

*Do Catholics Owe
Civil Allegiance
to Rome?*



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CATHOLICS OWE NO CIVIL ALLEGIANCE TO ROME

If we can prove that the Catholic Church has done more for our country in the past than any or all other institutions, and that she is doing more today, it should not be necessary to answer what to us is a laughable charge, viz., that spiritual allegiance to Rome cannot go hand in hand with political devotion to the United States government. We shall recount some of the things for which America is indebted to Catholics; then we shall show what allegiance to Rome implies, and quote Protestant authorities who see consistency in Catholic loyalty to Church and State.

I.

The United States had its birth as an independent nation in 1776, when the grandest government in history was established. To whom are the 100,000,000 people who now enjoy the blessings of this free country most indebted? They may not be prepared to acknowledge it, but it will not be difficult to prove that humanly speaking we would have no United States to boast of, were it not for the assistance young America received at the hands of Catholics. Catholic France sent a fleet of 10,000 men, furnished the great generals Lafayette, LaGrasse and Rochambeau, and supplied \$3,000,000; Catholic Poland sent us Pulaski and Kosciusko; Catholic Ireland furnished a dozen generals, and one-half the soldiers of the Revolutionary war were Irishmen; Catholic Spain contributed 3,000 barrels of gun-powder and 1,000,000 francs. In fact nearly all the aid which our struggling patriots received from foreign countries came from Catholics.

At least one Catholic signed the Declaration of

Independence; several Catholics helped frame the Federal Constitution; even today the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, who interprets this wonderful document, is a Catholic. Washington wrote a letter to the Catholics of New York acknowledging the indispensable aid they contributed to the new-born nation, and thanked them for the same.

Commodore John Barry, the father and founder of the American Navy, was a Catholic; the city of Washington was platted by a Catholic; the White House was designed by a Catholic; the present supreme head of the G. A. R. is a Catholic.

2.

When the Union had to face its first great peril, which resulted in the Civil war, the proportion of Catholics in the Union army was double the proportion that the Catholics bore to the whole population. A whole host of Catholic generals in the Civil war helped to preserve the Union, among whom might be mentioned: Sheridan, Rosecrans, Buell, Shields, Mulligan.

3.

For many years emigration to the United States from the different countries of Europe has been heavy. In some of our big cities these so-called foreigners constitute more than one-half the population. They come with their strange customs, language, and inclinations. Every person must readily see that these cities would no longer merit the appellation "American" unless there were at work some unifying power, which amalgamates them with the native-born and makes of them good, law-abiding citizens. And our observant men give almost full credit for this invaluable service to the Catholic Church. The sameness of the Catholic Church here

with the Catholic Church they knew in their own land makes them feel welcome in her membership and at home in her temples. Foreign children are able to attend a parochial school where teacher and priest know their own language; here they are trained in virtue as well as knowledge, in patriotism as well as religion, and the country of their adoption becomes dearer to them than the country of their birth.

4.

If this government is to endure and be glorious it is not sufficient that it be based (as it is) on Christian principles. Those who govern the people, who make and execute our laws, who teach in our schools, must be *imbued* with Christian principles. Is the rising generation, which will be in control in twenty or thirty years hence, being properly schooled for the task? Not if Lyman Abbott (and a thousand others who say substantially the same) is right, when he contends that "Development of intelligence without a concurrent development of the *moral* nature does not suffice." For the continued safety of our government as now constituted, it is necessary that education tend to make our children *good* as well as learned citizens; it must be applied to the heart and conscience as well as the head. But only one million and a half of our children are receiving an education of this kind and nearly all of them are in the Catholic parochial schools.

5.

Take account of what the Catholic Church is doing for suffering humanity; there is kindness and benevolence and charity outside the Catholic Church, but no church has within it a large body of people who make charity their life's work. Hospitals, Reformatories,

4 OWE NO CIVIL ALLEGIANCE TO ROME

Homes for the Aged, the Poor, the Orphan, under Catholic auspices, abound.

