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## NEW THINGS

*Brian Mullan, O.P.*

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*This article is part of the Society of Catholic Social Scientists' research study on "Catholic Political Activity in the United States." It focuses on the moral obligations of Catholics in the political order.*



THE TERM "NEW THINGS" IS A LITERAL TRANSLATION OF THE TITLE OF THE PRIMUM social encyclical of the Catholic church, *Rerum Novarum* of Leo XIII issued on May 1, 1891. Pope John Paul II recently issued another encyclical on the hundredth anniversary of *Rerum Novarum* to try to update the principles enunciated in 1891 to the contemporary scene, called *Centesimus Annus*. The doctrine taught in these encyclicals has been reaffirmed by both the encyclical *Veritatis Splendor* and *The Catechism of the Catholic Church*. An even casual reading of all these documents makes clear to the reader that the church has a great interest in what goes on in the civil order. Does this mean the Catholic church has a civil mission? What is the exact basis for the authority and responsibility of the church to speak regarding these matters? Would not this be foreign to any real interest in the Gospel, which respects the other world? Or is the doctrine of Christ best served where throne and altar or in our case congress and altar rest as one? Would it not be the best of all possible worlds to have Catholic priests, bishops and committed laymen running congress and government according to Christian principles?

The answer to these questions rests on a dilemma in Catholic doctrine and practice that is as old as the church herself. How to be involved in the world that Christ called Catholics to serve by charity, even in the political sphere and yet not falsify the church by identifying her with merely a human future or a Marxist paradise. How can the church be counter-cultural and yet influence the culture?

In this article, I have two objects. First, to show the grounds on which the church and indeed any man should be concerned about the civil order. Second, to give some basic theoretical principles to guide the action of the lay person in the world, which according to Vatican II is to "work earnestly in order that created goods through human labor, technical skill and civil culture may serve the utility of all men according to the plan of the creator and the light of his word."<sup>1</sup>

### GENERAL PRINCIPLES

Why does the church discuss social questions? Does the church have a political mission to solve political difficulties? The Second Vatican Council is explicit on this subject.

The Church, because of her role and competence is not identified with any political community nor bound by ties to any political system. It is at once the sign and safeguard of the transcendental dimension of the human person. The political community and the Church

are autonomous and independent of each other in their own fields. Nevertheless, both are devoted to the personal vocation of man, though under different titles.<sup>2</sup>

The Church has no direct political mission as such, nor does the layman as a Catholic layman. The distinction between the two orders must be held intact.

The Church, because of her commission and competence is not to be confused in any way with a political community. She is both the sign and safeguard of the transcendent character of the human person.<sup>3</sup>

The distinction between the two orders is founded in the goals of the two societies and rooted in the distinction between the natural and supernatural order. The Church has always respected the legitimate autonomy of the civil order in theory. Though at times certain political climates have made it appear that the church had a political mission, this was not due to the nature of the case, but rather to the occasion and accidents of history. Pope John Paul II has reaffirmed this legitimate autonomy in his most recent encyclical:

The Church respects the legitimate autonomy of the democratic order and is not entitled to express preferences for this or that institutional or constitutional solution. Her contribution to the political order is precisely her vision of the dignity of the person revealed in all its fullness in the mystery of the Incarnate Word.<sup>4</sup>

The political order has as its goal the perfection of man *in this world*, in the order of nature. The ecclesiastical order has as its goal the perfection of man *in the next life* with regard to his ultimate end, the vision of

God. To mix the two orders is to confuse the natural and supernatural order. This is a common mistake today. One moralist recently maintained that the distinction between these two orders was “merely academic.”<sup>5</sup> This author attributes this shift in understanding of the relation of the natural to the supernatural order to the theology of Karl Rahner and the discovery of the “supernatural existential.”<sup>6</sup>



Karl Rahner

According to this understanding, grace has so permeated nature that there is a third and intermediate stage between the two in which the two are somehow identical or if not identical, at least confused. Yet, this third stage completely separates the two orders so that there is no ordering between the two by placing a third reality between nature and grace, the “supernatural existential.” In fact, this theory of Rahner destroys nature by reducing the nature known by reason alone to a “*rest-begriff*,” a “remainder concept” which no one can define without the ordering to grace.<sup>7</sup>

The obvious difficulty with this mere academic distinction is the fact that one cannot find any source for the interest or involvement of the Catholic in the civil order that is built on nature, but only on grace. This demands the union of the church and state is some close connection that destroys the order and distinction of both ends.

