



John XXIII Pope
Letters to French
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Letters
To
French Social Weeks

(1959-62)

National Catholic Welfare Conference

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Following is a translation of a letter sent on behalf of His Holiness, Pope John XXIII, by Amleto Cardinal Cicognani, Papal Secretary of State, to Alain Barrere, president of the French Social Week held at Strasbourg in July, 1962.

The Social Weeks of France are preparing to devote their next session to a problem of great current interest: "The Europe of persons and peoples." And they have judiciously chosen for this meeting the city of Strasbourg, a point of attraction as well as a focus for exchanges of a spiritual, cultural, political and economic nature, making it a privileged crossroads of Europe.

It is very pleasant for me to express to you the satisfaction of the Holy Father at seeing the Social Week--whose teaching is "so useful and appreciated," as Pope Pius XI of venerated memory deigned to recognize(1)--dealing with this important subject in the light of Christian principles.

An Achievement Which is Being Built Up Every Day

In fact, despite the difficulties and controversies caused by the legitimate debates on the institutions to be promoted and the structures to be constituted, Europe is a reality which is being built up every day.

As Pope Pius XII said: "Why continue to hesitate? The purpose is clear. The requirements of the nations are before everyone's eyes. One must reply to whoever asks for a guarantee in advance that there is certainly a risk, but a necessary one; a risk adapted to present capabilities, a reasonable risk."⁽²⁾

The risk was run and the audacity has had its reward. The European Coal and Steel Community has already long enjoyed a positive existence. Not only has it been able to replace old destructive rivalries with a fruitful friendship between neighbors who are legitimately proud of their past, but it has carried out, in an area which extends beyond national boundaries, a social

(1) *Quadragesimo Anno*, A.A.S. XXIII, 1931, p. 183.

(2) Radio Message at Christmas, 1953, *Acta Apostolicae Sedis*, XLVI 1954, p. 14.

program which gives employment to the unemployed, brings the [social and economic] levels of life closer to each other, facilitates economic improvement and contributes to peace.

Following it, and in its spirit, a European economic community has been worked out which is widely open to new partners, so that Europe is now at the threshold of a new edifice to be built. Its political organization is a problem which obviously concerns, above all, those responsible for the temporal order, but which interests Christians and the Church also.

It is, in fact, a just duty for the former to play their part in its true solution, for the latter can have important consequences with respect to the propagation of the Faith. It is therefore incumbent upon the Church, whose nature and mission place it above the choices and involvements of the temporal world, to contribute here as elsewhere the moral principles which enlighten the action of the responsible men and direct the research of competent institutions.

Therefore, it is quite proper for the Social Week to judge that the time has come to reflect upon the objectives to be pursued, upon the attitudes to be adopted and upon the means to be used by the various communities, and upon the responsibilities to be assumed by individuals in building Europe.

The Welfare of Europe

What objective is to be followed? Would a unified Europe have a common interest as is the case in each nation? A common interest which is not a specific one, shared by such-and-such a group or such-and-such a social category, but which is defined by its relation with the ultimate objective of the persons who are members of the community, of all and of each one?

Beyond any doubt, this European common interest exists; it must be affirmed and an effort must be made to bring about its realization. One and universal by its very definition, it must not bring greater advantage to one country or to one social group to the detriment of the others. It includes economic elements: prosperity to be developed harmoniously; social elements: equilibrium to be maintained, indeed to be restored between the various categories of citizens; finally, political elements: a juridical order to be established, promulgated and defended.

But the essence of this common interest is deeper. The element which constitutes a people, over and above the peculiarities of race, language, culture, tradition and religion which

delimit it, is found and its "collective will to live," which expresses itself in common ways of thinking, feeling and living. Is this not the case of Europe, whose economic, social and political components draw their unifying force from what may be called the European spirit, based upon the perception of common spiritual values?

There exists, in fact, a European patrimony which is humanist and universalist, whose elements appear in each national culture. Bringing it into play should bring more peace and fraternity.

One finds there Greek humanism, with its feeling of balance, of measure and of beauty; the Roman juridical spirit, giving to each individual his place and his rights in a solidly constructed political community.

But above all, what has shaped the European soul over nearly two millennia is Christianity, which has outlined the traits of the human person, a free being, independent and responsible. This personalism, which respects the calling of each individual and insists upon the complementariness of the social body, is the keystone of the European patrimony and makes all of its elements intelligible: intellectual and moral, cultural and artistic wealth, and even technical and scientific progress.

