

## THE COMMON GOOD AND THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC ORDER

On September 30, 1951, the Most Reverend John J. Wright, D.D., Bishop of Worcester, delivered the sermon at the Red Mass celebrated in St. Ignatius Church, Boston, Massachusetts. Having referred to the errors of individualism and collectivism that have plagued our times and have confused even good men in their search for a way to bridge the gap between individual good and collective good, the Bishop offered the following formula:

What to do? The time-tested philosophy of Christendom, blending the hope of Hebrew prophecy, the wisdom of Greek speculation, the sanity of Roman Law, and the charity of Christian Revelation, had a phrase which provides the saving word. That philosophy spoke of a third good, a good wider than that of the individual and more warm than that of the collectivity, a good with richly personal elements, yet truly public in its nature. That third good, conciliating and unifying, is more humane than the mere good of the State; it is more generous than the good of the mere individual. It is, to repeat, both *personal* and *public*, though not merely *individual* on the one hand nor merely *political* on the other. It is what the scholastic philosophers of Christendom and the founding fathers of America called "the common good." Perhaps it is time to ask for a reaffirmation of its nature and its claims.

The Bishop went on to say that a reaffirmation of the reality and claims of the common good would unify the groups within the nation, would suggest the proper formula for a better international order, and would even raise the minds of men beyond the thought of temporal good to the eternal source of all good. In his own warm and graphic way he was but expressing the heart of the program for social reform that has been asserted and reasserted by the last two Popes. At the beginning of his pontificate, Pius XI surveyed the various conflicts in society—the hatreds between the nations, the class struggles within the nations, the lack of peace in individual souls—and he dedicated his reign to the establishment of "the

peace of Christ in the Kingdom of Christ," a most apt expression for the true common good of all society.<sup>1</sup> Pius XII, besides accepting the goal set by his predecessor and restating it frequently, also declared in a very specific way that no program for social reform could be fruitful unless it prescribed: "first, respect for the human person in all men, no matter what their social position; secondly, acknowledgment of the solidarity of all people in forming the human family, created by the living omnipotence of God; thirdly, the imperative demand on society to place the common good above personal gain, the service of each of all."<sup>2</sup>

John F. Cronin, S.S., has rightly said: "Pope Pius XI was inspired to envision a social order based on co-operation for the common good. His successor constantly repeated this idea."<sup>3</sup> Father Cronin was referring particularly, I believe, to the papal program for economic reform, but his words could apply to the more extensive social teaching of both Popes. The common good is a central theme of their various social pronouncements. The purpose of this paper is to study the notion of the common good, especially as it concerns the social teaching of Pius XI and Pius XII, to outline some definite points in their teaching, and to make a specific application to our own country. Some limitation of theme is obviously required, because a full consideration of the common good would involve the complete social teaching of the Church. The limitation as to sources is not absolute; some use of other official statements, as well as of the teaching of representative authors, will be made—but only in so far as they are needed for illustration or comment. Needless to say, the sole reason for not explicitly including Leo XIII as a primary source is that his teaching seems to be sufficiently incorporated into the social pronouncements of Pius XI and Pius XII.

It is clearly unnecessary for me to demonstrate before this group that the study of social questions is within the province of the theologian. Yet, just for the record, it seems appropriate to recall here that recent Popes have declared clearly and forcefully not only that

<sup>1</sup> Cf. the encyclical *Ubi arcano*, AAS, XIV (1922), 673-700.

<sup>2</sup> *The Catholic Mind*, XLV (1947), 578.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid*, XLIX (1951), 686. This article by Father Cronin, "Social Economics of Pope Pius XII," is reprinted from the *Sign*, Dec., 1950; Jan. and Feb., 1951.

the Church has the right and the duty to speak on social questions, but also that we actually have a Catholic social teaching and that the great problems of the social order cannot be solved without the teaching and the influence of the Church.<sup>4</sup> Joseph Messner expresses this well when he says that it follows from a realization of the fact of original sin that "the approximation to a solution of the social question of a society depends on its being open to the influence of the regenerative effects of redemption. In consequence, since the teaching and the graces of redemption are deposited in the hands of the Church, the influence of the Church on the social fellowship, as St. Augustine in an eloquent, famous passage points out, goes to its very life roots."<sup>5</sup> Later he explains this more fully:

