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# INTERCREDAL COOPERATION

Papers by

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Intercredal*



**THE CATHOLIC ASSOCIATION FOR INTERNATIONAL PEACE**

1312 Massachusetts Avenue, N.W.

Washington 5, D. C.

1943

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*These papers on Intercredal Cooperation were abbreviated and adapted for publication in pamphlet form by the authors, at the request of the Executive Council of the Catholic Association for International Peace, from articles which appeared in Theological Studies, Vol. IV, No. 2, June, 1943. The pamphlet is printed for distribution by the Catholic Association for International Peace on order of the Executive Council.*

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**Censor Librorum.**

**Imprimatur:**

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**Archbishop of Baltimore and Washington.**

INTERCREDAL COOPERATION  
IN THE  
PAPAL DOCUMENTS

By

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and

INTERCREDAL COOPERATION:  
PRINCIPLES

By

JOHN COURTNEY MURRAY, S.J.

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## INTERCREDAL COOPERATION IN THE PAPAL DOCUMENTS

WILFRID PARSONS, S.J.

**I**N NEARLY all of his public utterances the present Holy Father, Pope Pius XII, has made some reference to those not of the Catholic faith and has expressed the belief or hope that many of these are "with him" in his gallant but desperate attempt to save human society. Particularly toward the end of his life, Pope Pius XI constantly made similar utterances. It may be useful therefore, to examine the question of intercredal cooperation, from the point of view of papal utterances, and from these, attempt to gather (1) what are the legitimate fields in which this cooperation may take place; and (2) what are the grounds for such cooperation.

Before examining the texts themselves, however, it will be helpful to recall the historical background. From the disastrous Peace of Westphalia (1648) up to our own times, the direct influence of the Papacy and, indeed, the Church on the temporal affairs of Europe and the world was reduced to almost nothing. What has been called the "secularization of politics," which was then made the official rule of European nations, brought, along with other unfortunate consequences, a universal acceptance of the exclusion of the Church from public affairs and a submissive spirit of isolationism on the part of Catholics. This spirit, until very recently, has been accepted by most modern Catholics as the normal mode of being by which the Church shall henceforth live.

It was Leo XIII, who, the first for a long time, reminded a startled world that the Catholic Church considers that temporal affairs also fall under the purview of her divine mission. Leo himself, however, did not immediately perceive that a changed world required a whole new set of concepts if this intervention was to be made valid. It was no longer, as his predecessor Pius IX seems to have imagined, a medieval synthesis which he faced, in which political unity and religious unity were the same unity, but a world of clashing nationalisms and religious dissensions. It is a kind of historical irony that, just as it was post-medieval France which pushed the Church back into the sacristy and then humiliated it, so it was modern France which first opened Leo's eyes to the new

state of affairs and furnished him with the clue to what to do about it.

### The Papal Texts

In a series of Encyclicals which began within a year after his accession, Leo began to unfold a philosophy of society which, beginning mostly as a condemnation of the modern State, gradually developed a positive reconciliation with it on a basis of Christian principles.

Up to this point, however, the great Pope had restricted himself to the role of a philosophic teacher, being content merely with setting forth correct principles of government. In 1891, with *Rerum Novarum*, he emerged as a social reformer. This was a definite departure in papal practice, for this Encyclical clearly called for action as well as the acceptance of truth. Moreover, in this action he explicitly engaged the Church as a partner with secular society:

So far as the Church is concerned, her cooperation will never be found wanting, be the time or the occasion what it may. She will intervene with all the greater effect in proportion as her liberty of action is the more unfettered. Let this in particular be carefully noted by those whose office it is to provide for the public welfare.

It became clear immediately that the test of this new policy would take place in France. It was there that the ancient and the modern were most closely at grips. Leo's proclamation of social reform came right in the middle of the crucial debate between himself and the French Royalists over the question of allegiance to the Third French Republic. It was in the previous November that Cardinal Lavigerie had made his sensational toast to the Republic in Algiers and had launched the movement of the *Ralliement*. After a year of furious disputes, Leo spoke a deciding word in his Letter to the French, *Au milieu des sollicitudes*, on February 16, 1892.

In this Letter the Pope told French Catholics that it was their duty to give their allegiance to the Republic. In it he made his famous distinction between the regime, which he declared legitimate, and its legislation, which he condemned and which he wished the Church in France, by cooperation with the regime, to change. What is remarkable about the Letter is the fact that Leo makes

an appeal for joint action between Catholics and non-Catholics in the work of transforming French society:

. . . We believe it opportune, and even necessary, to raise Our Voice again, and more urgently to exhort not only Catholics but also all Frenchmen of good will and good sense (*tous les Français honnêtes et sensés*) to put far from them every source of political dissension, in order that they may consecrate their energies solely to the pacification of their country. All are aware of the value of that pacification; all increasingly desire it. And We—who desire it more than anyone because We represent on earth the God of peace—We by this letter invite all upright minds and all generous hearts to assist Us in rendering it stable and fruitful.

Later, speaking more directly to Catholics, he insists that “a great union is necessary” for effective social action in the interests of social harmony. But in two subsequent passages he makes it clear that this unity, insofar as it is directed to the purposes of the temporal order, is not exclusive or closed. After condemning “tendencies hostile to religion and consequently to the interests of the nation,” which have become incorporated in legislation, he adds: “And here precisely is the field on which men of good will (*les gens de bien*), putting aside all political differences, ought to unite as one man, in order to combat by every legal and honest means the progressive abuses of such legislation.” And he gives the reason: all such men should agree that in attacking religion the State has violated the limits of its competence, as marked out by reason itself; there is, therefore, a common moral duty to resist such encroachments.

Secondly, at the end of the Letter he returns again to the same point with equal definiteness:

In summary but clear fashion, Venerable Brethren, We have explained, if not all, at least the principal points on which French Catholics and all reasonable men (*tous les hommes sensés*) must achieve union and concord, in order to heal—insofar as it is still possible—the evils with which France is afflicted, and to restore her moral grandeur. These points are: religion and the nation, political powers and legislation, the conduct to be observed with regard to these powers and this legislation, the Concordat, the separation of Church and State.

His evident supposition is that his doctrine on all these points should commend itself as reasonable to all those who, not professedly Catholic, still retain a natural rectitude of mind and heart.

The authentic commentary on these texts is furnished by Leo's Letter to the Bishop of Grenoble, written several months later, on June 22, 1892. Therein he writes the following passage, unmistakable in its clarity:

. . . The progress of religious life among the peoples is an eminently social task, because of the close connection between the truths which are the soul of the religious life and those which govern civil life. Hence arises a practical rule which must not be lost from view and which gives to Catholics a characteristic broadmindedness. It is this: that while holding firm to our dogmatic position and avoiding all compromise with error, it is Christian prudence not to reject, but rather to win over to us, the collaboration of all men of good will to the pursuit of individual and especially of social welfare.

The great majority of France is Catholic, but among those who are not so fortunate, many in spite of all still retain a basically sound sense and a certain uprightness which we may call the attitude of the naturally Christian soul. Now this lofty sensibility not only attracts them to the good but inclines them to adopt it, and frequently this inner inclination, this generous cooperation are a preparation for the appreciation and profession of the Christian truth. It is for this reason that in Our most recent statements We have not neglected to request the cooperation of these men in the triumph over the sectarian persecution, now unbridled and openly avowed, which is plotting the religious and moral ruin of France.

This advice to the French was quite different from Leo's earlier, more academic and general teaching on the civic obligations of Catholics. Now he was urging a conscious and concerted effort at social reform. Actually, what he wanted from France was nothing less than a radical transformation of modern society, and this was also clearly implied in the social reform preached in *Rerum Novarum*. This was a reform which Catholics by themselves would be powerless to effect, since it involved the whole economic and social structure of the nations. He saw very clearly that unless they were able to win over the collaboration of men of good will, with their naturally Christian soul, in the pursuit of the common good, nothing very effective or concrete was ever going to be done. Moreover, he looked on this collaboration as an excellent means to dispose such men to the acceptance of the whole Catholic truth.

This also, however, must be made clear. Leo XIII never had any other idea than that the ultimate transformation of human



society, for which he had drawn up the master plan, would be carried out within the framework of what may loosely be called Christian philosophy. This thought he repeated too many times to quote here. On the other hand, his concrete proposals, the planks of his platform, were not derived from the Christian revelation as such, but from the normal operation of human reason. What he hoped for from the Christian revelation was the virtue of charity, without which his politico-economic proposals would not be accepted in practice. The *anima naturaliter christiana*, he saw, with its *sens juste* and its *coeur droit*, even though it did not profess the whole Christian revelation, could be counted on as an ally with Catholics, for in his time and place he naturally assumed that the initiative in this would be taken by Catholics.