The Work of the Peoples

Therefore, the Europe which is being built will indeed be, as the Strasbourg Social Week proposes, a "Europe of persons and peoples," a living and original reality which is being worked out of national characteristics. For each of the historical communities which composes Europe is rich in traditions, within whose framework the political activity of men has developed.

And the states have as their function to guarantee the patrimony which composes the wealth of each nation and the capital of personal and social energies which each fatherland represents. It is the very basis for a European community, whose participants will have to define, little by little, the joint institutions which, while insuring the welfare of each community, will be able to promote the welfare of Europe.

Far from being the exclusive adjunct of governments, the organization of Europe will thus be the work of the peoples. Everyone will play his part therein by opening up the broader ideas and by helping to create an alert public opinion within the different natural groups. Among these human communities, one

must emphasize in particular the importance of the intermediate bodies and of the family.

It is the responsibility of the intermediate bodies of each nation to form bonds among themselves, in their respective areas, which make their solidarity genuine. Therefore, the capability should be reserved for them to make their voices heard on questions of general interest, as the consultative procedures of the various European institutions already allow.

That is true for trade union organizations as for the others of economic and cultural nature, whose sphere of activity must be recognized. While the task of the public powers is to aid, coordinate, and also to stimulate, the intermediate bodies have an irreplaceable role to play, for they constitute the basic structure of relations among peoples.

The Families: Vital Center

As for the families, it is quite clear that they form the vital center of the Europe of persons and peoples and that they cannot be sacrificed for the organization of the European countries. Therefore, economists will take care first of all to insure the workers of a guarantee of employment and of an equitable salary, of adequate social facilities, of appropriate lodgings and of conditions of life which permit everyone to bear his responsibilities properly as head of a family. And necessary measures must be taken to help families to preserve their stability amidst constantly more extensive population movements.

The Holy Father recently mentioned this again with force on the subject of migration problems: "For the migrant, the family remains an intangible refuge, where he regains strength, finds himself again and takes energy for a new effort. It is also, according to the prevailing opinion, his best chance for entry into the human community."⁽³⁾ This primary and irreplaceable role of the family cannot be neglected by those who are working to build Europe.

This is to say that the progressive realization of European unity requires emergence from isolation and narrow nationalism. This is the only way to constitute a genuine community, the authentic expression of personal solidarity, not shut in by a widened circle of egoistic interests, but open to the universal and higher interests of humanity.

(3) Address to the Supreme Council on Emigration, Oct. 20, 1961, A.A.S., LIII, p. 718.

So a double movement will infuse this building, according to the teaching given with precision by His Holiness Pope John XXIII in the Encyclical *Mater et Magistra*. The European communities will have to remedy progressively the inequalities in development of their geographic areas and of their sectors of activity, both agricultural and industrial, not forgetting, however, the other continents, in whose harmonious growth they will have an interest.

A Supranational Community

Only the union of minds and hearts in the same faith and same love will make it possible to realize this supranational community which is European first of all, but with a worldwide calling. Therefore Catholics must be in the first rank in this eminently pacific undertaking.

Doubtless, they will be called upon to take an active part in the institutions in which God is not explicitly recognized as the Author and Legislator of the universe.

They will often "meet men who do not have the same concept of life. Let them then take great care to remain true to themselves and not to accept any compromise which is harmful to the integrity of religion and morality. But let them also study with benevolence and equity the positions of others and let them not think only of their own interests, but collaborate faithfully in any matter which is good in itself or which can lead to good."(4)

They must always remember the statement of Pope Pius XII which is still so valid. When he was speaking to the Council of Europe on June 13, 1957, he underscored the close relationships between the Christian message and Europe:

"If it be true," said Pius XII, "that the Christian message was for [Europe] the yeast deposited in the dough, which worked it and caused the mass to rise, it is none the less true that this same message, today as yesterday, remains the most precious of the values placed in her care; it is capable of preserving integrity and vigor, with the idea and exercise of the basic liberties of the human person, the function of the family and national societies, and of guaranteeing, in a supranational community, respect for cultural differences, a spirit of conciliation

(4) *Mater et Magistra*, A.A.S., LIII, 1961, p. 456-457.

and collaboration, with an acceptance of the sacrifices which it implies and the devotion which it requires."(5)

On this basis, the European construction will succeed, safeguarded by the collaboration of men of good will. The Strasbourg Social Week, under your enlightened chairmanship and with the teaching of experienced experts, will contribute its part in orienting minds towards the building of a broad community of free men which will guarantee prosperity and peace to its own and spread them across the world, with complete fidelity to the highest requirements of the human person.

