

Catholic Church. Pope (1878-1903): Leo XIII.

GRAVES de Communi
CHRISTIAN Democracy.

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CHRISTIAN DEMOCRACY

ENCYCLICAL LETTER

POPE LEO XIII

WITH DISCUSSION CLUB OUTLINE

By REV. GERALD C. TREACY, S. J.

CHRISTIAN DEMOCRACY

ENCYCLICAL LETTER

of

Pope Leo XIII

Graves de Communi

*(With Discussion Club Outline
by Rev. Gerald C. Treacy, S.J.)*



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GRAVES DE COMMUNI

ENCYCLICAL LETTER OF OUR HOLY FATHER
BY DIVINE PROVIDENCE

POPE LEO XIII

ON

Christian Democracy

To Our Venerable Brethren, All Patriarchs, Primates,
Archbishops and Bishops of the
Catholic World,

In Grace and Communion with the Apostolic See,

POPE LEO XIII

Venerable Brethren,

Health and Apostolic Benediction

Causes of Present Unrest

1. The grave discussions on economical questions which for some time past have disturbed the peace of several countries of the world are growing in frequency and intensity to such a degree that the minds of thoughtful men are filled, and rightly so, with worry and alarm. These discussions take their rise in the bad philosophical and ethical teaching which is now widespread among the people. The changes also which the mechanical inventions of the age have introduced, the rapidity of communication between places and the devices of every kind for diminishing labor and increasing gain all add bitterness to the strife; and lastly matter have been brought to such a pass by the struggle between capital and labor, fomented as it is by professional agitators, that the countries where these disturbances most frequently occur, find themselves confronted with ruin and disaster.

The Social Efforts of the Pope

2. At the very beginning of Our Pontificate We clearly pointed out what the peril was which confronted society on this head, and We deemed it Our duty to warn Catholics, in unmistakable language, how great the error was which was lurking in the utterances of socialism, and how great the danger was that threatened not only their temporal possessions, but also their morality and religion. That was the purpose of Our Encyclical Letter *Quod Apostolici Muneris* which We published on the 28th of December in the year 1878; but as these dangers day by day threatened still greater disaster, both to individuals and the commonwealth, We strove with all the more energy to avert them. This was the object of Our Encyclical *Rerum Novarum* of the 15th of May, 1891, in which We dwelt at length on the rights and duties which both classes of society—those namely, who control capital, and those who contribute labor—are bound in relation to each other; and at the same time, We made it evident that the remedies which are most useful to protect the cause of religion, and to terminate the contest between the different classes of society, were to be found in the precepts of the Gospel.

Results Achieved

3. Nor, with God's grace, were Our hopes entirely frustrated. Even those who are not Catholics, moved by the power of truth, avowed that the Church must be credited with a watchful care over all classes of society, and especially those whom fortune had least favored. Catholics of course profited abundantly by these Letters, for they not only received encouragement and strength for the admirable enterprises in which they were engaged but also obtained the light which they desired, by the help of which they were able with greater safety and with more plentiful blessings to continue the efforts which they had been making in the matter of which We are now speaking. Hence it happened that the differences of opinion which prevailed among them were either removed or their acrimony diminished and the discussion laid aside. In the work which they had undertaken this was effected, viz.: that in their efforts for the elevation of the poorer classes, especially in those places where the trouble is greatest, many new enterprises were set on

foot; those which were already established were increased and all reaped the blessing of a greater stability imparted to them. Some of these works were called *Bureaus of the People*, their object being to supply information. Rural savings banks had been established, and various associations, some for mutual aid, others, of relief, were organized. There were working men's societies and other enterprises for work or beneficence. Thus under the auspices of the Church, united action of Catholics was secured as well as wise discrimination exercised in the distribution of help for the poor who are often as badly dealt with by chicanery and exploitation of their necessities, as they are oppressed by indigence and toil.

A Name Wanted for Social Action

4. These schemes of popular benevolence were, at first, distinguished by no articular appellation. The name of *Christian Socialism* with its derivatives which was adopted by some was very properly allowed to fall into disuse. Afterwards some asked to have it called *The Popular Christian Movement*. In the countries most concerned with this matter, there are some who are known as *Christian Socialists*. Elsewhere the movement is described as *Christian Democracy*, and its partisans *Christian Democrats*, in contradistinction to those who are designated as *Socialists*, and whose system is known as *Social Democracy*. Not much exception is taken to the former, *i. e.*, *Christian Socialism*, but many excellent men find the term *Christian Democracy* objectionable. They hold it to be very ambiguous and for this reason open to two objections. It seems by implication to covertly favor popular government, and to disparage other methods of political administration. Secondly, it appears to belittle religion by restricting its scope to the care of the poor, as if the other sections of society were not of its concern. More than that, under the shadow of its name, there might easily lurk a design to attack all legitimate power either civil or sacred. Wherefore, since this discussion is now so widespread, so exaggerated and so bitter, the consciousness of duty warns Us to put a check on this controversy and to define what Catholics are to think on this matter. We also propose to describe how the movement may extend its scope and be made more useful to the commonwealth.

