIII, concerning the nature of this relationship in detail. In the interests of clearness, our survey will follow the following order: (1) The fact of a divinely-given duty

³ *Ibid.*, p. 278.

⁴ *Arcanum Divinum*, ASS, XII, 385.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 386. Cf. *Immortale Dei*, ASS, XVIII, 161.

to the temporal happiness of mankind is inherent in the very mission of the Church. (2) The nature of this duty is such that it lays upon the Church very important roles in national and international life, in the solution of man's material problems, and in the progress of culture and knowledge. (3) This duty of the Church in temporal affairs is perfectly integrated with the unity of her one supernatural mission. (4) Without the accomplishment of this duty by the Church, substantial earthly happiness is impossible of attainment by the human race.

THE DUTY OF THE CHURCH TOWARD THE TEMPORAL ORDER

The mission of the Church is the mission of Christ Himself perpetually continued. That His mission to mankind might be continued until the end of time was the very reason why Christ founded the Church:

In the Church which He founded and in the very founding of that Church, what did Christ have in mind as His aim? This, precisely, was His desire—to transmit to it that very mission and that same mandate which He had received from His Father, that it might be continued forever. That was what He decided should be done. That was what He actually did.⁶

Since this is so, it will be helpful to begin our study of the Church's mission with a brief reference to that mission as we find it portrayed in the life of our Lord Himself.

Was there in the mission of Christ from the Father an essential concern with the earthly welfare of men—a true duty even to the temporal happiness of those whom He was sent to save? In many passages of his Encyclicals the Pontiff calls attention to the evidence in the Gospel pages that there was. For one thing, our Savior appealed to His works for earthly human happiness as proofs that He was the Messiah.⁷ The divine decree which had, through the messianic prophecies, established such works as the revealing sign of the Redeemer's advent laid upon Him a true duty for their performance. Nor was this a merely initial phase of His mission, to be finished and laid aside. When Christ sent forth His seventy-two disciples they were instructed to preach the Kingdom of God "and cure the sick."⁸ The same command

⁶ *Satis Cognitum*, ASS, XXVIII, 712.

⁷ Luke 7:19 ff.

⁸ Luke 10:9.

to carry temporal blessings as well as spiritual was laid upon the Apostles.⁹

We find further evidence of the relation of Christ's mission to man's earthly happiness in the very nature of the Kingdom which He preached. Action for that happiness is inseparable from the life of Christ's Kingdom. The obligations of its citizens extend to myriad acts whose immediate and connatural effect is the temporal well-being of men. Hunger, thirst, nakedness, imprisonment, sickness—all of these earthly sorrows have counterparts in the duties of the citizens of God's Kingdom to alleviate them. And Christ regarded these duties as so important that He referred to them alone in describing the standard by which members of the Kingdom will be finally judged.¹⁰

For the perpetuation of His redemptive work and of all the blessings which flowed therefrom upon the human race even in the sphere of its earthly happiness, Christ instituted the Church and made it the perpetual "vicar of His mission." After enumerating various blessings, both spiritual and temporal, by which the Redeemer "invested all things with a certain new order and beauty," His Holiness states: "In order that such remarkable benefits might last upon this earth as long as mankind will last, Christ constituted the Church the vicar of His mission and, looking to the future, He commanded that it should, if human society should suffer any serious disturbance or collapse, bring it back to a true order and lift it up again."¹¹

We turn now to a direct consideration of the Church's mission. In the light of Christ's own life¹² and the practice of the first Apostles,¹³ it would be idle to maintain that the Church has no concern with the temporal interests of humanity. Categorically, "it must not be thought that the work of the Church is so absorbed in the care of souls as to neglect those things which pertain to man's temporal and earthly interests."¹⁴

In its activity for such "temporal and earthly interests" of man the Church is imbued with a "divine power . . . to prevent or heal public and private ills where it is able to pursue its labors for men unim-

⁹ Matt. 10:5 ff.

¹⁰ Matt. 25:34-46.

¹¹ *Arcanum Divinum*, ASS, XII, 385-86.

¹² Cf. *Graves de Communi*, ASS, XXXIII, 390.

¹³ Cf. *Rerum Novarum*, ASS, XXIII, 655. ¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 654.

peded."¹⁵ It was the recognition of this immense power for the temporal welfare of society, inherent in the very nature of the Church, which kept any note of despair or defeatism from ever creeping into the Pope's description of the economic and social turmoil which he beheld impending.¹⁶ Pleading with the Orient to return to the Church, he promised that the fruit of such reunion would be temporal as well as spiritual blessings.¹⁷ In the words of a passage which seems to defy adequate translation and which we therefore cite in its original form, "Ecclesia enim catholica . . . sic nata institutaque est, ut civitatibus et populis, nihil admodum detrimenti, sed multiplices vero et decoras utilitates in rerum etiam mortalium genere, numquam non pariat feliciter."¹⁸

It was, as we have said, his "intimate realization of the nature of the Church"¹⁹ which led Pope Leo XIII to insist on its divine power for the earthly happiness of the human race. But power is not of itself duty. One might paraphrase the ancient adage to read, *a posse ad debere non valet illatio*. Has the Church the duty as well as the power to bend its efforts to the temporal well-being of the world? Not once but many times, the Leonine Encyclicals have put the authority of the Holy See behind an affirmative answer to that question.

There are various passages in these Encyclicals where a whole context points to the inclusion of work for man's temporal happiness in the mission which the Church has received from Christ. We have already heard the Pope saying that Christ "commanded" the Church to come to the aid of society in "any serious disturbance or collapse."²⁰ And this in a context which deals with temporal as well as spiritual problems. At another time, we are told that the Church was "founded to renew the world."²¹ The very extensiveness of such a phrase might obscure its exact meaning, if we did not have, in the context, the Pope's own commentary on its meaning. Human society, he says, is

¹⁵ *Praeclarum Studium*, ASS, XXIII, 450.

¹⁶ *Quantunque Le siano*, ASS, XX, 4. Cf. *Da grave*, ASS, XI, 276; *Dall' alto*, ASS, XXIII, 200-202.

¹⁷ *Praeclarae Gratulationis*, ASS, XXVI, 710. Cf. *Inscrutabili Dei*, ASS, X, 591.

¹⁸ *Caritatis Providentiaequae*, ASS, XXVI, 530. Cf. *Quod Apostolici*, ASS, XI, 378; *Ex Hac Augusto*, ASS, XIV, 97; *Praeclarae Gratulationis*, ASS, XXVI, 715.

¹⁹ *Solatio Nobis*, ASS, XI, 324.

²⁰ *Arcanum Divinum*, ASS, XII, 385-86. ²¹ *Da grave*, ASS, XI, 276.

threatened with utter temporal disaster. The world's prosperity is mortally afflicted. The reason for this lies in society's attempted apostasy from the Church of Christ. And in that Church alone exists the power which can heal society of its malady. As one proof of this, the Pontiff offers the evidence of history. The Church, "being founded by Christ to renew the world," began to exercise a super-human power for the tranquillity and security of society from the first moment of its appearance in the world. Because Christ is with His Church forever, that power is still in the Catholic Church today, ready to cope with the emergency of the present upheaval. If the nations would but recognize again the true nature of the Church and accept its help, the progressive ruin of society would straightway begin to be healed. Such careful analysis of the context reveals, it would seem, that mankind's earthly happiness and well-being has a definite place among the objectives of the Church's mission "to renew the world."

But there are other passages in the Leonine Encyclicals which do not depend on contextual analysis to establish this meaning clearly. The apostolic duty of the Holy See is the spread of the Church "in order that all the nations may be assisted by its guidance and protection to progress along the road of human and celestial happiness."²² If human as well as celestial happiness is the object of the Pope's duty it must also be embraced within the duties of the Church. For "the Church . . . is identified with the Papacy."²³

There is a striking statement of this duty of the Holy See (and therefore of the Church itself) to the universal well-being of men in the following words:

It is proper and it is certainly involved in the duty of the Holy See that We should foster and strenuously promote all those things whence men, both individually and in their social life as citizens, can draw help for the alleviation of those many ills which, like the fruits of a diseased tree, have followed upon the sin of our first parent. For, as a matter of fact, these helps, whatever may be their nature, not only serve to advance civilization and culture; they also lead in an appropriate way to that thorough renewal of things which Jesus Christ, the Savior of men, contemplated and willed.²⁴

²² *Ex Hac Augusta*, ASS, XIV, 97. ²³ *Spesse volte*, ASS, XXXI, 135.

²⁴ *In Pluribus*, ASS, XX, 546.

The concrete details of this duty of the Church are many and varied. In the realm of international affairs it is her duty to strive always for the cause of peace. "For this is the duty and this is the role assigned to the Church by her divine Founder, that she should be the bond of peace in the common society of men and the bulwark of the public welfare."²⁵ In the civic life of individual nations it is the Church's duty ("munus est Ecclesiae assignatum a Deo") to work earnestly that all "national laws and institutions" should be permeated through and through with the dynamic force of the Gospel.²⁶ Christ has made her custodian of "the social bond . . . the solid foundation upon which the peace of any nation must rest."²⁷ In the economic sphere such action as is exemplified in the great labor Encyclicals (*Rerum Novarum*, etc.) is "required by the nature" of the Papal office.²⁸ The hospitals, orphanages, and other charitable works of the Church are but the carrying out of "the mission of the Church which essentially consists in the sanctifying of souls and the doing of good to humanity."²⁹

Such instances of the Apostolic teaching on this matter might be multiplied further. But in referring to the details of the Church's task for the earthly welfare of mankind we are anticipating what is proper to the next stage of our inquiry. And before going on to that, it will be helpful to sum up what we have so far seen.