In your work, you will be led by Archbishop Jean-Julien Weber, Bishop of Strasbourg, and his distinguished Coadjutor, Bishop Arthur Elchinger. Surely you could not have found better guides nor a surer leadership.

Therefore, the Holy Father is invoking upon their excellencies, yourself, your co-workers and all those who are participating in these European meetings, an abundance of divine grace, as a token of which he is glad to send you a generous and paternal apostolic blessing.

Happy to send you these valuable words of encouragement, I give you my best wishes for the complete success of your work and assure you of my best wishes in Our Lord.

(5) To the Council of Europe, June 13, 1957, A.A.S., XLIX, p. 632.

THE PLACE OF YOUTH IN THE ADULT WORLD

The following is a translation of a letter sent on behalf of His Holiness, Pope John XXIII to the 1961 French Social Week held at Rheims, France by the Vatican Secretary of State, Domenico Cardinal Tardini.

For the second time in its history which is already so rich and fruitful, the traveling university of the Social Weeks will visit the Champagne region, and the zealous shepherd of the Archdiocese of Rheims, Archbishop Francois Marty, will welcome the lecturers and listeners of this session from July 11 to 16.

On this occasion, the Holy Father is pleased to encourage once again the patient effort of the French Social Weeks to study thoroughly the Christian social message. He congratulates its members on the good work accomplished for so many years in the service of mankind.

The theme you will discuss this year, "The Entrance of Youth into the Adult World," has in itself great importance. It is, in fact, of great importance that the adult generations should welcome the rising generations with kind and patient understanding and, above all, with affection. These, in their turn, will be able to bring to society their own contribution of generosity and enthusiasm, participating thus in the harmonious development of the great human family.

This welcome and this contribution are taking place in a world undergoing constant and rapid transformation. Science and technology have made spectacular progress which does not fail to have repercussions on the mind and on morals. Moreover, for several years since, the aging of the French populace has given way to a demographic awakening full of promise.

One must rejoice in this new dynamism, due without doubt to the courageous attitude of the hierarchy and also to the happy social disposition, to the zeal, of family organizations and, above all, to the generous fruitfulness of the homes. One cannot deny, however, that the topic suggested by the Rheims social week is of special interest and urgency now.

This "Rise of Youth" is an established fact which shows the moral health of your country. It gives rise, nevertheless, to difficult problems for the present and for the future.

The new generations are here. They must be given a good welcome; they must be offered first of all a home capable of receiving them as fast as the family circle expands; they must be given also a framework of life which is physically sound and morally educative. It is hoped that the people responsible for the "great (social and civic) groups" have thought of this!

Schools must be built, teachers must be recruited and trained. Every child must be given, along with instruction proportionate with his capabilities, a complete education which will arm him for life. This requires the collaboration of all men of good will and the establishment of a real and lasting "scholastic peace," which respects the rights of the Church and the demands of healthy freedom.

Moreover, every year provisions will have to be made for the creation of new jobs in great numbers. These steps will not fail to stimulate the national economy advantageously, to spur different responsible groups to be bold in investments, in the discovery of new solutions, in the conquest and expansion of markets in a Europe with open frontiers.

Happy is the country which is compelled by the laws of life to renew itself and to make new efforts!

But the principal difficulty does not reside in demographic and economic questions. It is found, above all, in the juxtaposition of the generations. To tell the truth, there has always been an inevitable tension between generations. Youth looks toward the future whereas adults often remain attached to the past. It is not surprising, therefore, that this phenomenon should occur more acutely in our times, when children grow in a very different world from that in which their fathers were trained.

Though the youth of today may seem to be independent, impatient, restless, ready to criticize everything and everyone, it nonetheless nourishes deep within itself a strong desire to act properly, and it aspires towards a just renewal. It is animated by a generous urge to work and make sacrifices.

Though experience has matured the wisdom and prudence of adults, on the one hand, is there not reason to wonder sometimes whether the setbacks and disappointments of life have not impaired their courage or weakened their enthusiasm for action?

The family home is indeed the first place for this dialogue. Because of the profound bonds that unite the members of a family, it is easier for parents than for other people to understand their children, to prepare them also to develop sound judgment and to make personal decisions. Is it not, in fact, the

whole art of the educator to help the adolescent to reach the age of manhood and to form his personality by a progressive control of himself?

It is sufficient to say that the Christian education given in the home will strive to make the children develop and to permit them to live in a way suitable to the spiritual demands of their times and will invite them to apply to a new way of life the wise principles they have received with piety.