Social Democracy

5. What *Social Democracy* is and what *Christian Democracy* ought to be, assuredly no one can doubt. The first, with due consideration to the greater or less intemperance of its utterance, is carried to such an excess by many as to maintain that there is really nothing existing above the natural order of things, and that the acquirement and enjoyment of corporal and external goods constitute man's happiness. It aims at putting all government in the hands of the people, reducing all ranks to the same level, abolishing all distinction of class, and finally introducing community of goods. Hence, the right of ownership is to be abrogated, and whatever property a man possesses, or whatever means of livelihood he has, is to be common to all.

Christian Democracy

6. As against this, *Christian Democracy*, by the fact that it is Christian, is built, and necessarily so, on the basic principles of divine faith, and provides for the betterment of the masses, with the ulterior object of availing itself of the occasion to fashion their minds for things which are everlasting. Hence, for *Christian Democracy* justice is sacred; it must maintain that the right of acquiring and possessing property cannot be impugned, and it must safeguard the various distinctions and degrees which are indispensable in every well-ordered commonwealth. Finally it must endeavor to preserve in every human society the form and the character which God ever impresses on it. It is clear, therefore, that there is nothing in common between *Social* and *Christian Democracy*. They differ from each other as much as the sect of Socialism differs from the profession of Christianity.

Not Political Democracy

7. Moreover it would be a crime to distort this name of *Christian Democracy* to politics, for although democracy, both in its philological and philosophical significations, implies popular government, yet in its present application it is so to be employed that, removing from it all political significance, it is to mean nothing else than a benevolent and Christian movement in behalf of the people. For the laws of nature and of the Gospel, which by right are superior to all human contingencies,

are necessarily independent of all modifications of civil government, while at the same time they are in concord with everything that is not repugnant to morality and justice. They are, therefore, and they must remain absolutely free from political parties, and have nothing to do with the various changes of administration which may occur in a nation; so that Catholics may and ought to be citizens according to the constitution of any State, guided as they are by those laws which command them to love God above all things, and their neighbors as themselves. This has always been the discipline of the Church. The Roman Pontiffs acted upon this principle, whenever they dealt with different countries, no matter what might be the character of their governments. Hence, the mind and the action of Catholics who are devoted to the amelioration of the working classes, can never be actuated with the purpose of favoring and introducing one government in place of another.

Christian Democracy All-Inclusive

8. In the same manner, from *Christian Democracy*, We must remove another possible subject of reproach, namely: that while looking after the advantage of the working people they should act in such a manner as to forget the upper classes of society; for they also are of the greatest use in preserving and perfecting the commonwealth. As We have explained, the Christian law of charity will prevent Us from so doing. For it extends to all classes of society, and all should be treated as members of the same family, as children of the same heavenly Father, as redeemed by the same Saviour, and called to the same eternal heritage. Hence the doctrine of the Apostle who warns us that: "We are one body and one spirit called to the one hope in our vocation; one Lord, one Faith and one Baptism; one God and the Father of all Who is above all, and through all, and in us all." Wherefore on account of the nature of the union which exists between the different classes of society and which Christian brotherhood makes still closer, it follows that no matter how great Our devotion may be in helping the people, We should all the more keep Our hold upon the upper classes, because association with them is proper and necessary, as We shall explain later on, for the happy issue of the work in which We are engaged.

Christian Obedience

9. Let there be no question of fostering under this name of *Christian Democracy* any intention of diminishing the spirit of obedience, or of withdrawing people from their lawful rulers. Both the natural and the Christian law command us to revere those who, in their various grades are above us in the State, and to submit ourselves to their just commands. It is quite in keeping with our dignity as men and Christians to obey, not only exteriorly but from the heart, as the Apostle expresses it, *for conscience, sake*, when he commands us to keep our soul subject to the higher powers. It is abhorrent to the profession of a Christian for any one to be unwilling to be subject and obedient to those who rule in the Church, and first of all to the bishops whom (without prejudice to the universal power of the Roman Pontiff) *the Holy Ghost has placed to rule the Church of God which Christ has purchased by His Blood.*¹ He who thinks or acts otherwise is guilty of ignoring the grave precept of the Apostle who bids us to obey our rulers and to be subject to them, for they watch, having to give an account of our souls. Let the faithful everywhere implant these principles deep in their souls, and put them in practice in their daily life, and let the ministers of the Gospel meditate them profoundly, and incessantly labor not merely by exhortation but especially by example to make them enter into the souls of others.