Action for the happiness of men in this present life was involved in Christ's own messianic mission. Such action, moreover, is inseparable from the nature of the Kingdom which He founded. Bringing to mankind temporal as well as eternal benefits, Christ commanded His Church to perpetuate all of these blessings among mankind. He made the Church as rich in helps to earthly happiness as if she had been instituted for that happiness alone. So equipped, the Church is commanded by Him to come to the aid of society in any disorder or collapse. It is her very nature that requires her to work for man's whole happiness, temporal as well as eternal. Strong with a divine power for this task and dedicated to the duty of its performance, the Catholic Church is today the hope of the world in crisis.³⁰

²⁵ *Pastoralis Vigilantiae*, ASS, XXIV, 68.

²⁶ *Sapientiae Christianae*, ASS, XXII, 397.

²⁷ *Au milieu*, ASS, XXIV, 520.

²⁸ *Nihil Nobis*, ASS, XXVI, 74.

²⁹ *Au milieu*, ASS, XXXIII, 356.

³⁰ *Pervenit all' anno*, ASS, XXXIV, 522-23.

THE WORK OF THE CHURCH IN THE TEMPORAL ORDER

We come now to the nature and the details of the work which it is the Church's duty under the will of her Founder to perform for the earthly prosperity of the human race.

The general way in which the world must arrive, if it is to arrive at all, at a proper participation in the temporal fruits of Christ's redemptive work is dictated by the will of the Redeemer Himself. It is His will that the blessings of earthly happiness which flow in abundance from His salvific mission should be reaped through the ministry of the Church. To be more specific—though still speaking in general terms—they are to be realized through the teaching by which the Church illumines men's minds and through the leadership by which she draws men's hearts to model their conduct on that teaching. The benefits of Christ's work to "the prosperity of this mortal life" must be sought "according to the manner, the discipline and the arrangement which the divine Author of religion Himself defined and commanded—that is, through the teaching and leadership of the Church."³¹

The Church is an essential part of the dispensation of divine providence which made man a social being. The problems and complexities of human society are, in fact, so vast and involved that human intelligence cannot hope to cope with them successfully by itself. The all-wise Creator therefore included the Church and its *magisterium* in His plan for the evolution of human society. He brought the Church into being and "set it upon a mountain . . . in order that it might be a light which would develop, with its life-giving ray, the germ of life in all the manifold phases of human society and teach that society the wise and heavenly norms which would enable it to reach the development most for its own good."³²

Thus, by the design of the Creator of all human society, the teaching mission of the Church was made an indispensable part of the way to that society's happiness. The society which rejects that teaching "decays or collapses, since it separates that which God wished joined together."³³ Need we go further than the present state of world-

³¹ *Caritatis Providentiaequae*, ASS, XXVI, 524.

³² *Pervenuti all' anno*, ASS, XXXIV, 529. Cf. *Praeclarae Gratulationis*, ASS, XXVI, 714; *Graves de Communi*, ASS, XXXIII, 390; *Inscrutabili Dei*, ASS, X, 591; *Quantunque Le siano*, ASS, XX, 4-6.

³³ *Loc. cit.*

society to find striking confirmation of this teaching of the Holy See? Modern rationalism, still blinded with the false optimism of the Renaissance, will repudiate this need of the Church as an insulting reflection upon the competence of human intelligence. But is it not rather the rationalist doctrine—the doctrine which represents human intelligence as competent, unaided, to manage successfully any and all complexities of the social problem—which contradicts the testimony of all history and is unworthy of the intelligence which man does possess?³⁴

The temporal affairs of society must lean heavily on another basic power which Christ gave to His Church—the power to move the hearts and wills of men to realize its teachings in their lives. With this power the Church strikes at the roots of those evil forces, born of original sin, which are destructive of all human happiness. These forces “of their own weight drag down the nations, which they have corrupted in mind and heart, into every kind of shamefulness. They undermine all right order and sooner or later bring the dignity and peace of a nation to destruction.”³⁵ To break the tragic sequence of sorrow which is the corollary of these forces in fallen human nature, Christ put into His Church “elements by which the rectitude of public morals, the honor of public authority, the charity and kindness of men to one another, order in society, and all human civilization are nourished and made to flourish.”³⁶

Today the evil forces are rampant, as the Pontiff foretold. They are dangerously active, as any but the most naïve must see, even in our own camp. Military victory for the arms of the United Nations will not dissolve the social malady which is causing and will continue to cause the world-wide unhappiness we see. Even “wise legislation by the States” will not suffice now for the remedy unless it is reinforced by the divine power which is instinct in the Church—her “more than human power, which reaches into the souls of men, renews them in the consciousness of their duty, and makes them better men; the

³⁴ In the words of Pius XII: “They spoke of progress, when they were going back; of being raised, when they grovelled; of arriving at man’s estate, when they stooped to servility. They did not perceive the inability of all human effort to replace the law of Christ by anything equal to it.” *Summi Pontificatus*, AAS, XXXI, 425.

³⁵ *Inscrutabili Dei*, ASS, X, 587.

³⁶ Allocution of Feb. 28, 1879, ASS, XI, 471.

power, namely, which once already has led the world back from ruin when it was overpowered by much worse afflictions."³⁷

In general, the Church is to perform her duty for man's happiness on earth through the operation of these two divinely assigned offices: by teaching, and by effectively inspiring men to accomplish the duties which her teaching has clarified. It was Christ's own will that society should reap the temporal benefits of His redemption in this way, "through the teaching, that is, and the leadership of the Church." Because such was Christ's will and because Christ was equal to all His purposes, "therefore the Church possesses, by reason of her divine mission, a great force for the right ordering of human society and is, in that society, . . . the effective cause of most precious benefits."³⁸ Because this was Christ's will and His will is the law of all human happiness, "in the Church of Christ alone is the power which can cure the dreadful ills of society" today.³⁹

So much for the general character of the work which the Church, by the will of her Founder, is to do for the happiness of men on earth. We turn now to the details of that work in its various spheres.

In International Life

Touchstone of the quality of international life is the basic reality that the whole human race is one thing. On this point the Leonine philosophy and theology of that ultimate human unity is one of the foundation stones of his entire Christian social synthesis. It is a truth which permeates every truth about man. It enters so intimately into the character of the Church's universal mission and is so indispensable for a proper understanding of the present stage of our inquiry that a recapitulation, at least, of its primary features is necessary here.

The ultimate human unity—Nazism *et al.* to the contrary—is not nationalism but humanity. Nothing can ever undo the irrevocable fact that the human race, by the very circumstances of its origin, is one family. One man and one woman, by the arrangement of the Creator Himself, "became the natural origin of all men—the origin

³⁷ *Tametsi Futurae*, ASS, XXXIII, 284. For a summary description of the past rescue to which the Pontiff refers, cf. *Inscrutabili Dei*, ASS, X, 588.

³⁸ *Caritatis Providentiaequae*, ASS, XXVI, 524.

³⁹ *Da grave*, ASS, XI, 275-76.

from which the entire human race should be propagated."⁴⁰ Universal community of parentage means universal brotherhood and it is in this, rather than in the ineffective (because groundless) sentimentality of our contemporary "liberals," that the brotherhood of man has its first and basic reality. The brotherhood of all men is not an impotent metaphor but an all-penetrating fact.

Humanity is also "a brotherhood whose origin lies in the common creatorship and fatherhood of God."⁴¹ Because mankind is one biological unit, and because it came from the hand of God as one unit, it will always be true that "absolutely all men, of all grades and conditions," are members "of one and the same family."⁴²

The brotherhood of men was further deepened by another circumstance of its initial being. The human race, created as one, was elevated as one to a supernatural level of existence. "God, . . . guided by His wonderful love, raised the human race in the beginning to a participation in His divine nature."⁴³ Since the communication of life is the essence of parenthood, men thus became God's children—and therefore brothers to one another—in a new sublime sense.

Humanity, created as one unit and elevated as a unit to a supernatural life, proceeded to sin as a unit, when the human race still numbered but two human beings. Not simply Adam and his wife, but "the human race . . . revolted against God" in the commission of that sin.⁴⁴ The consequences of that revolt still endure. One of the most tragic of its consequences, in the temporal order, was "the monstrous perversion that there should be men who would repudiate the memory of that brotherhood which comes from man's common origin. Whence they refused to be guided by the natural law to a mutual love and respect; instead, obeying their own cupidity, they came to look upon other men as beneath them and even to consider them as mere beasts of burden."⁴⁵

Christ came into the world to save the human race as the one family which it is—"that which had perished."⁴⁶ By the intrinsic nature of

⁴⁰ *Arcanum Divinum*, ASS, XII, 386. ⁴¹ *Humanum Genus*, ASS, XVI, 431.

⁴² *Graves de Communi*, ASS, XXXIII, 389. ⁴³ *Providentissimus Deus*, ASS, XXVI, 269.

⁴⁴ *Humanum Genus*, ASS, XVI, 477. Cf. *Divinum Illud*, ASS, XXIX, 651.

⁴⁵ *In Pluribus*, ASS, XX, 546.