The magisterium is clear on the subject of the basis for the involvement of the Catholic in the civil order. This basis is the same as the basis for any man. The source of the obligation for the Catholic is twofold. First, man is by nature a political animal, so the natural law<sup>8</sup> is the basis of his obligation to enter politics.

The natural law ... provides the necessary basis for the civil law with which it is connected, whether by a reflection that draws conclusions from its principles, or by additions of a positive and juridical nature.<sup>9</sup>

Second, the concern of the church for this entry is based on the moral teaching of the church with respect to her ability to interpret the natural law.<sup>10</sup> This teaching is obligatory for Catholics and advisory for those who are not. To hold that the church has a political mission as such would compromise the Gospel and the teaching that the purpose of the Kingdom of God and hence of the church is to attain the vision of God in heaven. On the other hand, to hold that the church has no right to speak about moral obligations in nature would make grace completely divorced from nature and morals and an alien body thereto.

We approach this subject with confidence and in the exercise of our rights which manifestly pertain to us, for no practical solution to this question will be found apart from religion and the Church.<sup>11</sup>

It is our right and duty to deal authoritatively with social and economic problems. It is not, of course, the office of the church to lead men to transient and perishable happiness only, but to that which is eternal; indeed the church believes that it would be wrong for her to intervene without just cause in matter of earthly concern. But she never can relinquish her God-given task of interposing her authority not indeed in matters of technique, for which she has neither the equipment nor the mission, but in all those which fall under the moral law.<sup>12</sup>

Not that the church has a mandate directly to regulate economic life. But the social and economic orders cannot be divorced from the moral, and it is her privilege and duty to affirm and proclaim the unchanging principles of morality.<sup>13</sup>

The Church's fundamental function in every age and particularly in ours is to direct man's gaze, to point the awareness and experience of the whole of humanity towards the mystery of God, and to help all men to be familiar with the profundity of the Redemption taking place in Christ Jesus. At the same time, Man's deepest sphere is involved, we mean the sphere of human hearts, consciences and events.<sup>14</sup>

So, the source of the obligation of the church is to resist an attitude that would place what is done in the civil order outside the pale of the natural law. Today, the tendency in the state to deny the natural law is based on a total disregard for any objective truth in morals. Men are declared to exercise such freedom that only the calculation of the majority founds the nature of justice. Human reason not only discovers the truth, but is completely independent of the order of nature and so from the will and truth of the Creator.

Unwanted children, or children who are not useful to certain human beings may be aborted. Sexual morality is based only on convenience to fulfill appetite. The wage has become a commodity which obeys only the laws of the marketplace with no true human dimension. The social conscience in both state and family is no longer formed on self-sacrifice, but on the use of others for manipulation. This very spirit enters even into the church where dissenters would like the teaching on contraception to obey only the laws of social manipulation and planning. Those who think this way do not realize that

in theory, this attitude encourages the very manipulative aspect of modern society.

Against this tendency, the church speaks to all men, and especially to Catholics, to return to the objective truth of human nature as the foundation of the social order. The church has no desire to replace or direct the state as to practical solutions, but the church is very concerned to assure the fact that these practical solutions are founded in the objective truth of human nature.

This error consists in an understanding of human freedom which detaches it from obedience to the truth, and consequently from the duty to respect the rights of others. The essence of freedom then becomes self-love carried to the point of contempt for God and neighbor, a self-love which leads to an unbridled affirmation of self-interest and which refuses to be limited by any demand of justice.<sup>15</sup>

Certain currents of modern thought have gone so far as to exalt freedom to such an extent that it becomes the absolute, which would then be the source of values. ... Taken to its extreme consequences, this individualism leads to a denial of the very idea of human nature.<sup>16</sup>



There are, then, two general principles that are hidden underneath any examination of social questions by the church. The first is that the goal of the church is not to direct the civil order, but to determine those aspects of economic or social questions that fall under the moral and natural law. The second is that the church wants to avoid the errors of both integralism and laicism in which the church is completely one with the state or the state is so completely autonomous that it does not even have to respect the moral law founded on the nature of man.

