

Important Modern Papal Statements on Political Matters

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Gregory XVI, *Mirari Vos* (1832)

§13: Now We consider another abundant source of the evils with which the Church is afflicted at present: *indifferentism*. This perverse opinion is spread on all sides by the fraud of the wicked who claim that it is possible to obtain the eternal salvation of the soul by the profession of any kind of religion, as long as morality is maintained. Surely, in so clear a matter, you will drive this deadly error far from the people committed to your care. With the admonition of the Apostle that “there is one God, one faith, one baptism” may those fear who contrive the notion that the safe harbor of salvation is open to persons of any religion whatever. They should consider the testimony of Christ Himself that “those who are not with Christ are against Him,” and that they disperse unhappily who do not gather with Him. Therefore “without a doubt, they will perish forever, unless they hold the Catholic faith whole and inviolate.” Let them hear Jerome, who, while the Church was torn into three parts by schism, tells us that whenever someone tried to persuade him to join his group he always exclaimed: “He who is for the See of Peter is for me.” A schismatic flatters himself falsely if he asserts that he, too, has been washed in the waters of regeneration. Indeed Augustine would reply to such a man: “The branch has the same form when it has been cut off from the vine; but what profit for it is the form, if it does not live from the root?”

§14: This shameful font of indifferentism gives rise to that absurd and erroneous proposition which claims that *liberty of conscience* must be maintained for everyone. It spreads ruin in sacred and civil affairs, though some repeat over and over again with the greatest impudence that some advantage accrues to religion from it. “But the death of the soul is worse than freedom of error,” as Augustine was wont to say. When all restraints are removed by which men are kept on the narrow path of truth, their nature, which is already inclined to evil, propels them to ruin. Then truly “the bottomless pit” is opened from which John saw smoke ascending which obscured the sun, and out of which locusts flew forth to devastate the earth. Thence comes transformation of minds, corruption of youths, contempt of sacred things and holy laws—in other words, a pestilence more deadly to the state than any other. Experience shows, even from earliest times, that cities renowned for wealth, dominion, and glory perished as a result of this single evil, namely immoderate freedom of opinion, license of free speech, and desire for novelty.

§15: Here We must include that harmful and never sufficiently denounced freedom to publish any writings whatever and disseminate them to the people, which some dare to demand and promote with so great a clamor. We are horrified to see what monstrous doctrines and prodigious errors are disseminated far and wide, in countless books, pamphlets, and other writings which, though small in weight, are very great in malice. We are in tears at the abuse which proceeds from them over the face of the earth. Some are so carried away that they contentiously assert that the flock of errors arising from them is sufficiently compensated by the publication of some book which defends religion and truth. Every law condemns deliberately doing evil simply because there is some hope that good may result. Is there any sane man who would say poison ought to be distributed, sold publicly, stored, and even drunk because some antidote is available and those who use it may be snatched from death again and again?

§16: . . . “We must fight valiantly,” Clement XIII says in an encyclical letter about the banning of bad books, “as much as the matter itself demands and must exterminate the deadly poison of so many books; for never will the material for error be withdrawn, unless the criminal sources of depravity perish in flames.” Thus it is evident that this Holy See has always striven, throughout the ages, to condemn and to remove suspect and harmful books. The teaching of those

who reject the censure of books as too heavy and onerous a burden causes immense harm to the Catholic people and to this See. They are even so depraved as to affirm that it is *contrary to the principles of law*, and they deny the Church the right to decree and to maintain it.

Pius IX, *Qui Pluribus* (1846)

§15: Also perverse is the shocking theory that it makes no difference to which religion one belongs, a theory which is greatly at variance even with reason. By means of this theory, those crafty men remove all distinction between virtue and vice, truth and error, honorable and vile action. They pretend that men can gain eternal salvation by the practice of any religion, as if there could ever be any sharing between justice and iniquity, any collaboration between light and darkness, or any agreement between Christ and Belial.

Pius IX, *Quanta Cura* (1864)

§3: For you well know, venerable brethren, that at this time men are found not a few who, applying to civil society the impious and absurd principle of *naturalism*, as they call it, dare to teach that “the best constitution of public society and (also) civil progress altogether require that human society be conducted and governed without regard being had to religion any more than if it did not exist; or, at least, without any distinction being made between the true religion and false ones.” And, against the doctrine of Scripture, of the Church, and of the Holy Fathers, they do not hesitate to assert that “that is the best condition of civil society, in which no duty is recognized, as attached to the civil power, of restraining by enacted penalties, offenders against the Catholic religion, except so far as public peace may require.” From which totally false idea of social government they do not fear to foster that erroneous opinion, most fatal in its effects on the Catholic Church and the salvation of souls, called by Our Predecessor, Gregory XVI, *an insanity*, viz., that “liberty of conscience and worship is each man’s personal right, which ought to be legally proclaimed and asserted in every rightly constituted society; and that a right resides in the citizens to an absolute liberty, which should be restrained by no authority whether ecclesiastical or civil, whereby they may be able openly and publicly to manifest and declare any of their ideas whatever, either by word of mouth, by the press, or in any other way.” But, while they rashly affirm this, they do not think and consider that they are preaching *liberty of perdition*; and that “if human arguments are always allowed free room for discussion, there will never be wanting men who will dare to resist truth, and to trust in the flowing speech of human wisdom; whereas we know, from the very teaching of our Lord Jesus Christ, how carefully Christian faith and wisdom should avoid this most injurious babbling.”

§4: And, since where religion has been removed from civil society, and the doctrine and authority of divine revelation repudiated, the genuine notion itself of justice and human right is darkened and lost, and the place of true justice and legitimate right is supplied by material force, thence it appears why it is that some, utterly neglecting and disregarding the surest principles of sound reason, dare to proclaim that “the people’s will, manifested by what is called public opinion or in some other way, constitutes a supreme law, free from all divine and human control; and that in the political order accomplished facts, from the very circumstance that they are accomplished, have the force of right.” But who does not see and clearly perceive that human society, when set loose from the bonds of religion and true justice, can have, in truth, no other end than the purpose of obtaining and amassing wealth, and that “society under such circumstances” follows no other law in its actions, except the unchastened desire of ministering to its own pleasure and interests?

§5: . . . But no one can be found not clearly and distinctly to see and understand how grievously this is opposed to the Catholic dogma of the full power given from God by Christ our Lord Himself to the Roman Pontiff of feeding, ruling and guiding the Universal Church.

§6: Amidst, therefore, such great perversity of depraved opinions, we, well remembering our Apostolic Office, and very greatly solicitous for our most holy Religion, for sound doctrine and the salvation of souls which is intrusted to us by God, and (solicitous also) for the welfare also of *human society itself*, have thought it right again to raise up our Apostolic voice. Therefore, by our Apostolic authority, *we reprobate, proscribe, and condemn all the singular and evil opinions and doctrines severally mentioned in this letter, and will and command that they be thoroughly held by all children of the Catholic Church as reprobated, proscribed and condemned.*

Leo XIII, *Inscrutabili Dei Consilio* (1878)

§1: When by God's unsearchable design, We, though all unworthy, were raised to the height of apostolic dignity, at once We felt Ourselves moved by an urgent desire and, as it were, necessity, to address you by letter, not merely to express to you Our very deep feeling of love, but further, in accordance with the task entrusted to Us from heaven, to strengthen you who are called to share Our solicitude, that you may help Us to carry on the battle now being waged on behalf of the Church of God and the salvation of souls.

§2: For, from the very beginning of Our pontificate, the sad sight has presented itself to Us of the evils by which the human race is oppressed on every side: the widespread subversion of the primary truths on which, as on its foundations, human society is based; the obstinacy of mind that will not brook any authority however lawful; the endless sources of disagreement, whence arrive civil strife, and ruthless war and bloodshed; the contempt of law which molds characters and is the shield of righteousness; the insatiable craving for things perishable, with complete forgetfulness of things eternal, leading up to the desperate madness whereby so many wretched beings, in all directions, scruple not to lay violent hands upon themselves; the reckless mismanagement, waste, and misappropriation of the public funds; the shamelessness of those who, full of treachery, make semblance of being champions of country, of freedom, and every kind of right; in fine, the deadly kind of plague which infects in its inmost recesses, allowing it no respite and foreboding ever fresh disturbances and final disaster.

§3: Now, the source of these evils lies chiefly, We are convinced, in this, that the holy and venerable authority of the Church, which in God's name rules all mankind, upholding and defending all lawful authority, has been despised and set aside. . .

§5: It is perfectly clear and evident, venerable brothers, that the very notion of civilization is a fiction of the brain if it rest not on the abiding principles of truth and the unchanging laws of virtue and justice, and if unfeigned love knit not together the wills of men, and gently control the interchange and the character of their mutual service. . . And if anyone of sound mind compare the age in which We live, so hostile to religion and to the Church of Christ, with those happy times when the Church was revered as a mother by the nations, beyond all question he will see that our epoch is rushing wildly along the straight road to destruction; while in those times which most abounded in excellent institutions, peaceful life, wealth, and prosperity, the people showed themselves most obedient to the Church's rule and laws. Therefore, if the many blessings We have mentioned, due to the agency and saving help of the Church, are the true and worthy outcome of civilization, the Church of Christ, far from being alien to or neglectful of progress, has a just claim to all men's praise as its nurse, its mistress, and its mother.

§6: Furthermore, that kind of civilization which conflicts with the doctrines and laws of holy Church is nothing but a worthless imitation and meaningless name. . .

§13: . . . All such [previous conciliar and papal] censures, We, following in the steps of Our predecessors, do confirm and renew from this apostolic seat of truth, whilst We earnestly ask of the Father of lights that all the faithful, brought to thorough agreement in the like feeling and the same belief, may think and speak even as Ourselves. It is your duty, venerable brothers, sedulously to strive that the seed of heavenly doctrine be sown broadcast in the field of God, and that the teachings of the Catholic faith may be implanted early in the souls of the faithful, may strike deep root in them, and be kept free from the ruinous blight of error. . .

Leo XIII, *Æterni Patris* (1879)

§2: Whoso turns his attention to the bitter strifes of these days and seeks a reason for the troubles that vex public and private life must come to the conclusion that a fruitful case of the evils which now afflict, as well as those which threaten, us lies in this: that false conclusions concerning divine and human things, which originated in the schools of philosophy, have now crept into all the orders of the State, and have been accepted by the common consent of the masses. For, since it is in the very nature of man to follow the guide of reason in his actions, if his intellect sins at all his will soon follows; and thus it happens that false opinions, whose seat is in the understanding, influence human actions and pervert them. Whereas, on the other hand, if men be of sound mind and take their stand on *true and solid principles*, there will result a vast amount of benefits for the public and private good. . .

§28: Domestic and civil society even, which, as all see, is exposed to great danger from this plague of perverse opinions,¹ would certainly enjoy a far more peaceful and secure existence if a more wholesome doctrine were taught in the universities and high schools—one more in conformity with the teaching of the Church, such as is contained in the works of Thomas Aquinas.

§29: For, the teachings of Thomas on the *true meaning of liberty*, which at this time is running into license, on the *divine origin of all authority*, on laws and their force, on the paternal and just rule of princes, on obedience to the higher powers, on mutual charity one toward another—on all of these and kindred subjects—have very great and invincible force to overturn those *principles of the new order* which are well known to be dangerous to the peaceful order of things and to public safety. . .

Leo XIII, *Arcanum* (1880)

§27: . . . But now there is a spreading wish to supplant natural and divine law by human law; and hence has begun a gradual extinction of that most excellent ideal of marriage which nature herself had impressed on the soul of man, and sealed, as it were, with her own seal; nay, more, even in Christian marriages this power, productive of so great good, has been weakened by the sinfulness of man. Of what advantage is it if a state can institute nuptials estranged from the Christian religion, which is the mother of all good, cherishing all sublime virtues, quickening and urging us to everything that is the glory of a lofty and generous soul? . . .

§28: Now, however much the legislators of these our days may wish to guard themselves against the impiety of men such as we have been speaking of, they are unable to do so, seeing that they profess to hold and defend *the very same principles of jurisprudence*; and hence they have to go with times, and render divorce easily obtainable. . . Many at the present time would fain have

¹ Especially, as Leo puts it, those who “with minds alienated from the faith. . . claim reason as their sole mistress and guide” (§27).

those laws [sanctioning divorce in France] reenacted, because they wish God and His Church to be altogether exiled and excluded from the midst of human society, madly thinking that in such laws a final remedy must be sought for that moral corruption which is advancing with rapid strides.

§43: Care also must be taken that they [the faithful] do not easily enter into marriage with those who are not Catholics; for, *when minds do not agree as to the observances of religion, it is scarcely possible to hope for agreement in other things.* . .

Leo XIII, *Diuturnum* (1881)

§3: These perils to commonwealth [assassination attempts and secret plots in Europe], which are before Our eyes, fill Us with grave anxiety, when We behold the security of rulers and the tranquillity of empires, together with the safety of nations, put in peril almost from hour to hour. Nevertheless, the divine power of the Christian religion has given birth to excellent *principles of stability and order for the State*, while at the same time it has penetrated into the customs and institutions of States. . .

§4: Although man, when excited by a certain arrogance and contumacy, has often striven to cast aside the reins of authority, he has never yet been able to arrive at the state of obeying no one. In every association and community of men, necessity compels that some should hold pre-eminence, lest society, deprived of a prince or head by which it is ruled should come to dissolution and be prevented from attaining the end for which it was created and instituted. But, if it was not possible that political power should be removed from the midst of states, it is certain that men have used every art to take away its influence and to lessen its majesty, as was especially the case in the sixteenth century, when a fatal novelty of opinions infatuated many. Since that epoch, not only has the multitude striven after a liberty greater than is just, but it has seen fit *to fashion the origin and construction of the civil society of men in accordance with its own will.*

§5: Indeed, very many men of more recent times, walking in the footsteps of those who in a former age assumed to themselves the name of philosophers, say that *all power comes from the people*; so that those who exercise it in the State do so not as their own, but as *delegated* to them by the people, and that, by this rule, it can be revoked by the will of the very people by whom it was delegated. But from these, Catholics dissent, who affirm that the right to rule is from God, as from a natural and necessary principle.

§6: It is of importance, however, to remark in this place that those who may be placed over the State may in certain cases be chosen by the will and decision of the multitude, without opposition to or impugning the Catholic doctrine. And by this choice, in truth, the ruler is *designated*, but the rights of ruling are not thereby *conferred*. Nor is the *authority* delegated to him, but the *person* by whom it is to be exercised is determined upon.

§11: And, indeed, nature, or rather God who is the Author of nature, wills that man should live in a civil society; and this is clearly shown both by the faculty of language, the greatest medium of intercourse, and by numerous innate desires of the mind, and the many necessary things, and things of great importance, which men isolated cannot procure, but which they can procure when joined and associated with others. But now, a society cannot exist nor be conceived in which there is no one to govern the wills of individuals, in such a way as to make, as it were, *one out of many*, and to *impel them rightly and orderly to the common good*; therefore, God has willed that in civil society there should be someone to rule the multitude. . . [W]hatever there is of government and authority, its origin is derived from one and the same Creator and Lord of the world, who is God.

§12: Those who believe civil society to have risen from the free consent of men, looking for the origin of its authority from the same source, say that each individual has *given up something of his right*, and that voluntarily every person has put himself into the power of the one man in

whose person the whole of those rights has been centered. But it is a great error not to see, what is manifest, that men, as they are not a nomad race, have been created, without their own free will, for a natural community of life. It is plain, moreover, that the pact which they allege, is openly a falsehood and a fiction, and that it has no authority to confer on political power such great force, dignity, and firmness as the safety of the State and the common good of the citizens require. Then only will the government have all those ornaments and guarantees, when it is understood to emanate from God as its august and most sacred source.

§23: On the other hand, the doctrines on political power invented by late writers have already produced great ills amongst men, and it is to be feared that they will cause the very greatest disasters to posterity. For an unwillingness to attribute the right of ruling to God, as its Author, is not less than a willingness to blot out the greatest splendor of political power and to destroy its force. And they who say that this power *depends on the will of the people* err in opinion first of all; then they place authority on too weak and unstable a foundation. For the popular passions, incited and goaded on by these opinions, will break out more insolently; and, with great harm to the common weal, descend headlong by an easy and smooth road to revolts and to open sedition. In truth, sudden uprisings and the boldest rebellions immediately followed in Germany the so-called Reformation, the authors and leaders of which, by their new doctrines, attacked at the very foundation religious and civil authority; and this with so fearful an outburst of civil war and with such slaughter that there was scarcely any place free from tumult and bloodshed. From this heresy there arose in the *last century* a false philosophy—a *new right* as it is called, and a *popular authority*, together with an unbridled license which many regard as the only true liberty. Hence we have reached the *limit* of horrors, to wit, communism, socialism, nihilism, hideous deformities of the civil society of men and almost its ruin. . .

Leo XIII, *Cum Multa* (1882)

§6: Here, however, it will be fitting to recall the mutual relations of the spiritual and of the temporal order, for many minds on this matter fall into a two-fold error. There are some, for instance, who are not satisfied with distinguishing between politics and religion but separate and completely isolate the one from the other; they wish them to have nothing in common, and imagine that the one should exercise no influence over the other. Such men, in truth, differ but little from those who desire the exclusion of God, the Creator and Sovereign of all things, from the constitutions and administrations of the State; and the error they profess is the more pernicious that they thereby rashly debar the State from its most abundant source of prosperity. The moment religion is removed, those principles are of necessity shaken on which the public welfare most of all rests, and which derive their greatest force from religion, among the first of which are government with justice and moderation, obedience from a sense of duty, the submission of the passions to the yoke of virtue, to render to each his due, to leave untouched that which is another's.

§7: But, though this opinion is to be avoided, the contrary error must likewise be shunned of those who identify religion with some one political party and confound these together to such a degree as to look on all of another party as undeserving any longer of the name of Catholic. This is an intrusion of political factions into the august realm of the Church; it is an attempt to break the union of brothers, and to open the gate and give access to a multitude of grievous troubles.

§8: The spiritual and temporal orders being, therefore, distinct in their origin and in their nature, should be conceived and judged of as such.

Leo XIII, *Nobilissima Gallorum Gens* (1884)

§1: . . . And would that she [France] had escaped altogether unhurt from those disasters to religion and the State which times not far distant from our own have brought forth! But when the human mind, filled with the poison of new opinions, had begun, in the pride of an untempered liberty, to reject the authority of the Church, its downward course has been rapid and precipitate. For when the mortal poison of false doctrines had penetrated manners and customs themselves, society, to a great extent, came to fall away from Christianity. And in France² the propagation of this plague was not a little promoted by certain philosophers in the last century, professors of foolish wisdom, who set themselves to root up the foundations of Christian truth, and started a system of philosophy calculated the more vehemently to inflame the desires after unlimited license which had already been enkindled. . .

§2: For these reasons, therefore, the fatherly love We bear to all the nations of the world, and which impelled Us to recall the peoples of Ireland, Spain, and Italy to their duty, when the need arose, by Our letters to their Bishops³—has induced Us to turn Our attention and thought to France. The designs of which We have just spoken are injurious, not only to religion, but are also harmful and fatal to the State; for it is impossible that prosperity should follow a State in which the influence of religion is extinguished. The moment man ceases to be in fear of God, he is deprived of the most necessary basis of justice, without which—even in the opinion of the Pagan philosophers—society cannot exist; the authority of rulers will lose its weight, and the laws of the land their force. Self-interest will weigh more with every man than high principles, and the integrity of rights will be threatened, for the fear of punishment is but a bad guarantee for the fulfillment of duty; those who rule will easily be led to exceed the proper limits of their authority, and those who obey seduced into sedition and revolt. Moreover, as there is nothing good in nature which is not to be referred to the Divine goodness, every human society which does its utmost to exclude God from its laws and its *constitution*, rejects the help of this Divine beneficence, and deserves, also, that help should be denied it. Rich, therefore, and powerful as it appears, that society bears within itself the seeds of death, and cannot hope for a lengthy existence. It is, indeed, with Christian peoples as with individuals; it is safety to follow the counsels of God, it is danger to fall away from them; and it often happens that when nations jealously retain their fidelity to God and the Church, they arrive, almost naturally, at the highest pitch of natural prosperity; but that when they fall away from it they perish. These facts are to be found in history; and We could cite to you more recent instances, even in your own country, had We the time to recall the events seen by a previous generation, when the impiety of the mob shook France to its very foundations, and Church and State perished in the same destruction. But, on the other hand, these certain causes of the State's ruin are easily removed, if, in the constitution and ruling of the family and of society, the precepts are observed of the Catholic religion, for these are most eminently fitted to preserve order and the welfare of the State.