⁴⁶ *Satis Cognitum*, ASS, XXVIII, 712. Cf. *Annum Sacrum*, ASS, XXXI, 649; *Immortale Dei*, ASS, XVIII, 164; *Rerum Novarum*, ASS, XXIII, 653.

the redemption which He wrought, He strengthened and deepened that unity with many bonds which draw the whole human race into an even closer brotherhood. He restored the consciousness of that natural brotherhood which is the corollary of our common origin.⁴⁷ By renewing our participation in the divine nature He restored the more sublime brotherhood which had been lost. Over and above the "restoration" He established an entirely new brotherhood which surpassed any previous fraternal bond among men—our brotherhood "in Christ." In this the previous natural and supernatural brotherhoods of the human race fused, and found in the Incarnate Word a common center. All men were made brothers by nature to the natural Son of God. This Christian brotherhood created a relationship more intimate than that of blood.⁴⁸ It encompassed every individual man without a single exception.⁴⁹ It was established as the solvent for every barrier of religion and nationalism which hitherto had divided the human race. "Jesus Christ was absolutely the first to proclaim the real relationship of men to each other; and the voice of His Apostles echoed His teaching—that there is no longer Jew, nor Greek, nor barbarian, nor Scythian, but all are brothers in Christ."⁵⁰

A new and higher brotherhood involves a new and higher brotherly love. Therefore Christ gave to mankind the "new commandment" of Christian charity to be the bond of its new brotherhood. "He who gave this commandment of charity Himself called it 'new,' not implying that men were not already obliged—by nature itself—to love one another, but because this Christian kind of love was something entirely new and undreamed of in all the memory of man."⁵¹

In this universal human brotherhood, reclaimed and restored and deepened by our redemption, Christ Himself reigns as the first-born and King. As eternal Son of the eternal God He has a native right to such universal sovereignty; by His redemptive death He added to

⁴⁷ *Arcanum Divinum*, ASS, XII, 386. ⁴⁸ *Reputantibus Saepe*, ASS, XXXIV, 322.

⁴⁹ *In Pluribus*, ASS, XX, 548. Concerning the absolute universality of Christ's work, cf. also *Arcanum Divinum*, ASS, XII, 386; *Auspicato Concessum*, ASS, XV, 146; *Caritatis Providentiaeque*, ASS, XXVI, 524; *Praeclarae Gratulationis*, ASS, XXVI, 705-707; *Satis Cognitum*, ASS, XXVIII, 712; *Divinum Illud*, ASS, XXIX, 644; *Annum Sacrum*, ASS, XXXI, 648-49; *Immortale Dei*, ASS, XVIII, 164; *Tametsi Futurae*, ASS, XXXIII, 276, 279-80.

⁵⁰ *Libertas Praestantissimum*, ASS, XX, 599. ⁵¹ *Sapientiae Christianae*, ASS, XXII, 402.

this native royal right a new and "acquired" title to the same catholic Kingship.⁵² In virtue of this twofold royal title, Christ could send His Church into the world and justly command that the whole human race, in its own catholic unity, should receive the Church and be guided, in its life as one great family, by the direction and assistance which He commanded His Church to give. This Christ actually did; and it is the mission of the Church for the earthly happiness of the human race as one great unity which we must examine now.

The most fundamental element in the happiness of the human race as a whole is international peace. War is the direct contradiction of the fraternal unity and harmony for which the race was born and to which it has been divinely called by the manner of its redemption. The international aspect of the Church's duty to man's earthly happiness is this before anything else: God has sent it to be the one indestructible external bond which should unite the nations of the earth in peace and be forever the center of their common unity. In an age such as our own, whose ominous beginnings called forth the explicit statement of it by the Holy See, the importance of this mission should need no proof. Its moment to humanity today is immense.

Looking to the past, the Holy See has described this mission of the Church in terms of achievements long since accomplished. Operating through her own center of unity in the papacy, the Church "gathered and united the remains of broken society . . . , became the torch from which the civilization of the Christian ages shone forth. It was the anchor of safety through the wildest tempests which tossed the human family. It was the sacred bond of concord which united the nations which were severed from each other by distance and divergence of customs. It was the common center to which men came not only for the doctrines of faith and religion but also for auspices and counsel in the cause of peace and great achievements."⁵³

Such international action is not a work of supererogation with Christ's Church. It is a constituent part of the Church's mission from God and therefore a duty still incumbent upon the Church today. "For this is the duty, and this is the role assigned to the Church by its divine Founder, that it should be the bond of peace in the common society of men and the bulwark of the public welfare."⁵⁴

⁵² *Annum Sacrum*, ASS, XXXI, 648. ⁵³ *Inscrutabili Dei*, ASS, X, 588.

⁵⁴ *Pastoralis Vigilantiae*, ASS, XXIV, 68.

How is the Church to perform this mission for the peace of mankind in its international life? Pope Leo XIII frequently contrasted the principles which guide the nations of today with those which must guide the Church in the effort for international peace. Since the contrast does much to bring out the power and the necessity of the Church's mission in this respect, we will follow his example.

Leo beheld the nations basing their hopes of peace upon armed security. He watched the dark beginnings of that whirlwind of armament expansion which wrought its first havoc upon the world ten years after he died, and is wreaking a still more terrible havoc now. He pleaded with the world to recognize, before it should be too late, the fallacy of "armed security" as a protection of peace. His words have lost none of their tragic significance since they were written.

Immense resources for war and unlimited armed power can sometimes forestall the outbreak of hostilities. But they are incapable of bringing a secure and stable peace. This threatening brandishing of weapons is more apt to excite than to allay antagonism and suspicions. It fills men with anxious foreboding of what is to come. And it has this against it especially, that it imposes upon the backs of the peoples burdens which are often scarcely more tolerable than war itself.⁵⁵

And again, even more eloquently:

We see what Europe is to-day. For years it has been living in an illusion, not the reality, of peace. Mutual suspicion is everywhere. Almost every nation is rushing to accumulate the armaments of war. The impressionable years of adolescence are spent in military life, far removed from the guidance and counsel of parents. Our strong youth is taken from the farms, from the market-place and from the crafts and put under arms. National treasuries are exhausted by the immense expense, national resources are drained dry, private fortunes are swept away. And now this armed peace can no longer be endured! Did Nature mean that such should be the civil union of mankind?⁵⁶

It is a vivid indication of the independence of Pope Leo's judgement and the keenness of his foresight to recall that these words were written as long ago as 1889 and 1894. The principle of armed security is a fallacy which invites the disaster it professes to prevent. The Church's work for international peace must develop along very different lines.

⁵⁵ Allocution of Feb. 11, 1889, *ASS*, XXI, 387.

⁵⁶ *Praeclarae Gratulationis*, *ASS*, XXVI, 714.

In the first place, peace is much more than the mere absence of war. Such a merely negative peace leaves untouched the centrifugal forces in human nature which can sweep it away in a moment.⁵⁷ True peace is a positive reality, over and beyond the mere absence of war. It "consists in the tranquillity of right order" which must exist throughout the human family as a whole; and "it follows that harmony between nations, just as between private individuals, must be founded above all on justice and charity."⁵⁸ The positive character of the Church's mandatory work for international peace is founded in the fact that God has made her the custodian of this twofold foundation upon which such peace must rise. He "has commanded the Church to be the parent and the guardian of these two virtues" and assigned to her as her "purpose" the conservation, the propagation and the protection of these foundations of peace over all the world.⁵⁹

Two elements enter essentially into the nature of the international peace which is the Church's goal. One is the fruit of charity and the other of justice. For both of these elements the Church must always labor in virtue of her very mission from Christ.

The first element is the unity of the parties at peace. Charity is one of the foundations of peace because it is the bond which brings this unity into being. It is the Church's God-given task to unite all the nations of the world in that charity which He commanded her to propagate to the ends of the earth. In Christian civilization, "it is the Church which has joined all the nations, no matter how different from each other in blood or how distant geographically, in the bond of a brotherly love."⁶⁰ And she must not rest until she has gathered every nation into that unity.

The second element of the only "peace which is worthy of the name"⁶¹ is that which protects the unity of the nations at peace, when that unity has been once realized and achieved. This element is the fruit of justice; and it is for this reason that justice is the other foundation of peace. Not in armed security but in a moral power, which is adequate to restrain these forces in human nature which are

⁵⁷ Response of Dec. 23, 1897, *ASS*, XXX, 539.

⁵⁸ Allocution of Feb. 11, 1889, *ASS*, XXI, 387.

⁵⁹ *Loc. cit.*

⁶⁰ *Loc. cit.*

⁶¹ *Praeclaræ Gratulationis*, *ASS*, XXVI, 714.

the greatest causes of war, must the protection of mankind's fraternal unity be found. The virtue of justice is that dynamic moral force. Without justice the charity in which mankind finds its unity goes down like a house of cards. If unchecked by justice, criminal ambition and the desire of what belongs to another will always lead to eventual warfare. The protection of the bond of brotherhood among the nations from the destructive violence of these passions must be the work, "above all, of the virtue of justice."⁶²

It will be enlightening to compare this analysis of the Church's basic mission for the international peace of mankind with the more summary statement of that mission which has already been cited. Speaking of the Church's work for the "solid prosperity" of nations the Pontiff wrote: "This is the duty and this is the role assigned to the Church by her divine Founder, that she should be the bond of peace in the common society of men and the bulwark of the public welfare." She is to be "the bond of peace" for the human race because God has made her, as we have just seen, the "parent and guardian" of universal charity among men. She is to be "the bulwark of public welfare" because God has likewise given her supreme charge over the moral force, justice, which safeguards the union of charity from dissolution.

The Church's mission to consecrate and preserve the natural unity of the whole human race in the charity of Christian brotherhood is a distinctive feature in the Leonine synthesis. The brotherhood "of man to man and of nation to nation" is Christ's gift to the world.⁶³ The Church must never tire in its labors to establish that brotherhood, since her mission is to perpetuate and spread throughout the whole earth all the benefits which Christ brought.⁶⁴ Since Christ has made universal brotherly love a part of His law, the Church, as the custodian of His law until the end of time, must forever demand such love for one another from all the members of the human race,⁶⁵ and devote all the energy of its "divine power" towards the perfect realization on earth of this brotherhood of all in Christ. Today, in the world-wide collapse of "the dominion of Christian peace"⁶⁶ the Church is still sent by God to do what it did in the past when, "with the passage of

⁶² *Loc. cit.*

⁶⁴ *Satis Cognitum*, ASS, XXVIII, 712.