On the other hand, if there are, alas, young people who hold aloof from social life, if there are adolescents who become "social misfits," is it not because they have, almost in every case, grown up without a home or in a home where there was no real love? "The city," said Pope Pius XI, "is what families and men who live in it make it, as the body is made up of limbs."(1)

Begun in the family, the climb of youth continues outside the family circle. Here again the initiative rests principally with adults. Overcoming spontaneous attitudes of defense before the vigorous thrust of youth, men of position must become consciously aware of their solidarity with the entire human community.

Far from hoarding jealously a heritage of riches, of technology, of science, of civilization and wisdom, acquired over the centuries, they must strive to impart it widely. In this manner, society will not be content to confine youth to positions of carrying out orders, but will initiate them without delay into responsibilities, entrusting to them progressively a part in the working out of decisions.

To create posts of employment in sufficient numbers is one of the first necessities. To make the efforts of imagination, of research, of prospecting, as is commonly said, to foresee what the world of the future will be and what functions it will require, is another, and no less urgent, necessity.

This anticipation will not be based only on present-day local needs, but will also be inspired by a Christian concept of the common good which embraces all places and looks toward the future. Man is, in fact, a part of the different communities to which he belongs; a mother lives for her children as one generation lives for the following one. This fact creates choices, requires sacrifices, involves the agreement of a whole community and particularly the enthusiastic agreement of youth. This is why youth must be associated with the new orientings of economy and of institutions.

(1) Encyclical, *Casti Connubii*, A.A.S., v. 22, p. 554.

In the same way as there is an apprenticeship to learn a trade, there is also a preparation for the duties awaiting the citizens of the future. This follows in great part from personal observation and reflection. One of the elements, which make many Catholic youth movements in France worthwhile is precisely that they know how to bring method to self-education.

Before youth throws itself into action, these movements teach them to observe, to appreciate behavior, institutions and situations in terms of the evangelical message. They accustom youth also to estimate its undertakings in terms of the possibilities of the moment.

The growing generation would not be equipped for life were it not careful to acquire, in addition to the indispensable aptitudes and technical knowledge, a system of thought which lights its steps and directs its undertakings. Soon it will have to take part in the conduct of affairs, in the cultural, social, economic and political activities of the country; in a word, to assume its responsibilities.

How could it do this without recklessness if it were not certain of possessing that body of defined truths, offered by the social doctrine of the Church, which will permit it, when the time comes, to participate successfully in civic life and even to solve new problems which will not fail to arise?

Youth will, moreover, strive to develop in itself the valuable qualities which will facilitate greatly its successful insertion into the adult world; to learn docility and patience, while at the same time forming its character, so as to progress beyond the instinctive and sterile opposition of adolescence; to cultivate the gifts of the mind and of the heart, to acquire competence, a broad outlook, perseverance and tenacity, respect for oneself and for men in the sight of God.

Such is the program which awaits the youth of today and which will make of them the adults whom the world of the future will need. "The nation," recalled Pope Pius XII, of venerable memory, "thrives on the fullness of the life of the men who form it and in which each one, in his own place and manner, is a person conscious of his own responsibilities and of his own convictions."(2)

On the basis of these reflections, how could one fail to state again that the Church, always faithful to its mission, devotes immense interest to the development of the history of men and

(2) A.A.S., v. 37, p. 13

to the variety of their communities? Not only does the Church rejoice in the rise of youth, but exercises toward them maternal solicitude, full of understanding and love. In contact with the changing world and under the pressing action of the Holy Ghost, the Church overflows with supernatural life. Eternally young and conquering, the Church contemplates in the light of the divine Word the vocation given to all generations to gather around Jesus Christ.

She well knows that the divine design entails for men the duty to form only one Mystical Body in which young and adults, children and old people, have their place. In this way the whole of humanity moves through the ages toward God until the end of the world.

To men who are tempted to forget or to deny human values, the Church recalls and affirms the true dignity of the person, intelligent and free, as well as the great importance of social life, based on truth, on justice and on the brotherly union of all. But she knows also that there are limits to these values. Lived by sinful and redeemed men, they must be transformed by the grace of the Lord so that men may enter one day into the glory of the Father.

Society expects a great deal, and with good reason, from the rising generations. For its part, the Church can discern already among the young those who will be in the future the ministers or helpers of its apostolate and it rejoices in this.

Speaking, on the feast of Pentecost, after the consecration of the new Bishops which he performed, the Holy Father recalled thus this expectation of the Church: "The generations endowed with rich experience and those which follow them . . . offer a happy expectation for the good success of the future.