² In other words, the two former sentences apply not to France alone, but to every nation where similar false doctrines had gained a foothold and were enjoying public approbation.

³ The Pontiff had already addressed Encyclicals to the Bishops of Italy (*Etsi Nos*, 1882) and of Spain (*Cum Multa*, 1882); had sent *Diuturnum* to all the Bishops of the world (1881); and would later write many such to various national episcopacies, including *Longinqua* to the American in 1888 and a second, *Au Milieu de Sollicitudes*, to the French in 1892. His four weighty and significant Encyclicals to the Church at large—*Libertas*, *Sapientiae Christianae*, *Immortale Dei*, and *Rerum Novarum*—constitute the crown of Leo's political Magisterium, and contain the fundamental principles as well as practical applications of the Church's doctrine on socio-economic matters.

Leo XIII, *Humanum Genus* (1884)

§21: What refers to domestic life in the teaching of the naturalists is almost all contained in the following declarations: that marriage belongs to the genus of commercial contracts, which can rightly be revoked by the will of those who made them, and that the civil rulers of the State have power over the matrimonial bond; that in the education of youth nothing is to be taught in the matter of religion as of certain and fixed opinion; and each one must be left at liberty to follow, when he comes of age, whatever he may prefer. . . For in many countries, and those nominally Catholic, it is enacted that no marriages shall be considered lawful except those contracted by the civil rite; in other places the law permits divorce; and in others every effort is used to make it lawful as soon as may be. Thus, the time is quickly coming when marriages will be turned into another kind of contract—that is, into changeable and uncertain unions which fancy may join together, and which the same when changed may disunite.

§24: . . . To have in public matters no care for religion, and in the arrangement and administration of the civil affairs to have no more regard for God than if He did not exist, is a rashness unknown to the very pagans; for in their heart and soul the notion of a divinity and the need of public religion were so firmly fixed that they would have thought it easier to have a city without foundation than a city without God. Human society, indeed for which by nature we are formed, has been constituted by God, the Author of nature; and from Him, as from their principle and source, flow in all their strength and permanence the countless benefits with which society abounds. As we are each of us admonished by the very voice of nature to worship God in piety and holiness, as the Giver unto us of life and of all that is good therein, so also and for the same reason, nations and States are bound to worship Him; and therefore it is clear that those who would absolve society from all religious duty act not only unjustly but also with ignorance and folly.

Leo XIII, *Immortale Dei* (1885)

§2: . . . Many, indeed, are they who have tried to work out a plan of civil society based on doctrines other than those approved by the Catholic Church. Nay, in these latter days a novel conception of law has begun here and there to gain increase and influence, the outcome, as it is maintained, of an age arrived at full stature, and the result of progressive liberty. But, though endeavors of various kinds have been ventured on, it is clear that no better mode has been devised for the building up and ruling the State than that which is the necessary growth of the teachings of the Gospel.

§6: . . . Since, then, no one is allowed to be remiss in the service due to God, and since the chief duty of all men is to cling to religion in both its teaching and practice—not such religion as they may have a preference for, but the religion which God enjoins, and which certain and most clear marks show to be the only one true religion—it is a public crime to act as though there were no God. So, too, is it a sin for the State not to have care for religion as a something beyond its scope, or as of no practical benefit; or out of many forms of religion to adopt that one which chimes in with the fancy; for we are bound absolutely to worship God in that way which He has shown to be His will. All who rule, therefore, would hold in honor the holy name of God, and one of their chief duties must be to favor religion, to protect it, to shield it under the credit and sanction of the laws, and neither to organize nor enact any measure that may compromise its safety.

§12: . . . And, assuredly, all ought to hold that it was not without a singular disposition of God's providence that this power of the Church was provided with a civil sovereignty.

§13: 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 the nature and special object of the province of each, so that there is, we may say, an orbit traced out within which the action of each is brought into play by its own native right. But, inasmuch as each of these two powers has authority over the same subjects, and as it might come to pass that one and the same thing—related differently, but still remaining one and the same thing—might belong to the jurisdiction and determination of both, therefore God, who foresees all things, and who is the author of these two powers, has marked out the course of each in right correlation to the other.

§14: . . . There must, accordingly, exist between these two powers a certain orderly connection, which may be compared to *the union of the soul and body in man*. The nature and scope of that connection can be determined only, as We have laid down, by having regard to the nature of each power, and by taking account of the relative excellence and nobleness of their purpose. One of the two has for its proximate and chief object the well-being of this mortal life; the other, the everlasting joys of heaven. Whatever, therefore, in things human is of a sacred character, whatever belongs either of its own nature or by reason of the end to which it is referred, to the salvation of souls, or to the worship of God, is subject to the power and judgment of the Church. Whatever is to be ranged under the civil and political order is rightly subject to the civil authority. Jesus Christ has Himself given command that what is Cæsar's is to be rendered to Cæsar, and that what belongs to God is to be rendered to God.

§16: Such, then, as We have briefly pointed out, is the Christian organization of civil society; not rashly or fancifully shaped out, but educed from the highest and truest principles, confirmed by natural reason itself.

§21: There was once a time when States were governed by the philosophy of the Gospel. Then it was that the power and divine virtue of Christian wisdom had diffused itself throughout the laws, institutions, and morals of the people, permeating all ranks and relations of civil society. . .

§22: A similar state of things would certainly have continued had the agreement of the two powers been lasting. . .

§23: But that harmful and deplorable passion for innovation which was aroused in the sixteenth century threw first of all into confusion the Christian religion, and next, by natural sequence, invaded the precincts of philosophy, whence it spread amongst all classes of society. From this source, as from a fountain-head, burst forth all those later tenets of unbridled license which, in the midst of the terrible upheavals of the last century, were wildly conceived and boldly proclaimed as the principles and foundation of that new conception of law which was not merely previously unknown, but was at variance on many points with not only the Christian, but even the natural law.

§24: Amongst these principles the main one lays down that as all men are alike by race and nature, so in like manner all are equal in the control of their life; that each one is so far his own master as to be in no sense under the rule of any other individual; that each is free to think on every subject just as he may choose, and to do whatever he may like to do; that no man has any right to rule over other men. In a society grounded upon such maxims *all government is nothing more nor less than the will of the people, and the people, being under the power of itself alone, is alone its own ruler*. It does choose, nevertheless, some to whose charge it may commit itself, but in such wise that it makes over to them not the *right* so much as the *business* of governing, to be exercised, however, in its name.

§25: The authority of God is passed over in silence, just as if there were no God; or as if He cared nothing for human society; or as if men, whether in their individual capacity or bound together in social relations, owed nothing to God; or as if there could be a government of which the whole origin and power and authority did not reside in God Himself. Thus, as is evident, a State becomes nothing but a *multitude which is its own master and ruler*. And since the people is declared to contain within itself the spring-head of all rights and of all power, it follows that the State does not consider itself bound by any kind of duty toward God. Moreover, it believes that it is not

obliged to make *public profession of any religion*; or to inquire which of the very many religions is the only one true; or to prefer one religion to all the rest; or to show to any form of religion special favor; but, on the contrary, is bound to grant *equal rights to every creed*, so that public order may not be disturbed by any particular form of religious belief.

§26: And it is a part of this theory that all questions that concern religion are to be referred to *private judgment*; that every one is to be free to follow *whatever religion he prefers*, or none at all if he disapprove of all. From this the following consequences logically flow: that the judgment of each one's conscience is independent of all law; that the most unrestrained opinions may be openly expressed as to the practice or omission of divine worship; and that every one has unbounded license to *think whatever he chooses* and to *publish abroad whatever he thinks*.

§27: Now, when the State rests on foundations like those just named—and *for the time being they are greatly in favor*—it readily appears into what and how unrightful a position the Church is driven. For, when the management of public business is in harmony with doctrines of such a kind, the Catholic religion is allowed a standing in civil society equal only, or inferior, to societies alien from it; no regard is paid to the laws of the Church, and she who, by the order and commission of Jesus Christ, has the duty of teaching all nations, finds herself forbidden to take any part in the instruction of the people. . . Lastly, they treat the Church with such arrogance that, rejecting entirely her title to the nature and rights of a perfect society, they hold that she differs in no respect from other societies in the State, and for this reason possesses no right nor any legal power of action, save that which she holds by the concession and favor of the government. If in any State the Church retains her own agreement publicly entered into by the two powers, men forthwith begin to cry out that *matters affecting the Church must be separated from those of the State*.

§28: Their object in uttering this cry is to be able to violate unpunished their plighted faith, and in all things to have unchecked control. And as the Church, unable to abandon her chiefest and most sacred duties, cannot patiently put up with this, and asks that the pledge given to her be fully and scrupulously acted up to, contentions frequently arise between the ecclesiastical and the civil power, of which the issue commonly is that *the weaker power yields to the one which is stronger in human resources*.

§30: Now, natural reason itself proves convincingly that such concepts of the government of a State are wholly at variance with the truth. Nature itself bears witness that all power, of every kind, has its origin from God, who is its chief and most august source.

§31: *The sovereignty of the people*, however, and this without any reference to God, *is held to reside in the multitude*; which is doubtless a doctrine exceedingly well calculated to flatter and to inflame many passions, but which lacks all reasonable proof, and all power of insuring public safety and preserving public order. Indeed, from the prevalence of this teaching, things have come to such a pass that many hold as an axiom of civil jurisprudence that seditions may be rightfully fostered. For the opinion prevails that *princes are nothing more than delegates chosen to carry out the will of the people*; whence it necessarily follows that all things are as changeable as the will of the people, so that risk of public disturbance is ever hanging over our heads.

To hold, therefore, that there is no difference in matters of religion between forms that are unlike each other, and even contrary to each other, most clearly leads in the end to the rejection of all religion in both theory and practice. And this is the same thing as atheism, however it may differ from it in name. Men who really believe in the existence of God must, in order to be consistent with themselves and to avoid absurd conclusions, understand that differing modes of divine worship involving dissimilarity and conflict even on most important points, cannot all be equally probable, equally good, and equally acceptable to God.

§32: So, too, *the liberty of thinking, and of publishing*, whatsoever each one likes, without any hindrance, is not in itself an advantage over which society can wisely rejoice. On the contrary, it is the fountain-head and origin of many evils. Liberty is a power perfecting man, and hence

should have truth and goodness for its object. But the character of goodness and truth cannot be changed at option. These remain even one and the same, and are no less unchangeable than nature itself. If the mind assents to false opinions, and the will chooses and follows after what is wrong, neither can attain its native fullness, but both must fall from their native dignity into an abyss of corruption. Whatever, therefore, is opposed to virtue and truth may not rightly be brought temptingly before the eye of man, much less sanctioned by the favor and protection of the law. A well-spent life is the only way to heaven, whither all are bound, and on this account *the State is acting against the laws and dictates of nature whenever it permits the license of opinion and of action to lead minds astray from truth and souls away from the practice of virtue.* To exclude the Church, founded by God Himself, from life, from laws, from the education of youth, from domestic society is a grave and fatal error. A State from which religion is banished can never be well regulated; and already perhaps more than is desirable is known of the nature and tendency of the so-called *civil* philosophy of life and morals. The Church of Christ is the true and sole teacher of virtue and guardian of morals. She it is who preserves in their purity the principles from which duties flow, and, by setting forth most urgent reasons for virtuous life, bids us not only to turn away from wicked deeds, but even to curb all movements of the mind that are opposed to reason, even though they be not carried out in action.

§33: To wish the Church to be subject to the civil power in the exercise of her duty is a great folly and a sheer injustice. Whenever this is the case, order is disturbed, for things natural are put above things supernatural; the many benefits which the Church, if free to act, would confer on society are either prevented or at least lessened in number; and a way is prepared for enmities and contentions between the two powers, with how evil result to both, the issue of events has taught us only too frequently.

§34: Doctrines such as these, which cannot be approved by human reason, and most seriously affect the whole civil order, Our predecessors the Roman Pontiffs (well aware of what their apostolic office required of them) have never allowed to pass uncondemned. Thus, Gregory XVI in his encyclical letter *Mirari Vos*, dated August 15, 1832, inveighed with weighty words against the sophisms which even at his time were being publicly inculcated—namely, that no preference should be shown for any particular form of worship; that it is right for individuals to form their own personal judgments about religion; that each man’s conscience is his sole and all-sufficing guide; and that it is lawful for every man to publish his own views, whatever they may be, and even to conspire against the State. On the question of the separation of Church and State, the same Pontiff writes as follows: “Nor can We hope for happier results either for religion or for the civil government from the wishes of those who desire that *the Church be separated from the State*, and the concord between the secular and the ecclesiastical authority be dissolved. It is clear that these men, who yearn for a shameless liberty, live in dread of an agreement which has always been fraught with good, and advantageous alike to sacred and civil interests.” To the like effect, also, as occasion presented itself, did Pius IX brand publicly many false opinions which were gaining ground, and afterwards ordered them to be condensed in summary form [i.e., the *Syllabus of Errors*⁴] in order that in this sea of error Catholics might have a light which they might safely follow.

§40: . . . *Our eyes are not closed to the spirit of the times.* We repudiate not the assured and useful improvements of our age, but devoutly wish affairs of State to take a safer course than they are now taking, and to rest on a more firm foundation without injury to the true freedom of the

⁴ Leo refers us to four errors condemned by Pius, including the following: “The Church must be separated from the State and the State from the Church” (n. 55), and “It is untrue that the civil liberty of every form of worship, and the full power given to all of openly and publicly manifesting whatsoever opinions and thoughts, lead to the more ready corruption of the minds and morals of the people, and to the spread of the plague of religious indifference” (n. 79).

people; for the best parent and guardian of liberty amongst men is truth. “The truth shall make you free.”

§41: If in the difficult times in which Our lot is cast, Catholics will give ear to Us, as it behooves them to do, they will readily see what are the duties of each one in matters of opinion as well as action. *As regards opinion, whatever the Roman Pontiffs have hitherto taught, or shall hereafter teach, must be held with a firm grasp of mind and, so often as occasion requires, must be openly professed.*

§42: Especially with reference to the so-called “liberties” which are so greatly coveted in these days, all must stand by the judgment of the apostolic see, and have the same mind. Let no man be deceived by the honest outward appearance of these liberties, but let each one reflect whence these have had their origin, and by what efforts they are everywhere upheld and promoted. Experience has made Us well acquainted with their results to the State, since everywhere they have borne fruits which the good and wise bitterly deplore. If there really exist anywhere, or if We in imagination conceive, a State, waging wanton and tyrannical war against Christianity, and if we compare with it the modern form of government just described, this latter may seem the more endurable of the two. Yet, undoubtedly, the principles on which such a government is grounded are, as We have said, *of a nature which no one can approve.*

§47: . . . Further, it is unlawful to follow one line of conduct in private life and another in public, respecting privately the authority of the Church, but publicly rejecting it; for this would amount to joining together good and evil, and to putting man in conflict with himself; whereas he ought always to be consistent, and never in the least point nor in any condition of life to swerve from Christian virtue.

Leo XIII, *Exeunte Iam Anno* (1888)

§6: If We look into the kind of life men lead everywhere, it would be impossible to avoid the conclusion that public and private morals differ much from the precepts of the Gospel. Too sadly, alas, do the words of the Apostle St. John apply to our age, “*all that is in the world, is the concupiscence of the flesh, and the concupiscence of the eyes and the pride of life.*” For in truth, most men, with little care whence they come or whither they go, place all their thoughts and care upon the weak and fleeting goods of this life; contrary to nature and right reason they willingly give themselves up to those ways of which their reason tells them they should be the masters. It is a short step from the desire of luxury to the striving after the means to obtain it. Hence arises an unbridled greed for money, which blinds those whom it has led captive, and in the fulfillment of its passion hurries them madly along, often without regard for justice or injustice, and not seldom in contempt for the poverty of their neighbor. Thus many who live in the lap of luxury call themselves brethren of the multitude whom in their heart of hearts they despise; and in the same way with minds puffed up by pride, they take no thought to obey any law, or fear any power. They call self-love liberty, and think themselves “born free like a wild ass’s colt.” Snares and temptation to sin abound; We know that impious or immoral dramas are exhibited on the stage; that books and journals are written to jeer at virtue and enoble crime; that the very arts, which were intended to give pleasure and proper recreation, have been made to minister to impurity. Nor can We look to the future without fear, for new seeds of evil are sown, and as it were poured into the heart of the rising generation. As for the public schools, there is no ecclesiastical authority left in them, and in the years when it is most fitting for tender minds to be trained carefully in Christian virtue, the precepts of religion are for the most part unheard. Men more advanced in age encounter a yet graver peril from evil teaching, which is of such a kind as to blind the young by misleading words, instead of filling them with the knowledge of the truth. Many now-a-days seek to learn by the aid

of reason alone, laying divine faith entirely aside; and, through the removal of its bright light, they stumble and fail to discern the truth, teaching for instance, that matter alone exists in the world; that men and beasts have the same origin and a like nature; there are some, indeed, who go so far as to doubt the existence of God, the Ruler and Maker of the world, or who err most grievously, like the heathens, as to the nature of God. *Hence the very nature and form of virtue, justice, and duty are of necessity destroyed.* Thus it is that while they hold up to admiration the high authority of reason, and unduly elevate the subtlety of the human intellect, they fall into the just punishment of pride through ignorance of what is of more importance.

§7: When the mind has thus been poisoned, at the same time the moral character becomes deeply and essentially corrupted; and such a state can only be cured with the utmost difficulty in this class of men, because on the one hand wrong opinions vitiate their judgment of what is right, and on the other the light of Christian faith, which is *the principle and basis of all justice*, is extinguished.

§8: In this way We daily see the numerous ills which afflict all classes of men. These poisonous doctrines have utterly corrupted both public and private life; rationalism, materialism, atheism, have begotten socialism, communism, nihilism—evil principles which it was not only fitting should have sprung from such parentage but were its necessary offspring. In truth, if the Catholic religion is wilfully rejected, whose divine origin is made clear by such unmistakable signs, what reason is there why *every* form of religion should not be rejected, not upheld by such criteria of truth? If the soul is one with the body, and if therefore no hope of a happy eternity remains when the body dies, what reason is there for men to undertake toil and suffering here in subjecting the appetites to right reason? The highest good of man will then lie in enjoying life's pleasures and life's luxuries. *And since there is no one who is drawn to virtue by the impulse of his own nature*, every man will naturally lay hands on all he can, that he may live happily on the spoils of others. Nor is there any power mighty enough to bridle the passions, for it follows that the power of law is broken, and that all authority is loosened, if the belief in an ever-living God, Who commands what is right and forbids what is wrong is rejected. Hence the bonds of civil society will be utterly shattered when every man is driven by an unappeasable covetousness to a perpetual struggle, some striving to keep their possessions, others to obtain what they desire. This is well-nigh *the bent of our age*.

§9: . . . Hence they who strive by the enforcement of law to extinguish the growing flame of lawless desire, strive indeed for justice; but let them know that they will labor with no result, or next to none, as long as they obstinately reject the power of the gospel and refuse *the assistance of the Church*. Thus will the evil alone be cured, by changing their ways, and returning back in their public and private life to Jesus Christ and Christianity.

Leo XIII, *Sapientiae Christianae* (1890)

§1: From day to day it becomes more and more evident how needful it is that the principles of Christian wisdom should ever be borne in mind, and that the life, morals, and the institutions of nations should be wholly conformed to them. For, when these principles have been disregarded, evils so vast have accrued that no right-minded man can face the trials of the time being without grave anxiety or consider the future without alarm. Progress, not inconsiderable indeed, has been made towards securing the well-being of the body and of material things, but the material world, with the possession of wealth, power, and resources, although it may well procure comfort and increase the enjoyment of life, is incapable of satisfying our soul created for higher and more glorious things. To contemplate God, and attend to Him, is the supreme law of the life of man. For we were created in the divine image and likeness, and are impelled, by our very nature, to the

enjoyment of our Creator. But not by bodily motion or effort do we make advance toward God, but through acts of the soul, that is, through knowledge and love. For, indeed, God is the first and supreme truth, and the mind alone feeds on truth. God is perfect holiness and the sovereign good, to which only the will can desire and attain, when virtue is its guide.