⁶⁶ *Già fin*, ASS, XXXIII, 197.

⁶³ *In Pluribus*, ASS, XX, 548.

⁶⁵ *Il divisamento*, ASS, XXV, 463-64.

time and events, by the persevering work of the Church, the society of nations was made over and united in the likeness of one family, Christian and free."⁶⁷

In National Life

Christ is also King over individual nations. In virtue of this sovereignty He has commanded that His law should rule and enlighten the public life of each country in the family of nations.

What we have said of private individuals is true in almost the same sense of nations He who made and redeemed human nature, the Son of God, is King and Lord of all the world and to Him belongs the supreme government of men, not only as individuals but also as united in civil society. Therefore in the common life and society of men the law of Christ should prevail; in such wise that this law should rule and enlighten not only private life but public life as well.⁶⁸

And this brings the Church of Christ immediately into the sphere of national affairs. For Christ has made her sole custodian of the law which should thus "rule and enlighten public life." Through the influence of His law Christ has willed that priceless benefits should accrue to the earthly prosperity of the nations.⁶⁹ But He has ordained that the nations should reap these blessings under "the teaching and the leadership of the Church."⁷⁰

The mission in national public life which thereby devolves upon the Church calls for her to play an active part always in the civic life of men.⁷¹ Her destiny and the destiny of each nation in which she pursues this divinely-appointed task are so intimately concerned with each other that, if the State should repudiate or repress such action by the Church, the results are mutually calamitous. Such repression "grievously obstructs and retards" the fulfillment of the Church's mission and tends to an outcome in which the civil and religious life of a nation go down in common ruin.⁷² The more free, on the other hand, the Church is left to play her proper role in public life, the more copiously does the temporal prosperity of the State benefit. For the

⁶⁷ *In Pluribus*, ASS, XX, 548. Cf. *Pervenuti all' anno*, ASS, XXXIV, 519.

⁶⁸ *Tametsi Futuræ*, ASS, XXXIII, 279-80.

⁶⁹ *Arcanum Divinum*, ASS, XII, 385-86.

⁷⁰ *Caritatis Providentiæque*, ASS, XXVI, 524.

⁷¹ *Militans Iesu*, ASS, XIII, 385.

⁷² *Nobilissima Gallorum*, ASS, XVI, 243.

Church is "born to assist" the nations by her authority and her counsels;⁷³ "so born and so instituted that she should never cease to be the fountainhead of many and splendid benefits to nations and peoples, even in temporal things."⁷⁴ In fact, these are "benefits so many and so great that she could not confer more or greater if the first and greatest end of her existence were to ensure the prosperity of our earthly life."⁷⁵

The most important phase of a nation's life as a nation is the political. This is the fundamental element in national life which makes a body of men "the body politic." And it is in this field that the Church operates—always by reason of her mission from Christ—most powerfully for the well-being of a nation as such.

When we speak of the Church's mission in political life, it is as important to establish what her mission is not as to establish what it is. "Political life" admits of at least three familiar meanings. Pope Leo taught that the Church has no competence at all in political life according to two of these meanings, just as emphatically as he insisted on her duty in regard to the third.

The first interpretation of political life makes it signify the legitimate rivalries of political "parties" within the fabric of a commonly accepted national form of government. Many problems of modern national life—tariffs, fiscal policies, public educational facilities, conservation of natural resources, foreign policies, and many others—admit of wide differences of opinion on the solutions which are most for the common good of the nation. The support of candidates for office who will act upon the viewpoint shared by its members is the normal and honorable activity of a political party. In this kind of political life the Pontiff emphatically states that the Church has no concern. He deplors the "error" of those Catholics who would identify the Church with any such political party; such error is as much to be avoided as the opposite extreme of complete civic paganism and irreligion.⁷⁶ When neither of two contending political parties offers menace to the sacred character of civil authority itself,⁷⁷ the Church must "hold herself apart

⁷³ *Praeclarae Gratulationis*, ASS, XXVI, 715.

⁷⁴ *Caritatis Providentiaequae*, ASS, XXVI, 530.

⁷⁶ *Immortale Dei*, ASS, XVIII, 161.

⁷⁵ *Cum Mulla*, ASS, XV, 242.

⁷⁷ When such menace is offered, as on the part of Communist parties in the various

from all the strife of rivalry and continue to pursue her work for the common good, embracing all in her maternal love."⁷⁸

The second meaning of political life goes more deeply into the bases of a nation's life. In this meaning, political life stands for the interplay of rival political philosophies, the rise and fall of different forms of government in popular favor. Thus republicanism sets itself in opposition to the monarchic system as a political ideal; democracy challenges dictatorship in its appeal for national acceptance, and so forth. Even in this more radical field of political life the Church has been given no role by her Founder. There is a wide field here also for honest and honorable rivalry between the champions of one form of government as superior to another in procuring the best interests of a particular people and the decision is a purely civil matter in which the Church has no part. The attempt to align the Church in exclusive support of any form of government—whether it be democracy, republicanism, monarchism or any other—is “an immoderate abuse of religion.”⁷⁹ Every nation has the right to choose whatever form of government seems most conducive to its common good and most in accord with the temperament of its people and the customs and institutions of its past.⁸⁰ In other words, Christ's Church does not favor or condemn either democracy or monarchy or any other political ideology as such. She simply has nothing to do, no mission from her Founder to perform, in this field of political life.

Matching the care of her own rights with scrupulous respect for the rights of another, the Church does not consider as her affair what form of government a people may choose or by what institutions the civil government of nations is conducted. Of the different types of government there is none which the Church does not approve, provided it be not destructive of religion or of moral discipline.⁸¹

But in its third and most fundamental meaning, political life is something with which the Church's mission from Christ is most intimately and inalienably involved. It is in this sense of the word that political life is what makes a group of men a nation; and the elements

modern nations, the Church must act even in this field of political life because of the duty which will be described in the following paragraphs.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 243.

⁷⁹ *Sapientiae Christianae*, ASS, XXII, 396.

⁸⁰ *Diuturnum Illud*, ASS, XIV, 4-5.

⁸¹ *Sapientiae Christianae*, loc. cit.

which compose it are the legitimate authority which is the bond of nationhood and the reconciliation of that authority with the God-given personal liberty of individual men.⁸² In this basic phase of all national life, it is the mission of the Church to guide mankind to a true understanding of the nature of civil authority; to be the champion of that authority; to demand from rulers, in the name of God, justice and paternal love in the exercise of their office, and from citizens, likewise in God's name, a ready obedience and respect for the authority which governs them; and, finally, to foster and deepen the unity in which the whole nation devotes itself to the cause of the common good. It is easy to see how the Church, equipped by God Himself with the means to perform this mission for the earthly happiness of society, should be called by the Holy Father "the Mother of nations," and this by "its very nature and institution."⁸³

The first element of the Church's mission in political life is magisterial. Legitimate authority is the foundation of a nation and the bond which makes the nation a civic unity.⁸⁴ The Church must forever keep clear, in every national polity, the true nature of this bond. In its origin, authority comes from God. "Whatever be the form of the government, the authority which it has comes from God."⁸⁵ Even though it is popular suffrage which elects and designates the ruler, it is not the popular will which is the ultimate origin of the authority which he thereby receives.⁸⁶ Since this is true, legitimate civil rulers "can so oblige citizens to obey, that disobedience would be a sin against God."⁸⁷ In its exercise, civil authority constitutes men "the ministers of God."⁸⁸ In its purpose, it is to be used solely for the common good, "for the benefit of those who are ruled," to secure the tranquillity of public order which will protect the individual citizen's welfare and enable him to work out his moral growth in mind and spirit with security.⁸⁹

⁸² *Praeclaræ Gratulationis*, ASS, XXVI, 715.

⁸³ *Nihil Nobis*, ASS, XXVI, 74-75.

⁸⁴ *Diuturnum Illud*, ASS, XIV, 6; *Cum Multa*, ASS, XV, 243.

⁸⁵ *Praeclaræ Gratulationis*, loc. cit.

⁸⁶ *Diuturnum Illud*, ASS, XIV, 4-5.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 6.

⁸⁸ *Libertas Praestantissimum*, ASS, XX, 605.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 604-5. Cf. *Sapientiae Christianae*, ASS, XXII, 397; *Diuturnum Illud*, ASS, XIV, 5; *Notre consolation*, ASS, XXIV, 643-44.

By this magisterial part of its action in national life the Church fulfills an important part of the mission which God assigned to her when, in the plan of His Providence that made man a social being, He ordained that the Church should light the way to a true understanding of the foundations of social life.⁹⁰ Through the teaching of the Church, the sacred character of the foundation of national life is kept forever clear and there lives again in the world "the true form and beauty of nationhood" which pagan superstition had once destroyed.⁹¹ Need we remark the importance of such a mission in the present age, when pagan superstition has once more set forth to destroy?

But the Church is sent not only to enlighten national life. Champion of the sacred character of authority, she also demands, in virtue of the supreme authority over consciences which Christ has given to her alone, that the bearers of civil authority recognize themselves as ministers of God and conduct their office with corresponding justice, impartiality, honesty and paternal devotion.⁹² And she must exert all her divine power, by which she can move hearts and inspire men to sacrifice and heroism, to make these demands upon the conscience of civil rulers effective.