After the death of Leo XIII (1903), his grandiose conception of social regeneration, it must be admitted, fell somewhat into abeyance. The program of Pius X, "instaurare omnia in Christo," did indeed include, as he said himself in his Encyclical Letter on Catholic Action, *Il fermo proposito* (June 11, 1905), "not only that which properly belongs to the Church's divine mission of leading souls to God, but also that which, as we have explained, spontaneously flows from that divine mission—Christian civilization in the totality of all the elements which constitute it." Circumstances, however, as well as his own pastoral inclinations, turned his energies primarily to the strengthening of the Church's own inner unity in doctrine, organization and life. Nevertheless, it so happened that circumstances also drew from him the only papal document that is completely and explicitly devoted to a particular problem of inter-confessional cooperation, the Encyclical Letter to the Bishops of Germany, *Singulari Quadam*, of September 24, 1912.

The point at issue was the organization of Catholic industrial workers in Germany: should strictly Catholic trade unions alone be encouraged? or should Catholics rather join the so-called "christliche Gewerkvereine," which were on principle "Christian," but interconfessional? In his reply, Pius X reveals an insight into the realities of Germany's economic life as exact as was Leo XIII's grasp of political realities in France. The *Singulari Quadam* clearly recognizes the necessity of organized co-operation between Catholics and non-Catholics in the economic field, in the interests

of justice for the industrial worker. Under the circumstances, and given certain safeguards, such cooperation "can be tolerated and permitted" (*tolerari posse et permitti*), even, though not preferably, in the form of Catholic membership in interconfessional unions. The preferable form of cooperation would be through a federative union of confessional organizations, Catholic and non-Catholic. In either case, the fact emerges that the Church, while vigilantly guarding the integrity of her children's faith, was prepared to accept the cooperation of men of Christian principles, as the members of the "christliche Gewerkvereine" professed themselves to be, in the work of establishing justice in the economic order.

The reign of Benedict XV was overshadowed by the first World War. On the accession of Pius XI (1922), the question of whether society could be saved was once more acute, and the new Pope showed immediately that he was keenly aware of it. From the time that he appeared on St. Peter's balcony the day of his election he made it clear that he was determined to break the shell of Catholic isolation. He immediately began to preach the doctrine that the Church includes the temporal in its divine mission. It was he who most insistently called the laity to participation in the apostolate of the hierarchy through Catholic Action. By the time of his death nearly every country in the world had a diplomatic representative at his court. It was he to whom it was reserved to restore the temporal freedom of the papacy. And he revived the Leonine tradition by his memorable series of social Encyclicals, among which the outstanding one was a commentary and development of Leo's own *Rerum Novarum*.

As we look back on them, these documents show a definite pattern, a pattern, indeed, very like that followed by Leo XIII. For the first ten years Pius was most concerned with drawing tight the ranks of Catholics themselves. He launched the movement of Catholic Action (*Ubi Arcano*); he promulgated the devotion and feast of Christ the King (*Quas Primas*); he promoted spiritual retreats for laymen (*Mens Nostra*). He followed that with teachings on Christian education (*Rappresentanti in Terra*) and the Christian family (*Casti Connubii*). All this work fur-

nished an almost complete picture of the Christian religion girding itself for the trials to come.

In 1931, however, the whole tone of this thought undergoes a change; he likewise becomes the social reformer. In that year, the fortieth since *Rerum Novarum*, he came out with the greatest of his Encyclicals, *Quadragesimo Anno*. It was a searching analysis of the whole temporal social order, and an urgent call to substitute for it a new and more just one before it was too late. By its very nature, this was a call directed to a wider circle than the Catholic Church. In fact, it contained a program which Catholics by themselves were certainly powerless to execute; the whole secular world of business and government would be required to cooperate. He said himself that his call was to "all men of good will," who would be willing to join with the pastors of the Church.

By October of that year, in *Nova Impendet*, he was already talking of a great crusade, in which all men would participate:

To this vigorous effort of compassion and love, which will manifest a sacrificial devotion to the needs of the poor, We summon all as children of the one heavenly Father, as the myriad members of the same one family, and therefore as all brothers in Christ, who make a common lot of prosperity and comfort, of hardship and sorrow. To this great effort we summon all as to a sacred duty imposed by the law that is distinctive of the Gospel—the precept, namely, of charity, which Christ our Lord promulgated as His first and greatest commandment and as the supreme law that sums up all else that He enjoined. In the days when war raged and hatred was rampant, Our immediate predecessor repeatedly and with emphasis urged this precept, and made of it, as it were, the distinguishing mark of his pontificate.

From this stirring passage, several things are immediately manifest. The common effort is in the temporal order—that is its field; the grounds of cooperation are our common membership in the race of men, the one family of the one Father; the cooperation is a duty, and its motive is the law of charity promulgated in the Gospel.

Less than a year later, Pius XI cleared away any doubt that this passage might have left as to the meaning of "God's family." To him it meant the whole human race, not merely the members of the Church; for in his Encyclical *Caritate Christi Compulsi*, he said:

Constrained by the charity of Christ, in our Encyclical Letter *Nova Impendet* of October 2 last year, we spurred on all the children of the Church, and indeed all men of good will, to a holy rivalry in love and succor, whereby the terrible sufferings brought on human society by the economic crisis might in some measure be lightened.

Moreover, in this Encyclical Pius XI broadened the scope of cooperation with men of good will and made it include more constructive aims in the temporal order; he also defined more clearly the reasons that made it necessary. Unlike many, he did not envisage the crisis of the '30's as a purely economic one. With extraordinary penetration he saw, even that early, that the human race had divided itself into two camps, and was setting itself for a struggle *à outrance* between the two:

For in this battle there is at stake the most important decision that the free will of man can be called on to make: either for God or against God—that is once more the point at issue, and upon it hangs the lot of all the world. For in every department of life—in politics and economics, in morals, in the sciences and arts, in the State and in domestic and civil life, in the East and in the West—everywhere the same issue arises, big with consequences of supreme moment.

The conclusion that he drew from this fundamental conflict was that all who are menaced by it should join together—and that meant all those who believe in God: "It is imperative . . . that we also should unite all our forces into one compact army to march against the battalions of evil, enemies of God no less than of the human race." This unity, which the Pope demanded that we recognize, is in a sense a unity created by our enemies; for he reminds us that they are hurling their attacks "not against the Catholic religion alone, but against every religion that recognizes God as the author of this visible world, and as the ruler of the universe." He reminds us, too, of their organization: ". . . in a spirit of diabolical fury these squadrons are striving, not merely by speeches, but by a union of all their active energies, to put through their impious designs with all possible speed." Consequently, by their organized attacks they have drawn together in a common cause all those who believe in God and love mankind. In a last desperate appeal, Pius XI says:

In the name of the Lord, therefore, we implore both individuals and nations. . . . Let all close ranks, if necessary at the cost of heavy

sacrifices, in order to rescue themselves and the society of men. In such a union of minds and energies, they, of course, should claim the first place who boast of being Christians, and are mindful of the splendid example of Apostolic times, when "the multitude of the faithful were but one heart and one soul" (Acts 4:32); but let all those also, whoever they are, who acknowledge God and with sincere hearts adore Him, give their assistance to the common cause, in order to ward off from mankind the immense danger which threatens all alike.

Five years later, in that Encyclical which has been called *On Atheistic Communism (Divini Redemptoris)*, but which is really a commentary on his own *Quadragesimo Anno*, Pius XI is still appealing for cooperation:

But in combating the violence with which the powers of darkness are striving to pluck out of the hearts of men the very idea of God, We have high hopes that with those who glory in the name of Christian all those also—and they comprise the great majority of mankind—who believe in God and adore Him will effectively join. Renewing the invitation extended to them five years ago in Our Encyclical *Caritate Christi*, We urge them, each with his own contribution, to devote themselves to this cause.

In these words the great Pope struck a note that had not been heard in Europe for many centuries. It is no longer a question of fanatical Mohammedans threatening Christianity, or of Lutherans and Calvinists striking at the Catholic Church; it is a matter of dark and powerful forces mustering armies against the very foundation stone of human life, God Himself. It is well known that in many audiences, as the clouds grew darker and the lights began to go out all over the world, the failing Pope strove to make his visitors see and realize the true meaning of this crisis of mankind itself. He made it clear that unless the Church was able to find allies among those who were themselves really in the shadow of the same menace, the future, humanly speaking, was dark indeed.

His successor, Pius XII, who had been so close to him, lost no time in sounding the same note. In his first public utterance—the radio message to the whole world on the day following his election—after expressing his inner spiritual unity with the hierarchical Church throughout all her ranks, he shows himself conscious and desirous of a wider unity with these words: "Moreover,

our thoughts go out also to those who are outside the enclosures of the Catholic Church. They will be glad, We trust, to know that in this solemn hour Our prayers have begged for them divine assistance from Almighty God."

In what follows he utters his consecration to the work of restoring within the temporal order that spiritual unity which is known as peace, "God's most lovely gift":

We exhort all to that peace which refreshes the souls of those who are united to God in friendship, and which orders and harmonizes family life by the sacred love of Jesus Christ; to a peace which unites nations and peoples in the bonds of mutual and fraternal assistance; to a peace and concord, finally, which must be so established among nations that all of them, united by common agreement, by a friendly alliance, and by cooperative action, may, with God's inspiration and assistance, direct their energies to the progress and happiness of the whole human family.