§2: But what applies to individual men applies equally to society—domestic alike and civil. Nature did not form society in order that man should seek in it his last end, but in order that in it and through it he should find suitable aids whereby to attain to his own perfection. If, then, a political government strives after external advantages only, and the achievement of a cultured and prosperous life; if, in administering public affairs, it is wont to put God aside, and show no solicitude for the upholding of moral law, it deflects woefully from its right course and from the injunctions of nature; nor should it be accounted as a society or community of men, but only as the deceitful imitation or appearance of a society.

§3: As to what We have called the goods of the soul, which consist chiefly in the practice of the true religion and in the unswerving observance of the Christian precepts, We see them daily losing esteem among men, either by reason of forgetfulness or disregard, in such wise that all that is gained for the well-being of the body seems to be lost for that of the soul. A striking proof of the lessening and weakening of the Christian faith is seen in the insults too often done to the Catholic Church, openly and publicly—insult, indeed, which an age cherishing religion would not have tolerated. For these reasons, an incredible multitude of men is in danger of not achieving salvation; and even nations and empires themselves cannot long remain unharmed, since, when Christian institutions and morality decline, the main foundation of human society goes together with them. Force alone will remain to preserve public tranquillity and order. But force is very feeble when the bulwark of religion has been removed, and, being more apt to beget slavery than obedience, it bears within itself the germs of ever-increasing troubles. The present century has encountered memorable disasters, and it is not certain that some equally terrible are not impending. . .

§5: Now, if the natural law enjoins us to love devotedly and to defend the country in which we had birth, and in which we were brought up, so that every good citizen hesitates not to face death for his native land, very much more is it the urgent duty of Christians to be ever quickened by like feelings toward the Church. For the Church is the holy City of the living God, born of God Himself, and by Him built up and established. Upon this earth, indeed, she accomplishes her pilgrimage, but by instructing and guiding men she summons them to eternal happiness. We are bound, then, to love dearly the country whence we have received the means of enjoyment this mortal life affords, but we have a much more urgent obligation to love, with ardent love, the Church to which we owe the life of the soul, a life that will endure for ever. For fitting it is to prefer the good of the soul to the well-being of the body, inasmuch as duties toward God are of a far more hallowed character than those toward men.

§6: Moreover, if we would judge aright, the supernatural love for the Church and the natural love of our own country proceed from the same eternal principle, since God Himself is their Author and originating cause. Consequently, it follows that between the duties they respectfully enjoin, neither can come into collision with the other. We can, certainly, and should love ourselves, bear ourselves kindly toward our fellow men, nourish affection for the State and the governing powers; but at the same time we can and must cherish toward the Church a feeling of filial piety, and love God with the deepest love of which we are capable. The order of precedence of these duties is, however, at times, either under stress of public calamities, or through the perverse will of men, inverted. For, instances occur where the State seems to require from men as subjects one thing, and religion, from men as Christians, quite another; and this in reality without any other ground, than that the rulers of the State either hold the sacred power of the Church of no account, or endeavor to subject it to their own will. Hence arises a conflict, and an occasion, through such conflict, of virtue being put to the proof. These two powers are confronted and urge their behests

in a contrary sense; to obey both is wholly impossible. No man can serve two masters, for to please the one amounts to contemning the other.

§7: As to which should be preferred, no one ought to balance for an instant. It is a high crime indeed to withdraw allegiance from God in order to please men, an act of consummate wickedness to break the laws of Jesus Christ, in order to yield obedience to earthly rulers, or, under pretext of keeping the civil law, to ignore the rights of the Church; “we ought to obey God rather than men.” This answer, which of old Peter and the other Apostles were used to give the civil authorities who enjoined unrighteous things, we must, in like circumstances, give always and without hesitation. No better citizen is there, whether in time of peace or war, than the Christian who is mindful of his duty; but such a one should be ready to suffer all things, even death itself, rather than abandon the cause of God or of the Church.

§20: In the case of those who profess to take reason as their sole guide, there would hardly be found, if, indeed, there ever could be found, unity of doctrine. Indeed, the art of knowing things as they really are is exceedingly difficult; moreover, the mind of man is by nature feeble and drawn this way and that by a variety of opinions, and not seldom led astray by impressions coming from without; and, furthermore, the influence of the passions oftentimes takes away, or certainly at least diminishes, the capacity for grasping the truth. On this account, in controlling State affairs, means are often used to keep those together by force who cannot agree in their way of thinking.

§26: The tracing out of these rights and duties [of the Catholic citizen] being thus set forth, it is plainly evident that the governing powers are wholly free to carry out the business of the State; and this not only not against the wish of the Church, but manifestly with her co-operation, inasmuch as she strongly urges to the practice of piety, which implies right feeling towards God, and by that very fact inspires a right-mindedness toward the rulers in the State. The spiritual power, however, has a far loftier purpose, the Church directing her aim to govern the minds of men in the defending of the “kingdom of God and His justice,” a task she is wholly bent upon accomplishing.

§30: The Church alike and the State, doubtless, both possess individual sovereignty; hence, in the carrying out of public affairs, neither obeys the other within the limits to which each is restricted by its constitution. It does not hence follow, however, that Church and State are in any manner severed, and still less antagonistic. Nature, in fact, has given us not only physical existence, but moral life likewise. Hence, from the tranquillity of public order, which is the immediate purpose of civil society, man expects to derive his well-being, and still more the sheltering care necessary to his moral life, which consists exclusively in the knowledge and practice of virtue. He wishes, moreover, at the same time, as in duty bound, to find in the Church the aids necessary to his religious perfection, in the knowledge and practice of the true religion; of that religion which is the queen of virtues, because in binding these to God it completes them all and perfects them. Therefore, they who are engaged in framing constitutions and in enacting laws should bear in mind the moral and religious nature of man, and take care to help him, but in a right and orderly way, to gain perfection, neither enjoining nor forbidding anything save what is reasonably consistent with civil as well as with religious requirements. On this very account, the Church cannot stand by, indifferent as to the import and significance of laws enacted by the State; not insofar, indeed, as they refer to the State, but insofar as passing beyond their due limits, they trench upon the rights of the Church.

§31: From God has the duty been assigned to the Church not only to interpose resistance, if at any time the State rule should run counter to religion, but, further, to make a strong endeavor that the power of the Gospel may pervade the law and institutions of the nations. And inasmuch as the destiny of the State depends mainly on the disposition of those who are at the head of affairs, it follows that the Church cannot give countenance or favor to those whom she knows to be imbued with a spirit of hostility to her; who refuse openly to respect her rights; who make it their aim and purpose to tear asunder the alliance that should, by the very nature of things, connect the interests

of religion with those of the State. On the contrary, she is (as she is bound to be) the upholder of those who are themselves imbued with the right way of thinking as to the relations between Church and State, and who strive to make them work in perfect accord for the common good. These precepts contain the abiding principle by which every Catholic should shape his conduct in regard to public life. In short, where the Church does not forbid taking part in public affairs, it is fit and proper to give support to men of acknowledged worth, and who pledge themselves to deserve well in the Catholic cause, and on no account may it be allowed to prefer to them any such individuals as are hostile to religion.

§33: As to those who mean to take part in public affairs, they should avoid with the very utmost care two criminal excesses: so-called prudence, and false courage. Some there are, indeed, who maintain that it is not opportune boldly to attack evil-doing in its might and when in the ascendant, lest, as they say, opposition should exasperate minds already hostile. These make it a matter of guesswork as to whether they are for the Church or against her, since on the one hand they give themselves out as professing the Catholic faith, and yet wish that the Church should allow certain opinions, at variance with her teaching, to be spread abroad with impunity. They moan over the loss of faith and the perversion of morals, yet trouble themselves not to bring any remedy; nay, not seldom, even add to the intensity of the mischief through too much forbearance or harmful dissembling. These same individuals would not have any one entertain a doubt as to their good will towards the holy see; yet they have always something by way of reproach against the supreme Pontiff.

§37: The like disposition and the same order should prevail in Christian society by so much the more that the political prudence of the Pontiff embraces diverse and multiform things, for it is his charge not only to rule the Church, but generally so to regulate the actions of Christian citizens that these may be in apt conformity to their hope of gaining eternal salvation. Whence it is clear that, in addition to the complete accord of thought and deed, the faithful should follow the practical political wisdom of the ecclesiastical authority. . .

§39: The Church, it is certain, at no time and in no particular is deserted by God; hence, there is no reason why she should be alarmed at the wickedness of men; but in the case of nations falling away from Christian virtue there is not a like ground of assurance, “for sin maketh nations miserable.” If every bygone age has experienced the force of this truth, wherefore should not our own? There are, in truth, very many signs which proclaim that just punishments are already menacing, and the condition of modern States tends to confirm this belief, since we perceive many of them in sad plight from intestine disorders, and not one entirely exempt. But, should those leagued together in wickedness hurry onward in the road they have boldly chosen, should they increase in influence and power in proportion as they make headway in their evil purposes and crafty schemes, there will be ground to fear lest the very foundations nature has laid for States to rest upon be utterly destroyed. Nor can such misgivings be removed by any mere human effort, especially as a vast number of men, having rejected the Christian faith, are on that account justly incurring the penalty of pride, since blinded by their passions they search in vain for truth, laying hold on the false for the true, and thinking themselves wise when they call “evil good, and good evil,” and “put darkness in the place of light, and light in the place of darkness.” It is therefore necessary that God come to the rescue, and that, mindful of His mercy, He turn an eye of compassion on human society.

Leo XIII, *Dall'alto Dell'apostolico Seggio* (1890)

§12: All know with what salutary effect and in how many ways the influence of religion penetrates society. It is beyond dispute that sound public and private morality gives honor and strength to States. But it is equally certain that, without religion there is no true morality, *either public or private*.—From the family, solidly based on its natural foundations, comes the life, the growth, and the energy of society. But without religion, and without morality, the domestic partnership has no stability, and the family bonds grow weak and waste away.—The prosperity of peoples and of nations comes from God and from His blessings. If a people does not attribute its prosperity to Him, but rises up against Him, and in the pride of its heart *tacitly* tells Him that it has no need of Him, its prosperity *is but a semblance*, certain to disappear so soon as it shall please the Lord to confound the proud insolence of His enemies.—It is religion which, penetrating to the depth of each one's conscience, makes him feel the force of duty and urges him to fulfill it. It is religion which gives to rulers feelings of justice and love towards their subjects; which makes subjects faithful and sincerely devoted to their rulers; which makes upright and good legislators, just and incorruptible magistrates, brave and heroic soldiers, conscientious and diligent administrators. It is religion which produces concord and affection between husband and wife, love and reverence between parents and their children; which makes the poor respect the property of others, and causes the rich to make a right use of their wealth. From this fidelity to duty, and this respect for the rights of others, come the order, the tranquillity, and the peace, which form so large a part of the prosperity of a people and of a State. Take away religion, and with it all these immensely precious benefits would disappear from society.

Leo XIII, *In Ipso* (1891)

§1: At the very beginning of our Pontificate, as We reviewed the entire Catholic world, We found much cause for joy in the many and various good works in which the bishops, the secular and religious clergy, and the faithful are constantly engaged. Nevertheless, it grieves Us to think that the enemies of the Church, joined in most wicked conspiracy, scheme to weaken and even, if possible, utterly wipe out that wondrous edifice which God Himself has erected as a refuge for the human race. This combat ardently waged against the Church far and wide, although carried on in different ways for different places, has one established plan: to remove all traces of religion from families, schools, laws, and institutions; to deprive the Church itself of its means of action and that singular virtue it possesses for the common good; and to infiltrate every vein, as it were, of domestic and civil society with the most dangerous poison of their errors. And so these adversaries have left nothing untried; their license has been boundless. In number and with violence, they have assailed the rights, liberty and dignity of the Church; the bishops and all ranks of the clergy; and especially the authority of the Roman Pontiff as well as the Pontiff himself. As a result of these attacks on the Catholic name, grave ills have befallen nations. The enemies extend their perverse views ever more widely, and the immorality and rebellion which accompany such views sweep away souls with the result that greater dangers daily threaten states and governments. Nor was any other result to be expected. Religion is the strongest bulwark of the state. It can, by proper warning and salutary prohibition, hold people fast to their obligations. But when religion is weakened, or worse still, tossed aside, then straightaway the foundations of civil society waver and are destroyed.

§2: These evils We have openly denounced at every opportunity. In Our communications, We have pointed out to those in authority how closely the interests of religion and the state are

intertwined, while at the same time exhorting the faithful to properly cherish and diligently fulfill the teachings of the Church. . .

Leo XIII, *Pastoralis* (1891)

§8: . . . For this gift, this possession, was granted to the Church by her Divine Founder, that she should be in the common society of men a bond of peace and the guardian of salvation. Wherefore the Church in no way weakens the power of those who rule the State, rather she supports and strengthens it, in conferring on the laws that spring from this power the sanction of religion, in reckoning among the obligations laid upon mankind by God a due reverence for authority, in warning citizens to refrain from sedition and all disturbance in the State, in teaching all to practice virtue, and conscientiously to fulfill the duties that belong to their condition in life. Therefore is the Church the pinnacle of morality, and by her salutary discipline she trains citizens to be upright, honorable, patriotic, faithful and very steadfast to duty, to be such men in fine as stand for an immovable foundation in the public ordering of the State, and as give to it an unconquerable strength for the achievement of every noble and high ideal. Therefore is it to the State's high advantage to leave to the Church that liberty of action which she demands of right, and to prepare a friendly path where she may be able to touch far lands with her beneficial powers, and to employ all the gifts of her endowment for the common good.

§11: It is the unanimous agreement of all principled and honorable men, that there is no remedy more efficacious and potent against the evils by which Our age is oppressed, and against the perils in store, than the Catholic doctrine, if it be received whole and incorrupt, and if mankind walk in that way of life which its practice demands.

Leo XIII, *Au Milieu des Sollicitudes* (1892)

§5: First of all, let us take as a starting-point a well-known truth admitted by all men of good sense and loudly proclaimed by the history of all peoples; namely, that religion, and religion only, can create the social bond; that it alone maintains the peace of a nation on a solid foundation. When different families, without giving up the rights and duties of domestic society, unite under the inspiration of nature, in order to constitute themselves members of another larger family circle called civil society, their object is not only to find therein the means of providing for their material welfare, but, above all, to draw thence the boon of moral improvement. Otherwise society would rise but little above the level of an aggregation of beings devoid of reason, and whose whole life would consist in the satisfaction of sensual instincts. Moreover, without this moral improvement it would be difficult to demonstrate that civil society was an advantage rather than a detriment to man, as man.

§6: Now, morality, in man, by the mere fact that it should establish harmony among so many dissimilar rights and duties, since it enters as an element into every human act, necessarily supposes God, and with God, religion, that sacred bond whose privilege is to unite, anteriorly to all other bonds, man to God. Indeed, the idea of morality signifies, above all, an order of dependence in regard to truth which is the light of the mind; in regard to good which is the object of the will; and without truth and good there is no morality worthy of the name. And what is the principal and essential truth, that from which all truth is derived? It is God. What, therefore, is the supreme good from which all other good proceeds? God. Finally, who is the creator and guardian of our reason, our will, our whole being, as well as the end of our life? God; always God. Since, therefore, religion is the interior and exterior expression of the dependence which, in justice, we owe to God, there follows a grave obligation. All citizens are bound [obliged] to unite in maintaining in the nation true religious sentiment, and to defend it in case of need, if ever, despite the protestations

of nature and of history, an atheistical school should set about banishing God from society, thereby surely annihilating the moral sense even in the depths of the human conscience. Among men who have not lost all notion of integrity there can exist no difference of opinion on this point.

§8: Now the history of a nation reveals in an incontestable way the generating and preserving element of its moral greatness, and should this element ever be missing, neither a superabundance of gold nor even force of arms could save it from moral decadence and perhaps death. . .

§14: . . . In this order of speculative ideas [which form of government is abstractly best] Catholics, like all other citizens, are free to prefer one form of government to another precisely because no one of these social forms is, in itself, opposed to the principles of sound reason nor to the maxims of Christian doctrine. What amply justifies the wisdom of the Church is that in her relations with political powers she makes abstraction of the forms which differentiate them and treats with them concerning the great religious interests of nations, knowing that hers is the duty to undertake their tutelage above all other interest. Our preceding Encyclicals have already exposed these principles, but it was nevertheless necessary to recall them for the development of the subject which occupies us to-day.

§15: In descending from the domain of abstractions to that of facts, we must beware of *denying the principles just established*: they remain fixed. However, becoming incarnated in facts, they are clothed with a contingent character, determined by the center in which their application is produced. . .

§18: And how are these political changes of which We speak produced? They sometimes follow in the wake of violent crises, too often of a bloody character, in the midst of which pre-existing governments totally disappear; then anarchy holds sway, and soon public order is shaken to its very foundations and finally overthrown. From that time onward a *social need* obtrudes itself upon the nation; it must provide for itself without delay. Is it not its privilege—or, better still, its duty—to defend itself against a state of affairs troubling it so deeply, and to re-establish public peace in the tranquillity of order? Now, this social need justifies the creation and the existence of new governments, whatever form they take; since, in the hypothesis wherein we reason, these new governments are a requisite for public order, all public order being impossible without a government. Thence it follows that, in similar junctures, all the novelty is limited to the *political form* of civil power, or to its *mode of transmission*; it in no wise affects the *power* considered in itself. This continues to be immutable and worthy of respect, as, considered in its nature, it is constituted to provide for the common good, the supreme end which gives human society its origin. To put it otherwise, in all hypotheses, civil power, considered as such, is from God, always from God: “For there is no power but from God.”

§19: Consequently, when new governments *representing this immutable power* are constituted, their acceptance is not only permissible but even obligatory, being imposed by the need of the social good which has made and which upholds them. This is all the more imperative because an insurrection stirs up hatred among citizens, provokes civil war, and may throw a nation into chaos and anarchy, and this great duty of respect and dependence will endure as long as the exigencies of the common good shall demand it, since this good is, after God, *the first and last law in society*.

§21: But a difficulty presents itself. “This [French Third] Republic,” it is said, “is animated by such anti-Christian sentiments that honest men, Catholics particularly, could not conscientiously accept it.” This, more than anything else, has given rise to dissensions, and in fact aggravated them. These regrettable differences would have been avoided if the very considerable distinction between *constituted power* and *legislation* had been carefully kept in view. In so much does legislation differ from political power and its form, that under a system of government most excellent in form legislation could be detestable; while quite the opposite under a regime *most imperfect in form*, might be found quite excellent legislation. It were an easy task to prove this

truth, history in hand, but what would be the use? All are convinced of it. And who, better than the Church, is in a position to know it—she who has striven to maintain habitual relations with all political governments? Assuredly she, better than any other power, could tell the consolation or sorrow occasioned her by the laws of the various governments by which nations have been ruled from the Roman Empire down to the present.

§22: If the distinction just established has its major importance, it is likewise manifestly reasonable. Legislation is the work of men invested with power, and who, in fact, *govern the nation*; therefore it follows that, practically, *the quality of the laws depend more upon the quality of these men than upon the power*. The laws will be good or bad accordingly as the *minds of the legislators* are imbued with good or bad principles, and as they allow themselves to be guided by political prudence or by passion.

§28: We shall not hold to the same language on another point, concerning the principle of the separation of State and Church, which is equivalent to the separation of human legislation from Christian and divine legislation. We do not care to interrupt Ourselves here in order to demonstrate the absurdity of such a separation; each one will understand for himself. As soon as the State refuses to give to God what belongs to God, by a necessary consequence it refuses to give to citizens that which, as men, they have a right; as, whether agreeable or not to accept, it cannot be denied that man's rights spring from his duty toward God. Whence it follows that the State, by missing in this connection the principal object of its institutions, finally becomes *false to itself by denying that which is the reason of its own existence*. These superior truths are so clearly proclaimed by the voice of even natural reason, that they force themselves upon all who are not blinded by the violence of passion; therefore Catholics cannot be too careful in defending themselves against such a separation. *In fact, to wish that the State would separate itself from the Church would be to wish, by a logical sequence, that the Church be reduced to the liberty of living according to the law common to all citizens.* . . . It is true that in certain countries this state of affairs exists. It is a condition which, if it have numerous inconveniences, also offers some advantages—above all when, *by a fortunate inconsistency*, the legislator is inspired by Christian principles—and, though these advantages *cannot justify the false principle of separation nor authorize its defense*, they nevertheless render *worthy of toleration* a situation which, practically, *might be worse*.