Object of Christian Democracy

10. We have recalled these matters which on other occasions We have made the subject of Our instructions, in the hope that all dissension about the name of *Christian Democracy* will cease and that all suspicion of any danger coming from what the name signifies will be put at rest. And with reason do We hope so; for neglecting the opinions of certain men, with regard to the power and efficacy of this kind of *Christian Democracy*, which at times are exaggerated and are not free from error, let no one, however, condemn that zeal which, according to the natural and divine law, has this for its object, *viz.:* to make the condition of those who toil more tolerable; to enable them to obtain, little by little, those means by which they may provide for the future;

¹ Acts xx. 28.

to help them to practice in public and in private the duties which morality and religion inculcate; to aid them to feel that they are not animals but men, not heathens but Christians, and so to enable them to strive more zealously and more eagerly for the one thing which is necessary, *viz.*: that ultimate good for which we are all born into this world. This is the intention; this is the work of those who wish that the people should be animated by Christian sentiments and should be protected from the contamination of socialism which threatens them.

The Social Question a Moral Question

11. We have designedly made mention here of virtue and religion. For, it is the opinion of some, and the error is already very common, that the social question is merely an economic one, whereas in point of fact, it is above all a moral and religious matter, and for that reason must be settled by the principles of morality and according to the dictates of religion. For even though wages are doubled and the hours of labor are shortened and food is cheapened, yet if the working man hearkens to the doctrines that are taught on this subject, as he is prone to do, and is prompted by the examples set before him to throw off respect for God and to enter upon a life of immorality, his labors and his gain will avail him naught.

Religion Necessary for a Solution

12. Trial and experience have made it abundantly clear that many a workman lives in cramped and miserable quarters, in spite of his shorter hours and larger wages, simply because he has cast aside the restraints of morality and religion. Take away the instinct which Christian virtue has planted and nurtured in men's hearts, take away prudence, temperance, frugality, patience, and other correct, natural habits, no matter how much he may strive, he will never achieve prosperity. That is the reason why We have incessantly exhorted Catholics to enter these associations for bettering the condition of the laboring classes, and to organize other undertakings with the same object in view; but We have likewise warned them that all this should be done under the auspices of religion, with its help and under its guidance.

Active Charity Needed

13. The zeal of Catholics on behalf of the masses is especially noteworthy by the fact that it is engaged in the very field in which, under the benign inspiration of the Church, the active industry of charity has always labored, adapting itself in all cases to the varying exigencies of the times. For the law of mutual charity perfects, as it were, the law of justice, not merely by giving each man his due and in not impeding him in the exercise of his rights, but also by befriending him in case of need, "not with the word alone, or the lips, but in deed and in truth"; being mindful of what Christ so lovingly said to His own: "A new commandment I give unto you, that you love one another as I have loved you, that you love also one another. By this shall all men know that you are My disciples, if you have love one for the other." This zeal in coming to the rescue of Our fellow men should, of course, be solicitous, first for the imperishable good of the soul, but it must not neglect what is necessary and helpful for the body.

Our Lord's Test

14. We should remember what Christ said to the disciples of the Baptist who asked him: "Art Thou He that art to come or look we for another?" He invoked, as the proof of the mission given to Him among men, His exercise of charity, quoting for them the text of Isaias: *The blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead rise again, the poor have the Gospel preached to them.*² And speaking also of the Last Judgment and of the rewards and punishments He will assign, He declared that He would take special account of the charity men exercised towards each other. And in that discourse there is one thing that especially excites our surprise, viz.: that Christ omits those works of mercy which comfort the soul and refers only to external works which, although done in behalf of men, He regards as being done to Himself. *For I was hungry and you gave Me to eat; I was thirsty and you gave Me to drink; I was a stranger and you took Me in; naked and you covered Me; sick and you visited Me; I was in prison and you came to Me.*³

² Matt. xi. 5.

³ Matt. xxv. 35.

The Example of Christ

15. To the teachings which enjoin the twofold charity of spiritual and corporal works, Christ adds His own example so that no one may fail to recognize the importance which He attaches to it. In the present instance we recall the sweet words that came from His paternal heart: *I have pity on the multitude*,⁴ as well as the desire He had to assist them even if it were necessary to invoke His miraculous power. Of His tender compassion we have the proclamation made in Holy Writ, viz.: that *He went about doing good and healing all that were oppressed by the devil*.⁵ This law of charity which He imposed upon His apostles, they in the most holy and zealous way put into practice; and after them those who embraced Christianity originated that wonderful variety of institutions for alleviating all the miseries by which mankind is afflicted. And these institutions carried on and continually increased their powers of relief and were the especial glories of Christianity and of the civilization of which it was the source, so that right-minded men never fail to admire those foundations, aware as they are of the proneness of men to concern themselves about their own and neglect the needs of others.

