

**Three Sermons Against Racism by Archbishop
Stepinac**

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INTRODUCTION

Alojzije Stepinac was born during 1898 in the north of Croatia. Conscripted into the Austrian army in 1916, he was wounded, became a prisoner of war in 1918 and volunteered for the 'Yugoslav Legion'. After the armistice he studied agriculture before managing his father's main farm. Although he became engaged, his fiance felt she could not live up to his very high Christian ideals. Some time later, he went to Rome to try his vocation and was ordained in 1930. Returning to Croatia he specialized in organizing charity for the poor and in 1936 became the youngest bishop in the world. Two years later he was made Archbishop of Zagreb, and was very active in combating the spread of Nazi and Communist ideas.

When the Germans invaded Yugoslavia in 1941, they recognized Croatian independence. While this was popular with the Croats including Stepinac, the Croats were not permitted to chose their rulers. Hitler approved of a government composed of members from the small Ustasha party which had seized power. The new state, normally refered to as the 'NDH', consisted of both Croatia and Bosnia and, being very mountainous, was difficult to control. For five years it was a place of turmoil with Serbs, Croats, Moslems, Communists, Germans and Italians in constant vicious combat.

Atrocities, massacres, ethnic cleansing, and the killing of 'class' and racial enemies, reached horrifying dimensions. The Catholic clergy, led by their bishops tried to quieten passions, aid victims and to petition the various authorities to discipline those of their members guilty of crimes.

Most of this was done privately so as to avoid their words being misused by political factions as propaganda. But from time to time Stepinac used his cathedral pulpit to stress the dignity of every human being. His words were banned from the radio and press, but many priests and lay Catholics were arrested while passing copies of the sermons around in leaflet form.

Excerpts have been quoted in our 'Croatia 1941-46'. But in order to appreciate the full force of his words, it is necessary to read the complete sermons. We present here three which he preached in 1943.

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The Sermon of the Archbishop in the Cathedral on the Anniversary of the Coronation of Pope Pius XII, March 14,1943

"And thou, being once converted, confirm thy brethren" (Lk. 22:32).

Catholic Men and Woman, Catholic Youth, My Beloved Faithful!

During the Last Supper while the Apostles like weak men were quarreling among themselves about who would be the greatest among them, Jesus Christ addressed the following words to Simon Peter: "Simon, Simon, behold Satan has desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not; and thou, being once converted, confirm thy brethren." He said to Him, "Lord, I am ready to go with thee, both into prison and to death." But He said, "I say to thee, Peter, the cock shall not crow this day, till thou thrice deniest that thou knowest me" (Lk..2:31-34).

And truly! Peter, through human weakness, denied knowing Jesus during His bitter passion. God allowed this in order to deliver Peter from his pride and to affirm humility in him. But there is one thing that Peter did not do! He did not conceal nor abandon his belief that Jesus Christ was the true and living God, that He was the Saviour of the world. On account of this, we should not be astonished, if we read in Holy Scripture how St. Peter appeared as master of the truths that the Son of God had revealed and how he taught them to the Apostles that he might continue to reveal them to the world. This was shown best when the first Council was assembled at Jerusalem, under the leadership of Peter, to resolve the difficulties presented by the narrow criteria of certain individuals who did not yet understand that Christianity was, in its essence, above all nationality; that it did not separate people, but that it reunited them in one great family and in one great community of love and mutual respect. St. Peter appeared, as chief of the Apostles, against the destroyers of that great family of Christians into which all nations must enter. This, because St. Peter was destined, according to the order of God, to be the infallible teacher of the faith; in the words of the holy Council of the Vatican, "This doctrine of the apostles has been accepted by all the venerable Fathers, and the holy faithful Teachers have respected it and followed it, absolutely convinced that the Throne of Peter keeps itself free from all error in accordance with the Divine promise of the Lord our Saviour given to the chief of His disciples, 'have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and thou, being more convinced, confirm thy brethren'" (DB, 1836).