Leo XIII, *Annum Sacrum* (1899)

§10: Such an act of consecration [to the Sacred Heart], since it can establish or draw tighter the bonds which naturally connect public affairs with God, gives to States a hope of better things. In these latter times especially, a policy has been followed which has resulted in a sort of wall being raised between the Church and civil society. In the constitution and administration of States the authority of sacred and divine law is utterly disregarded, with a view to the exclusion of religion from having any constant part in public life. This policy almost tends to the removal of the Christian faith from our midst, and, if that were possible, of the banishment of God Himself from the earth. When men's minds are raised to such a height of insolent pride, what wonder is it that the greater part of the human race should have fallen into such disquiet of mind and be buffeted by waves so rough that no one is suffered to be free from anxiety and peril? When religion is once discarded it follows of necessity that the surest foundations of the public welfare must give way, whilst God, to inflict on His enemies the punishment they so richly deserve, has left them the prey of their own evil desires, so that they give themselves up to their passions and finally wear themselves out by excess of liberty.

§11: Hence that abundance of evils which have now for a long time settled upon the world, and which pressingly call upon us to seek for help from Him by whose strength alone they can be

driven away. Who can He be but Jesus Christ the Only-begotten Son of God? “For there is no other name under heaven given to men whereby we must be saved” (Acts iv., 12). We must have recourse to Him who is the Way, the Truth, and the Life. We have gone astray and we must return to the right path: darkness has overshadowed our minds, and the gloom must be dispelled by the light of truth: death has seized upon us, and we must lay hold of life. It will at length be possible that our many wounds be healed and all justice spring forth again with the hope of restored authority; that the splendors of peace be renewed, and swords and arms drop from the hand when all men shall acknowledge the empire of Christ and willingly obey His word, and “Every tongue shall confess that our Lord Jesus Christ is in the glory of God the Father” (Philippians ii, 11).

Leo XIII, *Depuis le Jour* (1899)

§14: In our Encyclical *Æterni Patris*, which we once again recommend to the attentive perusal of your seminarists and their masters, we declared, with St. Paul as our authority, that is it by the empty studies of false philosophy *per philosophiam et inanem fallaciam* that the minds of the faithful are most frequently led astray and the purity of the faith corrupted among men, we added, and the events of the last twenty years [i.e. the course of his pontificate] have furnished bitter confirmation of the reflections and apprehensions we expressed at the time. If one notes the critical condition of the times in which we live and ponders on the state of affairs in public and private life, he will have no difficulty in seeing that the cause of the evils which oppress us, as well as those which menace, lies in the fact that erroneous opinions on all subjects, human and divine, have gradually percolated from philosophical schools through all ranks of society, and have come to be accepted by a large number of minds.

Leo XIII, *Tametsi Futura Prospicientibus* (1900)

§7: From this [reality of the human condition] it may clearly be seen what consequences are to be expected from that false pride which, rejecting our Saviour’s Kingship, places man at the summit of all things and declares that human nature must rule supreme. And yet, this supreme rule can neither be attained nor even defined. The rule of Jesus Christ derives its form and its power from Divine Love: a holy and orderly charity is both its foundation and its crown. Its necessary consequences are the strict fulfillment of duty, respect of mutual rights, the estimation of the things of heaven above those of earth, the preference of the love of God to all things. But this supremacy of man, which openly reject Christ, *or at least ignores Him*, is entirely founded upon selfishness, knowing neither charity nor self-devotion. Man may indeed be king, through Jesus Christ: but only on condition that he first of all obey God, and diligently seek his rule of life in God’s law. By the law of Christ we mean not only the natural precepts of morality and the Ancient Law, all of which Jesus Christ has perfected and crowned by His declaration, explanation and sanction; but also the rest of His doctrine and His own peculiar institutions. Of these the chief is His Church. Indeed whatsoever things Christ has instituted are most fully contained in His Church. . .

§11: . . . A system of morality based exclusively on human reason robs man of his highest dignity and lowers him from the supernatural to the merely natural life. Not but that man is able by the right use of reason to know and to obey certain principles of the natural law. But though he should know them all, and keep them inviolate through life—and even this is impossible without the aid of the grace of our Redeemer—still it is vain for anyone without faith to promise himself eternal salvation. “If anyone abide not in Me, he shall be cast forth as a branch, and shall wither, and they shall gather him up and cast him into the fire, and he burneth” (John xv., 6). “He that

believeth not shall be condemned” (Mark xvi., 16). We have but too much evidence of the value and result of a morality divorced from divine faith. How is it that, in spite of all the zeal for the welfare of the masses, nations are in such straits and even distress, and that the evil is daily on the increase? We are told that society is quite able to help itself; that it can flourish without the assistance of Christianity, and attain its end by its own unaided efforts. Public administrators prefer a purely secular system of government. All traces of the religion of our forefathers are daily disappearing from political life and administration. What blindness! Once the idea of the authority of God as the Judge of right and wrong is forgotten, law must necessarily lose its primary authority and justice must perish: and these are the two most powerful and most necessary balms of society. Similarly, once the hope and expectation of eternal happiness is taken away, temporal goods will be greedily sought after. Every man will strive to secure the largest share for himself. Hence arise envy, jealousy, hatred. The consequences are conspiracy, anarchy, nihilism. There is neither peace abroad, nor security at home. Public life is stained with crime.

§12: So great is this struggle of the passions and so serious the dangers involved, that we must either anticipate ultimate ruin or seek for an efficient remedy. It is of course both right and necessary to punish malefactors, to educate the masses, and by legislation to prevent crime in every possible way: but all this is by no means sufficient. The salvation of the nations must be looked for higher. A power greater than human must be called in to teach men’s hearts, awaken in them the sense of duty, and make them better. This is the power which once before saved the world from destruction when groaning under much more terrible evils. Once remove all impediments and allow the Christian spirit to revive and grow strong in a nation, and that nation will be healed. The strife between the classes and the masses will die away. Mutual rights will be respected. If Christ be listened to, both rich and poor will do their duty. The former will realize that they must observe justice and charity, the latter self-restraint and moderation, if both are to be saved. Domestic life will be firmly established by the salutary fear of God as the Lawgiver. In the same way the precepts of the natural law, which dictates respect for lawful authority and obedience to the laws, will exercise their influence over the people. Seditions and conspiracies will cease. Wherever Christianity rules over all without let or hindrance, there the order established by Divine Providence is preserved, and both security and prosperity are the happy result. The common welfare, then, urgently demands a return to Him from whom we should never have gone astray; to Him who is the Way, the Truth, and the Life—and this on the part not only of individuals but of *society as a whole*. We must restore Christ to His own rightful possession. All elements of the national life must be made to drink in the Life which proceedeth from Him—legislation, political institutions, education, marriage and family life, capital and labor. Everyone must see that the very growth of civilization which is so ardently desired depends greatly upon this, since it is fed and grows not so much by material wealth and prosperity, as by the spiritual qualities of morality and virtue.

St. Pius X, *Iucunda Sane* (1904)

§19: Not less deplorable are the injuries which accrue from this negation [of supernatural principles] to the moral life of individuals and of civil society. Take away the principle that there is anything divine outside this visible world, and you take away all check upon unbridled passions even of the lowest and most shameful kind, and the minds that become slaves to them riot in disorders of every species. “God gave them up to the desires of their heart, unto uncleanness, to dishonor their own bodies among themselves” (Rom. i. 24). You are well aware, Venerable Brethren, how truly the plague of depravity triumphs on all sides, and how the civil authority wherever it fails to have recourse to the means of help offered by the supernatural order, finds itself quite unequal to the task of checking it. Nay, authority will never be able to heal other evils as long as it

forgets or denies that all power comes from God. The only check a government can command in this case is that of force; but force cannot be constantly employed, nor is it always available, yet the people continue to be undermined as by a secret disease, they become discontented with everything, they proclaim the right to act as they please, they stir up rebellions, they provoke revolutions, often of extreme violence, in the State; they overthrow all rights human and divine. Take away God, and all respect for civil laws, all regard for even the most necessary institutions disappears; justice is scouted; the very liberty that belongs to the law of nature is trodden under foot; and men go so far as to destroy the very structure of the family, which is the first and firmest foundation of the social structure. The result is that in these days hostile to Christ, it has become more difficult to apply the powerful remedies which the Redeemer has put into the hands of the Church in order to keep the peoples within the lines of duty.

St. Pius X, *Vehementer Nos* (1905)

§3: That the State must be separated from the Church is a thesis absolutely false, a most pernicious error. Based, as it is, on the principle that the State must not recognize any religious cult, it is in the first place guilty of a great injustice to God; for the Creator of man is also the Founder of human societies, and preserves their existence as He preserves our own. We owe Him, therefore, not only a private cult, but a public and social worship to honor Him. Besides, this thesis is an obvious negation of the supernatural order. It limits the action of the State to the pursuit of public prosperity during this life only, which is but the *proximate object* of political societies; and it occupies itself in no fashion (on the plea that this is foreign to it) with their *ultimate object*, which is man's eternal happiness after this short life shall have run its course. But as the present order of things is temporary and subordinated to the conquest of man's supreme and absolute welfare, it follows that the civil power must not only place no obstacle in the way of this conquest, but must aid us in effecting it. The same thesis [viz., of separation] also upsets the order providentially established by God in the world, which demands a harmonious agreement between the two societies. . . It follows necessarily that there are many things belonging to them in common in which both societies must have relations with one another. Remove the agreement between Church and State, and the result will be that from these common matters will spring the seeds of dispute which will become acute on both sides; it will become more difficult to see where the truth lies, and great confusion is certain to arise. Finally, this thesis inflicts great injury on society itself, for it cannot either prosper or last long when due place is not left for religion, which is *the supreme rule and the sovereign mistress in all questions touching the rights and the duties of men*. Hence the Roman Pontiffs have never ceased, as circumstances required, to refute and condemn the doctrine of the separation of Church and State. Our illustrious predecessor, Leo XIII, especially, has frequently and magnificently expounded Catholic teaching on the relations which should subsist between the two societies. "Between them," he says, "there must necessarily be a suitable union, which may not improperly be compared with that existing between body and soul." He proceeds: "Human societies cannot, without becoming criminal, act as if God did not exist, or refuse to concern themselves with religion, as though it were something foreign to them, or of no purpose to them. . . As for the Church, which has God Himself for its author, to exclude her from the active life of the nation, from the laws, the education of the young, the family, is to commit a great and pernicious error."⁵

⁵ "*Civitates non possunt, citra scellus, genere se tamquam si Deus omnino non esset, aut curam religionis velut alienam nihilque profuturam abjicere...Ecclesiam vero, quam Deus ipse constituit, ab actione vite excludere, a legibus, ab institutione adolescentium, a societate domestica, magnus et perniciosus est error.*"

St. Pius X, *Pascendi Dominici Gregis* (1907)⁶

§24: . . .The rights and duties of the Church towards civil societies must, therefore, [according to the Modernists, whom the Pope is condemning] be determined, and determined, of course, by its *own* nature as it has been already [falsely] described [by the Modernists]. The rules to be applied in this matter are those which have been laid down for science and faith, though in the latter case, the question is one of *objects*, while here we have one of *ends*. In the same way, then, as faith and science are alien to each other by reason of the diversity of their *objects*, Church and State are strangers by reason of the diversity of their ends, that of the Church being spiritual while that of the State is temporal. Formerly it was possible to subordinate the temporal to the spiritual and to speak of some questions as *mixed*, conceding to the Church the position of queen and mistress in all such, because the Church was then regarded as having been instituted immediately by God as the author of the supernatural order. But this doctrine [viz. the subordination of temporal to spiritual] is today repudiated alike by philosophers and historians. The State must, therefore, be separated from the Church, and the Catholic from the citizen. Every Catholic, from the fact that he is also a citizen, has the right and the duty to work for the common good in the way he thinks best, without troubling himself about the authority of the Church, without paying any heed to its wishes, its counsels, its orders—nay, even in spite of its rebukes. For the Church to trace out and prescribe for the citizen any line of action, on any pretext whatsoever, is to be guilty of an abuse of authority, against which one is bound to protest with all one’s might. Venerable brethren, the principles from which these doctrines spring have been solemnly condemned by Our predecessor, Pius VI, in his Apostolic Constitution *Auctorem fidei*.

§25: But it is not enough for the Modernist school that the State should be separated from the Church. For as faith is to be subordinate to science, as far as *phenomenal elements* are concerned, so too in temporal matters the Church must be subject to the State. They do not say this openly *as yet*—but they *will* say it, when they wish to be logical on this head. For given the principle that in temporal matters the State possesses absolute mastery, it will follow that when the believer, not fully satisfied with his merely internal acts of religion, proceeds to external acts, such for instance as the administration or reception of the sacraments, these will fall under the control of the State. What will then become of ecclesiastical authority, which can only be exercised by external acts? Obviously it will be completely under the dominion of the State. It is this inevitable consequence which impels many among liberal Protestants to reject all external worship, nay, all external religious community, and makes them advocate what they call, *individual* religion. If the Modernists have not yet reached this point, they do ask the Church in the meanwhile to be good enough to follow spontaneously where they lead her and adapt herself to the civil forms in vogue. . .

St. Pius X, *Communium Rerum* (1909)

§30: They err greatly, therefore, who lose faith during the storm, wishing for themselves and the Church a permanent state of perfect tranquillity, universal prosperity, and practical, unanimous and uncontested recognition of her sacred authority. But the error is worse when men deceive themselves with the idea of gaining an ephemeral peace by cloaking the rights and interests of the Church, by sacrificing them to private interests, by minimizing them unjustly, by truckling to the world, “the whole of which is seated in wickedness” (1 Jn. 5:19) on the pretext of reconciling the

⁶ The following excerpt can be confusing, unless the reader recalls that Pope Pius is *mocking* the position of the Modernists by drawing it out better than they would have done—before he smites it. Imagine the whole passage as a lecture given by a Modernist, and it will make perfect sense.

followers of novelties and bringing them back to the Church, as though any composition were possible between light and darkness, between Christ and Belial. This hallucination is as old as the world, but it is always modern and always present in the world so long as there are soldiers who are timid or treacherous, and at the first onset ready to throw down their arms or open negotiations with the enemy, who is the irreconcilable enemy of God and man.

§31: It is for you, therefore, venerable brethren, whom Divine Providence has constituted to be the pastors and leaders of the Christian people, to resist with all your strength this most fatal tendency of modern society to lull itself into a shameful indolence while war is being waged against religion, seeking a cowardly neutrality made up of weak schemes and compromises to the injury of divine and human rights, to the oblivion of Christ's clear sentence: "He that is not with me is against me" (Mt. 12:30). Not indeed that it is not well at times to waive our rights as far as may lawfully be done and as the good of souls requires. And certainly this defect can never be charged to you who are spurred on by the charity of Christ. But this is only a reasonable condescension, which can be made without the slightest detriment to duty, and which does not at all affect the eternal principles of truth and justice.

St. Pius X, *Edite Sæpe* (1910)

§42: They [viz. Catholic subjects] must be as faithful in their loyalty and respect to "wicked rulers" when their commands are just, as they are adamant in resisting their commands when unjust. They must remain as far from the impious rebellion of those who advocate sedition and revolt as they are from the subservience of those who accept as sacred the obviously wicked laws of perverse men. These last mentioned wicked men uproot everything in the name of a deceitful liberty, and then oppress their subjects with the most abject tyranny.

§43: This is precisely what is happening today in the sight of the whole world and in the broad light of modern civilization. Especially is this the case in some countries where "the powers of darkness" seem to have made their headquarters. This domineering tyranny has suppressed all the rights of the Church's children. These rulers' hearts have been closed to all feelings of generosity, courtesy, and faith which their ancestors, who gloried in the name of Christians, manifested for so long a time. It is obvious that everything quickly lapses back into the ancient barbarism of license whenever God and the Church are hated. It would be more correct to say that everything falls under that most cruel yoke from which only the family of Christ and the education it introduced has freed us. . .

Benedict XV, *Ad Beatissimi Apostolorum* (1914)

§5: But it is not the present sanguinary strife alone that distresses the nations and fills Us with anxiety and care. There is another evil raging in the very inmost heart of human society, a source of dread to all who really think, inasmuch as it has already brought, and will bring, many misfortunes upon nations, and may rightly be considered to be the root cause of the present awful war. For ever since the precepts and practices of Christian wisdom ceased to be observed in the ruling of states, it followed that, as they contained the peace and stability of institutions, the very foundations of states necessarily began to be shaken. Such, moreover, has been the change in the ideas and the morals of men, that unless God comes soon to our help, the end of civilization would seem to be at hand. Thus we see the absence from the relation of men of mutual love with their fellow men; the authority of rulers is held in contempt; injustice reigns in relations between the classes of society; the striving for transient and perishable things is so keen, that men have lost sight of the

other and more worthy goods they have to obtain. It is under these four headings that may be grouped, We consider, the causes of the serious unrest pervading the whole of human society. All then must combine to *get rid of them* by again bringing Christian principles into honor, if we have any real desire for the peace and harmony of human society.

§9: The second cause of the general unrest We declare to be the absence of respect for the authority of those who exercise ruling powers. Ever since the source of human powers has been sought apart from God the Creator and Ruler of the Universe, in the free will of men, the bonds of duty, which should exist between superior and inferior, have been so weakened as almost to have ceased to exist. The unrestrained striving after independence, together with over-weaning pride, has little by little found its way everywhere; it has not even spared the home, although the natural origin of the ruling power in the family is as clear as the noonday sun; nay, more deplorable still, it has not stopped at the steps of the sanctuary. Hence come contempt for laws, insubordination of the masses, wanton criticism of orders issued; hence innumerable ways of undermining authority; hence, too, the terrible crimes of men who, claiming to be bound by no laws, do not hesitate to attack the property or the lives of their fellow men.

§11: Let the Princes and Rulers of peoples remember this truth, and let them consider whether it is a prudent and safe idea for governments or for states to separate themselves from the holy religion of Jesus Christ, from which their authority receives such strength and support. Let them consider again and again, whether it is a measure of political wisdom to seek to divorce the teaching of the Gospel and of the Church from the ruling of a country and from the public education of the young. Sad experience proves that human authority fails where religion is set aside. The fate of our first parent after the Fall is wont to come also upon nations. As in his case, no sooner had his will turned from God than his unchained passions rejected the sway of the will; so, too, when the rulers of nations despise divine authority, in their turn the people are wont to despise their human authority. There remains, of course, the expedient of using force to repress popular risings; but what is the result? Force can repress the body, but it cannot repress the souls of men.

§15: Once the plastic minds of children have been molded by godless schools, and the ideas of the inexperienced masses have been formed by a bad daily or periodical press, and when by means of all the other influences which direct public opinion there has been instilled into the minds of men that most pernicious error that man must not hope for a state of eternal happiness; but that it is here, here below, that he is to be happy in the enjoyment of wealth and honor and pleasure: what wonder that those men whose very nature was made for happiness should with all the energy which impels them to seek that very good, break down whatever delays or impedes their obtaining it. And as these goods are not equally divided amongst men, and as it is the duty of authority in the State to prevent the freedom enjoyed by the individual from going beyond its due limits and invading what belongs to another, it comes to pass that public authority is hated and the envy of the unfortunate is enflamed against the more fortunate. . .

Pius XI, *Ubi Arcano Dei Consilio* (1922)

§7: One thing is certain today. Since the close of the Great War, individuals, the different classes of society, the nations of the earth have not as yet found true peace. They do not enjoy, therefore, that active and fruitful tranquillity which is the aspiration and the need of mankind. This is a sad truth which forces itself upon us from every side. For anyone who, as We do, desires profoundly to study and successfully apply the means necessary to overcome such evils, it is all-important that he recognize both the fact and the gravity of this state of affairs and attempt beforehand to discover its *causes*. . .