The mission of the Church in national life is of cardinal importance to those who form the citizenry of a nation. In the first place, it alone protects the one thing which makes civil obedience worthy of the dignity of a human being.⁹³ The compulsion of a citizen's free will by the command of his ruler is mere slavery and an outrage upon the dignity of human nature if that ruler commands only in the name of his own will. And if he commands only in the name of the collective will of a national majority, and in that name compels the individual to obey, then citizenship is merely collectivized slavery. Slavery to the will of a multitude is no less unworthy of human dignity than slavery to an individual. But obedience to one who rules as the minister of God—even when it was the popular will which designated the minister—is not slavery but that civic Christian virtue with which the Church of Christ has been sent to imbue the citizens of all the nations. The Church guards the sacred character of authority and the dignity

⁹⁰ *Pervenuti all' anno*, ASS, XXXIV, 529.

⁹¹ *Diuturnum Illud*, loc. cit.

⁹² *Libertas Praestantissimum*, ASS, XX, 605.

⁹³ *Inscrutabili Dei*, ASS, X, 588.

of citizenship itself when she teaches every Christian man to say to his ruler, in the words of Christ, "Thou wouldst have no power at all over me were it not given thee from above,"⁹⁴ and to respect that power as Christ Himself did.⁹⁵ Supporting this teaching with her divine power to impart moral strength, the Church makes civil obedience readier and easier, makes the citizens themselves upright, constant and devoted to their country, and produces "such citizens, in fine, as constitute the steady foundation of the public order of nations and give to States the invincible power which conquers obstacles and achieves great projects."⁹⁶

National unity is the most essential of all the fruits of national authority and is the foundation of national happiness.⁹⁷ The deepening of this unity is a further part of the Church's mission in national life. She is to unite citizens to their rulers "not in obedience only, but in reverence and love."⁹⁸ With the "new and undreamed of" charity which it is her mission to inspire in every human heart, she is to deepen the civil bond and draw citizens more closely together, uniting all the members of a nation in a brotherhood of love for each other, for their common fatherland, and for the whole Christian family of nations.⁹⁹ "Reason must testify and history bear witness to the fact that the bonds which unite the members of any nation to one another are strengthened and consolidated by the Catholic religion."¹⁰⁰

⁹⁴ *Diuturnum Illud*, ASS, XIV, 5.

⁹⁵ Pope Leo's condemnation of sedition is not in contradiction to the teaching of Pius XI concerning the circumstances which justify revolt against a legal government (*Firmissimam Constantiam*, AAS, XXIX, 189 ff.). Leo XIII condemns revolt against legitimate authority. Pius XI deals with the question of revolt against a legal government which, going beyond mere abuse of its legitimate authority, strives for the destruction of the very foundations of society. Such a government, however legal, destroys the sole reason for its own existence and the legitimacy of its own authority. Since it does not work for the common good but for the common ill *simpliciter*, rebellion against it is no more than defense of the nation against a deadly internal enemy. That Pope Leo would have spoken in the same way, had he faced the situation which Pius XI beheld in Mexico, is clear from his condemnation of "those champions of 'Liberalism' who would make the State a servile one, absolutely limitless in its power." "If the principles of such men were true," says Leo, "man would be obliged to obey and put up with any tyranny, no matter how savage" (*Libertas Praeantissimum*, ASS, XX, 609). There is an excellent review of this problem in *Periodica*, XXVI (1937), 338-42.

⁹⁶ *Pastoralis Vigilantiae*, ASS, XXIV, 68-69. Cf. *Exeunte Iam Anno*, ASS, XXI, 325.

⁹⁷ *Au milieu*, ASS, XXIV, 520. ⁹⁸ *Libertas Praeantissimum*, ASS, XX, 605.

⁹⁹ *In Pluribus*, ASS, XX, 548; *Sapientiae Christianae*, ASS, XXII, 387; *Libertas Praeantissimum*, ASS, XX, 599; *Arcanum Divinum*, ASS, XII, 386.

¹⁰⁰ Allocution of May 12, 1879, ASS, XI, 585.

Such is the basic element in the mission of the Church for the earthly happiness of mankind in the sphere of national affairs—to enlighten mankind about the sacred character of the foundation of all civil life; to make good rulers and good citizens; to deepen the unity which binds both into one national family; to strive until the end of time “that all the members and parts of a nation, the commands and prohibitions of legislation, the popular institutions, the seats of learning, the marriage law and the homes, the establishments of the wealthy and the factories of the working-man should all receive and imbibe that *life* which comes from Christ.”¹⁰¹ With the tensions of different political ideologies or the rivalries of different political parties the Church can be concerned only in the event that these offer a threat to the Christian character of the nation’s life. This is “the order established by divine Providence”¹⁰² and it is in this manner that, by the will of Christ, the nations are to achieve their happiness on earth “through the teaching and the leadership of the Church.”¹⁰³

In Economic Life

Christ’s own mission was intimately concerned with the conduct by men of their economic life. It was He who established, once and forever, the relations which must regulate the co-operation of the rich and the poor for the common material welfare of all. To the rich Christ proclaimed a strict obligation to use the resources of their wealth not only for their own advantage but also for the good of the poor.¹⁰⁴ For an example to them He drew upon the resources of His own divinity to assist the poor in their material needs.¹⁰⁵ To the poor He offered the loving comradeship and example of His own voluntary poverty and bade them learn from His own life the dignity and the duty of their station.¹⁰⁶ And to both rich and poor He commanded mutual assistance in the fulfilling of life’s material wants as a requirement for the attainment of eternal happiness itself—going so far as

¹⁰¹ *Tametsi Futurae*, ASS, XXXIII, 284. Cf. *Sapientiae Christianae*, ASS, XXII, 397.

¹⁰² *Tametsi Futurae*, ASS, XXXIII, 284. Cf. *Arcanum Divinum*, ASS, XII, 396; *Rerum Novarum*, ASS, XXIII, 654; *Dall’alto*, ASS, XXIII, 201.

¹⁰³ *Caritatis Providentiaeque*, ASS, XXVI, 524.

¹⁰⁴ *Rerum Novarum*, ASS, XXIII, 651–52.

¹⁰⁵ *Graves de Communi*, ASS, XXXIII, 390–91.

¹⁰⁶ *Rerum Novarum*, *loc. cit.*

to make personal love for Himself the incentive to this mutual material assistance.¹⁰⁷

As Christ's mission was concerned for the material welfare of the human race, so must the Church's be. It is the character of that concern, and the nature of the work for man's earthly happiness which thereby devolves upon the Church, which we must now consider. Since this work cuts across all lines of national boundaries, it will serve to round out the picture of the Church's task in international and national life which has so far been drawn.

That the Church has duties in the economic sphere is clear. Pope Leo XIII described the promulgation of the great labor Encyclical *Rerum Novarum* as a duty incumbent upon him precisely because he was the head of the Church.¹⁰⁸ Referring to that Encyclical and the economic disorder which evoked it, he wrote: "The nature of our ministry requires that We be always prompt and ready to bring aid wherever the afflicted cry for comfort, the weak for protection, or the sorrowful for the lifting of their burdens."¹⁰⁹

Given this ministry, the Church was immediately faced with the challenge of the "monstrous perversion"¹¹⁰ of human slavery which disfigured the economic life of the Roman world. Patiently and untiringly working for the eradication of that curse, she succeeded at last in restoring throughout the Christian economy the dignity of human nature as such—although this work was temporarily undone by a post-Reformation revival of the hideous traffic.¹¹¹ Today, when "a small number of very rich men have been able to lay upon the teeming masses of the laboring poor a yoke which is little better than slavery itself,"¹¹² there is a similar challenge to the Church's ministry in the economic life of mankind. The issue is now one of economic rather than physical slavery, but the fundamental problem is still one of adjustment between the rich and the poor, between the powerful and the powerless on the economic level. And the success with which the Church wiped that earlier slavery out of the Christian world

¹⁰⁷ *Graves de Communi, loc. cit.*

¹⁰⁸ *Rerum Novarum, ASS, XXIII, 647.*

¹⁰⁹ *Nihil Nobis, ASS, XXVI, 74.*

¹¹⁰ *In Pluribus, ASS, XX, 546.*

¹¹¹ *Inscrutabili Dei, ASS, X, 586-87; Rerum Novarum, ASS, XXIII, 653-54.*

¹¹² *Rerum Novarum, ASS, XXIII, 642.*

should be an object lesson, the Holy Father says, of what mankind can expect from the Church's mission in its economic life today.¹¹³

This phase of the Church's task for our earthly welfare follows the same general pattern which we have already seen in studying her role in national and international life. It is a task of "teaching and leadership." She is to teach the rich the meaning and the obligations of wealth, the poor the meaning and the obligations of poverty, and rich and poor are to learn from her the relationship which God has decreed should exist between them. And she is to see to it, by her "divine power" and by the moral imperative of her authority, that her teaching is translated into the actualities of economic life.

Magisterially, this task embraces four fundamental issues. First, the Church must enlighten men concerning the religious core of the whole economic question.¹¹⁴ The secret of economic happiness lies not in material things themselves but in the right use of those things by men.¹¹⁵ Even if commerce, profits, and wages should be doubled and at the same time all laboring hours should be cut in half and prices remain as they were—so that everyone would get twice as much for half the toil—even then, if a Christian use of the increased resources did not prevail, the economic misery we have known would continue or quickly recur.¹¹⁶ In short, morality and virtue lie at the base of economic prosperity in this life just as they do in the case of our far more important eternal happiness. The social elements which are the ingredients of economic happiness are not riches and poverty, but the rich and the poor; not the material things, but the men. It is precisely because morality is the dynamic of economics, just as it is of world peace and national well-being, that God, wishing that morality to be Christian and not merely "natural," gave to the Church the mission we are studying.