The Church is, however, not only the divinely appointed teacher and expounder of the moral law [which is the first reason for her mission in social reform]. Her vocation to co-operate in the solution of the social question goes still further. The failure of moral judgment on the part of man and society is but one side of the consequences of original sin, in which lies the origin of the social question. The other side is the tumult of human instincts and passions, egotism, avarice, worship of mammon and desire for power, with all their disintegrating effects on the social order. Society depends on the Church not only for moral doctrine but also for the sources of moral strength and spiritual regeneration which the Church affords. These are the graces of redemption and the forces derived from the supernatural.<sup>6</sup>

To put the matter in a nutshell: reason alone cannot adequately diagnose the ills of society; nor can nature alone supply the remedy. Hence the Church is needed; theology is needed; the theologian is needed.

<sup>4</sup> Cf., e. g., *Rerum novarum*, nn. 24-25, and *Quadragesimo anno*, nn. 41-43. The numbers refer to the texts of these two encyclicals as given in *Two Basic Social Encyclicals* (New York: Benziger Brothers, 1943). Subsequent references to these encyclicals will be made merely by using the initials *RN* and *QA*, with paragraph numbers.

For Pius XII, relative to the authority of Catholic social teaching, see *AAS*, XXXIII (1941), 218, and XXXIX (1947), 263. Both passages are of the utmost importance for theologians.

<sup>5</sup> *Social Ethics* (St. Louis: B. Herder Book Co., 1949), 254.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 277-78.

PART ONE: *The Common Good, in General*

The notion of common good is inseparably connected with the notion of society because the common good is the reason for society's existence. Consequently, authorities usually explain this good when they discuss society, especially the "perfect" society known as the state. For this reason, a description of the political common good seems to be a natural point of departure for the first part of this paper.

A. *The Political Common Good*

The end and object of civil authority, said Pius XI in his encyclical on Christian Education, is the promotion of the common temporal welfare, which "consists in that peace and security in which families and individual citizens have the free exercise of their rights, and at the same time enjoy the greatest spiritual and temporal prosperity possible in this life, by the mutual union and co-ordination of the work of all."<sup>7</sup> Later he implicitly made his own the more detailed description given by Leo XIII in *Rerum novarum*:

. . . Now, states are made prosperous especially by wholesome morality, properly ordered family life, protection of religion and justice, moderate imposition and equitable distribution of public burdens, progressive development of industry and trade, thriving agriculture, and by all other things of this nature, which, the more actively they are promoted, the better and happier the life of the citizens is destined to be.<sup>8</sup>

Pius XII, in the first of his encyclicals, repeated the teaching of Leo XIII concerning the function of the state, namely, that it "should facilitate the attainment in the temporal order, by individuals, of physical, intellectual and moral perfection; and should aid them to reach their supernatural end."<sup>9</sup> It follows from this, he added, that the common good towards which the state is to direct individual activities is not to be understood on a merely material

<sup>7</sup> AAS, XXI (1929), 737. For English translation see *Principles for Peace* (Washington: National Catholic Welfare Conference, 1943), n. 902.

<sup>8</sup> RN, 48. Pius XI quotes part of the context in QA, 25, and implicitly includes the whole paragraph.

<sup>9</sup> AAS, XXXI (1939), 551.

level, "but rather it should be defined according to the harmonious development and the natural perfection of man."<sup>10</sup> Similarly, in his world broadcast commemorating the fiftieth anniversary of *Rerum novarum*, he insisted that the genuine notion of the common good requires "every public authority to safeguard the inviolable sphere of the rights of the human person and to facilitate the fulfillment of his duties."<sup>11</sup>

The teaching of Catholic authors reflects these same notions. Suarez can speak for the classic authors when he says that the temporal welfare to be obtained for the community and its members through good laws consists in conditions that provide for bodily comfort, for the fitting conservation and propagation of the race, and for that degree of moral righteousness which is required for preserving external peace and happiness.<sup>12</sup>

For Merkelbach—whose treatment of this topic represents the best in contemporaneous theological manuals—the temporal common good which the state is to preserve and increase in the lives of the citizens consists principally in the practice of the virtues, then in the cultivation of the arts and sciences. Material well-being is a prerequisite; and friendship and peace are the natural consequences.<sup>13</sup>