My dear faithful today we fix our eyes on that rock of solid principles in the midst of the raging sea of the opinions of men; we fix our eyes on that lamp of truth in the midst of the shadows and the lies of false doctrines; we direct our vision toward that home of love and of peace among men, peoples, and states from this hell of hate into which humanity has fallen. The devil has sought according to the words of Christ to sift the Apostles like wheat, that is to say, to kill in them their faith in Christ. But Christ prayed that the faith of Peter might not be weakened, but that he, after being convinced, might confirm his brothers. Over the centuries Satan has tried constantly to uproot from the hearts and souls of men all belief in the One God, and along with faith in God, all principles of morality, honesty, true civil order, and, in place of them, establish throughout the world the triumph of lies, hypocrisy, and hate. The eyes of all mankind looked during centuries, and today look more than ever, toward the throne of Peter to hear from it these words of truth, of consolation, and of salvation.

Catholic men and women, Catholic faithful! If you should ask me what we justly regard today to be the immense importance of the Pontificate for the human race, I should reply: the defense of that which is trampled upon, more or less, over the entire world; the defense of the dignity of the human person, the defense of the rights of the family, the defense of the weak.

Yes! It is without doubt one of the gravest errors of our times that the dignity and merit of the human person has fallen so low. When the value of money fell — the world had already accustomed itself to that in the last war — no one saw anything extraordinary in it. The world had also accustomed itself to the failure of so many other material values. But the mind of normal man can reconcile itself to the collapse of the dignity of the human person, to the fall of the value of man. Because, whether he believes in a personal God or not, each one, and even the worshiper of materialism, feels in the depths of his soul — and confesses it by his whole life — that he is not and cannot be the same thing as his dog; that he is not and cannot be the same thing as a small cog in a machine; that he is not and cannot be the same thing as a soap bubble that a playful child breaks in the air with a straw. Each one, and even this idolater when he rages most against God, feels in the depths of his soul the significance of the words, "*ad majora natus sum!*" I am, however, born for something higher. And he who has kept the faith best, he who carries in his soul the invincible realization of the existence of God the Creator, knows that man is never the chance effect of a nebulous, pantheistic evolution; but rather the work of the will of God who said, "Let us make man to our image and likeness" (Gen. 1:26). Consequently, every man, of whatever race or nation, whether he has studied in the universities of the civilized centers of Europe or hunts his food in the virgin forests of Africa, carries equally on himself the stamp of God the Creator and possesses inalienable rights which must not be taken from him nor arbitrarily limited by any human power. Each of them has the right to marriage, the right of physical life, the right to the life of the soul, the right to a religious education, the right to use material goods in so far as not contrary to just laws which protect the interests of the whole community; and many other rights. Every violation of these rights of the human person can only have evil consequences. And if today we sigh so much after peace, I repeat the words of Pope Pius XII, who gloriously rules the Church, which appear in his message of last Christmas, "Let him who wishes that the star of peace appear, as it did in earlier times to the Wise Men, and that it may remain above human society, contribute, on his part, in rendering to the human person the dignity that God has given it since the beginning of time" (*Osservatore Romano*, 1942, No. 300, p. 2).

The Pontificate is today a solid bulwark in the defense of the family and its sanctity. The full meaning of this can only be grasped by witnessing the tears of those who are in danger of the destruction of their families. This past week we have seen such tears and listened to the sobs even of stalwart men, and the cries of women without assistance, over whom this danger hung, for the sole reason that the sanctity of their families did not conform to the theories of racism. We, as representatives of the Church, could not and should not keep silent without betraying our mission. We repeat the words of Jesus Christ Himself, "What therefore God hath joined together, let no man put asunder." And today we proclaim it in public as well. No one denies the right of the secular authority to punish proved crimes. It has that right and that duty. But no one gives to human authority the right to violate the sanctity of the family or of a marriage which has been concluded on the foundation of the natural and positive law of God.