Nine days later, at his coronation, he spoke to the Cardinals of the "confidence and hope placed in the Holy See not only by those who are intimately united with Us in faith and charity but also by numerous brethren separated from Us, and by almost the whole human family." This same sense of unity with the "whole human family" was expressed in almost everything he had to say: in his Easter homily at St. Peter's on April 9; in his letter to Cardinal Maglione on April 20; in his address to the National Eucharistic Congress in Algiers on May 7; in his talk to the Venetian pilgrims on August 19 ("having in our prayers so many souls of good will who, though living outside the Church, also aspire to peace"); in his radio appeal for peace on August 24; in his discourse to the Belgian ambassador on September 14; in his allocution to the Polish pilgrims on September 30; in his homily at the consecration of the missionary bishops on October 29; in his allocution to the Minister of Haiti on November 10.

Throughout all these documents there runs one constantly recurring and significant phrase, "We have with us": "all men of good will," "all those who are upright of heart," "all those who have power to influence the thought and action of their fellow-men, for whose destiny they are responsible," "innumerable souls of good will," "the other millions of sincere souls," "all men of

good faith," "all those who glory in the name of Christian," "multitudes of just souls, even those alien to the Catholic faith."

Starting with what he variously calls this "sense," this "feeling," or even this "certainty" of having all believers "with him" in the defense of humanity and God against their enemies, he proceeded, as did his predecessor, to call for cooperation in action for the salvation and regeneration of mankind. In his first Encyclical, *Summi Pontificatus* (to which has been given the English title, *On the Unity of Human Society*), issued on October 20, 1939, Pius XII renewed the idea of Pius XI that the enemies of God have not only united Catholics but with them all who believe in God:

The difficulties, anxieties, and trials of the present hour arouse, intensify, and refine to a degree rarely attained the sense of solidarity of the Catholic family. They make all believers in God and in Christ share the consciousness of a common threat from a common danger.

And he greets with gratitude this sense of unity with him as felt by "those who, though not belonging to the visible body of the Catholic Church, have given noble and sincere expression to their appreciation of all that unites them to Us in love for the Person of Christ or in belief in God." He assures this body of believers that his one aim is that they "may have life and may have it more abundantly" (John 10:10).

It is, perhaps, not without significance, and certainly not without interest, that his first clear appeal for actual cooperation was addressed to the United States. Within two weeks after *Summi Pontificatus* he sent a Letter to American Catholics, then celebrating the sesquicentennial of the founding of the hierarchy. In this Letter, *Sertum Laetitiae*, among many other problems discussed, he treats of the social question; its solution, he hopes, will come from America:

What a proud vaunt it will be for the American people, by nature inclined to grandiose undertakings and to liberality, if they untie the knotty and difficult social question by following the sure paths illuminated by the light of the Gospel, and thus lay the basis of a happier age. If this is to come to pass, power must not be dissipated through disunion, but rather strengthened through harmony.

Then, to make it clear that he envisages a larger unity than that formed by the members of the Church, he continues:

To this salutary union of thought and policy, whence flow mighty deeds, in all charity We invite those, too, whom Mother Church laments as separated brethren.

He recalls the "sentiments full of homage and noble respect" expressed by "many of these" on his accession to the Papacy, and adds: "This attitude—We openly confess—has encouraged a hope which time does not take from Us, which a sanguine mind cherishes, and which remains a consolation to Us in hard and troublous times." And he returns to the necessity of union with the words: "May the attempts with which enemies secretly banded together seek to pull down the sceptre of Christ be a spur to us to work in union for the establishment and advancement of His reign."

Moreover, to Pius XII as to Pius XI, this united effort is a true crusade; for in his Christmas sermon of that same year, 1939, he says:

If ever there was a purpose worthy of the collaboration of all noble and generous spirits, if ever there arose flaming courage for a spiritual crusade, in which with new truth the cry, "God wills it!" might resound, it is surely this high purpose and this crusading struggle of unselfish and greathearted men, engaged in the endeavor to lead the nations back from the turbid cisterns of material and selfish interests to the living fountain of divine law, which alone is powerful to create that enduring moral grandeur of which the nations and humanity, to their own serious loss, have for far too long a time felt the absence and the need.

It was at this juncture that President Roosevelt wrote His Holiness a letter announcing the fact that he was sending Mr. Myron Taylor as his personal representative to the Vatican. In his reply, dated January 7, 1940, the Pope welcomed the President's message as an "exemplary act of fraternal and hearty solidarity between the New and Old World in defense against the chilling breath of aggressive and deadly godless and anti-Christian tendencies, that threaten to dry up the fountainhead whence civilization has come and drawn its strength."

As the war deepened and spread, the utterances of the Pope have become less frequent, but in each successive one it is possible to discern a more ardent earnestness and a compelling desire to unite all believers in God in a common action. In his Christmas sermon of 1940, broadcast to the world, he offered the services of



the Church, "so that every people, in a manner corresponding to its particular genius, may have the assistance of the truths and the ethico-religious motive forces of Christianity, with a view to establishing a society that will be fittingly human, of high spiritual quality, and a source of genuine prosperity." At the close of the sermon, he offers his prayers in union not only with the faithful in the Church, but also "with all those who recognize in Christ their Lord and Savior."

His Christmas message of 1941, also broadcast, reveals a deeper and more urgent call. I think that by this time he had abandoned the idea of bringing about any peace except one that would arise from wide cooperation based on fundamental agreement, and not from any political combination:

The destruction brought about by the present war is on so vast a scale that it is imperative that there be not added to it the further ruin of a frustrated and illusory peace. In order to avoid so great a calamity, it is fitting that in the formulation of that peace there should be assured the cooperation, with sincerity of will and energy, with the purpose of a generous participation, not only of this or that party, not only of this or that people, but of all people, yea, rather of all humanity. It is a universal undertaking for the common good, which requires the collaboration of all Christendom in the religious and moral aspects of the new edifice that is to be constructed.

In this same message he also definitely listed those among whom he expected to find collaborators:

. . . while unbelief, which arrays itself against God, the Ruler of the universe, is the most dangerous enemy of a new order that would be just, on the other hand, every man who believes in God is numbered among His partisans and paladins. Those who have faith in Christ, in His divinity, in His law, in His work of love and of brotherhood among men, will make a particularly valuable contribution to the reconstruction of the social order.

For this reason and with this in mind, he ended his message with an inclusive blessing:

May Our blessing be also upon those who, though not members of the visible body of the Catholic Church, are near to Us in their faith in God and in Jesus Christ, and share with Us Our views with regard to the provisions for the peace and its fundamental aims.

Finally, in his Christmas message of last December, Pius XII

reached the climax of urgent insistency on universal collaboration in a "noble and holy crusade for the purification and rebirth of society." After listing the "first five milestones" on the path to this goal, he says that his words "are meant as an appeal to the conscience of the world, and as a rallying cry to all those who are ready to ponder and weigh the grandeur of their mission and responsibility against the vastness of this universal disaster." In gathering allies, he turns first to his own children, and then goes on:

We turn to all those who are united with Us at least by the bond of faith in God. We turn, finally, to all those who would be free of doubt and error, and who desire light and guidance. And We exhort you with suppliant, paternal insistence not only to realize the dreadful gravity of this hour, but also to meditate upon the vistas of good and supernatural benefits which we have received, and to unite and collaborate towards the renewal of society in spirit and in truth.

Again we hear the familiar muster of the forces of God, and their summons to a united effort against the forces of disruption.

### The Papal Idea

I think it will be clear to all who have read thus far that the Popes, from Leo XIII to Pius XII, have stated with increasing emphasis that it is the duty of Catholics to initiate a new type of cooperative relationship with non-Catholics. Our task now is to attempt to delimit as accurately as possible the field in which this mandatory cooperation is to take place, and then to define the basis on which it is grounded.

First of all, however, it may not be out of place to emphasize the fact that the cooperation with which we are here concerned differs essentially from cooperation in the direction of "Christian reunion." This latter type takes its inspiration from the spectacle of religious disunity among Christians; it supposes that the unity of Christ's Church does not exist; it proposes to effect that specifically ecclesiastical Christian unity, in doctrine, polity, and worship, and to this end it employs the technique of debate and discussion, into which the divided parties enter on a basis of equality and in a spirit of inquiry.

On the contrary, the type of cooperation urged in the new papal directives, cited in this article, has an entirely distinct inspiration—

the spectacle of disorder and chaos in the temporal order of human society, caused by the rejection of the law of God as the basic principle of social order. The supposition is that all those who believe in God, and more particularly all those who believe in Christ, are united in a common will to make their faith socially effective, and in common desire to reconstruct the social order on its proper basis, the law of God. Consequently, the specifying finality (the *finis operis*) of their cooperation is definitely located in the temporal order; and the technique is that of action.