Jacques Maritain, who has written much on the political common good, can speak for our philosophers. He includes among those things which pertain to the political common good: "the collection of public commodities and services—roads, ports, schools, etc. . . .; a sound fiscal condition of the state and its military power; the body of just laws, good customs and wise institutions, which provide the nation with its structure; the heritage of its great historical remembrances, its symbols and its glories, its living traditions and cultural treasures." He includes the whole sum of these things, as well as "the sociological integration of all the civic conscience, political virtues and sense of right and liberty, of all the activity, material prosperity and spiritual riches, of unconsciously operative hereditary

<sup>10</sup> *Loc. cit.*

<sup>11</sup> *AAS*, XXXIII (1941), 221.

<sup>12</sup> *De legibus*, L. 3, c. 11, n. 7.

<sup>13</sup> *Summa Theologiae Moralís*, II (Paris: Desclée, 1935), n. 265.

wisdom, of moral rectitude, justice, friendship, happiness, virtue and heroism in the individual lives of its members."<sup>14</sup>

The foregoing paragraphs enumerate many things that pertain to the political common good. Not all these things, however, pertain to the common good in the same way. As Messner notes, the legal and social institutions (by which he means such things as the legal system, educational institutions, public health services, public utility services, etc.) are rather means of securing the common good than constituent elements of the good itself. This latter consists in such things as peace, true freedom, good health, economic security, etc. He does not disparage institutions, but he insists that they be kept in their true place as means, not ends; and he things this needs stressing "at a time when the progress of society is viewed too much in terms of institutions, organization, and planning."<sup>15</sup>

To sum up: the political common good embraces three spheres: economic, cultural, and moral or spiritual. All are necessary for the full human life, even in the natural order; the economic is subordinate to the other two; and both economic and cultural are subordinate to the moral. Moreover, we might add here something which is apparent in the teaching of the Church: there is a certain mutual dependence between economic and moral good. Generally speaking, a degree of economic well-being is a requisite for good morality; and good morality is a requisite for the attainment and preservation of a real economic common good.

#### B. *Characteristics of the Common Good*

Before we consider the common good with reference to other societies it may be well to note some of its characteristics. It actually exists only in the persons who make up society, yet it clearly differs from individual good. It represents a state of well-being that the person alone could not achieve. In other words, society offers him advantages in the economic, cultural, and moral orders that he could not attain without society; and these advantages constitute the common good. For example, as someone has aptly observed, our civilized

<sup>14</sup> Cf. *The Person and the Common Good* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1947), 42.

<sup>15</sup> Cf. *Social Ethics*, pp. 122-23.

institutions offer economic advantages that were simply beyond the reach of Robinson Crusoe. The same is true of the cultural order through the progress of the arts and sciences. And it is certainly true that, generally speaking, a well-organized and good society provides greater opportunities and inspiration for virtuous living than does solitude.

Though distinct, individual and common good are not to be understood as necessarily mutually exclusive. It is the individual who enjoys the common good; and no good is truly common unless it is both communicable and communicated to the individual members of the society. Thus, Leo XIII said: "The end of civil society concerns absolutely all members of this society, since the end of civil society is centered in the common good, in which latter, one and all in due proportion have a right to participate."<sup>16</sup> Pius XI asserted, speaking of social justice, the object of which is the common good:

But just as in the living organism it is impossible to provide for the good of the whole unless each single part and each individual member is given what it needs for the exercise of its proper functions, so it is impossible to care for the social organism and the good of society as a unit unless each single part and each individual member—that is to say, each individual man in the dignity of his human personality—is supplied with all that is necessary for the exercise of his social functions.<sup>17</sup>

These quotations from Leo XIII and Pius XI naturally lead to a further question concerning the nature of the common good: must it be shared equally by all? According to Catholic teaching there must be absolute equality in the safeguarding of basic rights; but a proportionate equality—that is, according to contribution and capacity—is sufficient, and even natural, as regards the participation in other benefits. Pius XII spoke in the first sense when, in *Sertum laetitiae*, he expressed the hope "that each and every able-bodied man may receive an equal opportunity for work in order to earn the daily bread for himself and his own."<sup>18</sup> Earlier in the same encyclical

<sup>16</sup> *RN*, 71.