"At the sight of so many young people brimming over with life, fervor and courage, trained in good morals and in the respect of traditions, a thought comes to Our mind: Why should there not be kindled in many of them the fire which will lead them to forsake everything so as to dedicate themselves to the priesthood, to religious life, to the accomplishment of the works of mercy, to the immense pastures of the missionary apostolate? . . . It is Our duty to encourage and to pray, today as yesterday and always . . . *Deus dabit incrementum*" (God will give increase).(3)

(3) *L'Osservatore Romano*, May 22-23, 1961.

It is permitted to hope that the Social Week of Rheims, by preparing a Christian solution to the problems of the "rise of youth," will contribute as its part to assure future society of the structures and atmosphere in which will be possible the harmonious development and flourishing of the most noble aspirations of the growing generation for the satisfaction of the Holy Church and for the great benefit of the national community.

Formulating this wish, the Holy Father grants with all his heart, to you who are about to discharge for the second time with zeal and competence your functions as president, to the members of the hierarchy present and to all the participants in the Social Week of Rheims, an abundant apostolic blessing as token of the finest grace.

Accept, Mr. President, together with my personal good wishes for the success of these important meetings, the assurances of my devoted sentiments in Our Lord.

ON EXCESSIVE SOCIALIZATION

The following is a translation of a letter sent by the Vatican Secretary of State, Domenico Cardinal Tardini, on behalf of His Holiness Pope John XXIII, to the President of the French Social Weeks. The letter was read on July 12, 1960 at the opening session of the 1960 French Social Week, held in Grenoble, France.

Continuing the tradition of your predecessors, you submitted a respectful communication to His Holiness following your election to the presidency of the Social Weeks of France, together with the program of your coming Sessions to be held at Grenoble on the theme "Socialization and the Human Person."

The Holy Father was touched by this gesture, which bears witness to the continuity of this institution he has known well and long.

From the time of his nunciature at Paris, he nourished cordial relations with Charles Flory, whom you have just succeeded. In particular, he appreciated the courageous clarity with which, following the last World War, the Social Weeks handled, under his direction--with good results and an ever-larger audience--a series of especially urgent and delicate problems.

His Holiness takes pleasure in recognizing this and sincerely hopes that the large movement of which you are henceforth assuming the chairmanship may pursue its beautiful mission with growing success.

At Grenoble, where a bishop who is following attentively the course of social problems is preparing to receive you, surrounded by a select and wideawake group, you are going to discuss a subject that falls within the framework of a basic aim of the Social Weeks.

As early as 1937, they were thinking of the "human person in danger," and at the close of the second world conflict (1945) they began to study "social changes and freedom of the individual." The similarity of these titles shows that you know, when the right time appears, how to direct your research to analogous problems when they take on a new light.

Your desire to safeguard under all circumstances the dignity and the welfare of the human person, and to form social structures based upon it, echoes nicely the teaching of the Sovereign Pontiff himself.

"The troubles which are shaking the inner peace of nations," he said in his last Christmas message, "have their primary origin in the fact that man has been treated almost exclusively like an instrument, like an article of merchandise, like a poor gear in a great machine, like a simple unit of production. It will only be when the personal dignity of man is taken as a basis for appreciating him and his activity, that social conflicts may be allayed, as well as the divergencies, often deep-rooted, which exist, for example, between employers and workers."(1)

This basic principle adapts itself to the changing conditions of society. In 1937, as we have just recalled, when the Social Week of Clermont-Ferrand considered the "human person in danger," the threat came from the totalitarian governments and still more from their erroneous philosophy.

State, party, race or people--symbolized by their leader--came to assume prerogatives that belong only to God. In 1945 the perspectives were different: the ruins accumulated by the war required more urgent rebuilding, and seemed to postpone to a more distant time the eventual threats of new tyrannies. People sought the possibilities of new development in transformed structures, and these "social transformations" seemed to promise a "liberation of the person." In dealing with this theme, the Social Week of Toulouse was therefore following closely the line of your traditions.

The changes that have occurred since mark a development in the direction of an ever-wider, ever-deeper socialization. Not only economic and political structures, but also a whole network of customs, of ways of life, of spontaneous or legal institutions envelop the individual, sustain and guide him.

The advantages implicit in this state of affairs, both in the economic and social order as well as in the cultural domain are undeniable. Besides developing a sense of cooperation and solidarity, it permits the concrete satisfaction of social needs of first importance: for example, the need for housing, medical care, social security; the need for education, work, leisure.