Secondly, the Church must teach the rich and the powerful, in God's name, that they are obliged to use their resources, whether of fortune or power or mind, for the good of others as well as for their own good. The very possession of abundance constitutes a man the steward of God's providence for the care of the less fortunate.

¹¹³ *Nihil Nobis*, ASS, XXVI, 75.

¹¹⁴ *Graves de Communi*, ASS, XXXIII, 389.

¹¹⁵ *Rerum Novarum*, ASS, XXIII, 650. ¹¹⁶ *Graves de Communi*, loc. cit.

Whoever has received from the divine bounty a large share of temporal blessings, whether they be external and material 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.¹¹⁷

Thirdly, the Church is sent to teach the poor the real meaning and dignity, as well as the obligations of poverty. The need to toil for a living is not a cause for shame. The life of labor is quite as noble and dignified as the life which directs the investment of capital; and poverty, in the sight of God—and in the light of His social truth—may hold its head as high as wealth.¹¹⁸ Indeed, in the light of Christ's own choice of it, poverty may hold its head even higher than wealth.¹¹⁹ On the other hand (and who is so naïvely partisan as to deny the importance of this truth also?), just as God will hold the rich to a strict account of their social obligations, so He will hold the laboring man to a strict account of the diligence, the honesty, and the patience and charity which it is his obligation to bring to the cause of the common economic welfare.¹²⁰

Finally, to the rich and the poor alike the Church must teach the relationship which Christ has decreed should obtain between the two classes. The mutual duties of rich and poor exceed the duties of justice. To justice must be added not merely the casual benevolence of kindly men nor merely the more constant benevolence of friendship, but the fulness of brotherly love which is zealous for the good "both of body and soul" of each other.¹²¹ This brotherly love must "embrace altogether all men, of every condition in life, as members of one and the same family, children of the same loving Father, redeemed by the same Savior and called to the same eternal heritage."¹²² It is no mere human ideal, born of a certain fragile human kindness. Such brotherly love is the strict law of God and Christ "which, as it were, completes the law of justice."¹²³ Men may deny and outrage this duty and law—as they are doing today in so many parts of the world—but the Church must forever pursue its mission to bring home to the rich and the poor

¹¹⁷ *Rerum Novarum*, ASS, XXIII, 652. Cf. *Quod Apostolici*, ASS, XI, 377.

¹¹⁸ *Loc. cit.*

¹¹⁹ *Loc. cit.*

¹²⁰ *Rerum Novarum*, ASS, XXIII, 649; *Graves de Communi*, ASS, XXXIII, 389.

¹²¹ *Rerum Novarum*, *ibid.*, p. 653; *Graves de Communi*, *ibid.*, pp. 390–91.

¹²² *Graves de Communi*, *ibid.*, p. 388. ¹²³ *Ibid.*, p. 390.

the fact that between them "friendship is not enough. If they are to obey the precepts of Christ, it is brotherly love which must unite them."¹²⁴

As Christ entrusted His wisdom to the Church for her task of teaching, so He has given her definite instruments for the realization of the ideal she teaches. Rich and poor must do more than merely acknowledge their several obligations. They must live up to these obligations. "And it is precisely in this fundamental and all-important matter, on which everything depends, that the Church possesses a power peculiarly her own."¹²⁵ For the instruments with which the Church is to implement her teaching were designed for that purpose by God Himself and given to her alone.¹²⁶ By them the hearts of men are moved as by nothing else to translate the Christian social ideal into an actual Christian social life. And no other instruments are so powerful to protect the brotherhood of rich and poor—and the economic happiness which depends on that brotherhood—from the professional agitator who plays upon the feelings of the poor and from the hypocrites who, "surrounding their own lives with every luxury, prate in the presence of the multitudes of a brotherhood which, in the depths of their hearts, they proudly despise."¹²⁷

Pope Leo XIII considered this action of the Church so vital to the present emergency that he commanded seminaries to instruct candidates for the priesthood thoroughly in the social teachings of the papal documents; and he never ceased to exhort the Church's priests to "that social labor of the clergy which we have so often insisted upon as necessary to our times."¹²⁸

Intimately connected with the Church's mission in economic life is her task in the direct alleviation of material suffering. Her hospitals, her refuges for the hungry and the homeless, her associations for the help of the needy are history's own testimony to this aspect of her mission for our earthly happiness, and the wonder even of her enemies.¹²⁹ How is it, the Pontiff asks, that this temporal activity of the Church, like her spiritual work, has continued to grow more vigor-

¹²⁴ *Rerum Novarum*, ASS, XXIII, 653.

¹²⁵ *Loc. cit.*

¹²⁶ *Loc. cit.*

¹²⁷ *Exeunte Iam Anno*, ASS, XXI, 325.

¹²⁸ *Fin dal principio*, ASS, XXXV, 263.

¹²⁹ *Rerum Novarum*, ASS, XXIII, 654-55.

ously through the ages despite persecutions and confiscations and laws which were framed expressly to crush it? The answer lies both in the power of the Church's prayers and in the fact that God Himself has ordained from all eternity that the Church should lead mankind to eternal happiness by the proximate help of such temporal things.¹³⁰

The mission of the Church to continue the benefactions which her Founder lavished upon the needy and the suffering is illustrated by the work of her religious orders. In their apostolate "for the eternal salvation of the neighbor and for the solace of those sorrows which weigh in such numbers upon humanity . . . they co-operate abundantly in the mission of the Church, which consists essentially in the sanctifying of souls and the doing of good to humanity."¹³¹ Christ has put the impulse to this work for the suffering so intimately into the very nature of His Church that such religious orders spontaneously spring up within her whenever her life is allowed to develop freely.¹³²

To sum up, before going on to our next consideration. Christ has sent the Church to enlighten economic life. She is to teach mankind that economic prosperity depends upon the morality which directs the use of its material resources; and she is to say what that morality is. She is to teach rich and poor their obligations to each other and unite both in Christian brotherhood. She is to apply the fulness of her spiritual authority—and all the other means which Christ Himself designed for this purpose and entrusted to her alone—to see that the Christian ideal of economic life is translated into actuality. To her sole keeping Christ has entrusted the force which pours itself out upon the needs of suffering humanity as no other force can do—His own divine charity.¹³³ And in this lies the final secret of the Church's unparalleled power for the material welfare of the human race. God has made her the keeper of the fire which kindles the hearts of rich and poor to love one another "in Christ."¹³⁴ Inflamed herself with this divine charity, luminous with the glory of centuries of devotion to the alleviation of earthly sorrow, her very life and being is a cry to the rich and the poor alike: "Be imitators of me as I am of Christ."¹³⁵

¹³⁰ *Octobri Mense*, ASS, XXIV, 200-201.

¹³¹ *Au milieu*, ASS, XXXIII, 356. The Church has fulfilled the temporal side of this mission right from the apostolic times: *Rerum Novarum*, *loc. cit.*, quoting Acts, 4:34.

¹³² *Au milieu*, *loc. cit.*

¹³³ *Rerum Novarum*, ASS, XXIII, 655.

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 653.

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 655.

In the Progress of Culture and Knowledge

Earthly human happiness is much more than mere material well-being. The most exquisite manifestations of it, in fact, transcend the things of matter. The civilization in which mankind finds its happiness in this life is much more a thing of the mind and the heart. The mission of the Church for the advancement of this civilization, like her task in economic life, cuts across national boundaries and will serve to complete the description of her Christ-given task for the happiness of our race and on earth.

As one of the fruits of His redemptive work, Christ Himself brought into the world a whole new civilization and culture.¹³⁶ That the Church He founded has a duty to promote and propagate that new civilization cannot be doubted. She was founded and commissioned to perpetuate all the blessings which His mission produced for the human race.¹³⁷ The Church's work to lead mankind from barbarism and darkness to civilization and culture is her "duty and task."¹³⁸ All the immense effort of the Holy See for the cause of culture and knowledge, continued in his pontificate by Pope Leo XIII, has been "inspired by the realization of our supreme and most sacred duty, that is, by the Apostolic mission, which We bear to all nations."¹³⁹

For the character of the Church's duty in this field, we may turn to the immediate context of the words just quoted, since it is there that the Pontiff is speaking of this task as integral to the mission of the Church.¹⁴⁰

The Church recognizes in all truth which mankind achieves through research and study the trace of divine intelligence itself. All truth, therefore, serves to help mankind to a greater knowledge of God. For this reason the Church must rejoice in every extension of the boundaries of human knowledge and must foster, with every means at her disposal, the growth of all intellectual disciplines.

¹³⁶ *Spectata Fides*, ASS, XVIII, 306. It is interesting to note, in this connection, the role which Leo assigns to Europe in the dispensation of divine providence: "Quantum valet mortalis ratio ex rerum eventis existimare, hoc plane videtur Europae munus assignatum a Deo, ut Christianam gentium humanitatem ad omnes terras sensim perferat" (*Praeclarae Gratulationis*, ASS, XXVI, 716.)

¹³⁷ *Satis Cognitum*, ASS, XXVIII, 712.

¹³⁸ *Trans Oceanum*, ASS, XXIX, 659.

¹³⁹ *Immortale Dei*, ASS, XVIII, 176.

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 177-78.

Even in the quest of the various material sciences after an increase of "the things which minister to the refinements and the comforts of life" and in the probing of nature's secrets which has borne such practical fruits in our own time, the Church has come into the world to lend every active encouragement and to be the sworn foe of mental indolence. She is to "give stimulus to every manner of art and craft and, by her influence, direct all these strivings after perfection towards virtue and salvation."