In any case it would be false to think that the Catholic Church would approve of measures which violate the elementary rights of man. There is still another reason why the Church cannot do so, because by such measures more and more individuals are driven into the ranks of the enemies of the present government because they cannot suffer — despite the best will — their families to be destroyed and annihilated, while they are conscientiously doing their duty to the state, on the battlefields, and elsewhere, where they strive to be trustworthy and useful citizens of the community in which they live. The great Pope Pius XII emphasized in his Christmas message, "Let him who wishes that the star of peace shine above human society repel any form of materialism which considers the nation only a mass of individuals — broken up and without any interior bond — to be arbitrarily dominated" (*Osservatore Romano, ibid.*).

As in the case of the doctrines on the natural law and on the equality of all men, the popes have not been indifferent to the question of nationality; rather have they always exalted the praiseworthy and noble qualities of individual nations and defended their rights if they were exposed to danger. But they have never considered them through the narrow prism of human passions, which makes of one's own nation an idol before which all must prostrate themselves; but instead through the prism of the Gospels which sees in these nations only the work of God the Creator with the fixed purpose of serving the glory of God as well as the national community. Only when considered in this way, does the Christmas message of Pope Pius XII ring true: "Within the scope of the new social order, based on moral principles, there is no place for the violation of the liberty, inviolability or security of other nations, no matter what their territorial extent or their capacity for defense. If, it is inevitable that large states because of their

greater capacities and power dictate conditions in the establishment. of economic groups between themselves and smaller and weaker nations, the rights of the smaller and weaker nations are, nevertheless, incontestable, according to the common good which does not distinguish their rights from the rights of larger nations: the right to liberty in their political domain; the right to guard actively their neutrality in quarrels between states, which right belongs to them by natural and national law; the right to defend their economic development. It is only in this way that they will be able to achieve — in the interest of the common good - the material and spiritual prosperity of a true nation" (*Osservatore Romano*, 1941).

Only if viewed through the Gospels, as in the declaration of Pope Pius XII now gloriously reigning, can it be seen that, "In the realm of the new order, founded on moral principles, there is no place for open or disguised pressure on the cultural particularities or languages of national minorities, nor place for the obstruction or denial of their economic possibilities, and no one may limit or make impossible their natural expansion. The more the competent authorities conscientiously respect the rights of minorities, the more they are able to exact from the members of minorities an honest performance of their duties as citizens which are common to other citizens" (*Osservatore Romano*, 1941).

The popes of Rome have taken this position in the past, and the present Pope, Pius XII, takes this same view of our nation. If other peoples accept this doctrine the Croatian people will secure all the rights which belong to them in accordance with natural and Divine Law. If our people will observe this same doctrine, taught from the Throne of Peter, they will be happy and blest by God, because it is only truth and justice which can, in the last analysis, save individuals and peoples.

My dear faithful, Catholic men and women! It is said that above the entrance of the main hall at the University of Uppsala is written in golden letters, "To think freely is a great thing, but to think justly is yet a greater thing." Yes, the intelligence of man is only too liable to error and it needs someone to correct it if, unhappily, it should stray from the way of truth.

And almighty God rendered an enormous service to humanity in giving to it an infallible teacher in questions of faith and morals. That is the Pope! We regard in him the deputy of Christ on earth, and we pray today, on the occasion of the fourth anniversary of his coronation, that God may protect him, grant him a long and happy life, and that He will not abandon him to the will of his enemies.

Sermon Delivered in Zagreb, October 25, 1943

Christ, You are the King of centuries, You are the Prince of all peoples.
You are the Sole judge of all minds and of all hearts
(Hymn I, Vesp. *Christi Regis*).

Catholic Men and Woman, Catholic Faithful!

When we look about us in this world, and when we consider what goes on around us, we conclude that all that is created on this earth is subject to change. There are the vegetable and mineral kingdoms which are subject to change. There are the seasons which are subject to change. There is the firmament and the depths of the sea which are subject to change. And there is man who is also subject to change. On leaving his crib, where his mother's hands had put him, he learns to walk; from the age of a little boy he grows to adolescence; from the age of adolescence he grows to manhood, only to find himself in a short time a weak old man at the edge of the tomb, to become again the dust from which he was made. And human power is also changing on earth. Today millions tremble before individuals whose names will evoke no memory tomorrow.