§11: Public life is so enveloped, even at the present hour, by the dense fog of mutual hatreds and grievances, that it is almost impossible for the common people so much as freely to breathe therein. If the defeated nations continue to suffer most terribly, no less serious are the evils which afflict their conquerors. . . Conditions have become increasingly worse because the fears of the people are being constantly played upon by the ever-present menace of new wars, likely to be more frightful and destructive than any which have preceded them. Whence it is that the nations of today live in a state of armed peace which is scarcely better than war itself, a condition which tends to exhaust national finances, to waste the flower of youth, to muddy and poison the very fountain-heads of life, physical, intellectual, religious, and moral.

§22: It is in the very nature of material objects that an inordinate desire for them becomes the root of every evil, of every discord, and in particular, of a lowering of the moral sense. On the one hand, things which are naturally base and vile can never give rise to noble aspirations in the human heart which was created by and for God alone and is restless until it finds repose in Him. On the other hand, material goods (and in this they differ greatly from those of the spirit which the more of them we possess the more remain to be acquired) the more they are divided among men, the less each one has, and, by consequence, what one man has another cannot possibly possess unless it be forcibly taken away from the first. . .

§23: The same effects which result from these evils among individuals may likewise be expected among nations. “From whence are wars and contentions among you?” asks the Apostle St. James. “Are they not hence from your concupiscences, which war in your members?” (James iv.1,2)

§24: The inordinate desire for pleasure, *concupiscence of the flesh*, sows the fatal seeds of division not only among families but likewise among states; the inordinate desire for possessions, *concupiscence of the eyes*, inevitably turns into class warfare and social egotism; the inordinate desire to rule or to domineer over others, *pride of life*, soon becomes mere party or factional rivalries, manifesting itself in constant displays of conflicting ambitions and ending in open rebellion, in the crime of *lèse majesté*, and even in national parricide.

§25: These unsuppressed desires, this inordinate love of the things of the world, are precisely the source of all international misunderstandings and rivalries, despite the fact that oftentimes men dare to maintain that acts prompted by such motive are excusable and even justifiable because, forsooth, they were performed for reasons of state or of the public good, or out of love for country. Patriotism—the stimulus of so many virtues and of so many noble acts of heroism when kept within the bounds of the law of Christ—becomes merely an occasion, an added incentive to grave injustice when true love of country is debased to the condition of an extreme nationalism, when we forget that all men are our brothers and members of the same great human family, that other nations have an equal right with us both to life and to prosperity, that it is never lawful nor even wise, to dissociate morality from the affairs of practical life, that, in the last analysis it is “justice which exalteth a nation, but sin maketh nations miserable” (Prov. xiv, 34).

§28: These words of the Holy Bible [“They that have forsaken the Lord, shall be consumed,” Isaias i, 28; “Without Me you can do nothing,” John xv, 5; “He that gathereth not with me scattereth,” Luke xi, 23] have been fulfilled and are now at this very moment being fulfilled before our very eyes. Because men have forsaken God and Jesus Christ, they have sunk to the depths of evil. They waste their energies and *consume* their time and efforts in vain sterile attempts to find a remedy for these ills, but without even being successful in saving what little remains from the existing ruin. It was a quite general desire that both our *laws* and our *governments* should exist *without recognizing God* or Jesus Christ, on the theory that *all authority comes from men*, not from God. Because of such an assumption, these theorists fell very short of being able to bestow upon law not only those sanctions which it must possess but also that secure basis for the supreme criterion of justice which even a pagan philosopher like Cicero saw clearly could not be derived except

from the divine law. Authority itself lost its hold upon mankind, for it had lost that sound and unquestionable justification for its right to command on the one hand and to be obeyed on the other. Society, quite logically and inevitably, was shaken to its very depths and even threatened with destruction, since there was left to it no longer a stable foundation, everything having been reduced to a series of conflicts, to the domination of the majority, or to the supremacy of special interests.

§45: . . .No merely human institution of today can be as successful in devising a set of international laws which will be in harmony with world conditions as the Middle Ages were in the possession of that true League of Nations, Christianity. It cannot be denied that in the Middle Ages this law was often violated; still it always existed as an ideal, according to which one might judge the acts of nations, and a beacon light calling those who had lost their way back to the safe road.

§60: Many believe in or claim that they believe in and hold fast to Catholic doctrine on such questions as social authority, the right of owning private property, on the relations between capital and labor, on the rights of the laboring man, on the relations between Church and State, religion and country, on the relations between the different social classes, on international relations, on the rights of the Holy See and the prerogatives of the Roman Pontiff, and the Episcopate, on the social rights of Jesus Christ, who is the Creator, Redeemer, and Lord not only of individuals but of nations. In spite of these protestations, they speak, write, and, what is more, act as if it were not necessary any longer to follow, or that they did not remain still in full force, the teachings and solemn pronouncements which may be found in so many documents of the Holy See, and particularly, in those written by Leo XIII, Pius X, and Benedict XV.

§61: There is a species of moral, legal, and social modernism which We condemn, no less decidedly than We condemn theological modernism.

Pius XI, *Studiorum Duce*m (1923)

§27: Again, if we are to avoid the errors which are the source and fountain-head of all the miseries of our time, the teaching of Aquinas must be adhered to more religiously than ever. For Thomas refutes the theories propounded by Modernists in every sphere, in philosophy. . .in dogmatic theology. . .in theology. . .in exegesis. . .in the science of morals of sociology, moral, and law, by laying down sound principles of legal and social, commutative and distributive, justice and explaining the relations between justice and charity; in the theory of asceticism. . .Lastly, against the much-vaunted liberty of the human reason and its independence in regard to God, he asserts the rights of primary Truth and the authority over us of the Supreme Master. It is therefore clear why Modernists are so amply justified in fearing no Doctor of the Church so much as Thomas Aquinas.

Pius XI, *Quas Primas* (1925)

§17: It would be a grave error. . .to say that Christ has no authority whatever in civil affairs, since, by virtue of the absolute empire over all creatures committed to Him by the Father, all things are in His power. . .

§18: Thus the empire of our Redeemer embraces all men. To use the words of Our immortal predecessor, Pope Leo XIII: "His empire includes not only Catholic nations, not only baptized persons who, though of right belonging to the Church, have been led astray by error, or have been cut off from her by schism, but also all those who are outside the Christian faith; so that truly the whole of mankind is subject to the power of Jesus Christ" (*Annum Sacrum*). He is the author of happiness and true prosperity for every man and for every nation. "For a nation is happy when its citizens are happy. What else is a nation but a number of men living in concord?" (St. Augustine,

Epist. ad Macedon.) If, therefore, the rulers of nations wish to preserve their authority, to promote and increase the prosperity of their countries, they will not neglect the *public duty* of reverence and obedience to the *rule of Christ*.

§24: . . . This evil spirit [of anti-clericalism], as you are well aware, Venerable Brethren, has not come into being in one day; it has long lurked beneath the surface. The empire of Christ over all nations was rejected. The right which the Church has from Christ Himself, to teach mankind, to make laws, to govern peoples in all that pertains to their eternal salvation, that right was denied. Then gradually the religion of Christ came to be likened to false religions and to be placed ignominiously on the same level with them. It was then put under the power of the state and tolerated more or less at the whim of princes and rulers. Some men went even further, and wished to set up in the place of God's religion a natural religion consisting in some instinctive affection of the heart. There were even some nations who thought they could dispense with God, and that their religion should consist in impiety and the neglect of God. The rebellion of individuals and states against the authority of Christ has produced deplorable consequences. . .

Pius XI, *Caritate Christi Compulsi* (1932)

§24: . . . Certainly one of the most dangerous errors of our age is the claim to separate morality from religion, thus removing all solid basis for any legislation. This intellectual error might perhaps have passed unnoticed and appeared less dangerous when it was confined to a few, and belief in God was still the common heritage of mankind, and was tacitly presumed even in the case of those who no longer professed it openly. But today, when atheism is spreading through the masses of the people, the practical consequences of such an error become dreadfully tangible, and realities of the saddest kind make their appearance in the world. In place of moral laws, which disappear together with the loss of faith in God, brute force is imposed, trampling on every right. Old time fidelity and honesty of conduct and mutual intercourse, extolled so much even by the orators and poets of paganism, now give place to speculations in one's own affairs, as in those of others, without reference to conscience. In fact, how can any contract be maintained, and what value can any treaty have, in which every guarantee of conscience is lacking? And how can there be talk of guarantees of conscience, when all faith in God and all fear of God has vanished? Take away this basis, and with it all moral law falls, and there is no remedy left to stop the gradual but inevitable destruction of peoples, families, the State, civilization itself.

Pius XI, *Dilectissima Nobis* (1933)

§6: But, returning to the deplorable laws regarding religious confessions and Congregations, We learned with great sorrow that therein, at the beginning, it is openly declared that the State has no official religion, thus reaffirming that separation of State from Church which was, alas, decreed in the new Spanish constitution. We shall not delay here to repeat that it is a serious error to affirm that this separation is licit and good in itself, especially in a nation almost totally Catholic.⁷ Sepa-

⁷ Thus Pius, echoing his predecessors, condemns the principle for *all* States, not merely European or traditionally Catholic ones. Further, it should be observed that, because Columbus claimed the Americas *on behalf of the Spanish Crown and in the name of Christ and His Church*, and moreover, because the Spaniards settled on the West Coast and were flourishing long before the British colonies began to prosper, the Americas—North, Central, and South—were meant to be Catholic, have in part a vivid Catholic heritage, and cannot be excluded from the Church's strong words about human governments in general. At most, the Church can *tolerate* separation, for two reasons: (1) to attempt the removal of a certain evil may cause more

ration, well considered, is only the baneful consequence—as We often have declared, especially in the Encyclical *Quas Primas*—of laicism, or rather the apostasy of society that today feigns to alienate itself from God and therefore from the Church.

§7: But if the pretension of excluding God the Creator and Provident Ruler of that same society is impious and absurd for *any people whatsoever*, it is particularly repugnant to find this exclusion of God and Church from the life of the Spanish Nation, where the Church always and rightly has held the most important and most beneficially active part in legislation, in schools, and in all other private and public institutions. . .

Pius XI, *Mit brennender Sorge* (1937)⁸

§29: It is on faith in God, preserved pure and stainless, that man's morality is based. All efforts to remove from under morality and the moral order the granite foundation of faith and to substitute for it the shifting sands of human regulations, sooner or later lead these individuals or societies to moral degradation. The fool who has said in his heart "There is no God" goes straight to moral corruption (Ps. xiii.1), and the number of these fools who today are out to sever morality from religion, is legion. They either do not see or refuse to see that the banishment of *confessional Christianity*, i.e., the clear and precise notion of Christianity, from teaching and education, *from the organization of social and political life*, spells spiritual spoliation and degradation. No coercive power of the State, no purely human ideal, however noble and lofty it be, will ever be able to make shift of the supreme and decisive impulses generated by faith in God and Christ. If the man, who is called to the hard sacrifice of his own ego to the common good, loses the support of the eternal and the divine, that comforting and consoling faith in a God who rewards all good and punishes all evil, then the result of the majority will be, not the acceptance, but the refusal of their duty. The conscientious observation of the ten commandments of God and the precepts of the Church (which are nothing but practical specifications of rules of the Gospels) is for everyone an unrivaled school of personal discipline, moral education, and formation of character, a school that is exacting, but to excess. A merciful God, who as Legislator, says—Thou must!—also gives by His grace the power to will and to do. To let forces of moral formation of such efficacy lie fallow, or to exclude them positively from public education, would spell religious under-feeding of a nation. To hand over the moral law to man's subjective opinion, which changes with the times, instead of anchoring it in the holy will of the eternal God and His commandments, is to open wide every door to the forces of destruction. The resulting dereliction of the eternal principles of an objective morality, which educates conscience and ennobles every department and organization of life, is a sin against the destiny of a nation, a sin whose bitter fruit will poison future generations.

§30: Such is the rush of present-day life that it severs from the divine foundation of Revelation, not only morality, but also the theoretical and practical rights. We are especially referring to what is called *the natural law*, written by the Creator's hand on the tablet of the heart (Rom. ii, 14) and which reason, not blinded by sin or passion, can easily read. It is in the light of the commands of this natural law, that all positive law, whoever be the lawgiver, can be gauged in its moral con-

harm and turmoil than to leave it temporarily alone; (2) from evils greater goods may be hoped for and cultivated. Responding to the question "Whether it is lawful to borrow money under a condition of usury," St. Thomas says "It is by no means lawful to induce a man to sin, yet it is lawful to make use of another's sin for a good end, since even God uses all sin for some good since He draws some good from every evil. . . Thus, too, it is lawful for a man who has fallen among thieves to point out his property to them (which they sin in taking) in order to save his life, after the example of the ten men who said to Ishmael: 'Kill us not; for we have stores in the field'" (*ST II-II.78.4*).

⁸ See in addition §§6-9.

tent, and hence, in the authority it wields over conscience. Human laws in flagrant contradiction with the natural law are vitiated with a taint which no force, no power can mend. In the light of this principle one must judge the axiom that “right is common utility,” a proposition which may be given a *correct* significance—that what is morally indefensible, can never contribute to the good of the people. . .

Pius XI, *Divini Redemptoris* (1937)

§16: If We would explain the blind acceptance of Communism by so many thousands of workmen, we must remember that the way had already been prepared for it by the religious and moral destitution in which wage-earners had been left by *liberal economics*. . .It can surprise no one that the Communistic fallacy should be spreading in a world already, to a large extent, de-Christianized.

§29: But God has likewise destined man for civil society according to the dictates of his very nature. In the plan of the Creator, society is a natural means which man can and must use to reach his destined end. Society is for man and not *vice versa*. This must not be understood in the sense of liberalistic individualism, which subordinates society to the selfish use of the individual; but only in the sense that by means of an organic union with society and by mutual collaboration the attainment of earthly happiness is placed within the reach of all. In a further sense, it is society which affords the opportunities for the development of all the individual and social gifts bestowed on human nature. These natural gifts have a value surpassing the immediate interests of the moment, for in society, they reflect the divine perfection, which would not be true were man to live alone. But on final analysis, even in this latter function, society is made for man, that he may recognize this reflection of God’s perfection, and refer it in praise and adoration to the Creator. Only man, the human person, and not society in any form, is endowed with reason and a morally free will.

§41: As in all the stormy periods of the history of the Church, the fundamental remedy today lies in a sincere renewal of private and public life according to the principles of the Gospel by all those who belong to the Fold of Christ, that they may be, in truth, the salt of the earth, to preserve human society from total corruption.

Pius XII, *Summi Pontificatus* (1939)

§3: . . .It unfolds itself to Us ever more clearly as a message of comfort and a grace from God not only to His Church, but also to a world in all too dire need of help and guidance: to a world which, preoccupied with the worship of the ephemeral, has lost its way and spent its forces in a vain search after earthly ideals. It is a message to men who, in ever-increasing numbers, have cut themselves off from faith in Christ and, even more, from the recognition and observance of His law; a message opposed to that philosophy of life for which the doctrine of love and renunciation preached in the Sermon on the Mount and the Divine act of love on the Cross seem to be a stumbling block and foolishness.

§5: . . .What age has been, for all its technical and purely civic progress, more tormented than ours by spiritual emptiness and deep-felt interior poverty? May we not, perhaps, apply to it the prophetic words of the Apocalypse: “Thou sayest: I am rich, and made wealthy, and have need of nothing: and knowest not, that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked” (Apoc. iii, 17).

§21: At the head of the road which leads to the spiritual and moral bankruptcy of the present day stand the nefarious efforts of not a few to dethrone Christ; the abandonment of the law of truth which He proclaimed and of the law of love which is the lifebreath of His Kingdom.

§22: In the recognition of the royal prerogatives of Christ and in the return of individuals and of society to the law of His truth and of His love lies the only way to salvation.

§28: The present age, Venerable Brethren, by adding new errors to the doctrinal aberrations of the past, has pushed these to extremes which lead inevitably to a drift towards chaos. Before all else, it is certain that the radical and ultimate cause of the evils which We deplore in modern society is the denial and rejection of a universal norm of morality as well as for individual and social life, as for international relations; We mean the disregard, so common nowadays, and the forgetfulness of the natural law itself, which has its foundation in God, Almighty Creator and Father of all, supreme and absolute Lawgiver, all-wise and just Judge of human actions. When God is hated, every basis of morality is undermined; the voice of conscience is stilled or at any rate grows very faint, that voice which teaches even to the illiterate and to uncivilized tribes what is good and what is bad, what lawful, what forbidden, and makes men feel themselves responsible for their actions to a Supreme Judge.

§29: The denial of the fundamentals of morality had its origin, in Europe, in the abandonment of that Christian teaching of which the Chair of Peter is the depository and exponent. That teaching had once given spiritual cohesion to a Europe which, educated, ennobled and civilized by the Cross, had reached such a degree of civil progress as to become the teacher of other peoples, of other continents. But, cut off from the infallible teaching authority of the Church, not a few separated brethren have gone so far as to overthrow the central dogma of Christianity, the Divinity of the Savior, and have hastened thereby the process of spiritual decay.

§31: Many perhaps, while abandoning the teaching of Christ, were not fully conscious of being led astray by a mirage of glittering phrases, which proclaimed such estrangement as an escape from the slavery in which they were before held; nor did they then foresee the bitter consequences of bartering the truth that sets free, for error which enslaves. They did not realize that, in renouncing the infinitely wise and paternal laws of God, and the unifying and elevating doctrines of Christ's love, they were resigning themselves to the whim of a poor, fickle human wisdom; they spoke of progress, when they were going back; of being raised, when they groveled; 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; "they became vain in their thoughts" (Rom. i, 21).

§32: With the weakening of faith in God and Jesus Christ, and the darkening in men's minds of the light of moral principles, there disappeared the indispensable foundation of the stability and quiet of that internal and external, private and public order, which alone can support and safeguard the prosperity of States.

§42: In the light of this unity of all mankind, which exists in law and in fact, individuals do not feel themselves isolated units, like grains of sand, but united by the very force of their nature and by their internal destiny into an organic, harmonious mutual relationship which varies with the changing of times.

§52: But there is yet another error no less pernicious to the well-being of the nations and to the prosperity of that great human society which gathers together and embraces within its confines all races. It is the error contained in those ideas which do not hesitate to divorce civil authority from every kind of dependence upon the Supreme Being—First Source and Absolute Master of man and of society—and from every restraint of a Higher Law derived from God as from its First Source. Thus they accord the civil authority an unrestricted field of action that is at the mercy of the changeful tide of human will, or of the dictates of causal historical claims, and of the interests of a few.

§53: Once the authority of God and the sway of His law are denied in this way, the civil authority as an inevitable result tends to attribute to itself that absolute autonomy which belongs exclusively to the Supreme Maker. It puts itself in the place of the Almighty and elevates the State or group into the last end of life, the supreme criterion of the moral and juridical order, and therefore forbids every appeal to the principles of natural reason and of the Christian conscience. We do not, of course, fail to recognize that, fortunately, false principles do not always exercise their full influence, especially when age-old Christian traditions, on which the peoples have been nurtured, remain still deeply, even if unconsciously, rooted in their hearts.

§55: When the dependence of human right upon the Divine is denied, where appeal is made only to *some insecure idea of a merely human authority*, and an autonomy is claimed which rests only upon a utilitarian morality, there human law itself justly forfeits in its more weighty application the moral force which is the essential condition for its acknowledgment and also for its demand of sacrifices.

§58: Indeed, as Our great predecessor, Leo XIII, wisely taught in the Encyclical *Immortale Dei*, it was the Creator's will that the civil sovereignty should regulate social life after the dictates of an order changeless in its universal principles; should facilitate the attainment in the temporal order, by individuals, of physical, intellectual and moral perfection; and should aid them to reach their supernatural end.

§59: Hence, it is the noble prerogative and function of the State to control, aid and direct the private and individual activities of national life that they converge harmoniously towards the common good. That good can neither be defined according to arbitrary ideas nor can it accept for its standard primarily the material prosperity of society, but rather it should be defined according to the harmonious development and the natural perfection of man. It is for this perfection that society is designed by the Creator as a means.

§60: To consider the State as something ultimate to which everything else should be subordinated and directed, cannot fail to harm the true and lasting prosperity of nations. This can happen either when unrestricted dominion comes to be conferred on the State as having a mandate from the nation, people, or even a social order, or when the State arrogates such dominion to itself as absolute master, despotically, without any mandate whatsoever. . .