6.

The moral soundness of a nation's life rests on the sacredness and stability of the families which make up the nation's people. But there exist in our country 3,000 divorce courts, which annually break up the family for 400,000 people. The law which permits this contributes to the killing of love, devotion, sacrifice, contributes to the making of criminals. The number of divorces would be increased by one-sixth, were it not that 15,000,000 of our countrymen are pledged not to take part in the nefarious work. Who are these? The Catholics of the United States.

7.

Our observant statesmen see the beginning of a virulent cancer in the body politic in the growth of Socialism and its zealous propaganda. No greater enemy to our country could be conceived than that which seeks to overthrow the whole government and to erect another of an untried kind in its stead. Socialism proposes this, and there is no large organization, save the Catholic Church, which is taking the government's side.

If a friend in need is a friend indeed, then our country has no truer friend than the Catholic Church.

ROME NOT CONCERNED ABOUT AMERICAN POLITICS.

Many Protestants erroneously believe that the Pope is impatient to become a Temporal Ruler; that he is playing secret politics through bishops and priests everywhere in order to get Catholic subjects in high

office, who, because of sworn loyalty to him, will promote the interests of the Catholic religion.

To such as have even surmised that this might be true, I wish to declare without the slightest qualification that the Pope is not concerning himself in the least about American politics. And if a Catholic were to become President, the Catholic religion would not seek a single favor at his hands and would be far less likely to get any than at present, since he would "be afraid" to offend the non-Catholic. Rome would not meddle with his administration; she would have no interest in him other than a hope that he would rule justly and creditably. And granting the impossible supposition that Rome would make a suggestion to him of a political nature, he could, without being disloyal, tell the Pope to stay within his (spiritual) realm.

No, Rome would like to have only such Temporal Power as would insure the Pope freedom to govern the Church without interference by an unfriendly King. One who rules over an international Church should not be the *subject* of another who might hamper his spiritual administration.

POPE PIUS X.

(In an Address to a Party of Pilgrims from the Argentine Republic.)

"The Church will always defend the constituted authorities, imposing love, obedience, respect and observance of the laws, helping the State to provide for the maintenance of peace. At the same time the State should always render to God the things that are God's, by showing itself respectful to that authority of the Church which God has given her, and by not thwarting, but rather protecting her and her children."

CARDINAL GIBBONS.

"In his spiritual affairs, every Roman Catholic owes allegiance to a foreign ecclesiastical power, namely the Pope

But it is only in his spiritual affairs. In matters concerning his civil welfare, or that of his country, every Roman Catholic is as free as any other American citizen to act as his wisdom and conscience dictate.

"The religious intolerance, of which these people seem to complain, can only be their own intolerance, for the Roman Catholics have none, and the religious liberty which they proclaim they are going to protect and fight for is as dearly cherished by Catholics as by the members of any other creed or sect in the land."

RIGHT REV. BISHOP CONATY.

(Los Angeles)

"The truth of the teaching is that we owe to the Church our spiritual allegiance, we owe to our country our temporal allegiance. These two allegiances are absolutely distinct one from the other. The Church dictates to me nothing but what I shall know and believe of God and the human life,—the commandments which I must obey in order to save my soul; and places before me the means by which those commandments may be followed and my salvation effected. The Church dictates not to me, not to any Catholic, what shall be my relation toward the government, except one thing,—that is, obedience and love. I must love my God and I must love my country; and I cannot love my God and not love my country. . . . The laws of the Church, its commandments, its prohibitions, are concerned about and confined to things appertaining directly or indirectly to the spiritual order. The Church does not interfere with our political duties, except as it teaches us conscientious fidelity to all that concerns the welfare of our fellowmen. It forbids what already is forbidden by the law of God, and it exacts that which is already demanded by virtue of divine law. The obligations of obedience to the lawfully constituted civil power is a moral obligation, and we hold that to come from God."

INTER-OCEAN.

(Chicago, 1896.)