On the other hand, socialization overemphasizes the bureaucratic mechanism, making the legal regulation of human relationships ever more detailed in all sectors of life in society, and it uses methods that incur a serious risk of what is characterized today in one word: "dehumanization." Modern man sees that

(1) *Acta Apostolicae Sedis*, LII, 1960, p. 29.

the sphere in which he can think for himself, act on his own initiative, exercise his responsibilities, and affirm and enrich his personality is in many cases restricted to an excessive degree.

Does it follow that the process of socialization is impossible to control and that, increasing constantly in breadth and depth, it will one day surely reduce men to the role of automatons? Certainly not. For socialization is not the result of forces of nature acting according to a determinism that cannot be changed. It is the work of man, of a free being, conscious of, and responsible for, his acts. Therefore, on the one hand, one ought to be able to profit from its advantages, but on the other, one ought to know how to defend the person against the serious threats that its excessive and disorderly development could bring to weigh upon him.

An important principle quite familiar to the regular members of the Social Weeks is that which gives to the state, in this area, a function we have agreed to call "supplemental" or "subsidiary." Pius XI, in the encyclical *Quadragesimo Anno*, stated it in these terms:

"Just as one cannot take away from individuals and transfer to the community the tasks they are capable of accomplishing by themselves, thus it would also be an injustice--and at the same time a harmful disturbance of the social order--if one were to remove from groups of lower rank functions they can exercise themselves and entrust them to a wider collectivity of higher rank. The natural objective of any intervention in social matters is to assist the members of the social body and not to destroy or absorb them."(2)

One sees the role that can be played in this perspective, for the purpose of safeguarding the rightful autonomy of the (human) person and the family, by the "intermediate bodies," as they are often called, i.e., those forms of free and spontaneous associations, well ordered and well oriented, so often advised by the sovereign pontiffs and so constantly invoked by the Social Weeks. By taking charge of tasks too weighty or too complex for the individual and the family to handle alone, these groups liberate new individual or collective capabilities.

But this is to be done on the condition that each of these institutions remains within its own sphere of responsibility, that it be offered to, not imposed upon, the free choice of mankind.

(2) A.A.S., XXIII, 1931, p. 203.

They must under no circumstances look upon themselves as an end, making their members an instrument of their activity.

Speaking of the trade unions--which one may consider as "intermediate bodies"--Pius XI expressed this wise warning: "If the union as such, through political and economic development were one day to exercise a kind of ownership or right by virtue of which it freely controlled the worker [. . .], the very idea of a union, which is to unite for the purpose of mutual aid and defense, would be changed and destroyed thereby." (3)

These remarks apply to all forms of usurped collective domination. They apply also to the domain of thought. The means for instructing the public, for counseling it and guiding it, have made considerable progress, and without a doubt it is a most valuable acquisition for man to be able to educate himself, to know or to learn and to be able to form a justifiable opinion for himself.

Your meeting at Nancy, devoted to "Communication Techniques in Contemporary Civilization," rightfully emphasized this in 1955. But it would be a manifest abuse, were this same information--written, auditory or visual--to become what one calls a "psychological action," with the purpose of imposing ready-made judgments upon the masses. In that case, the "people" would really become "masses," according to the vivid distinction made by Pius XII in his 1944 Christmas message.

"The people," said the late Pontiff, "lives from the fullness of the life of the men who make it up, each of whom, in his place and in the manner proper to him, is a person conscious of his own responsibilities and of his own convictions. The mass, on the other hand, awaits an impulsion from without, an easy plaything in the hands of anyone who exploits its instincts and impressions, quick to follow now this flag, now that one." (4)

These disorders are, alas, too often aided by the fact that the individual abandons through inertia part of his essential prerogative, that of judging freely after having informed himself without bias; and this abdication of oneself is at the same time an error against society and one of the greatest dangers of our time.

Therefore, your next session will render outstanding services to its listeners by inviting them to meditate as Christians upon the multiple aspects of the phenomenon of socialization. Let them gauge before God the value of these institutions that

(3) A.A.S., XXXVII, 1945, p. 70.

(4) A.A.S., XXXVII, 1945, p. 13.

are offered to them, of these pressures that they accept and suffer.

Indeed, as we have said above, they make living easier, for they reduce individual effort and increase the well-being of the collectivity; but for a Christian, the humanism which they bring cannot suffice; he knows that, according to the words of St. Paul, man regenerated by grace ought to “. . .use this world, as though not using it,”(5)and that he will find true freedom in proportion as he becomes cognizant of the sublime dignity with which he has been endowed, as man and as Christian.

It is only then that he will know how to assume the responsibility for his soul, his thought and his actions, to judge the facilities and opinions presented to him by collective life by comparing them with the only necessity, from whose function all things receive their true value.