#### SOURCE OF TWO SOCIETIES: THE NATURE OF MAN

Man is a rational animal, composed of body and soul. The final goal of this composed being is God Himself, and this union with God is realized in a final and

complete sense in the church, which alone, as the Mystical Body of Christ has the means to arrive at the Beatific Vision.<sup>17</sup>

In his inner constitution, the human person differs from the rest of material creation. The human person touches all the lower orders of material beings and the higher order of spiritual beings. He shares a body with lower bodies and a spirit with the angels and God. The dignity of the human person consists in the activity that is characteristic of the rational soul. That activity includes acts which have this world as their goal and acts that have the next world as their goal. The society of the state regulates the former; the society of the church regulates the latter.

The church can countenance no theory of society that would found the nature of society in anything less than this dignity of man, the body-spirit. This is the truth about man that the church proclaims and is the source of all her social teaching. “The main thread ... of all the Church’s social doctrine, is *a correct view of the human person*. ...”<sup>18</sup> The spiritual nature of man is the source of both society and freedom. The intellect and will are the source of the social character.

The intellect allows man to rise above the world of specific objects. This universal transcendence is the foundation of the freedom of the will.<sup>19</sup> The freedom of the subject by definition must be rooted in the objective order because the intellect is the source of the freedom of the will and the intellect must be rooted in the real order of things. This intellect-will composite is the cornerstone of Catholic social teaching. In Catholic moral teaching, the intellect and the will both have a complementary place. They form together the objective basis for human freedom. The church wishes to defend this objective source against all theories of the origin of the person that would see the intellect and will or freedom and law as somehow contradictory sources of this teaching.

Thus, the responsibility of the church for social matters is on the level of morals and nature and not on the level of politics and economics. This responsibility is not to influence culture and political society by replacing them, but rather to encourage them to fulfill the direction of the subject by objective principles drawn from nature that the character of the human person as an ethical being demands.

The church has never been directly concerned with the civil order as though this were a matter of her jurisdiction or necessary for her to carry out her mission that is spiritual and can even be carried out in the midst of persecution by the civil order. The church has always affirmed forcefully the distinction between nature and grace and thus between the civil and ecclesiastical orders. “By the very economy of salvation the laity should learn to distinguish carefully between the rights and duties which they have as belonging to the Church as those which fall to them as members of human society.”<sup>20</sup>

On the one hand, the church has a responsibility to show that the state and the church are two separate and distinct societies, each with its own end and means. It is not right for the church to enter the civil order as such and seek to establish a theocracy. Any theory of Christendom that suggests this seriously compromises the distinction between nature and grace and runs the risk of reducing the church to a servant of the state.

The Almighty, therefore, has given the charge of the human race to two powers, the ecclesiastical and the civil, the one being set over divine, and the other over human things. Each in its kind is supreme, each has fixed limits within which it is contained, limits which are defined by nature and special object of the province of each, so that there is, ... an orbit traced out within which the action of each is brought into play by its own native right.<sup>21</sup>

The necessity of distinguishing between these two orders also demands the defense of the rights of the church as is true of any other citizen to pursue her mission unmolested by the civil law. On the other hand, then, the church also must affirm that though there is a distinction between civil and ecclesial order, this distinction is not opposition.<sup>22</sup>

In past times, the confessional state was one means that was though perhaps necessary to insure the autonomy of the mission of the Church in the *de facto* situation, is not a necessary means *de iure*. This has proven ineffective in the contemporary world in which most the citizens are no longer practicing Catholics. The fact that the state is not confessional, however (i.e., professes no state religion) does not mean it is atheistic. This would mean that the orders of nature and grace were opposed and contradictory. Atheism is in fact a religious option and a religious option which is against both grace and

nature. If the state makes no religious option as such for a state religion, this includes the option of atheism.

The doctrine that the state was opposed to the Church is a teaching based on the liberal idea of the person in the Nineteenth Century. In this philosophy, the individual and his reason are looked upon as quasi-divine and completely autonomous from all law except that found within the subject himself. Only absolute liberty from all other objective outside restraints could lead to the true good of the person and therefore of the state. The individual was a law unto himself. The philosophy of society was based on an exaggerated idea of the possibility of human reason arriving at all the truth unaided by any other power. Even reference to the objective law of God through the natural order was an outside interference on the dignity of the person. This dignity was always absolute.

According to this philosophy the origin of truth and justice was in the individual himself. The objective order was overcome by the subjective order. The common good became merely the sum total of private interests. All limits to the freedom of the person to realize himself were viewed as an unjust encroachment on the nature of man. The proclamation of the separation of church and state in this climate served to affirm the exaggerated freedom of the individual from every restraint except his own reason. In his understanding man created values and meaning and did not find it in the outside world. Human laws lacked sanction apart from the collection of individual will which made them. All law was interest.