"The Catholic, who owes a certain allegiance to the Pope, can be a good citizen; for that allegiance is in spiritual matters, about which this government does not concern itself. The Catholic may take his religion from Rome, but he sup-

plies his own politics. His conscience is no more liable to lead him into conflict with the State than the conscience of any other religious man. He occupies the same position in this respect as the Protestant who takes his religion from the Bible. The conscience of either Catholic or Protestant is liable to bring him into conflict with particular policies or laws of the State; but that will occur only in most exceptional circumstances, and the same objection holds against the individual reason. A man with no religion may oppose certain State policies, and so may a religious man from motives of conscience; but neither becomes, on that account, a bad citizen."

CHURCH NOT IN POLITICS.

Now a word on "Catholics and Politics." Catholics, like other citizens, have politics, but the Catholic Church has none. Some of the Catholic bishops of the United States are Republicans, some are Democrats. So it is with the priests and people. And not only is there never a word from Rome or elsewhere about what Catholics should be in the matter of politics, but the clergy never so much as intimate to the people how they should vote. This should be plain to any observant person. Some of our states, where Catholics constitute nearly one-half the total population, will go Republican, whilst other states where they are equally strong will be carried by the Democrats. If Catholics were in politics, as many Protestants think they are, nearly all the Eastern states would have Catholic governors, most of the big cities Catholic mayors. Religion is not carried into politics by Catholics.

What we say about our country is equally true about others.

The Catholic Church is not desirous of a union of Church and State except where separation of Church and State means the subjection of the Church to the

State, persecution of the Church by the State. Fair play is all that is asked. Even our President believes in more. He wants co-operation :

GREATER RIGHT TO BE HERE THAN OTHERS.

The Catholic Church takes more pains to teach her people their *duties* to the American Republic than to remind them of their *rights*. But if Catholics and Protestants were to press their respective claims for priority of right to live in blessed Columbia, the former would easily win :

1. No right is so indisputable as the right procured by Discovery; and no land owes its discovery so much to Catholic faith, Catholic ardor, Catholic instinct, as America. The bravest of our sailors and mariners today would have hesitated to venture out on the broad ocean 400 years ago in such ill-fitted and almost open boats. But Columbus, aided by a Catholic Queen, risked it. He risked it not for man, but for God; not for gold, but for souls. His prime motive was to bring the Catholic religion to another land and hence he was accompanied by priests, who were the first to bless this country; they planted the cross of Christ thereon, and dedicated the same to San Salvador,—Holy Savior.

2. Next to discovery, there is nothing that could establish a stronger right than Exploration! And the first explorations carried on in the New World were by Catholics. They gave names to our lakes, rivers, and cities. The Cabots erected the Cross on Cape Cod 120 years before the Puritans set foot on Plymouth Rock; the Catholic Balboa discovered the Pacific; the priest Marquette was the first to sail down the Mississippi; the priest LaSalle was the first navigator of

the Great Lakes; and the priest DeSmet was the first to bring the Christian religion to the savage tribes of the Rocky Mountains.

3. If the right to live in this land belongs to any denomination, it should surely belong to that religion, which first proclaimed religious toleration in America. The Catholic Lord Baltimore, at the head of the Maryland colony, was the first one in our country or in all the world to proclaim it. Shortly after the discovery of America, the different Protestant religions had their birth in Europe, and fierce persecutions ensued. In France, Holland, Germany, England, Scotland, Switzerland, the new religions became so intolerant of the old, that in the persecutions which followed thousands were burned, hanged, beheaded, maimed and whipped, whilst others were outlawed and their property confiscated. These persecutions started an exodus of people to the land discovered by Columbus; but even here, one non-Catholic denomination persecuted another; everywhere save in Catholic Maryland were people fined and imprisoned for conscience sake. In this Catholic colony religious freedom was made the basis of the State, and persecuted Protestants were invited to Maryland to serve their God in their own way unmolested.

CATHOLICS MUST OBEY ONLY IN THINGS SPIRITUAL.