§76: . . . To tear the law of nations from its anchor in Divine law, to base it on the autonomous will of States, is to dethrone that very law and deprive it of its noblest and strongest qualities. Thus it would stand abandoned to the fatal drive of private interest and collective selfishness exclusively intent on the assertion of its own rights and ignoring those of others.

§78: Today, Venerable Brethren, all men are looking with terror into the abyss to which they have been brought by the errors and principles which We have mentioned, and by their practical consequences. Gone are the proud illusions of limitless progress. Should any still fail to grasp this fact, the tragic situation of today would rouse them with the prophet's cry: "Hear, ye deaf and ye blind, behold" (Isa. xlii, 18). What used to appear on the outside as order, was nothing but an invasion of disorder; confusion in the principles of moral life. These principles, once divorced from the majesty of the Divine law, have tainted every field of human activity.

§79: But let us leave the past and turn our eyes towards that future which, according to the promises of the powerful ones of this world, is to consist, once the bloody conflicts of today have ceased, in a new order founded on justice and on prosperity. Will that future be really different; above all, will it be better? Will treaties of peace, will the new international order at the end of this war be animated by justice and by equity towards all, by that spirit which frees and pacifies? Or will there be a lamentable repetition of ancient and of recent errors?

Pius XII, *Sertum Lætitiae* (1939)⁹

§18: Not with the conquest of material space does one approach to God, separation from Whom is death, conversion to Whom is life, to be established in Whom is glory; but under the guidance of Christ with the fullness of sincere faith, with unsullied conscience and upright will, with holy works, with the achievement and the employment of that genuine liberty whose sacred rules are found proclaimed in the Gospel. If, instead, the Commandments of God are spurned, not only is it impossible to attain that happiness which has place beyond the brief span of time which is allotted to earthly existence, but the very basis upon which rests true civilization is shaken and naught is to be expected but ruins over which belated tears must be shed. How, in fact, can the public weal and the glory of civilized life have any guarantee of stability when right is subverted and virtue despised and decried? Is not God the Source and Giver of law? Is He not the inspiration and the reward of virtue with none like unto Him among lawgivers (cf. Job xxxvi, 22)? This, according to the admission of all reasonable men, is everywhere the bitter and prolific root of evils: the refusal to recognize the Divine Majesty, the neglect of the moral law, the origin of which is from Heaven, or that regrettable inconsistency which makes its victims waver between the lawful and the forbidden, between justice and iniquity.

§19: Thence arise immoderate and blind egoists, that thirst for pleasure, the vice of drunkenness, immodest and costly styles in dress, the prevalence of crime even among minors, the lust for power, neglect of the poor, base craving for ill-gotten wealth, the flight from the land, levity in entering into marriage, divorce, the break-up of the family, the cooling of mutual affection between parents and children, birth control, the enfeeblement of the race, the weakening of respect for authority, or obsequiousness, or rebellion, neglect of duty towards one's country and towards mankind.

§20: We raise Our voice in strong, albeit paternal, complaint that in so many schools of your land Christ often is despised or ignored, the explanation of the universe and mankind is forced within the narrow limits of materialism or of rationalism, and new educational systems are sought after which cannot but produce a sorrowful harvest in the intellectual and moral life of the nation.

Pius XII, *Optatissima Pax* (1947)

§1: Peace, longed for so hopefully, which should signify the tranquillity of order and serene liberty, even after the cruel experience of a long war, still hangs in uncertain balance, as everyone must note with sadness and alarm. . .

Pius XII, *Auspicia Quædam* (1948)

§4: Even though the war has ceased in nearly every land, still benign peace has not yet dawned on the minds and hearts of all men; indeed, the sky is still heavy with threatening clouds.

Pius XII, *Anni Sacri* (1950)

§2: . . . Nevertheless, if these sights [pilgrims to Rome] have given Us gentle comfort, reasons are not lacking for the anxiety and anguish which grieve Our paternal heart. And in the first place,

⁹ Addressed to the American Bishops.

although war has almost everywhere ceased, nevertheless the longed-for peace has not come—a stable and solid peace which might happily solve the many and ever-increasing reasons for discord. Many nations are still opposed to each other; and as confidence lessens an armaments race begins, leaving the hearts of all overcome by fear and trepidation.

§3: That which seems to Us not only the greatest evil but the root of all evil, is this: often *the lie is substituted for the truth*, and is then used as *an instrument of dispute*. On the part of not a few, religion is passed by as a thing of no importance, and elsewhere absolutely prohibited in family and social life as a remnant of ancient superstition; public and private atheism is exalted in such a way that God and His law are being abolished, and morals no longer have any foundation. The Press also too often vulgarly reviles religious feeling, while it does not hesitate to spread the most shameful obscenities, agitating and with incalculable harm leading into vice tender childhood and betrayed youth.

§4: By means of *false promises* a people is deceived and provoked to hatred, rivalry and rebellion, especially when the hereditary faith, the only relief in this earthly exile, is successfully torn from its heart. Disturbances, riots and revolts are organized and fomented in continuing series, which prepare for the ruin of the economy and cause irreparable harm to the common good.

§7: As you know, once religion is taken away there cannot be a well-ordered, well-regulated society. In this point lies the urgency to spur on priests under your guidance in order that, especially during the Holy Year, they spare no efforts so that souls entrusted to them, with their false prejudices and erroneous convictions cast aside, and hatreds and discords settled, may nourish themselves on the teachings of the Gospel and thus participate in Christian life so as to hasten the desired renewal of morals.

§10: Let all, united with Us in prayer, implore from Divine Mercy that a *new order*, based on truth, justice and charity, may arise from the longed-for restoration of morals. May the Heavenly Light illuminate the minds of those who have in their hands the destinies of people; may they realize that just as peace is the work of wisdom and justice, so war is the fruit of blindness and hatred; let them consider that one day they must render account not only to history but to God's eternal judgment.

Pius XII, *Summi Mæroris* (1950)

§2: . . .As We behold the present social conditions of the people, they are such as to give us reason for the keenest anxiety and concern. Though many are discoursing, writing and speaking on the method needed to arrive finally at the peace that is so much desired, some have neglected or openly repudiated the principles that must constitute its solid foundation. Indeed, in not a few countries, falsehood instead of truth has been presented under a certain guise of reasonableness; not love, not charity have been fostered, but hatred and a blind rivalry are being encouraged; not concord among citizens is exalted, but disturbance and disorder are being provoked.

§4: As the heavens are become darkened by heavy clouds, We, who have dearest at heart the liberty, dignity and prosperity of all nations, must needs return to exhorting earnestly all citizens and their governments to a true concord and peace.

§13: You must teach all this [what constitutes true peace] with frankness; because only when the Christian commandments inform private and public life, only then may we rightly hope that, after human dissensions have been composed, the various classes of citizens, peoples and nations will live together in brotherly concord.

Pius XII, *Humani Generis* (1950)

§18: . . .The duty that is incumbent on the faithful to flee also those errors which more or less approach heresy, and accordingly “to keep also the constitutions and decrees by which such evil opinions are proscribed and forbidden by the Holy See,” is sometimes as little known as if it did not exist.

§32: While scorning our [traditional] philosophy, they extol other philosophies of all kinds, ancient and modern, oriental and occidental, by which they seem to imply that any kind of philosophy or theory, with a few additions and corrections if need be, can be reconciled with Catholic dogma.

§40: Let no Christian therefore, whether philosopher or theologian, embrace eagerly and lightly whatever novelty happens to be thought up from day to day, but rather let him weigh it with painstaking care and a balanced judgment, lest he lose or corrupt the truth he already has, with grave danger and damage to his faith.

Pius XII, *Mirabile Illud* (1950)

§1: That admirable prodigy of fraternal concord which the numberless multitudes of the faithful, from almost every nation, flocking to Rome as devout pilgrims during the course of the Holy Year, have provided, seems to us to contain as it were a warning voice, a solemn testimony to everybody that the peoples of the world do not wish for war, nor discord, nor hatred, but ardently desire peace, unity of mind, and that Christian love which alone can be the source of a better and more happy era for all. It is our ardent wish that all should at last hear that warning, as with anxious mind We behold peoples engaged in a fearful preparation for war while in certain places a horrible fury of slaughter is already reaping its harvest of courageous, youthful lives.

Pius XII, *Evangelii Præcones* (1951)

§17: There are some shepherds, as you know, Venerable Brethren, who strive to lead away the sheep from this one fold and haven of salvation; you likewise know that this danger is daily growing greater. When We consider before God the immense number of men without the truth of the Gospel, and duly reckon the grave danger that faces many from the prevalence of atheistic materialism, or from a so-called Christian creed which is infected by the tenets and errors of communism, We feel the deepest concern and solicitude that nothing be left undone to promote the work of the apostolate throughout the world.

Pius XII, *Orientalis Ecclesias* (1952)

§37: If, therefore, she [the Church] is allowed to enjoy the liberty given to her by God, if she is allowed to display her strength publicly and carry on her activities openly in the midst of the people, she can undoubtedly contribute much towards promoting the common good, towards bringing the various classes of citizens closer together in justice and in concord, and towards leading all nations to that true peace and tranquillity which, just as it is desired by all, must also be *willed* by all.

Pius XII, *Doctor Mellifluus* (1953)

§32: We can think of no better way to conclude this Encyclical Letter than in the words of the *Doctor Mellifluus* [St. Bernard of Clairvaux] to invite all to be more and more devout to the loving Mother of God, and each in his respective state in life to strive to imitate her exalted virtues. If at the beginning of the twelfth century grave dangers threatened the Church and human society, the perils besetting our own age are hardly less formidable. . . With the Christian religion either neglected or cruelly destroyed, morals, both public and private, clearly stray from the straight way, and, following the torturous path of error, end miserably in vice.

Pius XII, *Ecclesiae Fastos* (1954)

§36: This manner of acting of St. Boniface, in which his respectful homage towards the Roman Pontiffs is seen most clearly, has always been faithfully followed, as you know well, Venerable Brothers, by all those who have kept in mind that the Prince of the Apostles was placed by our Divine Redeemer as the firm rock upon which is built the universal Church, which will last until the end of time, and that to him also were given the keys of the kingdom of heaven and the universal power of binding and loosing. Those who reject the rock and try to build without it certainly lay the foundations of a tottering edifice upon shifting sands; their efforts, works and undertakings, as all human things, cannot be solid, cannot be firm and stable, but—as both ancient and modern history show—must almost necessarily undergo change as time goes on, due to contradictory human opinions and the vicissitudes of human events.

Pius XII, *Le Pelerinage de Lourdes* (1957)

§45: But the world, which today affords so many justifiable reasons for pride and hope, is also undergoing a terrible temptation to materialism which has been denounced by Our Predecessors and Ourselves on many occasions.

§46: This materialism is not confined to that condemned philosophy which dictates the policies and economy of a large segment of mankind. It rages also in a love of money which creates ever greater havoc as modern enterprises expand, and which, unfortunately, determines many of the decisions which weigh heavy on the life of the people. It finds expression in the cult of the body, in excessive desire for comforts, and in flight from all the austerities of life. It encourages scorn for human life, even for life which is destroyed before seeing the light of day.

§47: This materialism is present in the unrestrained search for pleasure, which flaunts itself shamelessly and tries, through reading matter and entertainments, to seduce souls which are still pure. It shows itself in lack of interest in one's brother, in selfishness which crushes him, injustice which deprives him of his rights—in a word, in that concept of life which regulates everything exclusively in terms of *material prosperity and earthly satisfaction*.

§49: To a society which in its public life often contests the supreme rights of God, to a society which would gain the whole world at the expense of its own soul and thus hasten to its own destruction, the Virgin Mother has sent a cry of alarm.

§55: Christians of every class and every nation will try to be of one mind in truth and charity, and to banish misunderstanding and suspicion. Without doubt, social structures and economic pressures of enormous weight burden the good will of men and often paralyze it. But if it is true, as Our predecessors and We Ourselves have insistently stressed, that *the quest for social and political peace among men is, above all, a moral problem, then no reform can bear fruit, no agreement can be lasting without a conversion and cleansing of heart*.

Pius XII, *Miranda Prorsus* (1957)¹⁰

§27: True human liberty, then, requires that we utilize and share with others all those resources which can contribute to virtue and to the perfection of our nature.

§32: So too, We cannot approve the stand of those who claim and defend their freedom to depict and display whatever they please, despite the perfectly evident fact that great harm has come to souls in days past as a result of this attitude. For here the issue is not real freedom, which We have discussed above, but unchecked license to express oneself without regard for prudence, even though this be contrary to sound morals and liable to result in serious danger for souls.

§33: The Church encourages and fosters all that really assists in the enrichment of the mind (she is, after all, the patron and support of humane studies and liberal arts), but she cannot tolerate a breach of these rules which direct and guide man to God, his final end. It is not surprising, then, that in a matter requiring such great caution she acts carefully and discretely, in accordance with the Apostle's instruction: "But test all things; hold fast that which is good. Keep yourselves from every kind of evil."

§34: Wherefore they are certainly to be reproved who assert that the publication of matters which impede or are opposed to the principles of morality should be approved if they conform to technical and artistic norms. In a short address on the fifth centenary of the death of Fra Angelico We said: "Of themselves, the liberal arts certainly do not demand direction to a moral or religious function. But if artistic expression, in words, sounds, or images, is equated with false, empty, and confused techniques which are out of harmony with the plan of the Divine Creator; if instead of raising the mind and heart to lofty sentiments it moves them rather to base passions and desires, then it can attract men by its novelty, which does not always have value or virtue, or by its slight content of truth (for truth is present in every being), but such art will have abandoned its position of honor, strayed far from its first and necessary principle, and so be neither universal nor perennial, as is the human spirit to which it speaks."

§35: Public authorities are bound, beyond all doubt, to oversee carefully these new means of communication. They should look on this matter not from a political point of view alone, but from that of public morals, whose sure foundation rests on the natural law, which, as inspired words attest, is written in our hearts.

§36: This vigilant attention of civil authorities cannot be regarded as an unjust restriction on civil liberty, since it is not directed to private persons, but to the whole of human society, by whom these means of communication are shared.

John XXIII, *Ad Petri Cathedram* (1959)

§6: All the evils which poison men and nations and trouble so many hearts have a single cause and a single source: ignorance of the truth—and at times even more than ignorance, a contempt for truth and a reckless rejection of it. Thus arise all manner of errors, which enter the recesses of men's hearts and the bloodstream of human society as would a plague. These errors turn everything upside down: they menace individuals and society itself.

§17: Some men, indeed do not attack the truth wilfully, but work in heedless disregard of it. They act as though God had given us intellects for some purpose other than the pursuit and attainment of truth. This mistaken sort of action leads directly to that absurd proposition: one

¹⁰ See also *Meminisse Iuvat* §§9-10.

religion is just as good as another, for there is no distinction here between truth and falsehood. “This attitude,” to quote Pope Leo again, “is directed to the destruction of all religions, but particularly the Catholic faith, which cannot be placed on a level with other religions without serious injustice, since it alone is true.” Moreover, to contend that there is nothing to choose between contradictories and among contraries can lead only to this fatal conclusion: a reluctance to accept any religion either in theory or in practice.

§25: If this teaching [the Gospel], this consoling hope, were taken away from men, there would be no reason for living. Lusts, dissensions, and disputes would erupt from within us. There would be no reasonable check to restrain them. The olive branch of peace would not shine in our thoughts; the firebrands of war would blaze there. Our lot would be cast with beasts, who do not have the use of reason. Ours would be an even worse lot, for we do have the use of reason and by abusing it (which, unfortunately, often happens) we can sink into a state lower than that of beasts. Like Cain, we would commit a terrible crime and stain the earth with our brother’s blood.

§32: The mind of Our predecessor, Leo XIII, squares perfectly with his view [of world peace]: “Nothing is better suited than Christian virtue, and especially justice, to check ambition, covetousness, and envy which are the chief causes of war.”

§33: But if men do not pursue this fraternal unity, based on the precepts of justice and nurtured by charity, then human affairs will remain in serious peril. This is why wise men grieve and lament; they are uncertain whether we are heading for sincere, true, and firm peace, or are rushing in complete blindness into the fires of a new and terrible war.

§38: Anyone, therefore, who ventures to deny that there are differences among social classes contradicts the very laws of nature. Indeed, whoever opposes peaceful and necessary cooperation among the social classes is attempting, beyond doubt, to disrupt and divide human society; he menaces and does serious injury to private interests and the public welfare.

§48: It is very important, however, that moral progress should not lag behind economic progress. Anything else would be unworthy of men, not to say of Christians. If the working classes have an abundance of material goods and enjoy all the benefits of civilization while losing or neglecting those higher goods which pertain to the immortal soul, what does it profit them?

§95: The peace, then, which we must seek, which we must strive to achieve with all the means at our disposal, must—as We have said—make no concessions to error, must compromise in no way with proponents of falsehood; it must make no concessions to vice; it must discourage all discord. Those who adhere to this peace must be ready to renounce their own interests and advantages for the sake of truth and justice, according to the words: “Seek first the kingdom of God and his justice.”

§130: There is never any need, therefore, to turn to proponents of doctrines *condemned by the Church*; for they only draw men on with false promises and when they obtain control of the state, try boldly and unscrupulously to deprive men of their supreme spiritual goods—the Christian commandments, Christian hope, and Christian faith. Those who adhere to the doctrines these men propose, minimize or eliminate all that our present age and our modern civilization hold dearest: *true liberty and the authentic dignity of the human person*. Thus they attempt to destroy the bases of Christianity and civilization.¹¹

¹¹ Pope John XXIII makes clear that modern man sincerely *desires* to be free, to be humane, to remain faithful to what is best in him; but, insofar as he follows “false promises” proposed by bold and unscrupulous “proponents of doctrines condemned by the Church,” i.e., proscribed in her ordinary Magisterium, he cannot attain the longings of his heart. Natural liberty as man’s highest social good; separation of religion from temporal society; unfettered freedom of expression; merely secular education; and the indeterminate exercise of an unformed conscience, are some of the many errors the Popes, including John, deplore and reprobate as *violations* and *corruptions* of “the authentic dignity of the human person.”

§131: All, therefore, who wish to remain Christians must be aware of their serious obligation to avoid those false principles, which Our predecessors—especially Popes Pius XI and Pius XII—have condemned in the past, and which We condemn once more.

§140: There is one truth especially which We think is self-evident: when the sacred rights of God and religion are ignored or infringed upon, the foundations of human society will sooner or later crumble and give way. . .

John XXIII, *Mater et Magistra* (1961)

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

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

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

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

§215: Let men make all the technical and economic progress they can, there will be no peace nor justice in the world until they return to a sense of their dignity as creatures and sons of God, who is the first and final cause of all created being. Separated from God, a man is but a monster, in himself and toward others; for the right ordering of human society presupposes the right ordering of man's conscience with God who is Himself the source of all justice, truth, and love.

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

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

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

John XXIII, *Pacem in Terris* (1963)

§4: And yet there is a disunity among individuals and among nations which is in contrast to this perfect order in the universe. One would think that the relationships that bind men together could only be governed by force.

§6: But the mischief is often caused by erroneous opinions. Many people think that the laws which govern man's relations with the State are the same as those which regulate the blind, elemental forces of the universe. But it is not so; the laws which govern men are quite different. The Father of the universe has inscribed them in man's nature, and that is where we must look for them; there and nowhere else.

§57: In this connection, We would draw the attention of Our own sons to the fact that the common good is something which affects the needs of the whole man, body and soul. That, then, is the sort of good which rulers of States must take suitable measure to ensure. They must respect the hierarchy of values, and aim at achieving the spiritual as well as the material prosperity of their subjects.

Paul VI, *Ecclesiam Suam* (1964)

§100: This [atheism] is the most serious problem of our time. We are firmly convinced that the basic propositions of atheism are utterly false and irreconcilable with the underlying principles of thought. They strike at the genuine and effective foundation for man's acceptance of a rational order in the universe, and introduce into human life a futile kind of dogmatism which far from solving life's difficulties, only degrades it and saddens it. Any social system based on these principles is doomed to utter destruction. Atheism, therefore, is not a liberating force, but a catastrophic one, for it seeks to quench the light of the living God. We shall therefore resist this growing evil with all our strength, spurred on by our great zeal for safeguarding the truth, inspired by our social duty of loyally professing Christ and His gospel, and driven on by a burning, unquenchable love, which makes man's good our constant concern. We shall resist in the invincible hope that modern man may recognize the religious ideals which the Catholic faith sets before him, and feel himself drawn to seek a form of civilization which will never fail him but will lead on to the natural and supernatural perfection of the human spirit. . .