<sup>17</sup> *Divini Redemptoris*, n. 51 in NCWC translation. *AAS*, XXIX (1937), 92.

<sup>18</sup> *AAS*, XXXI (1939), 654.

he touched upon the second aspect when he pointed to the fact that "the history of every age teaches us that there were always rich and poor; that it will always be so we may gather from the unchanging tenor of human destinies."<sup>19</sup> This division between rich and poor he explained as part of the divine plan, and therefore not contrary to the common good; but both he and his predecessors have clearly taught that the existing division into ultra-rich and ultra-poor, which in great part stems from a denial of basic rights, is certainly contrary to the common good and attributable to the divine will only in a permissive sense.

Some authors speak of the dynamic quality of the common good;<sup>20</sup> by which they mean that the state of well-being of a community is always subject to improvement. Thus the ideal common good is truly an indefinite goal towards which we are constantly striving. This implies, I believe, another distinction of considerable importance: the distinction—if I may use the expressions—between the *de facto* common good and the *de jure* common good. The latter is a state of well-being that *should* exist in a society; the former is a state of well-being, perhaps far below the ideal, which *does* exist in a society. A *de facto* condition might indeed be called "good" only in the sense that it could be worse. For example, the present economic status of society is certainly not the ideal; yet it could be worse, and in some cases it might be necessary to limit claims that would pertain to the ideal order lest the present situation become even more deplorable. Thus, we have the seeming paradox that the (*de facto*) common good may require compromises that would be contrary to the (*de jure*) common good. This is an important distinction, it seems to me, in the formulating of a prudential policy of social reform.

Of its nature, the common good is a unifying principle of society.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, 653.

<sup>20</sup> Cf., e. g., F. Cimetier, P.S.S., *Brève synthèse de théologie morale sociale* (Paris: Desclée, 1945), 51. The same idea is expressed by V. Vangheluwe in *Collationes Brugenses*, XLIV (1948), 393. This is the last of a noteworthy series of articles on social justice published in *Collationes Brugenses* during 1947-48. In this same concluding article is an excellent analysis of the common good.



It is principally under this aspect that it has been an ever-recurring refrain in the social pronouncements of the last two Popes. These pronouncements have been largely directed towards the healing of conflicts; and the healing balm, according to the Popes, is the mutual desire for, and collaboration towards, the common welfare.

Finally, there is the obligatory characteristic of the common good. We saw that the common good is really distinct from individual good; yet it is actually realized in the individuals and there is no necessary contradiction between the two. Nevertheless, Catholic social teaching takes it as axiomatic that the individual is obliged to promote the common good and that in case of conflict, the common good takes precedence over merely individual, or private, good.<sup>21</sup> In recent years, the ideas inherent in this principle of the primacy of the common good have been the subject of severe controversies among Catholic philosophers.<sup>22</sup> It would be beyond the scope of this paper, as well as beyond the ability of its author, either to present a brief, clear outline of these controversies or to offer the ultimate speculative solution to them. But I believe that these propositions may be stated as unquestionably true:

<sup>21</sup> It is not mere hair-splitting to suggest that when we speak of conflict we should distinguish between individual (private) good and the individual's good. There can be conflict between individual good and the common good; but there seems to be no conflict in the strict sense between the individual's good and the common good because the common good is his good. Moreover, even when purely individual good is sacrificed for the common good the individual is not the loser; he gains by perfecting himself in a higher order. Cf. Jacques Leclercq, *Leçons de droit naturel*, I (Louvain: Société d'Études Morales Sociales et Juridiques, 1947), 325.

<sup>22</sup> For some aspects of this controversy, see "Two Catholic Critiques of Personalism," by Jules A. Baisnée, in *The Modern Schoolman*, XXII (1945), 59-75; and "In Defense of Jacques Maritain," by I. Th. Eschmann, *ibid.*, 183-208. Maritain himself published *The Person and the Common Good* to clarify some aspects of this controversy. Here I might mention Father Eschmann's "A Thomistic Glossary on the Principle of the Preeminence of a Common Good," *Mediaeval Studies*, V (1943), 123-65. This study contains all the texts in which St. Thomas used the principle: *bonum commune praefertur bono privato*. I have the impression that some of these texts do not refer to the *bonum commune*, but rather to the good "of many" in contradistinction to the good of one. The common good is not merely the good of a plurality but the good of an organic plurality, i. e. a society.