Protection from the spiritual havoc which the industry of human intelligence may work when, in its fallibility, it temporarily mistakes error for truth is no small part of the Church's duty to the welfare of civilization. "She labors to prevent man's intellectual activity and industry from ever leading him away from God and from his heavenly happiness." Specious knowledge is dearly bought when the price is eventual spiritual ruin and the collapse of all happiness.

This, then, is the key to the real meaning of so much that is glorious and heroic in the Church's past. In saving the libraries, the literatures, and the cultural monuments of antiquity from destruction, in fostering every kind of learning, whether sacred or profane, by the foundation of universities and schools of every description, in inspiring the fine arts in all their noblest manifestations,¹⁴¹ the Church was being true to a "supreme and most sacred duty." All her unnumbered services to civilization and knowledge have not been mere human policy on her part or just an intellectual and artistic interest with which she could have dispensed if she saw fit. They have been the faithful fulfillment of a mission which the Church received at her birth—"her duty and task" to lead men from darkness and barbarism, along the footprints which divine truth and beauty have left in this world, to Christian civilization and culture.

THE UNITY OF THE MISSION OF THE CHURCH

The relation which the Church's task for our earthly happiness bears to the supernatural purpose of her existence has already been adumbrated many times in the preceding pages. A more precise formulation of that relation will be useful now. It will serve to reintroduce

¹⁴¹ Cf. *Inscrutabili Dei*, ASS, X, 586-88; *Nel Giugno*, ASS, XI, 533; *Libertas Praestantissimum*, ASS, XX, 608; *Dall' alto*, ASS, XXIII, 201-202; *Gid fin*, ASS, XXXIII, 197.

into this picture of the Church's mission the sublime and perfect unity with which that mission came from the hand of God. Sometimes the extended consideration of so many disparate details can produce an unfortunate obscuration of the fundamental unity which underlies them all.

The Church of Christ has only one divine mission, one ultimate goal which she must pursue in everything she does. She was founded by our Redeemer to lead the human race to the happiness of heaven. This alone is her "true and proper end."¹⁴² All her authority, whether magisterial or jurisdictional, is spiritual authority and her every concern for the earthly happiness of mankind is regulated and conditioned by the connection between such happiness and the eternal bliss of heaven. It is only the fact that there is such a connection, established by God Himself who is the author both of nature and of grace, which brings the Church into the temporal field at all. It is because this connection is so extensive that her duty to man's earthly happiness is a thing of so many ramifications.

The transcendence of the Church's ultimate supernatural goal over all her preoccupations with the things of time is reflected in the very nature of human life and destiny. Mortal life can be evaluated only in terms of the immortal one which is to follow it. By any other standard, mankind's earthly existence is a meaningless mystery.¹⁴³ "God made man not for the fragile and passing happiness of this earth but for a heavenly happiness without end."¹⁴⁴ Mortal life is therefore but a prelude and a striving. "It is when we have departed from this life that we shall begin to live our true life."¹⁴⁵ Since this is true, earthly happiness, if placed in contrast to the eternal, means absolutely nothing.¹⁴⁶

But to represent earthly and heavenly happiness as merely a contrast would be a supreme misrepresentation of the order decreed by divine providence. "Nothing could be more odious, nothing more a misrepresentation" than to depict their mutual relation as one of conflict.¹⁴⁷ Earthly happiness was meant by God to help man's growth in virtue and to foreshadow, even in time, virtue's eternal reward.

¹⁴² *Quantunque Le siano*, ASS, XX, 4.

¹⁴⁴ *Loc. cit.*

¹⁴⁶ *Loc. cit.*

¹⁴³ *Rerum Novarum*, ASS, XXIII, 650-51.

¹⁴⁵ *Loc. cit.*

¹⁴⁷ *Laetitiae Sanctae*, ASS, XXVI, 197.

Mankind should find in the splendor of an earthly prosperity the faint likeness of a much more magnificent destiny which beckons him on. In short, God made nature and grace, the temporal and the eternal, for co-operation and not for conflict:

The same God is the author of nature and of grace, not that the one should obstruct the other or that they should live at swords' points with each other, but that they should conspire together in friendly harmony: so that, by their twofold guidance, we might reach, as it were by an easier road, the immortal happiness for which we mortal men have been born.¹⁴⁸

The reflection of this divine arrangement in the mission of the Church is the explanation of her duty to man's earthly happiness and of the role she must therefore play in temporal affairs. The Church of Christ, which is to guide the human race in all the things which are conducive to its eternal salvation, cannot neglect the instrument of temporal happiness and well-being which God Himself made helpful and, within certain limits, morally necessary to that end as a means to its attainment.

An analysis of the Church's actual operation in the temporal sphere reveals that three types of action enter into it. Consideration of each serves to bring out clearly just how her mission for man's earthly happiness is integrated into the unity of her one supernatural mission.

The imposition by the Church of a strict obligation in conscience, regulating men's conduct of their temporal affairs, is the first type of such action. Most of the concrete manifestations of the Church's mission which were outlined in the preceding pages are instances of this type of action. With her divine authority to teach she must promulgate the true nature of international society, of civil authority, of economic responsibility, of civilization's relation to the Christian revelation, and so forth. The acceptance of these teachings is a command which God Himself makes through His Church. With her divine authority to rule, the Church obliges men to the performance of the duties which such truths introduce into his temporal life. In every such case the Church's competence to command springs from the necessary connection which God and Christ have established between these earthly things and our heavenly destiny.

¹⁴⁸ *Loc. cit.*

It is by her counsel and inspiration that the Church accomplishes the second type of her action for man's earthly happiness. The social wisdom she has gathered in her march through the centuries and the dynamic of her unparalleled power for the moving of men's hearts are brought to bear upon the betterment, by men themselves, of their temporal condition and the consequent increase of their happiness in this life. This type, also, of assistance in the temporal field is prompted by the Church's mandate to lead the human race to heaven. She knows that a certain modicum of earthly prosperity is ordinarily essential for the prospering of religion itself;¹⁴⁹ and therefore she must lend every assistance to its realization. She knows, furthermore, that a truly flourishing temporal prosperity is to be sought, according to God's own design, "that we might reach, as it were by an easier road, the immortal happiness for which we mortal men have been born."¹⁵⁰ And so she cannot but stimulate by every means at her disposal, and in virtue of her own spiritual purpose, the advancement of that prosperity.

The third type is the Church's direct use of temporal things for the promotion of man's temporal welfare. The collection and distribution of funds for Catholic Charities, accomplished annually under the auspices of the Church in New York, is an immediate example of this. The hospitals and orphanages which are conducted by her religious orders throughout the world are more permanent examples. In another field of mankind's temporal welfare, the universities and schools with which she has circled the globe are yet further examples of this type of her work for our present happiness. Msgr. Ligutti's National Catholic Rural Life Conference, the Pontifical Academy of Sciences, the Providence mills in Ireland, the Vatican galleries and museums—an enumeration which could be prolonged indefinitely—are other examples, each in its own particular sphere of human advancement in the things of this life. As has also been seen in the preceding pages, the Church has been faithful to this type of direct action for man's earthly happiness from the apostolic times themselves. In all these things the Church is pursuing, while working directly with temporal

¹⁴⁹ *Rerum Novarum*, ASS, XXIII, 657, quoting St. Thomas, *De Regimine Principum*, I, 15.

¹⁵⁰ *Laetitia Sanctae*, loc. cit.

things, her one supernatural mission. In none of them is her activity merely a work of supererogation. For she knows that God has designed these temporal things to help us to the immortal happiness for which we mortal men have been born. And she is eternally conscious that it is her mission from Christ to help and guide the human race in all the things which God has made conducive to its salvation.

This, then, is the true character of the Church's task and duty for men's earthly happiness. Her mission for our temporal good is an auxiliary mission, flowing spontaneously from the nature of the ultimate goal which has been set before her. As the truths which are connected with the deposit of faith are the secondary object of her divine mission to teach, so the temporal happiness which is so intimately related to our attainment of happiness in heaven is the secondary object of her divine salvific mission. Her duty to man's earthly happiness is but a manifestation, in the temporal field, of her supreme duty to his eternal salvation.

THE NECESSITY OF THE CHURCH FOR TEMPORAL HAPPINESS

God has entrusted to the Church alone the task of guiding mankind to its supernatural happiness in heaven. Since He has dowered her alone with the only means through which that ultimate human destiny can be achieved, she is necessary for that salvation: without her men are simply unable to reach heaven. The final point which we find in the teaching of the Holy See on the character of the Church's task for man's earthly happiness is the fact that an analogous necessity attaches to her ministry in this field also: "In these times, if never before, men ought to see and realize not only the advantage but the utter necessity of the Catholic religion to the peace and well-being of society."¹⁵¹

Without the help of the Catholic Church human society is incapable of a happy and prosperous life on earth. Without the assistance which it derives from her work for its temporal welfare, mankind cannot achieve real international peace, or solid prosperity in its individual nations, or properly distributed economic happiness, or secure growth in the splendor of its Christian civilization. God has made our temporal prosperity and happiness the proper purpose and goal of the civil

¹⁵¹ *Quod Multum*, ASS, XIX, 99.

society. He has equipped the civil society with the necessary instruments for this task. Therefore, the civil society is, according to the traditional terminology, a perfect society.¹⁵² Nevertheless, the same God who made the State a perfect society has ordained that the Church's guidance, inspiration, and collaboration should supplement the work of the State for prosperity,¹⁵³ and the rejection of this aid is a contravention of God's will which must lead to temporal disaster. "To repudiate the precepts which the Church gives and to reject her leadership is a repudiation of the will of God Himself and the rejection of a supreme benefit: with the result that all true prosperity and nobility vanish from the State, everything falls into confusion, and all, rulers and citizens alike, are convulsed with insecurity and foreboding."¹⁵⁴

The explanation of this necessity of the Church's ministry in temporal things lies in the very nature of the elements which must constitute man's earthly happiness. All of these elements rest upon foundations which are religious and, in the present order, supernatural. The very foundations of earthly happiness are, therefore, entrusted to the sole care of the Church. Positive peace among nations, national unity, harmony between the social classes—these must rest, according to the design of Providence for our happiness even in the present life, upon the Christian brotherhood which Christ sent His Church to propagate over the whole world. Rising upon that foundation, they depend for their security upon the practice of virtues which it is the Church's mission to inspire and direct. And she alone has received from Christ the instruments which He designed to make the practice of those virtues possible.¹⁵⁵ Without the aid of these instruments, the virtues themselves will not be practiced.¹⁵⁶ And without the practice of such virtues prosperity and temporal happiness is an impossible dream.¹⁵⁷

Rejection of the Church's help is therefore "not only impolitic but anti-social. For the blows which are aimed at religion strike at the heart of society itself. . . . The society, therefore, which withdraws itself from the Church—which is an important part of its strength—

¹⁵² *Immortale Dei*, ASS, XVIII, 173-74.