§101: It is for these reasons that We are driven to repudiate such ideologies as deny God and oppress the Church—We repudiate them as Our predecessors did, and as everyone must do who firmly believes in the excellence and importance of religion. These ideologies are often identified with economic, social, and political regimes; atheistic communism is a glaring instance of this. Yet is it really so much we who condemn them? One might say that it is rather they and their politicians who are clearly repudiating *us*, and for doctrinaire reasons subjecting us to violent oppression. Truth to tell, the voice we raise against them is more the complaint of a victim than the sentence of a judge.

§102: In these circumstances dialogue is very difficult, not to say impossible, although we have today no preconceived intention of cutting ourselves off from the adherents of these systems and these regimes. For the lover of truth, discussion is always possible. But the difficulties are enormously increased by obstacles of the moral order; by the absence of sufficient freedom of thought and action, and by the calculated misuse of words in debate, so that they serve not the investigation and formulation of objective truth, but purely subjective expediency.

§103: Instead of dialogue, therefore, there is silence, for example, the only voice that is heard is the voice of suffering. By its suffering it becomes the mouthpiece of an oppressed and degraded society, deprived by its rulers of every spiritual right. How can a dialogue be conducted in such circumstances as these, even if we embarked upon it? It would be but “a voice crying in the wilderness.” The only witness that the Church can give is that of silence, suffering, patience, and unfailing love, and this is a voice that not even death can silence.

Paul VI, *Populorum Progressio* (1967)

§19: Neither individuals nor nations should regard the possession of more and more goods as the ultimate objective. Every kind of progress is a two-edged sword. It is necessary if man is to grow as a human being; yet it can also enslave him, if he comes to regard it as the supreme good and cannot look beyond it. When this happens, men harden their hearts, shut out others from their minds, and *gather together solely for reasons of self-interest rather than out of friendship*; dissension and disunity follow soon after. Thus the exclusive pursuit of material possessions prevents man’s growth as a human being and stands in opposition to its true grandeur. Avarice, in individuals and in nations, is the most obvious form of stultified moral development.

§42: The ultimate goal is a full-bodied humanism. And does this not mean the fulfillment of the whole man and of every man? A narrow humanism, closed in on itself and not open to the values of the spirit and to God who is their source, could achieve apparent success, for man can set about organizing terrestrial realities without God. But “closed off from God, they will end up being directed against man. A humanism closed off from other realities becomes inhuman” (de Lubac). True humanism points the way toward God and acknowledges the task to which we are called, the task which offers us the real meaning of human life. Man is not the ultimate measure of man. Man becomes truly man only by passing beyond himself. In the words of Pascal: “Man infinitely surpasses man.”

John Paul II, *Redemptor Hominis* (1979)

§50: . . . Man cannot relinquish himself or the place in the visible world that belongs to him; he cannot become the slave of things, the slave of economic systems, the slave of production, the slave of his own products. A civilization purely materialistic in outline condemns man to such slavery, even if at times, no doubt, this occurs *contrary to the intentions and the very premises of pioneers*. The present solicitude for man certainly has at its root this problem. It is not a matter here merely of giving an abstract answer to the question: Who is man? It is a matter of the whole of the dynamism of life and of civilization. It is a matter of the meaningfulness of the various initiatives of everyday life and also of the premises for many civilization programs, political programs, economic ones, social ones, state ones, and many others.

§51: If we make bold to describe man’s situation in the modern world as far removed from the objective demands of the moral order, from the exigencies of justice, and still more from social love, we do so because this is confirmed by the well-known facts and comparisons that have already on various occasions found an echo in the pages of statements by the Popes, the Council, and the Synod. Man’s situation today is certainly not uniform, but marked with numerous differences. *These differences have causes in history, but they also have strong ethical effects*. Indeed everyone is familiar with the picture of the consumer civilization, which consists in a certain surplus of goods necessary for man and for entire societies—and we are dealing precisely with the rich, highly-developed societies—while the remaining societies—at least broad sectors of them—are

suffering from hunger, with many people dying each day of starvation and malnutrition. Hand in hand go a certain abuse of freedom by one group—an abuse linked precisely with a consumer attitude uncontrolled by ethics—and a limitation by it of the freedom of the others, that is to say those suffering marked shortages and being driven to conditions of even worse misery and destitution.

John Paul II, *Dives in Misericordia* (1980)

§109: Thus, in our world the feeling of being under threat is increasing. There is an increase of that existential fear connected especially, as I said in the encyclical *Redemptor Hominis*, with the prospect of a conflict that in view of today's atomic stockpiles could mean the partial self-destruction of humanity. But the threat does not merely concern what human beings can do to human beings through the means provided by military technology; it also concerns many other dangers produced by a materialistic society which—in spite of “humanistic” declarations—accepts the primacy of things over persons.

§153: A world from which forgiveness was eliminated would be nothing but a world of cold and unfeeling justice, in the name of which each person would claim his or her own rights *vis-à-vis* others; the various kinds of selfishness latent in man would transform life and human society into a system of oppression of the weak by the strong, or into an arena of permanent strife between one group and another.

§163: . . . The more the human conscience succumbs to secularization, loses its sense of the very meaning of the word “mercy,” moves away from God and distances itself from the mystery of mercy, the more the Church has the right and the duty to appeal to the God of mercy, “with loud cries.”

§164: These “loud cries” should be the mark of the Church of our times, cries uttered to God to implore His mercy, the certain manifestation of which she professes and proclaims as having already come in Jesus crucified and risen, that is, in the paschal mystery. It is this mystery which bears within itself the most complete revelation of mercy, that is, of that love which is more powerful than death, more powerful than sin and every evil, the love which lifts man up when he falls into the abyss, and frees him from the greatest threats.

§165: Modern man feels these threats. *What has been said above in this regard is only a rough outline.* Modern man often anxiously wonders about the solution to the terrible tensions which have built up in the world and which entangle humanity. . .

John Paul II, *Dominum et Vivificantem* (1986)¹²

Part II, section 3, §36: . . . “Disobedience” means precisely going beyond that limit, which remains impassable to the will and the freedom of man as a created being. For God the Creator is the one definitive source of the moral order in the world created by Him. Man cannot decide by himself what is good and what is evil—cannot “know good and evil, like God.” In the created world *God* indeed remains the first and sovereign source *for deciding about good and evil*, through the intimate truth of being, which is the reflection *of the Word*, the Eternal Son, consubstantial with the Father. . . “Disobedience,” as the original dimension of sin, means the *rejection of the source*, through man's claim to become an independent and exclusive source for deciding about good and evil. . .

¹² Italics in this encyclical belong to the original.

§37: . . . Man's disobedience, nevertheless, always means *a turning away from God*, and in a certain sense *the closing up* of human freedom in this regard. It also means a certain opening of this freedom—of the human mind and will—to the one who is the “father of lies.” This act of conscious choice is not only “disobedience,” but also involves a *certain consent to the motivation* which was contained in the first temptation to sin and which is unceasingly renewed during the whole history of man on earth: “For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.” Here we find ourselves at the very center of what could be called the “anti-Word,” that is to say the “anti-Truth.” For *the truth about man becomes falsified; who man is* and what are *the impassable limits* of his being and freedom. This “anti-Truth” is possible because at the same time there is a complete *falsification* of the *truth about who God is*. God the Creator is placed in a state of suspicion, indeed of accusation, in the mind of the creature. For the first time in human history there appears the perverse “genius of suspicion.” He seeks to “*falsify*” *Good itself, the absolute Good*, which precisely in the work of creation has manifested itself as the Good in an inexpressible way: as *bonum diffusivum sui*, as *creative love*. . .

§38: . . . The analysis of sin in its original dimension indicates that, through the influence of the “father of lies,” *throughout the history of humanity there will be a constant pressure on man to reject God*, even to the point of hating Him: “Love of self to the point of contempt for God,” as St. Augustine puts it. Man will be inclined to see in God primarily a limitation of himself, and not the source of his own freedom and the fullness of good. We see this confirmed in the modern age, when the atheistic ideologies seek to *root out religion* on the grounds that religion causes the radical “*alienation*” of man, as if man were dispossessed of his own humanity when, accepting the idea of God, he attributes to God what belongs to man, and exclusively to man! Hence a process of thought and historico-sociological practice in which the rejection of God has reached the point of declaring His “death.” An absurdity, both in concept and expression! But the ideology of the “death of God” is more a threat to *man*, as the Second Vatican Council indicates when it analyses the question of the “independence of earthly affairs” and writes: “For without the Creator the creature would disappear. . . When God is forgotten, the creature itself grows unintelligible.”

John Paul II, *Centesimus Annus* (1991)

§4: Here, particular mention must be made of the encyclical *Libertas Præstantissimum*, which called attention to the essential bond between human freedom and truth, so that freedom which refused to be bound to the truth would fall into arbitrariness and end up submitting itself to the vilest of passions, to the point of self-destruction.

§46: Authentic democracy is possible only in a State ruled by law, and on the basis of a correct conception of the human person. . . Nowadays there is a tendency to claim that agnosticism and skeptical relativism are the philosophy and the basis which correspond to democratic forms of political life. Those who are convinced that they know that truth and firmly adhere to it are considered unreliable from a democratic point of view, since they do not accept that truth is determined by the majority, or that it is subject to variation according to different political trends. It must be observed in this regard that if there is no ultimate truth to guide and direct political activity, then ideas and convictions can easily be manipulated for reasons of power. As history demonstrates, a democracy without values easily turns into open or thinly-disguised totalitarianism.

John Paul II, *Veritatis Splendor* (1993)¹³

¹³ Reading Leo's discussion of liberty in light of John Paul's, and *vice versa*, is a most profitable

Chapter II, Part I, §32: Certain currents of modern thought have gone so far as to *exalt freedom to such an extent that it becomes an absolute, which would then be the source of values*. This is the direction taken by doctrines which have lost the sense of the transcendent or which are explicitly atheistic. The individual conscience is accorded the status of a supreme tribunal of moral judgment which hands down categorical and infallible decisions about good and evil. To the affirmation that one has a duty to follow one's conscience is unduly added the affirmation that one's moral judgment is true merely by that fact that it has its origin in the conscience. But in the way the inescapable claims of truth disappear, yielding their place to a criterion of sincerity, authenticity, and "being at peace with oneself," so much so that some have come to adopt a radically subjectivistic conception of moral judgment. As is immediately evident, *the crisis of truth* is not unconnected with this development. Once the idea of a universal truth about the good, knowable by human reason, is lost, inevitably the notion of conscience also change. Conscience is no longer considered in its primordial reality as an act of a person's intelligence, the function of which is to apply the universal knowledge of the good in a specific situation and thus to express a judgment about the right conduct to be chosen here and now, instead, there is a tendency to grant to the individual conscience the prerogative of independently determining the criteria of good and evil, and then acting accordingly. Such an outlook is quite congenial to an individualistic ethic, wherein each individual is faced with his own truth, different from the truth of others. Taken to its extreme consequences, this individualism leads to a denial of the very idea of human nature. These different notions are at the origin of currents of thought which posit a radical opposition between moral law and conscience, and between nature and freedom.

§33: *Side by side* with its exaltation of freedom, yet oddly in contrast with it, *modern culture radically questions the very existence of this freedom*. . .

§42: Patterned on God's freedom, man's freedom is not negated by his obedience to the divine law; indeed, only through this obedience does it abide in the truth and conform to human dignity. . .

§46: The alleged conflict between freedom and law is forcefully brought up once again today with regard to the natural law, and particularly with regard to nature. *Debates about nature and freedom* have always marked the history of moral reflection; they grew especially heated at the time of the Renaissance and the Reformation, as can be seen from the teaching of the Council of Trent. Our own age is marked, though in a different sense, by a similar tension. The penchant for empirical observation, the procedures of scientific objectification, technological progress, and certain forms of liberalism have led to these two terms being set in opposition, as if a dialectic, if not an absolute conflict, between freedom and nature were characteristic of the structure of human history. . . Human nature, understood in this way, could be reduced to and treated as a readily available biological or social material. This ultimately means making freedom self-defining and a phenomenon creative of itself and its values. Indeed, when all is said and done, man would not even have a nature; he would be his own personal life-project. Man would be nothing more than his own freedom!

§47: In this context, *objections of physicalism and naturalism* have been leveled against the traditional conception of *the natural law*, which is accused of presenting as moral laws what are in themselves mere biological laws. Consequently, in too superficial a way, a permanent and unchanging character would be attributed to certain kinds of human behavior, and, on the basis of this, an attempt would be made to formulate universally valid moral norms. . .

§48: . . . A freedom which claims to be absolute ends up treating the human body as a raw datum, devoid of any meaning and moral values until freedom has shaped it in accordance with its

design. . . This moral theory does not correspond to the truth about man and his freedom. It contradicts the *Church's teachings on the unity of the human person*, whose rational soul is *per se et essentialiter* the form of his body. The spiritual and immortal soul is the principle of unity of the human being, whereby it exists as a whole—*corpore et anima unus*—as a person.

§49: . . . In fact, *body and soul are inseparable*: in the person, in the willing agent and in the deliberate act *they stand or fall together*.

Chapter II, Part II, §54: . . . The way in which one conceives the relationship between freedom and law is thus intimately bound up with one's understanding of the moral conscience. Here the cultural tendencies referred to above—in which freedom and law are set in opposition to one another and kept apart, and freedom is exalted almost to the point of idolatry—lead to a "*creative*" *understanding of moral conscience*, which diverges from the teaching of the Church's tradition and her Magisterium.

§64: . . . It follows that the authority of the Church, when she pronounces on moral questions, in no way undermines the freedom of conscience of Christians. This is so not only because freedom of conscience is never freedom "from" the truth, but always and only freedom "in" the truth, but also because the Magisterium does not bring to the Christian conscience truths which are extraneous to it; rather, it brings to light the truths which it ought already to possess, developing them from the starting point of the primordial act of faith. The Church puts herself always and only at the *service of conscience*, helping it to avoid being tossed to and fro by every wind of doctrine proposed by human deceit (cf. Eph. iv, 14), and helping it not to swerve from the truth about the good of man, but rather, especially in more difficult questions, to attain the truth with certainty and to abide in it.

Chapter III, §99: . . . The Supreme Good and the moral good meet in *truth*: the truth of God, the Creator and Redeemer, and the truth of man, created and redeemed by Him. Only upon this truth is it possible to construct a renewed society and to solve the complex and weighty problems affecting it, above all the problem of overcoming the various forms of totalitarianism, so as to make way for the authentic *freedom* of the person. "Totalitarianism arises out of a denial of truth in the objective sense. If there is no transcendent truth, in obedience to which man achieves his full identity, then there is no sure principle for guaranteeing just relations between people. Their self-interest as a class, group, or nation would inevitably set them in opposition to one another. If one does not acknowledge transcendent truth, then the force of power takes over, and each person tends to make full use of the means at his disposal in order to impose his own interests or his own opinion, with no regard for the rights of others. . . Thus, the root of modern totalitarianism is to be found in the denial of the transcendent dignity of the human person who, as the visible image of the invisible God, is therefore by his very nature the subject of rights which no one may violate—no individual, group, class, nation or state. Not even the majority of a social body may violate these rights, by going against the minority, by isolating, oppressing, or exploiting it, or by attempting to annihilate it" (*Centesimus Annus*, §44).

§101: . . . Today, when many countries have seen the fall of ideologies which bound politics to a totalitarian conception of the world—Marxism being the foremost of these—there is no less grave a danger that the fundamental rights of the human person will be denied and that the religious yearnings which arise in the heart of every human being will be absorbed once again into politics. This is *the risk of an alliance between democracy and ethical relativism*, which would remove any sure moral reference point from political and social life, and on a deeper level, make the acknowledgment of truth impossible. Indeed, "If there is no ultimate truth to guide and direct political activity, then ideas and convictions can easily be manipulated for reasons of power. As history demonstrates, a democracy without values easily turns into open or thinly-disguised totalitarianism" (*Centesimus Annus*, §46). . .

§102: . . .What is the ultimate source of this inner division of man? His history of sin begins when he no longer acknowledges the Lord as his Creator and himself wishes to be the one who determines, with complete independence, what is good and what is evil. “You will be like God, knowing good and evil” (Gen. 3:5): this was the first temptation, and it is echoed in all the other temptations to which man is more easily inclined to yield as a result of the original Fall.

John Paul II, *Evangelium Vitae* (1995)

[“Am I my brother’s keeper?” (Gen 4:9): A perverse idea of freedom]

18. The panorama described needs to be understood not only in terms of the phenomena of death which characterize it but also in the *variety of causes* which determine it. The Lord’s question: “What have you done?” (Gen. 4:10), seems almost like an invitation addressed to Cain to go beyond the material dimension of his murderous gesture, in order to recognize in it all the gravity of the *motives* which occasioned it and the *consequences* which result from it.

Decisions that go against life sometimes arise from difficult or even tragic situations of profound suffering, loneliness, a total lack of economic prosperity, depression and anxiety about the future. Such circumstances can mitigate even to a notable degree subjective responsibility and the consequent culpability of those who make these choices which in themselves are evil. But today the problem goes far beyond the necessary recognition of these personal situations. It is a problem which exists at the cultural, social, and political level, where it reveals its more sinister and disturbing aspect in the tendency, ever more widely shared, to interpret the above crimes against life as *legitimate expressions of individual freedom, to be acknowledged and protected as actual rights*.

In this way, and with tragic consequences, a long historical process is reaching a turning-point. The process which once led to discovering the idea of “human rights”—rights inherent in every person and prior to any Constitution and State legislation—is today marked by a *surprising contradiction*. Precisely in an age when the inviolable rights of the person are solemnly proclaimed and the value of life is publicly affirmed, the very right to life is being denied or trampled upon, especially at the more significant moments of existence: the moment of birth and the moment of death.

On the one hand, the various declarations of human rights and the many initiatives inspired by these declarations show that at the global level there is a growing moral sensitivity, more alert to acknowledging the value and dignity of every individual as a human being, without any distinction of race, nationality, religion, political opinion or social class.

On the other hand, these noble proclamations are unfortunately contradicted by a tragic repudiation of them in practice. This denial is still more distressing, indeed more scandalous, precisely because it is occurring in a society which makes the affirmation and protection of human rights its primary objective and its boast. How can these repeated affirmations of principle be reconciled with the continual increase and widespread justification of attacks on human life? How can we reconcile these declarations with the refusal to accept those who are weak and needy, or elderly, or those who have just been conceived? These attacks go directly against respect for life and they represent a direct threat to the entire culture of human rights. It is a threat capable, in the end, of jeopardizing the very meaning of democratic existence: rather than societies of “people living together”, our cities risk becoming societies of people who are rejected, marginalized, uprooted and oppressed. If we then look at the wider worldwide perspective, how can we fail to think that the very affirmation of the rights of individuals and peoples made in distinguished international assemblies is a merely futile exercise of rhetoric, if we fail to unmask the selfishness of the rich countries which exclude poorer countries from access to development or make such access depend-

ent on arbitrary prohibitions against procreation, setting up an opposition between development and man himself? Should we not question the very economic models often adopted by States which, also as a result of international pressures and forms of conditioning, cause and aggravate situations of injustice and violence in which the life of whole peoples is degraded and trampled upon?

19. What are the roots of this remarkable contradiction? We can find them in an overall assessment of a cultural and moral nature, beginning with the mentality which *carries the concept of subjectivity to an extreme* and even distorts it, and recognizes as a subject of rights only the person who enjoys full or at least incipient autonomy and who emerges from a state of total dependence on others. But how can we reconcile this approach with the exaltation of man as a being who is “not to be used”?¹⁴

The theory of human rights is based precisely on the affirmation that the human person, unlike animals and things, cannot be subjected to domination by others. We must also mention the mentality which tends to equate personal dignity with the capacity for verbal and explicit, or at least perceptible, communication. It is clear that on the basis of these presuppositions there is no place in the world for anyone who, like the unborn or the dying, is a weak element in the social structure, or for anyone who appears completely at the mercy of others and radically dependent on them, and can only communicate through the silent language of a profound sharing of affection. In this case it is force which becomes the criterion for choice and action in interpersonal relations and in social life. But this the exact opposite of what a State ruled by law, as a community in which the “reasons of force” are replaced by the “force of reason,” historically intended to affirm.