Fully conscious of what is at stake, moved by his apostolic zeal, he then makes a personal engagement with these communities that surround him, the result of a free and justified choice of careful thought about himself, his destiny and that of the world: that is for him--it must be stated without fear--a very useful and up-to-date manner to bear witness in the eyes of men to the Christian ideal that impels him.

Calling now for the most abundant light upon your work of the Social Week at Grenoble, where these important themes will be developed by qualified specialists, the Holy Father sends with all sincerity to His Excellency Bishop Fougerat, to yourself, to Alfred Michelin, your zealous vice president, to the faithful organizers of your Grenoble session and to all members of the Weeks a full, paternal apostolic benediction.

Please receive, Mr. President, with my cordial best wishes, the assurance of my religious esteem.

(5) 1. Cor. 7, 31.

THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF CATHOLICS IN REGARD TO THE PEOPLES OF UNDERDEVELOPED COUNTRIES

The following is a translation of a letter sent in the name of His Holiness Pope John XXIII by His Eminence Domenico Cardinal Tardini, Vatican Secretary of State on the occasion of the 46th Social Week held in Angers, France in 1959.

The French Social Weeks have had a tradition for more than half a century of making a major collective contribution each year to one of the great human problems which, in the lives of nations, control social stability, economic progress and civil or international peace.

This tradition, often encouraged by the Sovereign Pontiffs, has again this year inspired your choice of topic. Since world conditions are forcing on everyone's attention "the advance of (underdeveloped) peoples in the human community," you have not been afraid to tackle this broad and delicate question.

Your plan, however, is not to engage in debates of a purely political character. That is not the province of the Social Weeks. Yours is a more basic task: to examine lucidly and weigh accurately the responsibilities being created for Catholics today by insufficient living standards and too few possibilities for development throughout great areas of the world.

To receive your itinerant university and guide its work, you called on a great bishop whose experience and authority guaranteed in advance the integrity and prestige of your discussions. It was in the exercise of his charity for overseas peoples that Bishop Henri Chappoulie was called to God. His sacrifice will surely not have been in vain, and his memory as well as his example will live in the hearts of those taking part in the Social Weeks.

To succeed him, His Holiness chose one of his most valued collaborators, Bishop Henri Veuillot, whose experience during most of the past 10 years of working closely with the Sovereign Pontiff and in his immediate service has providentially prepared him to confront the serious problems that concern you. You will undoubtedly find in him an enlightened and competent guide, quite capable of giving a useful direction to your work.

Finally, I am happy to assure you, Mr. President, of the most paternal encouragement of the Sovereign Pontiff. After having frequently honored the Social Weeks of France with his presence as Apostolic Nuncio--especially the one held in 1948 in Lyons on a topic similar to this year's theme--the Holy Father today is happy to ask for an abundance of divine blessings for the important institution whose presidency you are assuming with so much competence and devotion.

In the tradition of his predecessors, he expects his sons who are meeting in Angers to inform themselves carefully of the social teachings of the Church as well as of its directives regarding action. He expects them to find in their Christian convictions the courage to work toward achievements that are in conformity with natural law and the lofty precepts of Divine Revelation.

According to custom, the first discussions of the Social Weeks will deal with an objective examination of facts. These will provide a picture of the living conditions of the too many people who, faced by the advances of other regions of the world, "become conscious--sometimes, alas, in revolt--of the scandalous contrast between the well-being of some and the vital needs of others."(1)

The tension that results from such a difference in living standards is often amplified and exploited by treacherous propaganda. Who, then, can oppose the legitimate hopes of millions of men to be saved, at last, from the permanent threats of famine and endemic diseases? Who can contest their aspiration to benefit also from better social conditions and the just advancement of their people in the great family of nations?

Today it is an unquestionable duty of justice and charity toward men to do everything possible to make sure that these undernourished people have food, to promote everywhere a more rational exploitation of the riches of the soil and subsoil for the benefit of a rapidly growing world population and, at the same time, to safeguard the social stability of the regions affected by this economic development.

Simultaneously, it is right to facilitate access to knowledge and culture for the elites of all countries and races, no less than to the responsibilities of civic life and, where the need arises, to the exercise of legitimate political liberties.

(1) Radio message of His Holiness, Feb. 18, 1959, A.A.S., vol. 51, p. 148.

What man, informed about world affairs and conscious of his duty, will not see in these truly important tasks a grave obligation for our generation for which it must be willing to make the necessary sacrifices?

To be sure, immense efforts have already been made by official organizations and private initiative, and it is with satisfaction that we see the men of Christian countries realize their responsibilities in this regard. But the results that have been achieved remain out of proportion to the vastness of the needs and the quickened march of events.