¹⁵³ *Caritatis Providentiæque*, ASS, XXVI, 524.

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 525.

¹⁵⁵ *Rerum Novarum*, ASS, XXIII, 653. ¹⁵⁶ *Loc. cit.*

¹⁵⁷ Response of December 23, 1897, ASS, XXX, 539. Cf. *Miræ Caritatis*, ASS, XXXIV, 648.

decays or falls into ruin, since it separates that which God wished joined together."¹⁵⁸

To confirm this, the Holy See points to the story of mankind's past. History is strewn with the wrecks of nations which insisted on excluding the Church's aid from their quest for prosperity.¹⁵⁹ Those same nations enjoyed a flourishing prosperity when the Church was left free to perform its divinely given mission within their borders.¹⁶⁰

The student of political philosophy might find, at first sight, an apparently insurmountable difficulty in this papal pronouncement of the necessity of the Church even for temporal happiness. Does not such a doctrine reflect upon the ability of the State to achieve its own proper end, and thus upon its character as a genuinely perfect society? If the State, without the Church, is unable to achieve temporal prosperity, how can it be said to contain within itself all the means necessary for the attainment of its purpose?

A distinction must be made between civil society in the abstract and civil society in the present fallen state of human nature. Civil society, as it actually exists today, is a society of men whose native capacities have been seriously affected by the results of original and personal sin. Because of this present condition of the human race, all men need divine revelation and the Church, if they are to reach a proper understanding of many truths which, in themselves, are not beyond the natural grasp of human intelligence.¹⁶¹ In the same way civil society, made up wholly of men whose nature is a fallen one, needs the Church if it is to attain even the proper earthly prosperity which is its goal.

This need of the Church does not, however, make the State only an imperfect society. It does mean that any State which repudiates the assistance of the Church can never properly achieve the purpose of its existence—and all history testifies that this is a fact. But such an impotency is found in the State only *per accidens*. According to God's design—*per se*, that is—every State should be Christian and Catholic and, as such, in possession of a strict right to the Church's assistance in those religious issues which must be the foundation of its prosperity.

¹⁵⁸ *Pervenuti all' anno*, ASS, XXXIV, 528-29.

¹⁵⁹ *Inscrutabili Dei*, ASS, X, 588; *Nobilissima Gallorum*, ASS, XVI, 242-43.

¹⁶⁰ *Inscrutabili Dei*, loc. cit.

¹⁶¹ Vatican Council, Sess. III, cap. 2; DB, n. 1786.

Per se this right is inherent in the constitution of civil society in the present Christian dispensation and it is this right which safeguards the State's position as a perfect society. It parallels the right which the Church herself has, as a perfect spiritual society, to such material help from the State as she might need for her own supernatural end.

The State, therefore, which rejects the help of the Church is still a perfect society. But it is a society which has repudiated "an important part of its strength"¹⁶² and refuses to employ one of the means which God Himself has made essential for the execution of its task.

We need not go back to the collapse of nations in bygone centuries to find illustration of the necessity of the Church for man's earthly happiness. Pope Leo XIII took his most vivid instance in point from the condition of the modern world. The cause of the "mortal disease which has infected the very core of society" in our time¹⁶³ "lies, beyond everything else, in this: that the holy and venerable authority of the Church which, in God's name, directs the human race has been rejected."¹⁶⁴ "The basic cause of such immense ruin is . . . the attempted apostasy of the present society from Christ and from His Church,"¹⁶⁵ "and from this senseless apostasy comes the trouble which is convulsing all practical life."¹⁶⁶ God gave His Church a task to perform even in the temporal things of which man's earthly happiness is compounded. By her authoritative direction and leadership, by her counsels and inspiration, and by her own direct use of material things, she is to play, in the life of nations and of all human society, a role which the design of Providence itself has made indispensable to man's temporal well-being. The anti-clericals of the modern nations have gloried in their exclusion of the Church from the fulfillment of this task. But the exclusion has led, not through any arbitrary visitation of divine vengeance but by a strict sequence of cause and effect, to the utter social disaster of this tragic twentieth century.

CONCLUSION

There is a high challenge in the appreciation of the Church's duty to man's earthly happiness, when this doctrine is viewed in the pitiless

¹⁶² *Pervenuti all' anno, loc. cit.*

¹⁶³ *Inscrutabili Dei, ASS, X, 585-86.*

¹⁶⁴ *Loc. cit.*

¹⁶⁵ *Da grave, ASS, XI, 275.*

¹⁶⁶ *Pervenuti all' anno, ASS, XXXIV, 522.*

light of contemporary conditions. We are assured that "in the Church of Christ alone is the power which can cure the dreadful ills of society."¹⁶⁷ We are likewise assured—by the highest authority in Christendom, the teaching of the Holy See itself—that Christ has sent His Church to use this power for the rescue of society in the twentieth century as in other centuries of disaster. It is in this that the challenge lies. The challenge is both to the Church, in all her members, and to human society.

It is a challenge to society. Perhaps at no previous time in the history of the world has mankind been so keenly aware of the tragedy of its lost unity. World-society is torn with forces which have disrupted its natural and divinely established unity. It has become a family divided against itself and therefore an unhappy family. It finds awareness of its lost unity in the very bitterness of the struggle which racks it. Man's inhumanity to man has grown so venomous that it can only be explained as the cruelty of brother to brother, instinct with the desire to repudiate an irrevocable common bond. The primal origin of this cleavage in the human family—of "the monstrous perversion that there should be men who would repudiate the memory of that brotherhood which comes from man's common origin"¹⁶⁸—goes all the way back to the infancy of the race. God Himself has given to society, in the Church, the instrument which can gather it again into the unity of one family and consecrate it, through the bond of Christian brotherhood, in an even deeper unity than that of its birthright. This is the only provision God has made for that restoration. Society must choose: but it can only choose between chaos and the Church.

It is a challenge to the Church, in all her members. The Church is profoundly convinced that the winning or loss of man's heavenly destiny is decided in this mortal life, and that her assistance is vital in providing the proper earthly happiness which plays such an important part in that decision. Perhaps it is because the Church is so necessary for man's eternal happiness that God made her so indispensable even for our earthly joy, that men might see in the splendor and beneficence of her earthly mission the image of her more glorious, eternal importance. In any event, because Christ has made her what she is, she

¹⁶⁷ *Da grave, loc. cit.* Cf. *Quantunque Le siano*, ASS, XX, 6.

¹⁶⁸ *In Pluribus*, ASS, XX, 546.

must gird herself for the rescue of society's temporal happiness today just as solicitously¹⁶⁹ as she has always striven for its eternal salvation.

The crisis stands before us—"a mortal disease has infected the very core of society, gives it no rest, and forbodes for the future still further upheavals and, in the end, catastrophe."¹⁷⁰

The world's need of the Church is indisputable—"in these times, if never before, men ought to see and realize not only the advantage but the utter necessity of the Catholic religion to the peace and the well-being of society."¹⁷¹

The adequacy of the Church to meet the fundamental spiritual demands of the social crisis could not be more complete—"in regard to things temporal it is the source of benefits so manifold and so great that it could not confer more or greater ones if the first and greatest end of its existence were to ensure the prospering of our earthly life."¹⁷²

And the mandate from Christ is clear—"Christ constituted the Church the vicar of His mission and, looking to the future, He commanded that, if human society should suffer any serious disturbance or collapse, she should bring it back to true order and lift it up again."¹⁷³

The Spouse of Christ will be faithful to that mandate. In that certainty resides the hope of the world in the present collapse. But her awareness of the task and of its urgency must be vividly shared by all her children, and her own devotion to the will of her Founder matched in their lives, if the duty is to be done with the heroic energy and promptness which it deserves.

¹⁶⁹ Pius XI, in the last Encyclical of his life: "With no less solicitude. . ." The encyclical is addressed to the Philippine hierarchy and dated Jan. 19, 1939; published on the day of his death, Feb. 10, 1939, in the *Osservatore Romano*.

¹⁷⁰ *Inscrutabili Dei*, ASS, X, 585-86.

¹⁷¹ *Quod Multum*, ASS, XIX, 99.

¹⁷² *Immortale Dei*, ASS, XVIII, 161.

¹⁷³ *Arcanum Divinum*, ASS, XII, 385-86.