The Nineteenth Century Liberal state was characterized by the idea that man made both the truth and justice and there was no other order that was involved in this, either natural or ecclesial. The civil order thus became independent of every objective standard outside itself. This liberal notion of the state was characterized by: economic amorality, liberal competition, absenteeism of the state in all matters of economics (“laissez faire”) and exaggerated individualism.<sup>23</sup> Freedom was absolute because man could discover on his own all the laws necessary to direct

his conduct and the source of that law was not nature, but his own providence. The optimism in the ability of the subject to overcome all evils was boundless.

Though the church affirms that there are two ends, two social orders and two separate societies of church and state, the church also reacted violently against the doctrine of the Enlightenment that placed all truth in the human subject and his progress.<sup>24</sup> The error of the liberal state consists not in the proclamation of the separation of church and state. This certainly is true if by this separation one understands that the concept of a confessional state or state religion is not necessary for the maintenance of just laws. The error the church condemns is rather any interpretation of the separation of church and state which is actually a separation of the interest and reasoning of the subject from any objective standard outside himself.

The denial of any ability of the church to teach in civil matters is the denial of her moral mission based on the natural order. To separate the church from the state in this way is to make the church alien to the state instead of complementary. The confessional state was a way of practically demonstrating the complementary character of state and church, but could not be sustained if the church was reduced by the state to an instrument of the civil power. The church recommended such a confessional state for many years, but as an expedient, not absolutely necessary to insure the mission of the church. In this context, one can understand very clearly the separation of church and state found in the Constitution of the United States.



*“Though the church affirms that there are two ends, two social orders and two separate societies of church and state, the church also reacted violently against the doctrine of the Enlightenment that placed all truth in the human subject and his progress.”*



So if this separation is understood in the sense of exaggerated individualism, the church has an obligation to resist this understanding. This is because this understanding of freedom leads to a concept of law, justice and morals which cannot be reconciled with either right reason or revelation. The church formally resists this for the sake of Christian consciences which must be formed according to revelation. The church resists this in the context of the civil state because of its desire to aid the

state in its own mission. This is not from any motive to enter tactically into the arena of politics by which the state is governed through the means of techniques, but from a charitable motive to teach the truth and establish each order in its own characteristic responsibility for morals.

Besides, the state will eventually interfere in the mission of the church if the state has a wrong understanding of the source of human freedom.

(The) error consists in an understanding of human freedom which detaches it from obedience to the truth, and consequently from the duty to respect the right of others. The essence of freedom then becomes self-love carried to the point of contempt for God and neighbor, a self-love which leads to an unbridled affirmation of self-interest and which refuses to be limited by any demand of justice.<sup>25</sup>

Catholic doctrine addresses the political order from a charitable motive to explain the true nature of human freedom to all men and resist exaggerated notions of freedom.

## TOWARD TRUE HUMAN FREEDOM

The church seeks to guide the Christian in his response to every state by teaching an authentic doctrine of human freedom. The church avoids two basic errors in this teaching. The first is that the human will is perfect in itself. This is the error of the Enlightenment and of the liberal idea of the state that is still very much with us today. The second is that a human person can make no really free and moral acts unless governed by grace. This is the error of exaggerated theocracy in which the church seeks to govern the state and influence techniques of political law.

The nature of freedom in society is best seen in the role of both the intellect and will regarding the freedom of religion. Vatican II is clear that this is a right which the church upholds in each civil society.

But men cannot satisfy their obligation in a way in keeping with their own nature unless they enjoy both psychological freedom and immunity from external coercion. Therefore the right to religious freedom has its foundation not in the subjective attitude of the individual, but in his very nature.<sup>26</sup>

“Nobody may be forced to act against his conscience, nor is anyone to be restrained from acting in accordance with his conscience in religious matters in private and in public, alone or in association with others, within due limits.” (DH #2, n. 1) This right is based on the very nature of the human person, whose dignity enables him freely to assent to divine truth which transcends the temporal order.<sup>27</sup>

These texts clearly teach liberty of conscience and indeed every civil freedom in human nature which includes the right of a person to embrace any truth from the interior movement of his will. One should notice in this text that the basis for religious freedom is based in “*their own nature.*” The nature of man is the basis for the discussion of freedom. This nature leads to the distinction between intellect and will. The word “freedom” on the one hand expresses the freedom from external coercion in an act and evaluates an act from the point of view of an act of the will. The word “freedom” on the other hand expresses a judgment about the binding nature of objective truth. This freedom is based on the presence of the intellect in the act. Freedom then can express two different powers with two different objects. The nature of obligation differs according to the different powers.