First, the principle of the primacy of the common good is certainly valid in the practical order and whenever there is a conflict between public and private good on the same plane. We know that there are many cases in which the individual must sacrifice his private interests for the common welfare.

Secondly, the principle must never be interpreted in such a way as to deny the inherent dignity of the human person, or in such a way as to deny that society exists to serve the human person, to help him to attain his specific perfection.

That these two points are basic to Catholic social teaching could be substantiated by almost innumerable references. Or, one might simply say: "Confer the pronouncements of Pius XII, *passim*." This same Pope who has repeatedly insisted on the need of social responsibility and personal sacrifice for the common good,<sup>23</sup> has with at least equal frequency asserted the natural and supernatural dignity of the human person and the fact that "the origin and primary scope of social life is the conservation, development and perfection of the human person, helping him to realize accurately the demands and values of religion and culture set by the Creator for every man and for all mankind."<sup>24</sup>

### C. *The Common Good and Other Societies*

The foregoing characteristics are not limited to the common good of the political state; they pertain to the common good of other societies, too. Today the other societies are receiving more attention in Catholic social writing. This is especially true of the community of nations, with its universal common good, to which the good of individual states is subordinated. Emphasis on this wider common good belongs to our day, but not the idea itself. As Messner<sup>25</sup> says, "We find the idea of a society of nations already in St. Augustine," and

<sup>23</sup> For some examples of Pius XII's insistence on the need of sacrifice for the common good, see *Principles for Peace*, nn. 1350, 1351, 1578.

<sup>24</sup> AAS, XXXV (1943), 12; and *The Catholic Mind*, January, 1943; p. 48. (In 1943, *The Catholic Mind* did not have consecutive pagination throughout the volume.)

<sup>25</sup> *Social Ethics*, 401-02.

later in the great Scholastic writers on international law, Francis de Vitoria, Dominic Soto, and Francis Suarez.

The new emphasis on the community of nations is especially prominent in the pronouncements of Pope Pius XII. In *Summi Pontificatus* he stressed the oneness of the human race,<sup>26</sup> and regarding the political states he said:

A disposition in fact of divinely sanctioned natural order divides the human race into social groups, nations or states, which are mutually independent in organization and in the direction of their internal life. But for all that, the human race is bound together by reciprocal ties, moral and juridical, into a great commonwealth directed to the good of all nations and ruled by special laws which protect its unity and promote its prosperity.<sup>27</sup>

His Christmas messages especially have been directed to the need of recognizing and co-operating towards the common good of the community of nations. Most frequently cited in this regard are the earlier broadcasts (1939-1943), but the subsequent messages are equally vibrant with the same theme. Thus, in the discourse of 1944, referring to the international order towards which a sound democracy is to co-operate, he says that the rulers must have the conviction "that the absolute order of being and purposes, of which we have repeatedly spoken, comprises also, as a moral necessity and the crowning of social development, the unity of mankind and of the family of peoples."<sup>28</sup> Later in the same address he predicts that sooner or later both warring sides will realize that the only way of avoiding war is a return to long-forgotten solidarity, "a solidarity not restricted to these or those peoples, but universal, founded on the intimate connection of their destiny and of their rights which belong equally to both."<sup>29</sup>

In 1947, confronted with the new division into battle lines brought about by post-war difficulties and Communist intrigue, he declares: "The human race, then, will be powerless to emerge from

<sup>26</sup> AAS, XXXI (1939), 546 ff.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, 554.