Precept of Almsgiving

16. Nor are we to eliminate from the list of good works the giving of money for charity, in pursuance of what Christ has said: *But yet that which remaineth, give alms*.⁶ Against this, the Socialist cries out and demands its abolition as injurious to the native dignity of man. But if it is done in the manner which the Scripture enjoins,⁷ and in conformity with the true Christian spirit, it neither connotes pride in the giver nor inflicts shame upon the one who receives. Far from being dishonorable for man it draws closer the bonds of human society of augmenting the force of the obligation of the duties which men are under with regard to each other. No one is so rich that he does not need another's help; no one so poor as not to be useful in some way to his fellow man; and the disposition to ask assistance from others with confidence, and to grant it with kindness is part of our very nature. Thus justice and charity are so linked with

⁴ Mark vii. 2.

⁶ Luke xi. 41.

⁵ Acts x. 38.

⁷ Matt. vi. 2.

each other, under the equable and sweet law of Christ, as to form an admirable cohesive power in human society and to lead all of its members to exercise a sort of providence in looking after their own and in seeking the common good as well.

Teaching Self-Help

17. As regards not merely the temporary aid given to the laboring classes, but the establishment of permanent institutions in their behalf, it is most commendable for charity to undertake them. It will thus see that more certain and more reliable means of assistance will be afforded to the necessitous. That kind of help is especially worthy of recognition which forms the minds of mechanics and laborers to thrift and foresight so that in course of time they may be able, in part at least to look out for themselves. To aim at that is not only to dignify the duty of the rich towards the poor, but to elevate the poor themselves; for while it urges them to work for a better degree of comfort in their manner of living, it preserves them meantime from danger by checking extravagance in their desires, and acts as a spur in the practice of the virtues proper to their state. Since, therefore, this is of such great avail and so much in keeping with the spirit of the times, it is a worthy object for charity to undertake with all prudence and zeal.

Catholic Unity

18. Let it be understood, therefore, that this devotion of Catholics to comfort and elevate the mass of the people is in keeping with the spirit of the Church and is most conformable to the examples which the Church has always held up for imitation. It matters very little whether it goes under the name of "*The Popular Christian Movement*," or "*Christian Democracy*," if the instructions that have been given by Us be fully carried out with the submission that is due. But it is of the greatest importance that Catholics should be one in mind, will, and action in a matter of such great moment. And it is also of importance that the influence of these undertakings should be extended by the multiplication of men and means devoted to the same object.

The Duties of the Wealthy

19. Especially must there be appeals to the kindly assistance of those whose rank, worldly wealth, and culture give them

importance in the community. If their help is extended, scarcely anything can be done which will be of any assistance for the wants which now clamor for satisfaction in this matter of the well-being of the people. Assuredly the more earnestly many of those who are prominent in the State conspire effectively to attain that object the quicker and surer will the end be reached. We wish them to understand that they are not at all free to look after or neglect those who happen to be beneath them, but that it is a strict duty which binds them. For no one lives only for his personal advantage in a community; he lives for the common good as well, so that when others cannot contribute their share for the general object, those who can do so are obliged to make up the deficiency. The very extent of the benefits they have received increases the burden of their responsibility, and a stricter account will have to be rendered to God who bestowed those blessings upon them. What should also urge all to the fulfillment of their duty in this regard is the widespread disaster which will eventually fall upon all classes of society if this assistance does not arrive in time; and therefore is it that he who neglects the cause of the distressed poor is not doing his duty to himself or to the State.

Blending the New and the Old

20. If this social movement extends its scope far and wide in a true Christian fashion, and grows in its proper and genuine spirit, there will be no danger, as is feared, that those other institutions, which the piety of our ancestors have established and which are now flourishing, will decline or be absorbed by new foundations. Both of them spring from the same root of charity and religion, and not only do not conflict with each other, but can be made to coalesce and combine so perfectly as to provide by a union of their benevolent resources in a more efficacious manner against the graver perils and necessities of the people which confront us today.