Unlike the "reunionists," therefore, the cooperators in this enterprise do not begin with a question, a doubt: How far do we think together on matters of religious faith and churchly order, and what further agreement in thought and polity can we reach? On the contrary, they begin with a fact, a certainty: We all acknowledge the existence of a moral imperative, binding on us collectively, to restore the religious bases of human society, lest we all likewise perish. Of course, behind this common acceptance of a common obligation lies, as we shall point out, a common belief in God. But the Popes seem clearly to regard this belief as an existent fact, to be antecedently taken as a fact, and not as an issue to be subjected to preliminary debate. They seem to regard themselves and all Catholics and all believers in Christ and all believers in God as joined together in a bond of religious faith that—however much it leaves to be desired from the point of view of ecclesiastical unity—does actually create a real unity of a particular kind, valid in the present circumstances and for the present purpose.\* The cooperation is not to create the bond (as it were, *à la* Stockholm); on the contrary, the Popes seem to indicate that the bond itself, as actually existing, is to create the cooperation. It is at once a principle of division, setting off those who are "for God" from those who are "against God," and as such it is a principle of union, to be taken for granted, not questioned, because it enters simply as

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\* I say "valid," not "adequate"; for the Popes do not conceal the fact that only the integral doctrine of Christ, as preserved in, and authoritatively taught by, His Church, is the adequate means for the renewal of society, even in the temporal order. On the other hand, their concrete position is highly realistic; they are willing to say, "Noster es," to anyone who believes in God.

a dynamic for united social action in the face of a common social peril.

At the risk of anticipating some developments, this much had to be said about the essential difference between cooperation toward "Christian reünion" and cooperation toward the renewal of society. Later we shall return to the question of their relationship. At the moment, we must go on to analyze in more detail the latter type.

### **The Field of Cooperation**

First of all, the field of cooperative action is already fairly clear from the declarations of the Popes themselves; but it is worth while to repeat here just what they mean. This will aid us in the more important later task of making clear the basis on which the cooperation rests.

For Leo XIII cooperation was in the political and socio-economic fields; for Pius XI it was in the national socio-economic field, and for Pius XII it is in both the national and international socio-economic fields. Pius XI told us in the rugged sentence: "Either for God or against God—that is once more the point at issue, and upon it hangs the lot of all the world. For in every department of life—in politics and economics, in morals, in the sciences and arts, in the State and in domestic life, in the East and in the West—everywhere the same issue arises. . . ." The field of cooperation, then, will lie where the struggle is—in the secular or temporal sphere of man's activities. Since the days of Pope St. Gelasius I (d. 496), and indeed since the Gospel (Matt. 22:21), it has been accepted as a Christian truth that mankind pursues its activities in two distinct spheres, each with its own proper autonomy, which roughly correspond, as St. Augustine pointed out, to the body and soul. The final cause of the first is man's temporal happiness, and of the second his eternal happiness; and while the first is subordinated to the second, yet mankind pursues its temporal happiness as an end, provided this does not interfere with the eternal salvation of individual souls. Each individual person, of course, must use temporal things as a means to his eternal salvation, while civil society, as such, has them as ends.

This temporal happiness of man is what we usually term social welfare, the temporal well-being of society as such, and the proper

sharing by all men of the goods of the earth. In other words, it is a common good, secured by the practice of social and distributive justice. It is the restoration of this welfare which is the objective of the social Encyclicals of Leo XIII, Pius XI, and Pius XII, as distinguished from those Encyclicals in which the pursuit of a supernatural good is enjoined. These social Encyclicals deal specifically with the temporal life of man, and they present a comprehensive pattern within which, by the proper use of the technical measures of economics, a decent new society may be built.

Now it is a characteristic of man's temporal happiness that it can be achieved only by the cooperation of all the elements of society, whatever be their religious profession. For there is here a question of the common good, and it is an axiom of social philosophy that the common good cannot be achieved except by joint action. It is this necessity of collaboration in the temporal sphere, if the common good is to be achieved, that the Popes have in mind. It should be sufficiently clear that the kind of financial and industrial reconstruction they preach cannot be brought about by Catholics alone, for we are everywhere a minority among the forces that bear responsibility for such things.

It might be urged, of course, that all the Popes have in mind for us is that we preach the principles of social justice and thus restrict our action to attempting to persuade others to bring about what we are told is desirable. I do not think that anybody who reads the Encyclicals carefully can seriously uphold such a position. In all the passages I have quoted from the Popes it is action that they are imposing on us, not words. The real issue here is settled in principle when we have answered the question: Do the Popes really want us Catholics to work for social justice, as well as talk for it? If they do, then there can be no doubt that they expect us to perform this work in cooperation with others, by the very nature of the work to which they call us.

### **The Basis of Cooperation**

We have not completed the discussion, however, when we have established this point. A more important and more difficult task is to define the basis on which this cooperation is to be conducted. It might be, for instance, that we are expected to work for the

regeneration of society solely in the purely secular groups that operate, at least partially, to this end. Catholics are members of the Democratic party, the A. F. of L., the C. I. O., and other labor groupings, the National Association of Manufacturers, the Boy Scouts, the Girl Scouts, and other youth organizations, various national societies for economics, sociology, and politics; they work on newspapers and national magazines. In these capacities they are often able to make their Catholic principles acceptable to their non-Catholic fellows, and thus secure their cooperation in this sense. Is this all that the Popes have in mind in their commands to us?

I do not think so. And the reason is that they uniformly put the collaboration which they demand on a religious basis, while the motivation of all the groupings I have listed is purely secular. The religious basis of the Popes' appeal is clear in nearly all the texts cited; in the *Caritate Christi*, for instance, Pius XI says:

Let all those also, whoever they are, who acknowledge God and with sincere hearts adore Him, give their assistance to the common cause, in order to ward off from mankind the immense danger which threatens all alike. For every human authority must necessarily be founded on belief in God, as on the solid basis of all civil order; and consequently all those who do not wish to see a revolutionary overthrow of all law and order must strenuously endeavor to prevent the enemies of religion from carrying out their brazenly publicized designs.

Later in the same Encyclical this same idea is further elaborated. Pius XI tells us that "there is no peace for the wicked" (quoting Isaias 58:22), because "they live in continuous contradiction and conflict with the order established by nature and consequently by the Author of nature"; this religious and moral schizophrenia can have no cure, and there will be no social peace in man's divided personality, until this order is restored. Then he continues:

But this longed for atmosphere of lasting peace will not be created by peace treaties, nor by solemn pacts, nor by international conventions and conferences, nor by the noble and sincere efforts of statesmen, unless beforehand the sacred rights of the natural and divine law are recognized. No amount of organizational and diplomatic ability on the part of the managers of the public economy will avail to disentangle the affairs of society, unless beforehand the moral law, based on God

and conscience, triumphs in the whole sphere of economic life. This is the main sinew on which depends the strength both of the political and of the economic life of nations; this is the most assured of all values, and so long as it stays steady, the others cannot waver, for they will be guaranteed by the most unshakable authority, the unchanging and eternal law of God.

From all this, two things follow: (1) negatively, it is our enemies who by their attacks have established the necessary body of cooperators; and (2) positively, the link that binds this body together is a common belief in God and a common love of His law. The aim of this body is the restoration of "the order established by nature and consequently by the Author of nature"; and the means to this restoration is "the moral law, based on God and conscience," that is, "the natural and divine law." The members of this body are all those who, in the words of Leo XIII to the French, have the *anima naturaliter christiana*. Consequently, the bond uniting the members is religious: Catholics are members of the body as Catholics, not merely as citizens, and others are members, again not merely as citizens, but as believers in God and lovers of His law.\*

We can arrive at the same set of conclusions if we re-examine the objectives set before us in the social Encyclicals. These objectives fall under the general head of a new and better social order. In the field of economics they envisage such technical matters as banking, credit and financing policies, industrial management, labor relations, price structure, wage scales, social insurance, international exchange, tariffs, control of raw materials, shipping,

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\* It may be supposed that the Popes, in issuing their call to union among believers, are not admitting the parity of all religious beliefs, nor conceding that the practical union of the collaborators obliterates, or makes unimportant, their religious differences. On the contrary, they display an acute sense of these differences, and of the difference they make. This is clear from the texts cited. Moreover, the Popes suppose, and explicitly state, that Catholics are to bring to the cooperative enterprise the integral resources of their faith, and continue to make full public profession of it. They suppose, too, that the Catholic contribution will be major—in thought, practical initiatives, programs, and sheer hard work. On the other hand, with the impressive realism already remarked, they respect the contribution to be made by those whose religious faith does not go beyond belief in God and the moral order; and they welcome unity with them.

railroading—in a word, the whole economic order. In the sociological field, the scheme of reorganization is even wider, including such fundamental problems as the restoration of the family as the unit of society, and the related problems of the school. In the political field, all national and international problems are embraced. Summarily, in the words of Pius XI, the total objective is “every value in the political as well as the economic life of nations.”