Obligation in both senses is *based on the nature of each in man.* Different contexts may lead to a difference in the discussion of freedom. At one time one may discuss freedom as a function of will and at another time one may discuss freedom as a function of intellect. Yet, these two conceptions of freedom do not contradict one another. Rather, the freedom of will and intellect complement each other and show a more complete picture of the human act in general, an action that follows nature.

Man’s genuine moral autonomy in no way means the rejection but rather the acceptance of the moral law, of God’s command: “The Lord God gave this command to the man...” (Gen. 2:16). *Human freedom and God’s law meet and are called to intersect ...*<sup>28</sup>

Church documents in general define freedom in all actual situations by reference to moral freedom. This is the same despite the type of society about which one is speaking. This is because every society is based on the nature of man regarding the order of the acts between intellect and will.

The term “freedom” can become very confusing unless it is one that is clear both regarding the intellect and will which is the foundation of human freedom. There is no better guide in this question than the *Summa Theologiae*. In the beginning of the section said to be on morals, St. Thomas defines free choice as the chief characteristic of man in which his nature as lord of his acts is expressed. He uses the term “*liberum arbitrium*” to express this free choice. There he explicitly states that free (*liberum*) choice (*arbitrium*) means a faculty that includes *both the intellect and will*.<sup>29</sup> A truly free act must be an act of both intellect and will. The “*liberum*” part of this expression treats of the presence of the will in the act. The “*arbitrium*” part refers to the presence of the intellect in the act. Acts which are not acts of both do not befit rational beings and are not placed in the genus of morals.<sup>30</sup> Free choice then must mean the act of both the powers.

The act of free choice must be essentially only one. This act is found in two powers, but is only one act.<sup>31</sup> So, both the intellect and the will form free choice, but in different ways. Free choice is primarily an act of the will but ordered always by the act of the intellect.<sup>32</sup>

The same object can be desired by the will and known by the intellect. This change in perspective forms the basis for the distinction of powers. For example, the one object may be experienced by sight, taste, smell, hearing, touch, imagination, and memory. The object remains the same, but the experience of each of the senses is different.

There is a twofold experience of the soul in relation to things. The soul experiences something within in the manner of the existence of the mind. This makes something knowable.<sup>33</sup> The soul may also experience a thing as that thing objectively exists in its own right outside the mind. This experience makes something lovable. It is an act of the will.<sup>34</sup> The love of the will is based on the universal character of the intellect.

The relation of the intellect to the will can also be looked upon in another twofold relationship. The presence of the will is the primary basis for the determination of *whether* a human act is present. This is called the *freedom of exercise*. The presence of intellect is the primary basis for the determination of the *goodness or evil* of the human choice. This is called the *freedom of specification*. To live a human life by making truly human acts must always be guided by the truth that is known. Will is blind with

out reason and reason is powerless to arrive at any good without will.<sup>35</sup>

Since reason is universalizing, it is always possible for reason to see something unlovable about a given being. The intellect understands that a given being completes some power in man. Food completes my taste and my powers of nutrition and allows my body to grow and live in a healthy way. So, food is good and to be loved and desired unless one is sick. Too much food may lead to loss of health and sickness. The very ability to universalize in acts and to see how a given goal perfects human nature is the source of human freedom.

This freedom - the specific independence from objects in the intentional order, the ability to choose among them, to decide about them - does not, however, abolish the fact that man is conditioned in the broadest sense by the world of objects, in particular, by the domain of values. For his is not the freedom from objects or values, but on the contrary, the freedom of, or rather for objects or values.<sup>36</sup>



An act becomes human because it results from the will. It is good or evil according to the judgment of reason. No human act can be good unless this act is according to the truth. That truth is formulated according to the objective character of the object in relation to human powers as reason perceives them. Reason does not create their value, but discovers it and presents it to the will. Freedom of the subject is not freedom from objective norms presented to the subject, but freedom for those objective norms.

The truth of a moral act must not be based on the fact that there is no determinacy in the act. This is the basis for judging the presence of the freedom of exercise. Truth in morals is judged, based on human nature. This is judged in the intellect and is the basis for the judgment of the *freedom of specification*.