The Threat of Socialism

21. The condition of things at present proclaims, and proclaims vehemently, that there is need for a union of brave minds with all the resources they can command. The harvest of misery is before Our eyes, and the dreadful projects of the most disastrous national upheavals are threatening Us from the growing

power of the socialistic movement. They have insidiously worked their way into the very heart of the State, and in the darkness of their secret gatherings, and in the open light of day, in their writings and their harangues, they are urging the masses onward to sedition; they fling aside religious discipline, they scorn duties the clamor only for rights; they are working incessantly on the multitudes of the needy which daily grow greater, and which, because of their poverty are easily deluded and hurried off into ways that are evil. It is equally the concern of the State and of religion, and all good men should deem it a sacred duty to preserve and guard both in the honor which is their due.

No Place for Dissension

22. That this most desirable agreement of wills should be maintained, it is essential that all refrain from giving any causes of dissension in hurting and alienating the minds of others. Hence in newspapers and in speeches to the people, let them avoid subtle and useless questions which are neither easy to solve nor to understand except by minds of unusual ability and only after the most serious study. It is quite natural for people to think differently in doubtful questions, but those who address themselves to these subjects in a proper spirit will preserve their mental calm and not forget the respect which is due to those who differ from them. If minds see things in another light it is not necessary to become alienated forthwith. To whatever opinion a man's judgment may incline, if the matter is yet open to discussion let him keep it, provided his mental attitude is such that he is ready to yield if the Holy See should otherwise decide.

Leadership Essential

23. This Catholic action, of whatever description it may be, will work with greater effect if all of the various associations, while preserving their individual rights, move together under one primary and directive force.

The Bishops' Task

24. In Italy We desire that this directive force should emanate from the Catholic Congresses and Reunions so often praised by Us, to further which Our predecessor and We Ourselves have ordered that these meetings should be controlled and guided by

the bishops of the country. So let it be for other nations, in case there be any leading organization of this description to which this matter has been legitimately entrusted.

The Clergy's Aid

25. Now in all questions of this sort where the interests of the Church and the Christian people are so closely allied, it is evident what they who are in the sacred ministry should do, and it is clear how industrious they should be in inculcating right doctrine and in teaching the duties of prudence and charity. To go out and move among the people, to exert a healthy influence on them by adopting themselves to the present condition of things is what more than once in addressing the clergy We have advised. More frequently also in writing to the bishops and other dignitaries of the Church, and especially of late (to the Minister General of the Minorities, November 25, 1898) We have lauded this affectionate solicitude for the people and declared it to be the especial duty of both the secular and regular clergy. But in the fulfillment of this obligation let there be the greatest caution and prudence exerted, and let it be done after the fashion of the saints. Francis, who was poor and humble, Vincent of Paul, the Father of the afflicted classes, and very many others whom the Church keeps ever in her memory, were wont to lavish their care upon the people, but in such wise as not to be engrossed overmuch or to be unmindful of themselves or to let it prevent them from laboring with the same assiduity in the perfection of their own soul and the cultivation of virtue.

Five Principles to Be Taught

26. There remains one thing upon which We desire to insist very strongly, in which not only the ministers of the Gospel, but also all those who are devoting themselves to the cause of the people, can with very little difficulty bring about a most commendable result. That is to inculcate in the minds of the people, in a brotherly way and whenever the opportunity presents itself, the following principles, viz.: to keep aloof on all occasions from seditious acts and seditious men; to guard inviolate the rights of others; to show a proper respect to superiors; to willingly perform the work in which they are employed; not to grow weary of the restraint of family life which in many ways is so advan-

tageous; to keep to their religious practices above all, and in their hardships and trials to have recourse to the Church for consolation. In the furtherance of all this, it is very efficacious to propose the splendid example of the Holy Family of Nazareth, and to advise the invocation of its protection, and it also helps to remind the people of the examples of sanctity which have shone in the midst of poverty, and to hold up before them the reward that awaits them in the better life to come.

Episcopal Authority and Guidance

27. Finally, We recur again to what We have already declared and We insist upon it most solemnly, viz.: that whatever projects individuals or associations form in this matter should be done with due regard to Episcopal authority and absolutely under Episcopal guidance. Let them not be led astray by an excessive zeal in the cause of charity. If it leads them to be wanting in proper submission it is not a sincere zeal; it will not have any useful result and cannot be acceptable to God. God delights in the souls of those who put aside their own designs and obey the rulers of His Church as if they were obeying Him; He assists them even when they attempt difficult things and benignly leads them to their desired end. Let them show also examples of virtue, so as to prove that a Christian is a hater of idleness and indulgence, that he gives willingly from his goods for the help of others, and that he stands firm and unconquered in the midst of adversity. Examples of that kind have a power of moving people to dispositions of soul that make for salvation, and have all the greater force as the condition of those who give them is higher in the social scale.