Now, the political and economic life of nations is not in the hands of Catholics. And yet somehow Catholics are to bring about its total renovation. How? By talking about it? Partly, but not wholly. They are to make an appeal for collaboration—and for collaboration based on a motive that is essentially religious, in a matter that is essentially secular. It may be noted that this is precisely what the British bishops did, under the leadership of the late Cardinal Hinsley. The reason for such an appeal to religious forces is derived from the papal Encyclicals: the Popes seem definitely to teach that as a matter of fact, and in the present dispensation, the renovation of secular society cannot be effected save by forces that are animated by belief in God and—what is more—love of Him. It is true that this renovation is to be based on the natural law; nevertheless, the rational convictions of the ethical philosopher will not, as a matter of fact, furnish a sufficiently powerful motivation to carry it through. The natural law must be grasped for what it is—the divine law—with the vividness and strength possible only to a mind and heart in which dwells a deeply religious faith in God, its Author, and the Judge of its observance. Indeed, the Popes go further, and definitely imply that the principal power behind the conception and carrying through of the needed program of social reform must be a personal love of Christ, the Savior of the world. At any rate, this is what I mean when I say that the motive behind the appeal for collaboration is essentially religious.

### **The Farther Goal**

But the renovation of secular society is not the whole Catholic program, nor even the principal part of it. The paramount interest is the religious adherence of all men, through faith and love, to



the supernatural unity of the Church of Christ, which is the Church in communion with the successor of Peter. It is primarily for this that the Church exists at all. Historically, however, as Mr. Christopher Dawson has pointed out in *The Judgment of the Nations*, "heresy and schism have derived their main impulse from sociological causes." Not that these causes actually furnished the doctrines which disrupted unity; but they were the natural and human motives which caused those doctrines to be embraced.

The full teaching of the Church, even as shown forth in all the Encyclicals, really proposes two distinct and successive steps that have to be taken before society can be really organized on the basis of a full and integral Christianity. The first step is the healing of the social conflicts that divide men, as a preliminary to the second step, religious union. As Mr. Dawson has well said: "The ideologies which today form the opposite poles of social tension are not religious, but political, national, and economic ones, which have cut across and largely obliterated the older socio-religious divisions which separated Catholic and Protestant Europe" (and, it may well be added, also the United States, which, in its racial origins and cultural traditions, is a cross-section of Europe). This patent fact seems to me to be an evidence of the deep wisdom of the Popes, who saw that a natural union must precede any union on the supernatural plane, and who consequently presented the unusual picture of religious teachers recalling the world to the social, economic, and political truths which are universal because they lie at the basis of human nature and are derived from divine law. It is the old Scholastic axiom: *primum in intentione, ultimum in executione*.

It seems to me that what the Popes have been telling us all these years is that it is our duty to prepare for the coming of the religious union of mankind by first bringing about a union of wills on the natural plane. I cannot otherwise explain the extreme preoccupation of the Popes with what must seem at first sight to be purely temporal and secular affairs. That also seems to me to explain why the appeal for cooperation is not put on purely natural grounds, but on religious ones, on the broad basis of a common belief in God, leading to a common acceptance of the divine

law, as shown forth in the natural law. This, they seem to tell us, is the first and necessary step to the ultimate Christianization of society. Natural society must reflect its Creator before it accepts its Redeemer.

In any case, the Popes have commanded us to unite with non-Catholics on this secular field. The British Catholics have taken the command seriously and have obeyed it. They have successfully invited their non-Catholic fellow-citizens to join with them on a basis of the papal plans. In this country we have not obeyed, and we remain progressively isolated from the course of human events, as the Church was for so many years in Europe. And there is every evidence that the enemies of God and Christ in this country have full intentions of keeping us isolated, by branding us as "clerical fascists" and similar foes to the nation.

It may be worth while to speculate on the reasons for our failure. Perhaps we instinctively feel that by following the British example we may do more harm than good. I mean that we may fear misunderstanding. We have ingrown in us a feeling that we are the object of suspicion on the part of non-Catholics, who think that whenever we move on the secular field we are merely looking to the political aggrandizement of the Church.

There is no doubt about this feeling, and there is no doubt, either, about the suspicion. But it seems to me that our social isolation is rather the cause of the suspicion than the result of it. As long as our socio-economic reform movement remains an exclusively Catholic movement, so long will non-Catholics naturally harbor the suspicion that we wish to make society to our image and likeness for our own mysterious and dangerous purposes. The best way to break down the suspicion, as the British experiment shows, is to work along with non-Catholics who believe as we do on the fundamental truths about society, and thus let them see at first that our aims are no different from theirs. At the very least, this close connection with them will give them the guarantee that we will not be able to plot any sinister social and political revolution of our own. At the best, it will give us the opportunity, so long desired by the Popes, of preaching a full and satisfying Christian regeneration and thus of preparing the way, on the natural plane, for the coming of the Holy Spirit to society as a whole.

One last word remains to be said about the motive for our own cooperation. It is, of course, Christian charity. I mean that we have to rid ourselves of that curious crypto-Calvinism which thinks that God gives His grace only to Catholics. We have no right to push our dogmatic exclusiveness into the field of human relations. "God's family" is truly the object of God's love, and all those who believe in God are, as Pius XII calls them, peculiarly our brothers. It is this fraternal affection which all the Popes quoted rely upon to create a union based on that "practical rule" of Leo XIII: "It is Christian prudence not to reject, but rather to win over the collaboration of all men of good will in the pursuit of individual and especially of social welfare."

## INTERCREDAL COOPERATION: PRINCIPLES

JOHN COURTNEY MURRAY, S.J.

**I**N WHAT follows, I should like, first, to state in brief outline a Catholic theory of intercredal cooperation, and, secondly, to indicate some of the principles that should preside over its organization. The discussion of the theory is not here documented; but it is actually based on the recent utterances of the Holy See which have invited the cooperation of "all men of good will" in the construction of a new world-order. This type of cooperation is quite unique. And, once grasped for what it is, it presents, I think, no difficulties from the standpoint of theological principle. If it did, we must suppose that the Popes would have indicated these difficulties. Significantly, they have not. There are, indeed, difficulties in the practical order, as I shall say. But it is of cardinal importance to realize that there exists a sound theological theory, implied in the papal utterances, which renders the cooperation in question entirely legitimate. Its expedience, on the other hand, is a matter for separate discussion.

### The Theological Problem

The fact of cooperation, in the strict sense of the term, establishes a unity between the cooperators—a unity in action, and in the thought and will that inspire the action. In the matter of intercredal cooperation, therefore, the properly theological issue would be this: Can Catholics enter into a unity of thought, will, and action with non-Catholics, without thereby compromising the Catholic unity of the Church of Christ? Obviously, the answer will vary according to the nature of the unity established, and this, in turn, will depend on the purposes of the cooperation. For instance, Catholics may join with non-Catholics in a Chamber of Commerce or in a political party; the common aim is purely economic or political, and the unity established is purely civic, unrelated to the unity of the Church. On the other hand, as *Mortalium Animos* made clear, Catholics may not ally themselves with non-Catholics in the ecumenical movement in its Protestant

form; for, in the concrete, they would be asserting a oneness with the Protestant participants, first, in the belief that the unity of Christ's Church does not actually exist, and secondly, in the will to work in common toward its creation. And to enter into this type of oneness in thought, will, and action with Protestants would clearly be contrary to the Church's doctrine on her own unity. Our essential question, therefore, is this: What is the precise purpose of the intercredal cooperation urged by the Holy See? The answer will enable us to define the particular type of unity in thought and will implied in it, and thus to vindicate its complete legitimacy.

To understand the purposes of this intercredal cooperation, one must first share the papal concern that prompted the invitation to it. This concern centers on today's cultural crisis, and on the new order that must necessarily issue from it. The crisis, as Pius XI often said, is unique in history. To find a parallel for it, one would have to go back to the crisis that developed when the infant Kingdom of Christ emerged into the world and came to grips with the absolutism, both temporal and spiritual, of imperial Rome. The uniqueness of the crisis, and the point of the partial parallelism, lies in the fact that it is a spiritual crisis, but located at the heart of the temporal order. And these two characteristics combine to create for the Church a unique task of colossal proportions. The task, briefly, is to effect a spiritual renewal of the social life of humanity, and to direct a structural reform of the social order, national and international. There must be, on the one hand, a respiritualization of the whole ethos of society; the temporal order as a unitary whole must receive a new moral direction. And on the other hand, there must be an erection or a restoration of social institutions that will correspond to the new ethos; the human person must be freed from the present intolerable pressure of myriad institutional tyrannies, economic, social, and political. The task is unique because of its world-wide scope, its complexities, the issues that hang on it, the power of the forces arrayed against its accomplishment, its desperate urgency. But its special uniqueness derives from the initial step that must be taken toward its achievement—not a winning of recognition for the spiritual authority of the Church, but simply a universal reinforce-

ment of the primal law of human nature, the moral law of justice between men, sanctioned by the sovereignty of God.

Confronted with this unique and colossal task, the Church has appealed for allies among all men of good will, who believe in God and reverence His law. The premise of her appeal is both the nature of the task and her own inadequacy to do it (not a doctrinal or spiritual, but a numerical and strategic inadequacy—the Church is the Body of Christ, but she is a minority group, and an “out-group”). The appeal itself is for unity and cooperation among all the religious forces that exist outside her visible body, but are not uninfluenced by the one Spirit who dwells in her. This unity and cooperation are to be as unique as the task which makes them necessary. This is the important point to have clear.