Thus good and evil in human acts are considered insofar as the act is in accord with reason informed by the divine law, either naturally, by in-

struction, or by infusion ... it is evil for the soul to be outside reason as for the body to be outside of nature.<sup>37</sup>

The conclusion is that the moral goodness or evil of a human act is judged on a different basis than just the presence of human freedom.

Freedom of choice is based on nature both regarding subject and regarding object. This nature is not created by man, but is discovered by him in acting. Since God is the author of nature, God is also the author of the natural law. This nature must be respected in every moral choice. The church calls the civil order to criticize its reduction of human freedom to freedom from an objective order of nature which exists outside the human subject who perceives it.

The right of religious liberty can of itself be neither unlimited nor limited by a “public order” conceived in a positivist or naturalist manner. The “due limits” which are inherent in it must be determined for each social situation by political prudence, according to the requirements of the common good, and ratified by the civil authority in accordance with “legal principles which are in conformity with the objective moral order.”<sup>38</sup>

The law of God, not the revealed law, but the one founded on nature, must be the source of the true civil laws for any society to be truly human.

From this it is manifest that the eternal law of God is the sole standard and rule of human liberty, not only in each individual man, but also in the community and civil society which men constitute when united. Therefore, the true liberty of human society does not consist in every man doing what he pleases ..., but rather in this - that through the injunctions of the civil law all may more easily conform to the prescriptions of the eternal law.<sup>39</sup>

## APPLICATION TO THE FREEDOM OF THE CIVIL ORDER

After examining the basic principles on which to guide moral conduct, one can summarize the obligations of a Catholic for the civil order with the following points.

1. The church has no direct responsibility for the state because they are two entirely different social orders based on different ends with different social means for carrying out these ends. The autonomy of both these orders must be preserved to ensure a true idea of the relation of grace to nature.

2. The church must not be mute with respect to the civil order. The priest must not be “limited to his sacristy” as was the common phrase in the Nineteenth Century. The church may teach concerning the civil order from two perspectives. On the one hand, it is necessary to instruct the faithful in the demands of the natural law concerning the civil order to guide the Christian conscience.

The church can also instruct the civil order respecting the moral law, but not because the church has any jurisdiction in the civil order. This instruction is from a motive of charity and justice. As citizens, Christians, like other men have an obligation to tell the truth and to make that truth known for the instruction of others. On the other hand, the church must defend its own right to pursue its mission in the face of possible unjust encroachment by the state. For example, the church can defend its right to own property because every law-abiding citizen can own property by natural right.

3. The obligation of the church and by extension the layman to perfect the civil order is not based on divine positive law as such, but on the natural law. The church can instruct the conscience of Christians and invite those who are not Christians to form their consciences according to the truth. “Consequently in the *practical judgment of conscience*, which imposes on the person the obligation to perform a given act, *the link between freedom and truth is made manifest.*”<sup>40</sup> Every man born into the world is a political animal and has an obligation to obey the laws and pursue human good according to the end and purpose of the civil order. This obligation is not absolved where Christians are concerned, but is made more urgent because charity goes beyond justice and presumes it. God is the author of the state through the natural order. He is not its direct author, but its indirect author and therefore his sovereignty over the world must be acknowledged for the natural law to be acknowledged that applies to the state.<sup>41</sup> As the *Epistle to Diognetus* clearly states, Christians “obey the prescribed laws, but in their own private lives they transcend the laws.”<sup>42</sup>

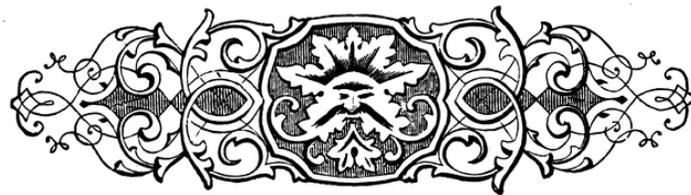
4. The obligation to have interest in the civil order has its source in the necessity of reason that is true-to-being to guide the will in morals. There is then no natural competition between the church and the state nor are they naturally in conflict. The general guidance of the will by the intellect applies to both societies, but the source of that guidance differs. In the civil society, it is reason based on nature. Reason can arrive at those laws necessary to guide the state, unaided. In the ecclesial society, it is reason enlightened by the instruction of revelation. Regarding the natural law, they coincide. Still, if a Catholic wishes to convince someone about the evil of abortion, for example, arguments drawn from revelation would be insufficient in the civil order. Arguments drawn from reason and the natural law would be sufficient. These arguments must follow the method of philosophy.