Appeal to the Hierarchy

28. We exhort you, Venerable Brethren, to provide for all this, as the necessities of men and of places may require, according to your prudence and your zeal, meeting as usual in council to combine with each other in your plans for the furtherance of these projects. Let your solicitude watch and let your authority be effective in controlling, compelling, and also in preventing, lest any one under the pretext of good should cause the vigor of sacred discipline to be relaxed or the order which Christ has established in His Church to be disturbed. Thus by the correct,

concurrent, and ever-increasing labor of all Catholics, the truth will flash out more brilliantly than ever, viz.: that truth and true prosperity flourish especially among those peoples whom the Church controls and influences: and that she holds it as her sacred duty to admonish every one of what the law of God enjoins to unite the rich and the poor in the bonds of fraternal charity, and to lift up and strengthen men's souls in the times when adversity presses heavily upon them.

St. Paul's Injunction

29. Let Our commands and Our wishes be confirmed by the words which are so full of apostolic charity which the blessed Paul addressed to the Romans: "I beseech you therefore brethren, be reformed in the newness of your mind; he that giveth, with simplicity; he that ruleth, with carefulness; he that showeth mercy, with cheerfulness. Let love be without dissimulation—hating that which is evil; clinging to that which is good; loving one another with the charity of brotherhood; with honor preventing one another; in carefulness, not slothful; rejoicing in hope; patient in tribulation; instant in prayer. Communicating to the necessities of the saints. Pursuing hospitality. Rejoice with them that rejoice; weep with them that weep; being of one mind to one another; to no man rendering evil for evil; providing good things not only in the sight of God but also in the sight of men."

30. As a pledge of these benefits receive the Apostolic Benediction which, Venerable Brethren, We grant most lovingly in the Lord to you and your clergy and people.

31. Given at St. Peter's in Rome, the eighteenth day of January, 1901, the thirteenth year of Our Pontificate.

LEO XIII, *Pope.*

DISCUSSION CLUB OUTLINE

By REV. GERALD C. TREACY, S.J.

Numerals Indicate Paragraphs

LESSON I

Paragraphs 1 to 6

Thinking men are concerned with the widespread economic disputes that are raging in one nation after another. These disputes owe their origin to wrong principles both moral and philosophical. There is today a keener struggle for existence due to the greater productivity of labor, and there is general discontent as the gulf between rich and poor has widened.

At the very beginning of our pontificate we called attention to these dangers threatening society. We warned Catholics against the errors of Socialism, and the destruction with which they threatened not merely the general welfare but morality and religion. That was the theme of our encyclical *Quod Apostolici Muneris*, issued on December 28, 1878. As the danger increased we did all in our power to provide against it. On May 15, 1891, we issued the encyclical *Rerum Novarum* wherein we explained the rights and duties of employers and employees, and urged a return to the precepts of the Gospel as the only remedy that could allay the strife between classes.

As a result of our apostolic endeavors Catholics and non-Catholics have benefited. Catholic action has been better organized and in places where poverty was most prevalent remedial measures have been applied, such as land banks for making loans and other societies for helping the needy. So under the guidance of the Church the poor have been aided and protected, for it must be realized that they are often as much the victims of dangerous propagandists as they are sufferers from hardship and poverty. Many names have been given to these various forms of Catholic action. One name Christian Democracy calls for an explanation as there has been much dispute among Catholics about its meaning. We think it well to end the controversy by defining what Catholics should think; moreover we intend to give some directions on Catholic action that it may be more widespread in scope and more beneficial to the State.

Christian Democracy is the opposite of Social Democracy. For Social Democracy rejects the supernatural, and makes bodily and material possessions the goal of life, and places human happiness in the attainment of these alone. It aims at the abolition of all classes, and with this achieved, all wealth will be distributed equally, and all private property abolished.

Christian Democracy on the other hand is founded on the teachings of divine Faith and while it labors for the human betterment of man, it does not neglect his eternal welfare. Christian Democracy is built on justice. It stands for the right of private property. It maintains the necessity of classes in a well-ordered State. It asserts that society must have the form and character that has been given it by The Creator. It is clear then that there can be nothing in common between Christian and Social Democracy. They are poles apart.

QUESTIONS

What is the cause of the economic disputes referred to by Pope Leo XIII?

What has been the result of the present intense struggle for existence?

Why has the gulf between rich and poor widened?

State the theme of the encyclical *Quod Apostolici Muneris* alluded to by the Pope.

State the theme of the *Rerum Novarum* mentioned by Pope Leo XIII.

What conclusions must be drawn by those who have read these encyclicals?

State some practical results following from the issuance of these documents.

Have the poor been victims only of poverty?

Define Christian Democracy.

Explain the errors of Social Democracy.

Is Christian Democracy concerned only with the material betterment of the people?

State the three main tenets of Christian Democracy.

Social and Christian Democracy are in no sense the same. Explain.