The task is spiritual—a spiritual crisis has to be met. Moreover, every “spiritual” man is engaged in the crisis; for it concerns the total work of the Spirit of God on earth, which is not merely the building up of the Body of Christ, but also the preparation of mankind throughout its length and breadth and in all the departments—even the terrestrial and secular departments—of its life, for that “gathering into one” (John 11:52) which is its obligatory destiny. To meet the crisis, therefore, all “spiritual” men must unite as one “spiritual” man. The Holy See has clearly said that today’s task can only be performed by a great unity that is at once interconfessional and spiritual. It must embrace all religious men, and its bond of unity must be no mere political or economic interest, but a religious faith in God and a love of His law as the spiritual source of all order in human life.

Consider now the other aspect of the task: it is to be performed in the temporal order. For the spiritual crisis is in the temporal order. Consequently, the Holy See desires a spiritual and interconfessional unity to be organized (I shall suppose for the moment that it is to be organized) for a work, the immediate scope of which is within the confines of the earthly city, but which remains fundamentally a spiritual work. For the earthly city must have its spirit renewed, as well as its institutional pattern changed. From this special finality the interconfessional cooperative action receives its distinctive character, which in turn reflects

back, and characterizes the spiritual unity which is its source and inspiration.

Obviously, then, we have here a quite unique unity, not easy to categorize. It does not belong wholly to the spiritual order, nor wholly to the temporal order; by definition it is a border-line thing. Perhaps, for the sake of a name, one might call it "religio-civic." It partakes of the nature of a civic unity because it is formed for the pursuit of the common good in the socio-economic order. But it transcends a mere civic unity because its bond is religious—faith in God and love of His law. Moreover, though its purposes remain within the temporal order, it concerns itself with the spiritual dynamic of the entire order, as well as with the techniques for its management in particular spheres. Consequently, it partakes also of the nature of a religious unity. For this reason, the qualification "religio-civic" might stand.

At all events, this spiritual and interconfessionally organized unity appears clearly as not ecclesiastical. It does not pretend to be the City of God in its terrestrial form, the economy of eternal salvation, the way to the Father in heaven. It is not divinely willed, except insofar as the will of God is manifested in the exigencies of our particular historical situation, which demands that men create it. In itself, it remains within the natural order of human institutions; of itself, consequently, it does not pretend to be a means or a milieu of "grace." It puts itself forward simply as the means necessary in a concrete context for communicating to mankind as a unity the benefits of a rightly directed and rightly ordered earthly city—a means which is necessary because it can call on the religious energies without which the city cannot be inspired or ordered. It does not put itself forward as an "inter-confessional Church." Consequently, the Holy See relaxes none of the exigencies of the Catholic Unity of the Church, when at the same time it urges with remarkable boldness the establishment of an organizational unity that will be both spiritual and inter-confessional. The point is that the two "unities" exist on two different planes. The unity of the Church is essentially supernatural, having its exemplar in the unity of Father and Son within the one life of God, that admits of no divisions (John 17:11, 21-23). Moreover, even in its visible, historical realization, the

unity of the Church is not of this world; for its efficient principle is the positive will of Christ, who determined the structural lines within which the action of His Spirit would organize the spiritual life of humanity in God. On the plane of supernatural, ecclesiastical unity, therefore, any species of interconfessionalism is disruptive of established reality, and contrary to the revealed will of God. But no expressed will of God forbids the human establishment of a spiritual and interconfessional unity on a distinct, non-ecclesiastical plane, and for a distinct non-ecclesiastical purpose.

There is, therefore, a cardinal distinction that must be firmly maintained in this whole question. An "interdenominational Christianity" that sets itself up as a religious system, supposedly deriving from Christ and supposedly sufficient for eternal salvation, is one thing; quite a different thing is an interconfessional agreement on certain necessary religious and moral bases of a just social order within the earthly city. With regard to the former, the Catholic judgment is clear and unwavering: "Nothing," said Pius X, "is more contrary to the teachings of Jesus Christ." Consequently, the Catholic conscience may show neither theoretical approval nor practical sympathy with such interconfessionalism in religious belief and worship. However, common agreement between men of different faiths on the religious and moral principles that are directive of the social order is, in controlled circumstances, entirely legitimate. It is true that the pastors of the Church have called attention to the dangers attendant upon such agreements; they can be pitfalls for the uninstructed, and consequently their formation and execution come under the vigilance of the Church. Nevertheless, no theological considerations forbid them; for, properly understood, they leave the integrity of Catholic faith untouched. The Catholic does not place *himself*—his interior religious life or his apostolic activity—on that "common ground"; on it he puts simply his *union with others* for certain common tasks in the temporal order. The content of the agreement is simply the basis of a cooperative relationship in the interests of the common good. It brings together, not different faiths, but persons of different faith, with a view to united social action. Moreover, it does not pretend to contain the full motivation of Catholic social activity, which will always derive from the



fullness of Catholic faith and charity. For instance, a Catholic and a Jew must agree that "victory over hatred which divides the nations today and the disappearance of systems and actions which breed this hatred" are indispensable conditions of a new world-order; but a Catholic will work toward this end because he sees in every man "the brother for whom Christ died"; while a Jew, sharing the idea, will not share this motivation for its realization in fact.

Interconfessional agreements of this type are not only legitimate, but also imperatively necessary today. This is clearly the view of the Holy See, which has done its best to furnish their content. Whatever their attendant dangers, they must be formulated and carried through in order to confront a still greater danger, and to afford a practical solution to a concrete problem. The fact is that we are living, and shall continue for a long time to live, in a religiously divided society. Because of its religious divisions and all they entail, and because, too, it contains so many members who have no religion, our society is spiritually weak, dangerously at the mercy of anti-religious and irreligious forces. It is, furthermore, a fact that our society finds itself in a state of spiritual crisis: from without, it is under attack by the totalitarian state, which has deliberately apostatized from the principles upon which the temporal order of the West has been built; and from within it is being disrupted by a pervading materialism, which has gone perilously far in the secularization of our traditional culture. Obviously, the action of these destructive forces cuts across the frontiers of existing religious differences, and threatens to undermine the common good of humanity itself. These are the terms of our problem; we are not at liberty to change them at our convenience. And in the face of this problem, the only alternative to a general chaos is the discovery of some spiritual unity capable of resisting the common threat. The imperative thing is a social unity based on sound principle with a universal appeal to the conscience of mankind, and not on error or mere sentiment.

Evidently, the problem is not only social, but also religious. And there are only two approaches to its solution. Many "liberals" take hold of the religious end of the problem, and ask for agreement on certain "fundamentals of Christianity," and for the sinking

of religious differences, in order to effect a union of the churches. This solution attempts to reduce religious pluralism to unity on the religious plane. But it would solve absolutely nothing; for a solution that is false in the religious order cannot be true in the social order. As interdenominational Christianity is not the way to the Kingdom of God, so it is not the way to strength and order even in human society. In itself, it is a spiritual disorder that necessarily must have its reflection in the sphere of the temporal. On the other hand, the Holy See has taken hold of the social end of the problem, and has asked for agreement on the natural religious and ethical principles which are the basic structural elements of right order in human society, and for sincere cooperation towards their realization in social institutions. This solution, therefore, reduces religious pluralism to unity on the social plane. And consequently, it opens a way to a practical solution at least of the social problem, which is all it pretends to do.

In saying that this is the solution proposed by the Holy See, I am thinking, of course, chiefly of the four sets of five points set forth by Pius XII in his successive Christmas Allocutions. I am thinking, too, of the large section of the *Summi Pontificatus* which deals with the natural law in its social applications, and of many pronouncements which repeat and develop this central theme of papal teaching: "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 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" (*Summi Pontificatus*). All the papal teaching on this theme was, I think, explicitly proposed for common agreement. It is significant, for instance, that none of the "points" put forth in the Christmas Allocutions derives necessarily from divine revelation; all of them state truths of the natural order, which must commend themselves to the man of right reason.

Consequently, on the basis of this religio-social program the Catholic can appeal, as Pius XII has in fact appealed, to the conscience of mankind for agreement and cooperation. Such agreement and cooperation would respect at once the exigencies of truth

and the rights of conscience, both Catholic and non-Catholic. It should be emphasized that the Pope's position is wholly affirmative: he asks for a common affirmation of the natural order of human life, basing joint action on the common good of humanity. And he involves himself in no destructive negations, either expressed or implied, of the supernatural unity of the Church as the divinely constituted, uniquely salvific Body of Christ. Realistically, he has faced the immediately urgent problem in the temporal order, and he remains within its terms, which concern, not the unity of the Church, but the unity of human society.

Obviously, no Catholic—and least of all the Holy See—would maintain that this solution is ideal, or adequate, or free from dangers. Still less would anyone be deceived into thinking that intercredal cooperation would somehow absolve us from the obligation of pursuing more intensively our distinctively Catholic program of prayer, study, and organized action. The point, however, is to note the breadth and scope of the papal program. "The call of the moment," said Pius XII in his 1942 Christmas Allocution, "is for action." And the action of the moment, as he sees it, must be *all* the action that is necessary at the moment. Wherefore, immediately after issuing this call to action, he turns "from the crib of the Prince of Peace" to his "beloved children, who adore Him, Christ your Savior." But not only to them—he turns also "to all those who are united with us, at least by the bond of faith in God." And he exhorts all, in an hour of dreadful gravity, "to unite and collaborate towards the renewal of society in spirit and truth." In the logic of the Pope's thought is the idea that anything short of this universal collaboration will result in a betrayal of humanity's common interest and profound need—peace and order on earth.