5. Though there is no direct ordering of the church to the state or vice versa because they are interested in different ends and means, still an individual Catholic can pursue heaven and make meritorious acts by participating in realizing the good of the civil order through involvement in politics. This is due to the presence of grace in the soul of the subject, not to the objective nature of the act itself. This presupposes that the acts which are political are also morally good. The act of a Catholic politician who cooperated in making a civil law which was morally evil could never be meritorious. In other words, no political act, no matter how good it is, would merit heaven unless the person who did it was in the state of grace and the act itself were objectively good according to the natural law.

6. Since the civil order must be governed by the natural law that is not determined by human expediency

or human will and intellect, the separation of church and state is not a sufficient basis for a Catholic politician to pursue means that are against the natural law. The plea that one must simply enforce a law which is evil is insufficient because an unjust law is tyranny and against reason. "When statesman forsake their private conscience for the sake of their public duty they lead their country on a short root to chaos."<sup>43</sup> This is not due to revelation, though, but to the natural law, although Christians, of course, also know these laws by revelation. Whatever is against nature is also against grace, though these orders are really distinct.

The responsibility of the Catholic for the perfection of the civil order is the same as any other man born into this world. It is based on the natural law and on reason guiding will in morals. Any freedom which seeks to detach reason and nature from will is a destructive freedom and every man should resist it. Freedom of exercise and freedom of specification must go together for there to be any human freedom worthy of the name. The obligation of the Catholic is more urgent in resisting their detachment. An autonomous human reason is a tyrannical human reason. The Catholic must also aid in implementing this natural order because revelation aids him with a clearer idea than most people have only by reason of this good. Still, the implementation of this good is a very small part of the obligations of the Catholic. The mission of the church does not depend on it because the church can flourish even in persecution. It is one area where the Catholic has the opportunity to practice virtue. "Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's."



## NOTES

1 *Lumen Gentium*, 36, in *Vatican Council II*, Austin Flannery, O.P., ed. (Northport, NY: Costello Publishing Company, 1977).

2 *Gaudium et Spes*, 76.

3 *The Catechism of the Catholic Church*, #2245.

4 *Centesimus Annus*, 47; Cf. also *The Catechism of the Catholic Church*, #2245-2246.

5 “The continuity and the interpretation in history of God’s work as both Creator and Saviour have the effect, if not of blurring, at least of rendering academic the conceptual distinction between nature and supernature.” John Mahoney, *The Making of Moral Theology* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987), p. 113.

6 Cf. “Relationship between Nature and Grace,” Karl Rahner, S.J., *Theological Investigations*, vol. I, trans. by Cornelius Ernst, O.P. (Baltimore: Helicon Press, 1961), pp. 313-315.

7 *Ibid.*, p. 313.

8 Cf. for example, the recent encyclical by Pope John Paul II, *Veritatis Splendor*, n. 44 and ff. where the foundation of the natural law for Christian ethics is very well set out.

9 *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, #1959.

10 “The Church invites political authorities to measure their judgments and decisions against the inspired truth about God and man...,” *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, #2244. Cf. also “It is a part of the Church’s mission to pass moral judgment even in matters related to politics, whenever the fundamental rights of man or the salvation of souls requires it.” CCC #2246.

11 Leo XIII, *Rerum Novarum*, 13.

12 Pius XI, *Quadragesimo Anno*, 41-43.

13 Pius XII, Radio Address of 16 July, 1947.

14 John Paul II, *Redemptor Hominis*, 7.

15 John Paul II, *Centesimus Annus*, 17.

16 John Paul II, *Veritatis Splendor*, n. 32.

17 “Man has a spiritual and immortal soul. He is a person, marvelously endowed by his Creator with gifts of body and mind. He is a true ‘microcosm’ as the ancients said, a world in miniature, with a value far surpassing that of the vast and inanimate cosmos. God alone is his last end, in this life and the next. By sanctifying grace he is raised to the dignity of a son of God, and incorporated into the Kingdom of God in the Mystical Body of Christ.” Pius XI, *Divini Redemptoris*, 27.

18 John Paul II, *Centesimus Annus*, 11.

19 “This freedom - the specific independence from objects in the intentional order, the ability to choose among them, to decide about them - does not, however, abolish the fact that man is conditioned in the broadest sense by the world of objects, in particular by the domain of values. For his is not the freedom from objects of values, but on the contrary, the freedom of, or rather for objects or values.” Karol Wojtyła, *The Acting Person*, trans. by Andrzej Potocki (Boston: D. Reidel Publishing Company, 1979), p. 132.