LESSON II

Paragraphs 7 to 10

It is wrong to use the term Christian Democracy in a political sense. While by its name it denotes popular rule, what it really means is *beneficent Christian action* in behalf of the people. As it is the application of the principles of the Natural Law and the Gospel to human life, it cannot be bound up with any particular form of civil government but must adapt itself to every just form of civic rule. It remains outside the field of party rivalries and political changes, and calls for Christian living by the people no matter what the form of government may be. So Catholics interested in the welfare of the people must not aim at establishing one form of government rather than another.

It is not exclusively dedicated to one class of society. It is dedicated to all for it is *Christian charity in action*. It looks on all men as members of one family who have God for their Father and Christ for their Redeemer. While laboring for the workers, it knows that its labor must benefit other classes in society as well. It strives to co-ordinate all classes in society. The harmony of all classes not the conflict of classes is according to God's Law and the Law of Nature.

Obedience to authority civil and ecclesiastical is one of the first duties of the true Christian. Civic obedience to all who hold office in the State is binding on the Christian conscience. This is the clear teaching of our

Lord, of St. Paul and of the Church. Obedience to the Pope, the bishops and all wielding Church authority is also fundamental in Christian life. Without this two-fold obedience there can be no Christian Democracy.

We hope that the meaning of the name of Christian Democracy is now clear to all. We trust all will understand that the efforts of Christian Democracy to better the conditions of the workers are worth while. For these efforts aim at making the workers' condition more tolerable enabling them gradually to rise above pressing poverty, to lead human lives as Christians should, and so reach the destiny that God has given them. For the workers are men and not mere animals, Christians not pagans. Christian Democracy must help the worker attain the *one thing necessary* and protect him against the poison of Socialism.

QUESTIONS

Has Christian Democracy a political meaning?

Why are the precepts of the Natural Law and of the Gospel not dependent on particular forms of government?

Sum up these precepts.

Should Catholics engaged in social action aim at a special form of government?

Is Christian Democracy exclusively concerned with the poor?

What follows from the fact that Christian Democracy must follow the law of charity?

How did St. Paul express this law?

State St. Paul's teaching on civic obedience and on obedience to Church authority.

Mention the aims of Christian Democracy as detailed by the Pope.

LESSON III

Paragraphs 11 to 16

The social question is not merely economic. It is first of all a moral and religious question and only moral and religious principles will solve it. For suppose the productivity of capital doubled, working hours were shortened, and food prices reduced, and yet the worker listened to teachings against God and religion—as he often does and acts upon them—what follows? His labor deteriorates and his earnings decrease. Practical experience shows that many a worker is in a sorry plight in spite of high wages and short hours, because religion has lost its hold on him and so he is not living according to God's Law. Without the influence of religion on human character, you may try as you will but you cannot provide prosperity. That is why we have not encouraged plans for the betterment of the workers unless those plans have back of them the spirit of religion.

However, Catholic interest in the workers is worthy of all commendation as it is a development of Catholic charity, and the fulfillment of that

new commandment that Christ gave to His followers. For it must be remembered that the law of charity completes the law of justice. While it is primarily concerned with eternal values it does not neglect the temporal. For our Lord Himself when asked by the disciples of John the Baptist if He were the Messiah, grounded His claim to the office of Messiah on the corporal works of mercy He was doing. And when He spoke of the final judgment He declared He would examine the charity that men showed one another. For whatever works of kindness they did for each other, they did for Him. The poor man is Christ poor.

Our Lord then not only taught charity in the full sense of the word, He practiced it, for "He went about doing good and healing all that were oppressed by the devil" (Acts x. 38). At the foundation of Christianity the Apostles emulated His example and so did the first Christians. The permanence of the tradition of charity is evidenced in the history of the Church, and the institutions that she founded for the alleviation of human misery. Wherever her influence was felt, the beauty of charity shone, in contrast to the dull drab selfishness that was characteristic of paganism. This has been the peculiar glory of Christian civilization.

Almsgiving a peculiarly Christian virtue which enobles the giver and the recipient is a praiseworthy practice befitting the follower of Christ. It is according to Christian tradition and makes for friendliness in human relationships. For truly there is none so rich that he does not need something, none so poor that he cannot help someone who is poorer. So justice and charity blended as they should be, according to the kindly law of the Gospel, maintain the bonds of human society.

QUESTIONS

The social question is not merely economic. Explain.

Where does its solution lie?

Will shorter hours, and reduction of food prices, solve the problem of Labor?

Many a worker lives poorly in spite of shorter hours and higher pay. Explain.

What must be the center of all Catholic social action?

The law of charity completes the law of justice. Explain.

State the meaning of the New Commandment.