“Were I a soldier or sailor in her Majesty’s service in a just war, and should the Pope suddenly bid all Catholics to retire from her service, I should not obey him.”—*Cardinal Newman*, “The Pope,” p. 68.

“If by any impossible supposition, the Pope should man army and fleet to storm our coast, do you know

what Catholics here would do? You would have two million Catholics in the American army ready to die to resist the Pope's invasion; you would have thirteen million Catholics in their homes praying for their sons, brothers and fathers in the field; you would have forty-five thousand Catholic nuns upon their knees before the Tabernacles beseeching the God of armies to strike the guns from the Roman emissaries; you would have seventeen thousand priests in the front ranks of the army fighting until they died for the Constitution of the United States. We would be loyal Catholics, still we would say to that Pope: 'We shall render to God the things that are God's. Yes, but we will render also unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's'—*Rev. J. P. McKey, C. M.*, in the "Marian," 1913.

"Some one may urge that the Pope may issue a mandate, enforced by an annexed excommunication, forbidding all Catholics to engage in the war against him. * * * The supposed action of the Pope does not change the question materially. The soldiers and sailors would not incur it, because 'grave fear' excuses from censure (excommunication), censures being directed against the contumacious, not against those who act through fear of coercion"—*Canon Neville*, "A Few Comments."

"In order to resist and defend oneself no authority is required. * * * Therefore, as it is lawful to resist the Pope, if he assaulted a man's person, so it is lawful to resist him, if he assaulted souls, 'or troubled the State,' and much more if he strove to destroy the Church. It is lawful to resist him, by not doing what

he commands, and hindering the execution of his will." *Bellarmino*, "De Rom. Pont." Vol. 2, p. 29.

WORDS TWISTED FOR ARGUMENT'S SAKE.

HOW ABOUT FATHER PHELAN?

Did not Father Phelan, a Catholic priest, make the unpatriotic statement: "If the Roman Catholic Church was to go to war with this government, I would say to hell with the government?" Have you a logical defense for such treasonable mutterings?

Editor Phelan did not say, "if the Roman Catholic Church was to go to war with the government," but this is what he said: "If the government of the United States were to go to war with the Church, we would say, to hell with the government of the United States."

Referring to this the *Iconoclast* comments as follows:

"I am not a Catholic, but I heartily endorse the sentiments and declaration of Father Phelan. It is the only position a true American can take. Before the government of the United States can go to war with the Catholic Church, it would have to be captured by Watson, Walker & Co. Once in the hands of the Guardians of Bigotry it would be subverted, perverted and converted into a veritable despotism. Once Bigotry is enthroned upon the ruins of liberty it would be the work of a moment to exchange the American Eagle for a vulture. Following this transformation the government might declare war on the Catholic Church, but it would not be the government established by Washington and Jefferson, upheld by Lincoln and preserved by the blood of our heroes.

Should this ever happen, I would be the first to cry from the house-tops: TO HELL WITH THE GOVERNMENT. I not only endorse Father Phelan's utterance, but go further. If the government of the United States were to inaugurate a war against the Methodists, Baptists, Presbyterians, or any other church, I would say, TO HELL WITH THE CONSTITUTION OF THE UNITED STATES. * * * So would every other true American of whatever race or creed who is loyal to the government established by the Fathers of the Republic. That government must cease to exist before the State could declare war against the Catholic Church, or deny the citizens absolute religious liberty.

"The *Independent*, a non-Catholic paper of New York City, which is never weary of attacking the Catholic Church, in its issue of August 12th, 1912, commenting on Father Phelan's sermon, which appeared in the *Western Watchman*, June 21, 1912, said: 'It is good strong language, and, mutatis mutandis, it is true; and we should say the same. He could say nothing else. As Christians we hold that the Church is the highest power for good in the world, its highest blessing, its supreme guide, and we love it more than our country and would sooner die for it.'

But even if Father Phelan had said what our enemies put in his mouth, what would his enunciation count against that of thousands of priests who would condemn his position?