At another level, the roots of the contradiction between the solemn affirmation of human rights and their tragic denial in practice lies in a *notion of freedom* which exalts the isolated individual in an absolute way, and gives no place to solidarity, to openness to others and service of them. While it is true that the taking of life not yet born or in its final stages is sometimes marked by a mistaken sense of altruism and human compassion, it cannot be denied that such a culture of death, taken as a whole, betrays a completely individualistic concept of freedom, which ends up by becoming the freedom of “the strong” against the weak who have no choice but to submit.

It is precisely in this sense that Cain’s answer to the Lord’s question: “Where is Abel your brother?” can be interpreted: “I do not know; am I my brother’s keeper?” (Gen. 4:9). Yes, every man is his “brother’s keeper”, because God entrusts us to one another. And it is also in view of this entrusting that God gives everyone freedom, a freedom which possesses an *inherently relational dimension*. This is a great gift of the Creator, placed as it is at the service of the person and of his fulfillment through the gift of self and openness to others; but when freedom is made absolute in an individualistic way, it is emptied of its original content, and its very meaning and dignity are contradicted.

There is an even more profound aspect which needs to be emphasized: freedom negates and destroys itself, and becomes a factor leading to the destruction of others, when it no longer recognizes and respects its essential link with the truth. When freedom, out of a desire to emancipate itself from all forms of tradition and authority, shuts out even the most obvious evidence of an objective and universal truth, which is the foundation of personal and social life, then the person ends up by no longer taking as the sole and indisputable point of reference for his own choices the truth about good and evil, but only his subjective and changeable opinion or, indeed, his selfish interest and whim.

20. This view of freedom leads to a serious distortion of life in society. If the promotion of the self is understood in terms of absolute autonomy, people inevitably reach the point of rejecting one another. Everyone else is considered an enemy from whom one has to defend oneself. Thus society becomes a mass of individuals placed side by side, but without any mutual bonds.

¹⁴ See Karol Wojtyła, *Love and Responsibility*, pp. 34-39, “Critique of Utilitarianism.”

Each one wishes to assert himself independently of the other and in fact intends to make his own interests prevail. Still, in the face of other people's analogous interests, some kind of compromise must be found, if one wants a society in which the maximum possible freedom is guaranteed to each individual. In this way, any reference to common values and to a truth absolutely binding on everyone is lost, and social life ventures on to the shifting sands of complete relativism. At that point, everything is negotiable, everything is open to bargaining: even the first of the fundamental rights, the right to life.¹⁵

This is what is happening also at the level of politics and government: the original and inalienable right to life is questioned or denied on the basis of parliamentary vote or the will of one part of the people—even if it is the majority. This is the sinister result of relativism which reigns unopposed: the “right” cease to be such, because it is no longer firmly founded on the inviolable dignity of the person, but is made subject to the will of the stronger part. In this way democracy, contradicting its own principles, effectively moves towards a form of totalitarianism. The State is no longer the “common home” where all can live together on the basis of principles of fundamental equality, but is transformed into a *tyrant State*, which arrogates to itself the right to dispose of the life of the weakest and most defenseless members, from the unborn child to the elderly, in the name of a public interest which is really nothing but the interest of one part. The appearance of the strictest respect for legality is maintained, at least when the laws permitting abortion and euthanasia are the result of a ballot in accordance with what are generally seen as the rules of democracy. Really, what we have here is only the tragic caricature of legality; the democratic ideal, which is only truly such when it acknowledges and safeguards the dignity of every human person, *is betrayed in its very foundations*. “How is it still possible to speak of the dignity of every human person when the killing of the weakest and most innocent is permitted? In the name of what justice is the most unjust of discriminations practiced: some individuals are held to be deserving of defense and others are denied that dignity?”¹⁶ When this happens, the process leading to the breakdown of a genuinely human co-existence and the disintegration of the State itself has already begun.

To claim the right to abortion, infanticide and euthanasia, and to recognize that right in law, means to attribute to human freedom a *perverse and evil significance*: that of an *absolute power over others and against others*. This is the death of true freedom: “Truly, truly, I say to you, every one who commits sin is a slave to sin” (Jn. 8:34).¹⁷

22: . . . Moreover, once all reference to God has been removed, it is not surprising that *the meaning of everything else becomes profoundly distorted*. Nature itself, from being “mater” (mother), is now reduced to being “matter,” and is subjected to every kind of manipulation. This is the direction in which a certain technical and scientific way of thinking, prevalent in present-day culture, appears to be leading when it rejects the very idea that there is a truth of creation which must be acknowledged, or a plan of God for life which must be respected. Something similar happens when concern about the consequences of such a “freedom without law” leads some people to the opposite position of a “law without freedom”, as for example ideologies which consider it unlawful to interfere in any way with nature, practically “divinizing” it. Again, this is a misunderstanding of nature's dependence on the plan of the Creator. Thus it is clear that the loss of contact with God's wise design is the deepest root of modern man's confusion, both when this loss leads to

¹⁵ The conception of society described in great detail by the Holy Father is none other than Madison's in Federalist 10 and 51, where we read about the selfishness and subjectivism necessarily accompanying man's desires and judgments; hence his tendency to form factions, a tendency the government must cleverly manipulate, not uproot or reform.

¹⁶ Footnote from encyclical: Address to the Participants at the Study Conference on the “Right to Life and Europe,” 18 December 1987: *Insegnamenti*, X, 3, 1446-1447.

¹⁷ Recall that Leo XIII quotes and comments on the same scripture verse in *Libertas*.

a freedom without rules and when it leaves man in “fear” of his freedom. By living “as if God did not exist,” man not only loses sight of the mystery of God, but also of the mystery of the world and the mystery of his own being.

23: The eclipse of the sense of God and of man inevitably leads to a practical materialism, which breeds individualism, utilitarianism and hedonism. Here too we see the permanent validity of the words of the Apostle: “And since they did not see fit to acknowledge God, God gave them up to a base mind and to improper conduct” (Rom. 1:28). The values of *being* are replaced by those of *having*.¹⁸ The only goal which counts is the pursuit of one’s own material well-being. The so-called “quality of life” is interpreted primarily or exclusively as economic efficiency, inordinate consumerism, physical beauty and pleasure, to the neglect of the more profound dimensions—interpersonal, spiritual and religious—of existence.

69: In any case, in the democratic culture of our time it is commonly held that *the legal system of any society should limit itself to taking account of and accepting the convictions of the majority*. It should therefore be based solely upon what the majority itself considers moral and actually practices. Furthermore, if it is believed that an objective truth shared by all is *de facto unattainable*, then respect for the freedom of the citizens—who in a democratic system are considered the true rulers—would require that on the legislative level the autonomy of individual consciences be acknowledged. Consequently, when establishing those norms which are absolutely necessary for social coexistence, the only determining factor should be the will of the majority, whatever this may be. Hence [according to this position it follows that] every politician, in his or her activity, should clearly separate the realm of private conscience from that of public conduct.¹⁹

As a result we have what appear to be two diametrically opposed tendencies. On the one hand, individuals claim for themselves in the moral sphere the most complete freedom of choice and demand that the State should not adopt or impose any ethical position but limit itself to guaranteeing maximum space for the freedom of each individual, with the sole limitation of not infringing on the freedom and rights of any other citizen. On the other hand, it is held that, in the exercise of public and professional duties, respect for other people’s freedom of choice requires that each one should set aside his or her own convictions in order to satisfy every demand of the citizens which is recognized and guaranteed by law; in carrying out one’s duties the only moral criterion should be what is laid down by the law itself. Individual responsibility is thus turned over to the civil law, with a renouncing of personal conscience, at least in the public sphere.

70. At the basis of all these tendencies lies the *ethical relativism* which characterizes much of present-day culture. There are those who consider such relativism an essential condition of democracy, inasmuch as it alone is held to guarantee tolerance, mutual respect between people and acceptance of the decisions of the majority, whereas moral norms considered to be objective and binding are held to lead to authoritarianism and intolerance. But it is precisely the issue of respect for life which shows what misunderstandings and contradictions, accompanied by terrible practical consequences, are concealed in this position.

It is true that history has known cases where crimes have been committed in the name of “truth”. But equally grave crimes and radical denials of freedom have also been committed and are still being committed in the name of “ethical relativism”. When a parliamentary or social majority decrees that it is legal, at least under certain conditions, to kill unborn human life, is it not really making a “tyrannical” decision with regard to the weakest and most defenseless of human beings? Everyone’s conscience rightly rejects those crimes against humanity of which our century has had such sad experience. But would these crimes cease to be crimes if, instead of being committed by unscrupulous tyrants, they were legitimated by popular consensus?

¹⁸ Put differently, quality gives way to quantity.

¹⁹ And this is what happens (and has always happened, of course), except in cases of a “fortunate inconsistency” on the part of representatives and their constituencies.

Democracy cannot be idolized to the point of making it a substitute for morality or a panacea for immorality.²⁰ Fundamentally, democracy is a “system” and as such is a means and not an end. Its moral value is not automatic, but depends on conformity to the moral law to which it, like every other form of human behavior, must be subject. . .

The basis of these values cannot be provisional and changeable “majority” opinions, but only the acknowledgment of an objective moral law which, as the “natural law” written in the human heart, is the obligatory point of reference for civil law itself. If, as a result of a tragic obscuring of the collective conscience, an attitude of skepticism were to succeed in bringing into question even the fundamental principles of the moral law, the democratic system itself would be shaken in its foundations, and would be reduced to *a mere mechanism for regulating different and opposing interests on a purely empirical basis*.²¹ Some might think²² that even this function, in the absence of anything better, should be valued for the sake of peace in society. While one acknowledges some element of truth in this point of view, it is easy to see that without an objective moral grounding not even democracy is capable of ensuring a stable peace, especially since peace which is not built on the values of the dignity of every individual and of solidarity between all people frequently proves to be illusory. Even in participatory systems of government, the regulation of interests often occurs to the advantage of the most powerful, since they are the ones most capable of maneuvering not only the levers of power but also of shaping the formation of consensus. In such a situation, democracy easily becomes an empty word.

Appendix

Vatican Documents on the Authority of Papal Teaching

- A Canon 752. While the assent of faith is not required, a religious submission of intellect and will is to be given to any doctrine which either the Supreme Pontiff or the College of Bishops, exercising their authentic Magisterium, declare upon a matter of faith or morals, even though they do not intend to proclaim that doctrine by definitive act. Christ’s faithful are therefore to ensure that they avoid whatever does not accord with that doctrine.²³
- B Collaboration between the theologian and the Magisterium occurs in a special way when the theologian receives the canonical mission or the mandate to teach. In a certain sense, such collaboration becomes a participation in the work of the Magisterium linked, as it then is, by a juridic bond. The theologian’s code of conduct, which obviously has its origin in the service of the Word of God, is here reinforced by the commitment the theologian assumes in accepting his office, making the profession of faith and taking the oath of fidelity. From this moment on, the theologian is officially charged with the task of presenting and illustrating the doctrine of the faith in its integrity and with full accuracy.

When the Magisterium of the Church makes an infallible pronouncement and solemnly declares that a teaching is found in Revelation, the assent called for is that of theological faith. This kind of adherence is to be given even to the teaching of the ordinary and universal Magisterium when it proposes for belief a teaching of faith as divinely revealed.

²⁰ Pius XII says precisely the same thing in *Mit brennender Sorge* §§6-9.

²¹ Footnote in original: Cf. John Paul II, *Veritatis Splendor*, 6 August 1993, 97 and 99: AAS 85 (1993), 1209-1211.

²² Who are they?

²³ *The Code of Canon Law* (1983).

When the Magisterium proposes “in a definitive way” truths concerning faith and morals, which, even if not divinely revealed, are nevertheless strictly and intimately connected with Revelation, these must be firmly accepted and held.

When the Magisterium, not intending to act “definitively”, teaches a doctrine to aid a better understanding of Revelation and make explicit its contents, or to recall how some teaching is in conformity with the truths of faith, or finally to guard against ideas that are incompatible with these truths, the response called for is that of the religious submission of will and intellect. This kind of response cannot be simply exterior or disciplinary but must be understood within the logic of faith and under the impulse of obedience to the faith.

The willingness to submit loyally to the teaching of the Magisterium on matters *per se* not irreformable must be the rule.²⁴

- C The social concern of the Church directed towards an authentic development of man and society which would respect and promote all the dimensions of the human person, has always expressed itself in varied ways. In recent years, one of the special means of intervention has been the Magisterium of the Roman Pontiffs which, beginning with the Encyclical *Rerum Novarum* of Leo XIII as a point of reference, has frequently dealt with the question and has sometimes made the dates of publication of the various social documents coincide with the anniversaries of that first document.

The Popes have not failed to throw fresh light by means of those messages upon new aspects of the social doctrine of the Church. As a result, this doctrine, beginning with the outstanding contribution of Leo XIII and enriched by the successive contributions of the Magisterium, has now become an updated doctrinal “corpus.” It builds up gradually, as the Church, in the fullness of the word revealed by Christ Jesus and with the assistance of the Holy Spirit (cf. Jn. 14:16, 26; 16:13-15), reads events as they unfold in the course of history. She thus seeks to lead people to respond, with the support also of rational reflection and of the human sciences, to their vocation as responsible builders of earthly society.

. . . It was out of an awareness of his mission as the Successor of Peter that Pope Leo XIII proposed to speak out, and Peter’s Successor today is moved by that same awareness. Like Pope Leo and the Popes before and after him, I take my inspiration from the Gospel image of “the scribe who has been trained for the kingdom of heaven”, whom the Lord compares to “a householder who brings out of his treasure what is new and what is old” (Mt. 13:52). The treasure is the great outpouring of the Church’s Tradition, which contains “what is old” – received and passed on from the very beginning – and which enables us to interpret the “new things” in the midst of which the life of the Church and the world unfolds. . . . The present Encyclical seeks to show the fruitfulness of the principles enunciated by Leo XIII, which belong to the Church’s doctrinal patrimony, and, as such, involve the exercise of her teaching authority.²⁵

- D For, though economic science and moral discipline are guided each by its own principles in its own sphere, it is false to affirm that the two orders are so distinct and alien that the former in no way depends on the latter. The so-called laws of economics, derived from the nature of earthly goods and from the qualities of the human body and soul, determine what aims are unattainable or attainable in economic matters and what means are thereby necessary, while reason itself clearly deduces from the nature of things and from the individual and social character of man, what is the end object of the whole economic order assigned by God the Creator.

²⁴ Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, *Instruction on the Ecclesial Vocation of the Theologian* §§22-24.

²⁵ John Paul II, *Centesimus Annus* §1; §3.

For it is the moral law alone which commands us to seek in all our conduct our supreme and final end, and to strive directly in our specific actions for those ends which nature, or rather the Author of Nature, has established for them, duly subordinating the particular to the general. If this law be faithfully obeyed, the result will be that particular economic aims, whether of society as a body or of individuals, will be intimately linked with the universal teleological order, and as a consequence we shall be led by progressive stages to the final end of all, God Himself, our highest and lasting good.²⁶

E Bishops who teach in union with the Roman Pontiff are to be revered as witnesses of divine and Catholic truth; the faithful, for their part, are obliged to submit to their bishop's decision, made in the name of Christ, in matters of faith and morals, and to adhere to it with a ready and respectful allegiance of mind. This loyal submission of the will and intellect must be given, in a special way, to the authentic teaching authority of the Roman Pontiff, even when he does not speak *ex cathedra* in such wise, indeed, that his supreme teaching authority be acknowledged with respect, and that one sincerely adhere to decisions made by him conformably with his manifest mind and intention, which is made known principally either by the character of the document in question, or by the frequency with which a certain doctrine is proposed, or by the manner in which the doctrine is formulated.²⁷

F It is true that Popes generally leave theologians free in those matters which are disputed in various ways by men of very high authority in this field; but history teaches that many matters that formerly were open to discussion, no longer now admit of discussion.

Nor must it be thought that what is expounded in Encyclical Letters does not of itself demand consent, since in writing such Letters the Popes do not exercise the supreme power of their Teaching Authority. For these matters are taught with the ordinary teaching authority, of which it is true to say: "He who heareth you, heareth me"; and generally what is expounded and inculcated in Encyclical Letters already for other reasons appertains to Catholic doctrine. But if the Supreme Pontiffs in their official documents purposely pass judgment on a matter up to that time under dispute, it is obvious that that matter, according to the mind and will of the same Pontiffs, cannot be any longer considered a question open to discussion among theologians. . . Hence, Our Predecessor of immortal memory, Pius IX, teaching that the most noble office of theology is to show how a doctrine defined by the Church is contained in the sources of revelation, added these words and with very good reason: "in that sense in which it has been defined by the Church."²⁸

G The present hour requires that believers, in every possible manner and with all their energy, give to the social doctrine of the Church its maximum in efficiency and in accomplishment. It is an illusion to believe, as some do, that one can disarm anti-clericalism and the anti-Catholic passion by restricting the principles of Catholicism to the domain of private life: this minimizing attitude, on the contrary, will only result in furnishing the adversaries of the Church with new pretexts. Catholics will maintain and improve their position according to the measure of the courage that they exercise in making their actions conform to their intimate convictions in the whole domain of public as well as private life.²⁹

²⁶ Pius XI, *Quadragesimo Anno*.

²⁷ Vatican II, *Lumen Gentium* §25.

²⁸ Pius XII, *Humani Generis* §19–21.

²⁹ Pius XII, letter to the president of *Semaines Sociales de France*, July 19, 1947. In Daniel A. O'Connor, C.S.V., *Catholic Social Doctrine* (Westminster, Md.: Newman Press, 1956), p. 88.

- H Even in the sphere of social-economics, although the Church has never proposed a definite technical system, since this is not her field, she has nevertheless clearly outlined the guiding principles which, while susceptible of varied concrete applications according to the diversified conditions of times and places and peoples, indicate the safe way of securing the happy progress of society.³⁰
- J . . . the political prudence of the Pontiff embraces diverse and multiform things, for it is his charge not only to rule the Church, but generally so to regulate the actions of Christian citizens that these may be in apt conformity to their hope of gaining eternal salvation. Whence, it is clear that, in addition to the complete accordance of thought and deed, the faithful should follow the practical political wisdom of the ecclesiastical authority. Now, the administration of Christian affairs immediately under the Roman Pontiff appertains to the bishops, who, although they attain not to the summit of pontifical power, are nevertheless truly princes in the ecclesiastical hierarchy; and, as each one of them administers a particular Church, they are “as master workers . . . in the spiritual edifice,” and they have members of the clergy to share their duties and carry out their decisions. Every one has to regulate his mode of conduct according to this constitution of the Church, which is not in the power of any man to change. Consequently, just as in the exercise of their episcopal authority, the bishops ought to be united with the apostolic see, so should the members of the clergy and the laity live in close union with their bishops. Among the prelates, indeed, one or other there may be affording scope to criticize either in regard to personal conduct or in reference to opinions by him entertained about points of doctrine; but no private person may arrogate to himself the office of judge which Christ Our Lord has bestowed on that one alone whom He placed in charge of His lambs and of His sheep.³¹
- K We, with the approval of the sacred council, teach and define that it is a divinely revealed dogma: that the Roman Pontiff, when he speaks *ex cathedra*, that is, when, acting in the office of shepherd and teacher of all Christians, he defines, by virtue of his supreme apostolic authority, doctrine concerning faith or morals to be held by the universal Church, possesses through the divine assistance promised to him in the person of St. Peter, the infallibility with which the divine Redeemer willed his Church to be endowed in defining doctrine concerning faith or morals; and that such definitions of the Roman Pontiff are therefore irreformable because of their nature, but not because of the agreement of the Church. But if anyone presumes to contradict this Our definition (God forbid that he do so): let him be anathema.³²

³⁰ Ibid., p. 76.

³¹ Leo XIII, *Sapientiae Christianae* §37.

³² Vatican I, in *The Church Teaches: Documents of the Church in English Translation*, ed. John Clarkson, S.J., p. 102.