So much, then, for the strictly theological aspect of intercredal cooperation. All it needs, I think, is clarification. And the clarifying principle is simply the familiar Catholic distinction between two orders of truth and of human life. On the one hand, there are the doctrinal truths, contained in the Christian revelation and taught by the Church of Christ, which are the pillars of her unity and the inspiration of her total life. These truths are a body which may not be dismembered by any selective, intercredal

affirmations. But there is, too, a body of religious and ethical truths, imbedded in the human conscience as such, and promulgated by its imperative, which are the bases of a just social order on earth. There is a natural law, and its precepts, in themselves and in their essential social applications, may be made the object of a common affirmation by men of different religious creeds, without prejudice to the integrity of faith.

Moreover, the value of this common affirmation must not be underestimated. It is, indeed, sometimes objected that on the basis of the natural law alone only partial solutions can be given to the great evils of modern life, and that a full solution must be preceded by a general acceptance of the total law of Christ—His divinity, the supernatural reality of the Church in which His Spirit dwells, all her doctrine, sacraments, and spiritual authority. The Church is—so the objection runs—the principle of mankind's unity; until all men are gathered into her, they will not be gathered into one, and have peace and order; let us, therefore, concentrate exclusively on "our own program"; others can supply us with nothing that we have not already got; let us leave them to whatever devices they can contrive, and go our own way.

The objection does not lack power. In the practical order it derives strength from the lamentable fact that our own social program, particularly with reference to international order, is still so undeveloped as to need intensive concentration. In the theoretical order it has behind it the awesome doctrine that integral humanity, whether in personal or social life, is the gift of the Holy Spirit of Christ, who indwells by faith in the souls of the just. It rests, too, on the doctrine that the Church alone has the spiritual authority authentically to interpret the moral law. Finally, in the emotional order, it has behind it the power of a great fear of indifferentism. Nevertheless, this objection has against it one powerful fact that for the Catholic should be decisive: it does not represent the position of the Holy See. As a matter of fact, the Holy See esteems intercredal agreement on the religious and ethical bases of human society so highly, and regards it as so necessary, that it has explicitly called for it, and has made it, and the cooperation it prompts, an integral part, though not the primary

part, of its peace program. For my part, I think that this "supernaturalist" position (*sit venia verbo*, but one must use some word) fails to reflect the fearless realism with which the Holy See has confronted today's crisis and seen the extent of its demands. Moreover, this position fails to give due weight to a truth that is central in the papal thought, namely, that if mankind's political, economic, and social thinking and activity and institutions could be brought under the governance of the natural law, the result would be, not indeed a paradise on earth, nor yet a blanket assurance that all men would be eternally saved, but at least a recognizably human social order, within which a man could lead a human life, and be free from today's inhuman tyrannies that imperil both his body and his soul.

However, the Catholic theory of intercredal cooperation does not rest merely on a distinction; primarily, it rests on a love—that "universal love which is the compendium and most general expression of the Christian ideal, and which, therefore, may serve as a common ground also for those who have not the blessing of sharing the same faith with us" (Christmas Allocution, 1939). This point emerges with particularly luminous clarity from the utterances of Pius XII. His invitation to cooperation in the *Sertum Laetitia*e was issued "at the compulsion of charity." The object of his charity is the immense "crowd" upon which our Lord Himself had compassion—the whole human race, so distressed by the warring strife that divides it against itself. And the source of his charity is a profound insight, revealed in many utterances, into the divinely-willed unity of the human family, one in nature and one in its redemption by Christ. The Holy See has made clear that charity makes unique and urgent demands today, not least among them being the fostering in every way of man's native sense of common kinship, the development of a profound concern over the common peril that hangs over all men, and the employment of every possible means whereby the peril may be warded off, and a new order in human life come to realization. In this respect, intercredal cooperation appears as an expression of Christian charity; for it is a means of assisting mankind to realize its natural unity (and thereby achieve peace) on the plane of social and international life. It is charity guided by truth—the

truth that has so far illumined all of Pius XII's thought and activity, namely, that all men are one.

Let me conclude this section by a brief comment on the second issue in the matter of intercredal cooperation—I mean its expediency, the possibility of launching it without occasioning misunderstanding or scandal. I am tempted to treat this issue rather ruthlessly: a certain type of cooperation has been proposed by the Holy See as necessary; it is, therefore, up to intelligent and responsible Catholic (and non-Catholic) leadership to see that it is made expedient. This should not be impossible; it is simply a matter of an adequate educational effort, whereby exact ideas may be clearly formulated and widely publicized. As a matter of fact (if I may venture a personal opinion on perhaps inadequate grounds), my own fear would be that intercredal cooperation and all it entails would not be a matter of scandal; rather, to too many people, both Catholics and non-Catholics, it would be a matter of no particular consequence. It might well leave the public, not shocked but apathetic.

### **The Organizational Problem**

In the practical order, the organization of an intercredal effort towards world reconstruction presents a real problem. However, since I do not believe that it can be solved on paper, but only by controlled experiment in the field of actuality, these comments on it must be confined to matters of principle. First of all, the fact that the intercredal effort should be somehow organized results from the whole description given by the Holy See of the work to be done. This work is the creation of a new complex of ethical currents in society, and their incorporation in a new set of social institutions, in order that both together may support, instead of crushing, the moral conscience as well as the temporal happiness of mankind. To do all this, organization is absolutely necessary. The moral life of an isolated individual has a certain inspirational power, but it will not create an ethos in society. One family's heroic devotion to the moral ideals of family life will not shatter the whole existing set of social institutions that now render the achievement of those ideals inhumanly difficult; still less will it create a new set of social institutions that will exert a permanent

pressure on the social conscience in the direction of high domestic morality. Again, it is generally recognized today that even a general "will to peace" on the part of individual nations will not insure a stable international order unless it is institutionalized in an international organization, that will function as a sort of collective conscience and be able to enforce its imperatives. The principle is clear: action for social organization must be social and organized in its principle. There is hardly need to belabor the point.

I might, however, add one consideration. In the *Sertum Laetitiae* Pius XII speaks of effecting a "salutary union of thought and policy" between Catholics and other believers in God with reference to the problems of the social order. The whole point of organization is to make this union really salutary. And it will be salutary, first, if it reckons with and respects the most delicate demands of conscience, and secondly, if it becomes an effective instrument for the common good, that is, if it is able strongly to influence public and governmental opinion, and to support serious practical measures for a new order based on justice. The union has this particular purpose, and its organization must be suitable to the achievement of this purpose.

A more difficult question concerns, not so much the fact as the mode of organization. However, from the standpoint of the ascertainable wishes of the Holy See, there are two principles available for its solution. Cooperation might be organized on the principle of fusion, that is, mixed membership, Catholic and non-Catholic, in a single association. In the case of the Christian trade unions in Germany at the beginning of the century, this principle was, under certain safeguards, "tolerated and permitted." But its use seems hardly possible or prudent in the American scene at the moment. The other organizing principle is that of federation, that is, distinct Catholic and non-Catholic organizations united by a joint committee of mixed membership. This arrangement was "preferable" to Pius X in the German trade union question. It had brilliant success in Holland about the same time and in the same field. In England today cooperation is, in general, organized on the principle of federation—the Sword of the Spirit is joined to Religion and Life by a Joint Standing Committee; and

there seems to be mutual satisfaction with the formula evolved: "Parallel action in the religious sphere, joint action in the social and international field."

In this mode of organization, the cooperation, in the strict sense, would be largely committed to the members of the joint committee, who would be persons of particular qualifications. To them, for instance, would be entrusted the drawing up of the joint statements of which mention has been made. They would have at their command the means of publicity, etc., whereby public opinion would be enlightened and guided. And they, too, would plan whatever measure of joint action might be judged possible and prudent. This would vary according to circumstances, and it is impossible to describe it in detail. At all events, it is difficult to see why this principle of federative union could not be adapted to the peculiar situations obtaining in the various regions of the United States.

In this mode of organization, each religious body would have its own distinctive program, which it would seek to carry through, its members being supported in their activity by the proper motivation of their own religious faith. Catholics would have the integral papal program; Protestants, the "Guiding Principles," the so-called "Six Pillars," etc.; Jews, the various statements of the Synagogue Council, the Rabbinical Assembly, etc. In other words, the cooperation of the distinct organizations would be subordinate and supplementary to the operation of each. From the Catholic standpoint, this hierarchy is obviously desirable. Yet the net effectiveness of the various organizations would be considerably broadened by the fact of their federation, and by the support it could give to joint statements. As a matter of fact, in the statements already issued by the three faiths there is an impressive agreement on many fundamental prerequisites on a new national and international order. At the moment, this agreement is known only to the professional student; but were it publicly formulated, the hope would be that it might clarify the popular intelligence, and kindle the popular will to demand a peace on ethical grounds that are by common agreement compulsory.