Is it applicable only to eternal interests?

What did our Lord point to in proof of His office as Messiah?

What did our Lord say would be the test of reward and punishment on the Last Day?

What type of compassion did Christ say would receive a reward?

What are the signal examples that our Saviour gave in His own Life?

How did the Apostles exemplify Christ's teaching?

How has the Church exemplified it through the ages?

The Socialists condemn almsgiving as derogatory to man. Refute this.

State the effects of justice and charity on human society.

LESSON IV

Paragraphs 17 to 22

Permanent help for the workers is one of the best forms of charity. To teach them thrift and the habit of saving, is to develop their power of self-help and enable them to provide for the needs of the future. And besides helping the worker this form of charity helps the better-off to fulfill their duties in regard to the poor.

Be it remembered that the Catholic social apostolate, by whatever name it is called must be *Catholic*. Its action must be united action under the direction of the Holy See. Its scope must be continually broadened. And unless the most influential classes in the State are interested in Catholic social action, little can be done to better the condition of the working classes.

We remind the rich that they have a duty to the poor. They cannot in good conscience consider this duty lightly. For men live in society not only for their individual good but for the common good. As some are too poor to contribute to the common good, it is the duty of those who have the means to contribute more generously. The extent of this obligation is measured by the amount of wealth possessed. The larger the amount the greater the obligation of supplying the needs of the poor. Failure to realize this will bring catastrophe not only to the poor, but to the rich themselves and to the whole body politic.

If an enterprise such as we describe should really take hold and flourish, it does not mean that our older organizations of Christian charity would be abandoned or absorbed by the new organization. All having the same aim should work in unison for the betterment of the people. For the people have need of help in these times when the poison of Socialism is spreading more and more, openly and secretly directed at making the people discontented and rebellious. It finds a fertile field among the very poor whose lot is such a hard one, with the result that not only religion but the State at present is in danger, and it is the plain duty of every right-minded man to be active in defending the one and the other.

To achieve necessary unity of Catholic action there must be no disagreement in principles. A difference of view in questions of policy is to be expected. But this difference should not lead to acrimonious disputes that do nothing but harm the sublime cause that is at stake. And whenever differences of opinion arise and cannot be adjusted, all must remember that the final decision as to policy rests with the Apostolic See.

QUESTIONS

Show that the teaching of self-help is true charity.

Zeal for the relief of the people must be in keeping with the mind of the Church. Explain.

Show how the help of the well-to-do is necessary in Catholic popular action.

Are the rich free to help or not to help those who are in need?

He who neglects the poor acts against his personal interest. Explain.

What does the Pope say of the methods of Socialism in dealing with the poor?

Compare these methods with those of present day Communism.

How much liberty of opinion should be allowed in Catholic social action?

LESSON V

Paragraphs 23 to 31

All Catholic action will be more effective, if its different parts or organizations have one guiding head. The Institute of Catholic Congresses and Assemblies in Italy serves this purpose, acting of course under the guidance of the several bishops. This should be done in other nations.

It is evident that in an enterprise of this kind the priesthood should be actively concerned. Again and again in speaking to the clergy We have urged them to get out among the people and make their priestly influence felt. And in their apostolate among the poor let them follow the example of St. Francis and St. Vincent de Paul who while wholly absorbed in work for the people, never neglected the one thing important, namely the salvation and perfection of their own souls.

There are five lessons that not only priests but all who engage in the apostolate among the workers must teach: The avoidance of violence and the advocates of violence; respect for everyone's rights; loyalty to employers by doing an honest day's work; treasuring the home life which is so fruitful of good; and above all the practice of religion as the one sure consolation in the hardships of life. The great ideal of the working family is the Holy Family of Nazareth. Finally we enjoin that whatever plans are undertaken in the interest of the people must meet with episcopal approval. No good can come from any scheme that is attempted without the blessing of obedience. Moreover, let the leaders who are working for the betterment of the people, set them the example of real Christian living. The more influential the position of the leader, the more forceful will be his good example. We urge the bishops to take the lead in these enterprises, guiding them with their fatherly authority, and keeping them under the protection of the Church, whose office it is to direct all according to the command of Christ, to unite rich and poor in fraternal charity, and to uplift and strengthen the hearts of men in their battle with the problems of life.

QUESTIONS

What part should a central society play in the Catholic social apostolate?

What part should the bishops and clergy take in this?

Why are St. Francis and St. Vincent the exemplars of the clergy in social work?

Name the five points that the Pope wishes stressed with the people.

What above all things should those who engage in social work keep in mind?

In what matters should the Christian social worker give example?

What does the Pope say to the bishops in regard to social work?

How does St. Paul express the Catholic social ideal?