The Church, with its moral authority, encourages this gesture of human solidarity. It has been taking part in it, moreover, for a long time through the activities of its missionaries, who are sent to all continents for the service of souls and who show in those places how devoted they are to the bodies they care for and the minds they teach.

In addition, the encyclical *Fidei Donum* (The Gift of Faith)--whose message you want to spread widely--issued a solemn and clear-sighted pronouncement two years ago in regard to Africa that can be rightfully applied to all peoples at present on the way toward advancement.

At the same time that it upheld and gave direction to such an advance, the Church clear-sightedly revealed that the main obstacle to it lies in man himself. Let us listen, then, to the great voice of Pius XII who denounced "beneath the expanse of unquestionable political and economic difficulties" what he called "a still more serious spiritual and moral misery." (2) He denounced, that is to say, a forgetfulness of God and scorn for His laws involving narrowness of mind, hardness of heart, the lure of gain and the lack of character to oppose public opinion.

These defects of sin aggravate the imbalance that so profoundly disturbs our humanity, for they prevent the establishment among peoples of an organic collaboration adapted to present conditions. Christians will apply themselves to combating these defects in themselves and their surroundings, alive in their faith and ready, in the words of the same Pontiff, "to go forward steadfastly, guided by the Spirit of God, in the light of eternal principles and with an unshakable confidence in His Divine Providence." (3)

(2) Radio messages of Pius XII, Christmas, 1950, A.A.S., vol. 43, p. 56.

(3) *Ibid.*, p. 56

This is the command to action, full of supernatural optimism, that His Holiness today issues to his sons, because it concerns them all. If the situation brought about by the advance of peoples can leave no one indifferent, Catholics all the more, from wherever they may come, face it with the will to provide a Christian solution to this problem, whose breadth might be discouraging to narrow minds and whose consequences might frighten cowardly hearts.

It is necessary to make the Catholics of privileged nations aware of the new and enlarged dimensions assumed by their permanent duties of respect for the human person and Christian charity.

For everyone it is a question of informing himself, revising his judgments when necessary, correcting his opinions and responding to the appeals made to him.

But from a few even more is demanded. According to the recommendation made in the name of Pius XII, they will personally apply themselves to works of international scope.

"Entire countries have need of the fraternal and disinterested aid of experts and technicians. Let Catholics, therefore, collaborate willingly in these great works. By means of their professional competence allied with their Christian spirit, they will render irreplaceable services to those countries and, thanks to them, Christian thought and morality will be a leaven of civilization in this new world."(4)

A no less important duty devolves on Catholics who belong to the peoples who are advancing. The same teachings of the Church that give a basis to the present tasks of human solidarity require that they combine with love and loyal service of their country a spirit of peaceful cooperation with nations capable of aiding their country without subjugating it to blameworthy doctrines.

In young nations facing formidable problems of growth--which the achievement of political independence alone cannot solve--a clear vision of their true present and future welfare commands Catholics who take part in public life to make effective social, cultural and economic progress prevail over the sterile demands of prestige.

And that is why, in particular, we can hope that the offerings inspired by an economy based on service and not on egoistic

(4) Letter from the Secretariat of State to the president of the Conference of International Catholic Organizations, April 8, 1957.

profit may always be accepted with worthy sentiments by generous hearts, freed from the narrowness of an exacerbated nationalism.

In truth it is to the whole human development of a people that these words of the Holy Father apply:

"In helping elite groups that turn toward it to develop the cultural potentialities of their nation or race," he said, "the Church asks them to carry out their task in a spirit of harmonious cooperation and with a profound sympathy for other currents (of thought) that stem from authentic civilizations.

"Is it not at this price alone that the conquests of the mind are increased and that the spiritual bonds of a fraternal community of men are forged?"(5)

Such are the reflections suggested by the theme of the Social Week at Angers. Faced with the advance of peoples, Catholics, far from remaining indifferent, rejoice at seeing the circle of the great human family enlarged. They will strive to create in it a climate of mutual understanding and trusting mutual aid. And, taking an active part in the common tasks, they will make the light of the message of unity and true peace of which they are the trustees, shine everywhere.

As a pledge of divine assistance for the work of this important session, the Holy Father grants with all his heart to his sons of the Social Weeks, to the Bishop and faithful of Angers, as well as to yourself, his most fatherly apostolic blessing.

(5) Address to the Congress of Negro Writers and Artists, April 1, 1959, A.A.S., vol. 51, p. 260.