There exists one power which knows no end, which knows no rival, which knows no fear, and which knows no change. That is the Royal Power of Jesus Christ, Son of God, of whom the Apostle said, "Jesus Christ, yesterday, and today, and the same forever!" (Hebr. 13:8.)

It is to this immortal King that the Church sings today from the canticles, "Christ, You are the King of centuries, You are the Prince of all peoples, You are the Sole judge of all minds and hearts." It is to this "King of kings, and Lord of lords" (Apoc. 19:16) that we have come today, to adore Him, full of a lively faith, of profound humility, and with hearts full of repentance.

Let us reflect His royal power and on our relations with Him both as individuals and nations. If individuals and peoples were conscious of what they really are before God, and of what their functions were, there would be less misery on earth and more happiness.

What are we as individuals? As individuals we resemble Lazarus in his tomb. He would have stayed for all eternity in this darkness tomb if the Light of the World, Jesus Christ, had not bent over his tomb and if He had not said, "Lazarus, come forth" (Jn 11:43). Each of us is nothingness and would have remained so eternally if the love of God and the power of God

had not called him to life and if it had not maintained him in life. All men of good will join with St. Paul the Apostle, "By the grace of God, I am what I am" (1 Cor. 15:10).

How, then, must we judge those individuals who raise their heads proudly as if God no longer existed on the earth and as if the law of the Gospels were superfluous? We ought to say to them that which Christ said to the unfaithful city of Capharnaum, "And you, Capharnaum, will you raise yourself to the sky? You will descend into hell" (Mt. 21:23).

And what, before God, are the peoples and races of this world? It is worth while to suggest this subject at a time when the theories of class, race, and nationality have become the main topics of discussion among men.

The first thing that we affirm is that all nations, without exception, are as nothing before God. "All nations are before him as if they had no being at all" says the prophet, "and are counted to him as nothing, and vanity" (Isa. 40:17). These words of the prophet have already found their affirmation many times in the history of the world, when the Divine Hand, for various reasons, has swept individual nations from the face of the earth. It is, moreover, in the act of doing that today to every nation, if as nations they do not conform to the laws given by God, because "The Lord made the little and the great" (Wisd. 6:8).

The second thing that we affirm is that all nations and all races have their origin in God. Only one race really exists and that is the divine race. Its birth certificate is found in the book of Genesis, when the Divine Hand formed the first man from earthly clay and breathed into him the spirit of life (Gen. 2:7). He made him as well a woman, blessed them saying, "Increase and multiply, and fill the earth" (Gen. 1:23). Among all who belong to that race, entrance into the world and their departure from it is the same and will remain the same until the end of time, for it is written by the Divine Hand for all, "For dust thou art and unto dust thou shalt return" (Gen. 3:19). Those who belong to the race may have a greater or lesser culture, may be white or black, separated by oceans, live at the North or the South pole, but they remain essentially the race which comes from God and which must serve God according to the norms of the divine natural and positive law, written in the hearts and in the souls of men and revealed by the Son of God, Jesus Christ, Prince of all peoples.

But why, then, the different nations? What is their function? They are all here, without exception, for the glory of God. Because, even if God is in Himself a simple being, for us men His greatness and His beauty are made

more evident by the diversity of created things. How much God ought to be admired in the creation of the vegetable kingdom with colors so varied! The mineral kingdom so diverse! The animal kingdom so diversified! The enormous number of stars in the sky! The immense oceans! But does not His greatness manifest itself in an extraordinary manner, as well as His wisdom and His power, by the fact that He created such a great number of peoples on the earth, with such different languages? This diversity of languages and peoples can lead to much rivalry among nations and much cultural progress, as life is much more animated in families where there are many children!

Finally, nationality as such can be a strong factor in resisting the moral decadence which springs from and is propagated by another nation. God, therefore, had great and wise reasons when He created diversity among peoples and when He gave the commandment of sincere love for one's own nation to the hearts and souls of men.