A further question now arises: Who should be brought into this salutary union of thought and policy on the problems of the



temporal order? In general, of course, "all men of good will" must be united—all those with fixed religious convictions, and, as Pius XII indicated, even those who have merely good *will*, "those who would be free from doubt and error and who desire light and guidance." More in particular, however, the Holy See envisages two assemblages: there must be, first, a muster of moral sentiment among the masses of men, and secondly, a muster of the technical competence found in a relative few. A muster of the masses is imperative in order to furnish the large-scale spiritual driving force necessary for the renewal of society in spirit; and a muster of specialists is necessary for the work of institutional reconstruction.

It is impressive to see the conviction of the Holy See that the Spirit of God somehow still dwells in the masses of men as a dynamic power which, if roused and organized, will prevail against the evil spirit who seemingly directs the godless minority now in control of the destinies of the masses. Pius XI speaks of those who believe in God as comprising "the vast majority of mankind"; his hope was that, if they could somehow be brought to participate as a unit in the present "battle of the powers of darkness against the very idea of divinity," their part would be decisive. Behind this hope is the ancient Catholic doctrine on the universality and spontaneity of the idea of God in the heart of man, His image—an idea that is all but innate, and is quite inextinguishable. Likewise, behind this hope is the doctrine that the Spirit of God, who dwells in the Church as the organizing principle of her unity, also animates much holiness beyond her visible borders, and acts in every man of good will. Every inarticulate groan after spiritual freedom is His voice, every glimpse of human unity is His grace, and every blow struck at the chains that bind men, or at the particularisms of race and culture that divide them, has His strength behind it.

This sense of God present in the inarticulate multitude seems to me to underlie the papal utterances on intercredal cooperation. Pius XII seems particularly to feel it. He would rouse "the people" to a sense of the power that is in them by reason of their belief in God; but he would also rouse them to a sense of guilt for their careless acquiescence in the steps that have led to the present

universal disaster. There is, for instance, the strong text in his Christmas Eve Allocution, 1942, which deserves quotation; it follows on his "appeal to the conscience of mankind . . . to ponder and weigh the grandeur of their mission and responsibility by the vastness of this universal disaster": "A great part of mankind, and, let us not shrink from saying it, not a few who call themselves Christians, have to some extent their share in the collective responsibility for the growth of error and for the harm and the lack of moral fibre in the society of today. . . . Who can see the end of this progressive demoralization? Do the people wish to watch impotently this disastrous progress? Should they not rather, over the ruins of a social order which has given such tragic proof of its ineptitude as a factor for the good of the people, gather together the hearts of all those who are magnanimous and upright in a solemn vow not to rest until in all people and in all nations of the earth a vast legion shall be formed, bent on bringing back society to its center of gravity, which is the law of God."

This is what I mean in speaking of the Pope's wish for a muster of all men of right moral sentiment, who will throw their unified power against today's hurrying currents, and redirect the flow of human life toward safe harbors. If this vast body, filled with a spirit of victory as well as of penitence, can somehow be brought together, the Pope feels that the world may yet be saved from further "inundation by violence and terror."

But good will alone will not save society. Not even saints are enough. Without them, of course, and without the multiplied prayers of all humanity, for which Pius XII has so often appealed, there will be no salvation. Nevertheless, Pius XII condemned those "currents of thought which hold that, since redemption belongs to the sphere of supernatural grace and is therefore exclusively a work of God, there is no need for us to cooperate on earth." There is, in fact, a work of reconstruction to be done, and the formula for it is not "sola Dei gratia." Pius XI made this clear:

"To achieve this lofty purpose [i.e., a better social order] and to further the common good in true and lasting fashion, We believe that it is necessary, before and above all else, that God should

come to our aid, and then that all men of good will should join forces and work to that end. Moreover, We are convinced that the goal will be more certainly achieved the greater the number of those who are prepared to devote their technical and professional and social competence to its attainment, and—what is more important—the greater the contribution to the cause made by Catholic principles and their application. We look for this contribution, not to Catholic Action (which deliberately stops short of any strictly syndical or political activity), but to those of Our sons whom Catholic Action has imbued with these principles and trained for an apostolate under the guidance and instruction of the Church.”

This significant text suggests in briefest compass the structural lines of the Church’s own organization of herself for her contemporary social task. Implied is a mobilization of her total resources. The strategically decisive element in the work of social reconstruction is a corps of trained specialists, Catholic laymen, possessing requisite technical competence in all the fields in which today’s problems rise, and willing to use their competence in the Christian cause out of a sense of Christian responsibility. Behind them is an organization, Catholic Action, that educates them to their responsibility, unites them in indispensable bonds of solidarity, and is the source of their spiritual inspiration, their integral Christian life, whose demands they are to realize concretely and in institutional form by the use of their professional abilities in the social field. And behind Catholic Action is the total sacramental reality of the Church, the Body of Christ, which powerfully deploys its sacerdotal action in prayer and sacrifice, to the end that the whole body may be filled to all the fullness of God, and flow over in beneficent action for the common good of all men. To this mobilization of the Church’s own resources join the wider effort implied in intercredal cooperation, embracing “all men of good will,” and you will have a more extensive spiritual force. You will have, too, a larger corps of “those who are prepared to devote their technical and professional and social competence” to the cause of reconstruction, out of a sense that God wills it. These men will draw their spiritual inspiration from their own religious traditions, which preserve the idea of the divine sovereignty and the obligation of universal charity. They will be made conscious of a cer-

tain spiritual unity with their Catholic brethren, based on a certain shared spiritual dynamic and a certain community of religio-social purpose. And in their professional work they will establish and maintain solidarity with Catholic specialists, and work with them in friendly and cooperative relationships. Were all this to reach realization, there would indeed be in the world a formidable power for the common good of humanity.

In this scheme of things, the Catholic contribution to the common good would be multiple—spiritual, theological, programmatic. The spiritual contribution would be the holiness of her own members, a leaven operating in hidden supernatural ways. It would also be the “sense of the collective responsibility of all for all,” which Pius XII has spoken of as part of the very soul of the Church. And it would be the heroic charity that has always been inspired in those who have been brought by able spiritual direction into contact with her soul. The theological contribution would be her total doctrine of man, his personal and social nature, and his transcendent destiny, together with the insight that this doctrine gives into the causes of today’s distress and disunity. It would also include, at least for her own children, her spiritual authority and the clarification of conscience that it brings. The programmatic contribution would be the social doctrine elaborated by a series of noble Pontiffs, whose moral stature and deep concern for humanity’s problems have been almost universally recognized. In the order of personnel, the Church’s contribution would be a corps of laymen who have been carefully formed for the social apostolate, and who by that very fact have been also formed for cooperation with all men of good will. Supporting them would be a group of priests, not only theologically trained, but also, in Pius X’s phrase, “*gnari temporum*,” familiar with the needs and the facts of the time. Ideally, their function would be essentially priestly, terminating at the direction of conscience in lay leaders; but in America, for obvious reasons, their role would have to be considerably broadened. However, the Church’s primary and chief contribution in the order of personnel will always be her Bishops and their spiritual leadership, skilful, courageous, sympathetic, paternally vigilant. The example of Cardinal Hinsley, and of the English hierarchy in general, has most recently shown how de-

cisive for success this leadership is. In the nature of things, it must always be so.

Hitherto I have outlined certain principles to be taken into account in discussing the organization of intercredal cooperation, in itself and in its relation to the distinctively Catholic social apostolate. It would carry me beyond my scope to discuss the practical possibilities in America. I may simply say that I believe that they exist, but that if they did not, it would be necessary to create them. In conclusion, let me go back to the beginning. I ventured the opinion that the strictly theological aspect of intercredal cooperation, as understood by the Holy See, presents no difficulty; a formula establishing its legitimacy is available by simple clarification of the papal idea. The problem of organization is real enough in the practical order; but at least principles for its solution are available, and for the rest, as Mrs. Micawber wisely said, "Experientia does it." The real, fundamental difficulty, to my mind, lies in the relative absence from the average American Catholic mind of what must be the dynamic of the whole idea—a profoundly felt and energetically operative concern over today's spiritual crisis in the temporal order. The crisis itself is there, perhaps more darkly menacing in America than elsewhere because its merace is so inadequately realized. Concern over it certainly exists in the heart of the Church and has been voiced in anguished fashion by our last two Popes. But until this concern is somehow thrust into the center of our consciousness and sharpened to the point of poignancy (for which perhaps tragic events are needed), discussion of intercredal cooperation—a problem allied to today's spiritual crisis—will command only academic interest, or perhaps be regarded as annoying.



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It was organized in a series of meetings during 1926 and 1927—the first held just following the Eucharistic Congress in Chicago, the second held in Cleveland that fall to form an organizing committee, and the third in Easter week, 1927, in Washington, when the permanent organization was established.

The Association works through the preparation of committee reports. Following careful preparation, these are discussed both publicly and privately in order to secure able revision. They are then published by the organization. Questions involving moral judgments are submitted to the Committee on Ethics.

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