20 Vatican 11, *Lumen Gentium*, #36; cf. also “All this must characterize the spirit of a committed Christian, without confusion with tactical attitudes or with the service to a political system. The church strives always to insert the Christian struggle for liberation into the universal plan of salvation which she herself proclaims.” Paul VI, *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, #38.

21 Leo XIII, *Immortale Dei*, #13.

22 “It is a homicidal folly and an offence to the Gospel to want to change the distinction between Church and State into opposition. The conflicts that have arisen between them in the course of history are accidental, not of the true essence of either.” Charles Journet, *The Church of the Word Incarnate* (London: Sheed and Ward, 1955), p. 200.

23 For an excellent analysis of these trends historically, cf. for example, Giacomo Martina, S.J., *La Chiesa nell’Eta del Liberalismo* (Brescia: Morcellina, 1979).

24 Cf. for example, “Morum leges divina haud egerit sanctione, minimeque opus est, ut humanae leges ad naturae ius conformentur aut obligandi vim a Deo accipiant.” “The laws of morality by no means need divine sanction, and there is not the least need that human laws conform to the natural law, or receive the power of binding from God.” Pius IX, *The Syllabus of Errors*, sec. VII, D. 2956 (1756).

25 John Paul II, *Centesimus Annus*, #17. Cf. also “Certain tendencies in contemporary moral theology, under the influence of the currents of subjectivism and individualism just mentioned, involve novel interpretations of the relationship between freedom and the moral law, human nature and conscience, and propose novel criteria for moral evaluation of acts. Despite this variety, these tendencies are at one in lessening or even denying the dependence of freedom on truth.” John Paul II, *Veritatis Splendor*, #34.

26 “Tenentur quoque veritati cognitae adhaerere atque totam vitam suam iuxta exigentias veritatis ordinare. Huic autem obligationi satisficere nommes, moao suae propriae naturae consentaneo, nun possunt nisi libertate psychologica simul atque immunitate a coercitione externa fruantur. Non ergo in subiectiva personae dispositione, sed in ipsa eius natura ius ad libertatem religiosam fundatur.” Ibid.

27 *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, #2106.

28 John Paul II, *Veritatis Splendor*, n. 41.

29 “Est autem homo dominus suorum actuum per rationem et voluntatem: unde et liberum arbitrium esse dicitur facultas voluntatis et rationis.” ST, I-II, 1, 1, ad corp.

30 “Illa ergo quae rationem habent, seipsa movent ad finem: quia habent dominum suorum actuum per liberum arbitrium, quod est facultas voluntatis et rationis...Illa ratione carent tendunt in finem per naturalem inclinationem, quasi ab alia mota, non autem a seipsis.” ST, I-I, 1, 2, ad corp.

31 Cf. “Liberum arbitrium est tantum una potentia formaliter, sed duae virtualiter.” Thomas Aquinas, In Commentaria Super Sententias, 2, d, 24, 1, 3, ad 2; *De Veritate*, 24, 5, corp.

32 Aquinas, ST, I-II, 13, 1, corp.

33 “Res autem ad animam invenitur duplicem habitudinem habere: unam secundum quod ipsa res est in anima per modum animae, et non per moeum sui.” Aquinas, *De Veritate*, 22, 10, ad corp.

34 “Aliam secundum quod anima comparatur ad rem in suo esse existentem.” Ibid.

35 “Freedom is the power, rooted in reason and will, to act or not to act, to do this or that, and so to perform deliberate actions on one’s own responsibility.” *The Catechism of the Catholic Church*, #1732.

36 Wojtyla, *The Acting Person*, op. cit., p. 132.

37 “Unde bonum et malum in actibus humanis consideratur secundum quod actus concordat rationi informatae lege divina, vel naturaliter, vel per doctrinam, vel per infusionem ... quod animae malum est praeter rationem esse, corpori praeter naturam.” Aquinas, *De Malo*, 2, 4, ad corp.

38 *The Catechism of the Catholic Church*, #2109.

39 Leo XIII, *Libertas Praestissimum*, #10.

40 John Paul II, *Veritatis Splendor*, n. 61.

41 For a clear presentation of the theocentric character of the natural law, cf. Ralph McInerny, *The Question of Christian Ethics* (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 1993), pp. 63-68.

42 *Epistle to Diognetus*, #5.

43 *A Man for All Seasons*, Robert Bolt.