But this diversity must not become a source of mutual destruction. For the third thing that we affirm is that all nations and all races, as reflected in the world today have the right to lead a life worthy of men and to be treated with the dignity with which one treats a man. All of them without exception, whether they belong to the race of Gypsies or to another, whether they are Negroes or civilized Europeans, whether they are detested Jews or proud Aryans, have the same right to say, "Our Father, who art in Heaven" (Mt. 6:9). And if God has given this right to all, what is the human power that can deny it? All nations, no matter what their names, have the same duty: to beat their breasts and to say, "And forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us" (Mt. 6:12).

That is why the Catholic Church has always condemned, and condemns today as well, every injustice and every violence committed in the name of the theories of class, race, or nationality. One cannot exterminate intellectuals from the face of the earth because it may be agreeable to the working class, as Bolshevism has taught and done. One cannot extinguish from the face of the earth Gypsies or Jews because one considers them inferior races. If the racist theories, which have no foundation, are to be applied without scruples, is there any security for any nation at all? The Catholic Church had the courage in the very recent past, as it always has when it is necessary to lift its voice against the secret work of international Freemasonry, against the moral deprivation of our youth by the unscrupulous press, against crimes of abortion practiced by those who, without conscience, are eager only for material gains. It had the courage to defend our Croatian national rights, and to hurl that word of defense before

crowned heads. It would be unfaithful to its duty if it did not raise its voice today, with the same energy, in defense of all those who suffer from injustices, without consideration of the race to which they belong. No one has the right to kill or harm in any way those who belong to another race or another nation. That can be done only by the legitimate authorities, if they had proved the crime of an individual and if the crime merits such punishment.

These things, moreover, are those which look to the interests, justly understood, and the love, well comprehended, of one's own country which are and remain for a Catholic not empty words but the moral duty for which he is responsible to God.

Catholic men and women! Faithful Catholics! Today is the feast of Christ the King. Not a king whose power lasts for today and tomorrow, but the feast of the Prince of princes! And of this Prince it is written, "For the nation and the kingdom that will not serve Thee, shall perish, such nations will be totally laid waste" (Isa. 60:12). This is what history has shown many times. It will show it again if the present-day nations reject the law of the Gospels and if they should repel Christ.

Your duty is to work in such a way that the spirit of the true Gospel may be introduced into our public and private life. For in the Gospels man is closest to God, and, so to speak, only in the Gospels can the human person find fulfilment. God has placed man as the crown and the earth, and master of all creation. "Increase and multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue , and rule over the fishes of the sea, and the fowls of the air, and all living creatures creatures that move upon the earth" (Gen. 1:28). And that human personality, which our modern age has degraded to the rank of slave to creatures, must become again the center around which all creation revolves according to the plan laid down by the Creator of the world. Because the least human being, whatever his name, to whatever race or nation he belongs, carries upon himself the imprint of the living God, an immortal soul.

One of the reasons that impelled Christopher Columbus, convinced that he would find land beyond the sea was the desire to lead new nations to Christ. After his return, when he was questioned about the new countries, he described the wealth and marvels of the new world with enthusiasm. But he concluded his description with the words, "India" — for he thought that America was India — "India is beautiful and rich, but the most beautiful jewel of India is the souls of the Indians." Yes! That is the most beautiful jewel of every man, for which, when it was lost and in order to restore it, the

Son of God, Jesus Christ Himself, descended from heaven, to give up not only all he had, but even give His own life on the cross to redeem this jewel — the soul of man — from the mire of sin, to pick it up, and to save it.

Catholic men and woman! Catholic faithful! It often happens, as a man walks across fields and climbs mountains, that he treads upon jewels or upon gold which is hidden underfoot, and of which he has no inkling. But in his ignorance there is no tragedy. It is much more tragic that men pass over that which is the most beautiful in man, that which renders him like unto God, over his own immortal soul and that of others. Away with that ignorance. Let everyone be conscious of his dignity as man! Let him be conscious of his royal vocation as a child of God, above all today when we celebrate the Feast of Christ the King, the King of centuries, the King of peoples, but especially the King of the immortal souls of men, to whom be glory and honor throughout the centuries. Amen.

Sermon at the Closing of the Procession of Penance at Zagreb,
October 31, 1943

Dear Faithful, Dear Brothers:

We have just finished the great procession of penance in our city of Zagreb which is, at the same time, the close of our devotions in honor of the Blessed Virgin during the month of October. What shall I say to you at the close of this procession? A certain writer tells the story of a peasant who every day brought five pounds of butter to the baker of his town, which he needed to bake his bread, and who also, every day, used to carry away with him from the baker's a five pound loaf of bread. It happened that one day the baker set about weighing the butter, and to his surprise he discovered that the peasant had brought him only four and a half pounds of butter. He called the peasant to account for cheating. But the peasant answered him quietly, "My friend, I am not guilty, for although naturally I have a scale, I have no weights. Because of that I always put your bread on one side of the scale, and on the other side my butter. I put exactly as much butter on the scale as the weight of your loaf." The baker did not believe this. But when he used a more accurate scale he saw that the peasant was right, and since that time the baker has given his customers an exact measure of bread.

You will ask me, perhaps, what has this to do with the procession of penance. I shall apply this parable to our lives today. Whether people believe or whether they do not believe, God is our Creator, and we are the wretched of the earth who owe to our Creator veneration and obedience, in other words, we are debtors of God. And yet it is already more than two

hundred years since Europe, as well as the entire world, has tried to appear more intelligent than God and refused to God the veneration due Him.

How can we describe the outrages to God in the newspapers and books of the past twenty years? How can we describe the criminal abortions over the years in the name of so-called science and of social advancement? How can we describe the corruption in the lives of numerous husbands and wives? How can we describe the evil that the pagan fashions of the woman of our day have brought? How can we describe the debauchery and immorality to be seen on the beaches and at bathing places? It is enough to recall only our own river, the Sava. But what good does it do to prolong this? The prophet summed up all the vices of humanity in one word when he said, "For my iniquities are gone over my head; and as a heavy burden are become heavy upon me" (Ps 37:5). It is thus that we have measured for God, our Creator. It is completely understandable that God has measured for us, then, just as did the peasant. For Christ has said "with what measure you mete, it shall be measured to you again" (Mt. 7:2). And God has meted to humanity a just measure. He reduces to dust and ashes the cities which have forgotten their duty of honoring their God. He reduces to dust and ashes the villages that take His Most Sacred Name in vain and violates the Lord's Day instead of blessing Him for the bread He gives them and for the air they breathe.. He reduces to dust men's works of art so that they might know that the most beautiful work is a pure human soul, the temple of the living God and which so many people have turned by their sins into a robber's den. It is today that the words of the Apostle, St. Paul, are realized, "it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God" (Hebr, 10.31). Since we are fallen, on account of our sins, into the hands of the living God who destroys not only individual cities and villages but also entire nations, our good sense tells us that we must humble ourselves before God like the debauched Ninevites and that we must repent with a sincere penance for our sins which cry to heaven for vengeance if we wish to save ourselves from total ruin. And these are the reasons for which we have prayed this whole month and for which we had our procession of penance.

This provides the opportunity to reply in public to innumerable officious advisors, of both Right and Left, who suggest to the representatives of the Catholic Church how they should proceed so that the guilt of numerous crimes which are committed and are being committed, does not fall on the Church.

Some accuse us of not raising our voices in time against crimes which have occurred in certain sections of our country. We reply to them first of all, that we are not and that we do not wish to be a political trumpet of any sort,

blowing according to the desires and momentary needs of certain parties or individuals. We have always asserted the value in public life of the principles of the eternal law of God *without regard to whether it is applied to Croats, Serbs, Jews, Bohemians, Catholics, Mohammedans, or Orthodox.*

But we cannot physically force anyone to fulfill the eternal laws of God, because every man has free will and each will answer for his actions according to the words of the Apostle, "For everyone shall bear his own burden" (Gal. 6:5). *For this reason we are unable to answer longer for those hotheads and extremists among the clergy.* The future will show that the Catholic Church has not failed in its duty; it will be demonstrated when things can be discussed in a calmer fashion, and the facts are all in. But today we wish to propose a question to certain groups and national organizations: Was it the Catholic Church that provoked the war which has had such terrible consequences, or was it someone else? Was it the Catholic Church which, year after year, created in the souls of men the discontent and brutality which has had such tragic results? How many times has the Catholic Church, during these past twenty years, reminded all the representatives of the intellectual and political communities that they should cease trampling on human and national rights, that they should cease destroying the generous humanity and the morality of the people through the press and the cinema. All in vain! The wind blew despite our efforts and warnings and became the terrible storm which all true Catholics regret profoundly but which all our most loyal efforts could not prevent. And for that we reply to the first group of those who reproach us: It is in you that is realized the story of the peasant and the baker. And if anyone thinks that the Catholic Church trembles before the future on account of its conduct, he is in error. The Church stands serene with a clear conscience, ready to face any situation which may arise.

We reply to those who accuse us of pro-communism, and of alleged inaction, that the Catholic Church is not an institution which lasts from today until tomorrow, but it is an organization which has survived and will yet survive innumerable states, nations, and transformations. It is not an institution which would make an agreement with communism today and tomorrow deny that agreement and fight a war of extermination. The Catholic Church has, moreover, made clear an indefinite number of times what it thinks, and where it stands. The Catholic Church can never recognize a system that seeks to take from the peasant his land; from the craftsman his shop; from a private person the fortune acquired through honest work; from the worker the fruits of his toil and, in general, from man his soul. If social reforms are indispensable, as they are, if a more just division is needed, and

that is what we preach, then no one has proposed a better solution than Pope Leo XIII and Pope Pius XI in their immortal encyclicals, *Rerum Novarum* and *Quadragesimo Anno*. That is our social program. It is put to work to perfection in our religious communities where such a way of life is uniquely possible because its basis is God and the bond between subordinates in Christian charity, sanctified on the cross of Christ. And when we say that we cannot recognize the system that aspires to take from the peasant his land and render him the slave of the state, we rely on more than merely right reason; we rely on experience which says that a peasant would prefer to die rather than let himself become a slave on his own land. We cannot tolerate a system that denies the family, which the Church sees as a divine institution and the fundamental unit of every nation. To wish to make a man and woman husband and wife only for the time that sexual relations exist, to wish to take from the family its sacred sacramental character, to prevent it from being the source of life and the place of the education of children, to wish to take the child from his parents and declare him the property of the state — all that means the undermining of the very principles of the natural law of life and the destruction not only of the family but also of the nation and the national community. We cannot recognize a system that would deny God himself, the Creator of the universe, and reduce the profession of a belief in God to the interior of four walls, where no one could hear or see us. We cannot recognize a system which refuses to little children the knowledge of God which is given to them by religious instructions in the schools taught by priests. If the entire visible universe is the creation of God, and is not the result of fortuitous chance, for chance is the God of fools, then the entire universe must revere God, it must revere Him in all phases of public life. ***This is our point of view, from which we will not retreat even at the cost of our lives, and the future will show as always that the Catholic Church has been right and that it cannot be otherwise. We do not profess these principles from today to tomorrow; we do not profess them through fear or out of personal interests, but only because of interior necessity, conscious that this conforms to the will of God the Creator.*** That is our reply to the charge that the Catholic Church is disposed to pro-communism or is perhaps partial to it. But those persons who reproach us in such a manner would, perhaps, do better if they would knock on the door of their own consciences and ask this question: are there not a great number of people who took refuge in the forests, not because of a conviction of the truth of communism, but very often out of despair, on account of the brutal methods of a few thoughtless individuals who thought that they could do whatever they liked and that there was for them no law, human or divine? Is it not here again that the story of the baker and the peasant is illustrated? Was the Church able to prevent this terrible

destruction, although it condemned it, when its teachings were so cynically spurned?

Finally, we will answer also those who accuse us of favoring racism because as you know in the minds of some people the Catholic Church is capable of anything. We have defined our position concerning racism ever since it existed and not merely now. That position is brief and precise. ***The Catholic Church knows nothing of races born to rule and races doomed to slavery. The Catholic Church knows races and nations only as creatures of God, and, if it esteems one more than others, it is because it possesses a more generous heart, not because one has the strongest arm. For it the Negro of Central Africa is as much a man as the European. For it the king in a royal palace is, as a man, exactly the same as the lowest pauper or gypsy in his tent.*** It sees no difference between them. Both possess an immortal soul, both have the same royal origin, finding their source in God the Creator. That is the racial doctrine of the Catholic Church, and all others are mere vulgar speculation and innuendo.

The Catholic Church cannot admit that one race or one nation, because it is more numerous or better armed, may do violence to a smaller nation with fewer people. We cannot admit that innocent people may be killed because someone, say a frontier guard, has, perhaps, killed a soldier, even if he is of a more noble race. The system of shooting hundreds of hostages for a crime, when the person guilty of the crime cannot be found, is a pagan system which only results in evil. It is absolutely certain that if order is sought with such measures, many people who up to now have obeyed the voice of the Church, although exposed to the terror, will, finally, attempt to seek safety in the forests. Is it not again, then, the realization of the story of the baker and the peasant?

Finally, I realize the question in the minds of the thousands listening to me: what order does the Catholic Church propose at a time when the entire world is fighting for a new order?

We condemn all injustice; all murder of innocent people; all burning of peaceful villages; all killings, all exploitation of the poor. We sorrow for the miseries and the sadness of all who today suffer unjustly, and reply: the Catholic Church upholds that order which is as old as the Ten Commandments of God. We are not for that order which is written on perishable paper but for that which is written by the hand of the living God in the consciences of men.

The basis of this order is God, our Lord, who does not lose Himself in rhetoric as do earthly lawgivers, but who has summed up the whole of order in the words of the Ten Commandments. We must give glory and honor to God since He is our Maker; to our parents, superiors, and to our country, love, obedience, and sacrifices if they are necessary. Our neighbor, no matter what his name, is not a cog in the machine of state, whether he be colored red, black, gray, or green; but is a free child of God, our brother in Christ. That is why we must recognize in our neighbor the right to life, to fortune, and to honor, because it is written: thou shalt not kill, thou shalt not steal, thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor! We must respect his family, because it is written by the hand of God: thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's wife! We must respect ourselves, because it is written: thou shalt not commit adultery! It would be a very great mistake to think that in this order there is no Last Judgment for those who violate it. All this frightful chaos that the world endures is only punishment for the violation of the Ten Commandments of God and for contempt of the Gospel of Christ. And if humanity does not wish to recognize again the divine authority which is above it, it is certain that the hand of God will strike again more rigorously.

My dear brothers, our procession of penance comes to its end. When Jesus, our Saviour, passed by the town of Jericho, two blind men cried out to Him, "Son of David, have mercy on us."

"What would you have Me to do to you?" Jesus asked them.

"Lord, that we might see," replied the blind men. And we end our procession with an ardent prayer to the Lord, our God, "Lord, let all who are blind see and let them realize that there is neither peace nor happiness for any man, for any family, for any nation, or for any state without You, God the Creator. Because it is written for today and forever: If the Lord does not build a house, in vain do they strive who would build it; and if the Lord does not watch over a city, in vain do they watch who would guard it! Let all men learn to know You are our Father, and that we all, regardless of color, language, or shape, are Your children, and among ourselves, brothers. If we have erred up to now in taking roads that lead to ruin, let us return to the way of Your Commandments, to the path of the Gospels of Christ, which to the blind may seem hard and bitter, but which alone can make happy all men and all nations! Amen."

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