<sup>28</sup> AAS, XXXVII (1945), 18.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, 21. For English quotations from this address see *The Catholic Mind*, XLIII (1945), 72, 75.

the present crisis and desolation and to go forward to a more harmonious future unless it restrain and control the forces of division and discord by means of a sincere spirit of brotherhood uniting all classes, all races and all nations with the one bond of love."<sup>30</sup> To the College of Cardinals, in 1948, he says: "The Catholic doctrine on the state and civil society has always been based on the principle that, in keeping with the will of God, the nations form together a community with a common aim and common duties."<sup>31</sup> Finally, in the Christmas broadcast of 1951, he continues the same theme: "The common good, the essential purpose of every state, cannot be attained or even imagined without this intrinsic relation of the states to the human race as a whole. Under this aspect the indissoluble union of states is demanded by nature."<sup>32</sup>

Large truths are not always susceptible of capsule-formulation; yet I believe that the essence of Pius XII's teaching on the community of nations is contained in the preamble to Part IV of the "Declaration of Rights," drafted by a committee appointed by the National Catholic Welfare Conference, February 1, 1947. "The human family," says the Declaration, "constitutes an organic unity or a world society. The states of the world have the right and the duty to associate and to organize in the international community for their common welfare."<sup>33</sup>

There is time for only a brief reference to the common good of other societies. Within the state there exist member societies—imperfect societies, as we style them philosophically. Primary among these, of course, is the family; then there are the vocational or professional groups, as well as societies whose purpose is charity, the cultivation of various arts and sciences, and so forth. As societies, each of these units has its own function, its own purpose to procure the welfare of each and all of its members; but as members of a greater society, each exists also for the good of that society, and its

<sup>30</sup> AAS, XL (1948), 13; *The Catholic Mind*, XLVI (1948), 73.

<sup>31</sup> AAS, XLI (1949), 10; *The Catholic Mind*, XLVII (1949), 183.

<sup>32</sup> AAS, XLIV (1952), 10; *The Catholic Mind*, L (1952), 252.

<sup>33</sup> Cf. *A Code of Social Principles* (Oxford: Catholic Social Guild, 1952—3rd. ed.), p. 87. For another description of international common good, see John J. Wright, *National Patriotism in Papal Teaching* (Westminster, Md.: The Newman Bookshop, 1943), 206-07.

own good is subordinated, in a greater or less degree, to the common good of the higher society.<sup>34</sup>

Finally, there is the Church, which is like the community of nations in that it is supra-national and universal, but unlike it in that the latter is not yet perfectly organized. The common good that forms the special province of the Church is supernatural well-being to be attained in this life as a preparation for the next.

In purely natural societies, the common good is something effected by the members themselves. Obviously, in the Church this cannot be entirely true. As Pius XII says, with reference to the work of the Holy Ghost:

In the moral body the principle of union is nothing else than the common end, and the common co-operation of all under the authority of society for the attainment of that end; whereas in the Mystical Body of which We are speaking, this collaboration is supplemented by another internal principle, which exists effectively in the whole and in each of its parts, and whose excellence is such that of itself it is vastly superior to whatever bonds of union may be found in a physical or moral body.<sup>35</sup>

Nevertheless, there is a sense in which the members of the Mystical Body do effectively co-operate (with Him, not apart from Him) towards their common good. "In the Church," says the same Pope, "the individual members do not live for themselves alone, but also help their fellows, and all work in mutual collaboration for the common comfort and for the more perfect building up of the whole body."<sup>36</sup>

On a purely theoretical plane it is not too difficult to outline the scope of these various societies—the common good, or the area of the common good, pertaining to each. But concretely we live in a disjointed world which enjoys only a small measure of the well-being

<sup>34</sup> Cf. *A Code of Social Principles*, n. 12 (9). The number in parentheses refers to the second edition. See also Messner, *Social Ethics*, pp. 140-41; and John F. Cronin, S.S., *Catholic Social Principles* (Milwaukee: The Bruce Publishing Company, 1950), 121-22.

<sup>35</sup> AAS, XXXV (1943), 222. N. 62 in NCWC translation of *Mystici Corporis*.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, 200; n. 15.

God has destined for it, and in which some necessary societies do not exist, while the others are not properly co-ordinated. Without the proper co-ordination, the total common good—"the peace of Christ in the Kingdom of Christ"—can never be attained. It is not for me to solve all the problems involved in replacing conflict with union; yet I should not wish to conclude this part of my paper without at least stating the principles of co-ordination as they are expressed in the *Code of Social Principles*:

*All the natural and supernatural societies of which we have spoken have each their own object and relative autonomy. But since they have the same subjects, they must act in concert, co-ordinating and subordinating themselves, in order that men may easily attain their twofold end.*

The family has its rights, the state has its rights, the vocational group has its rights, the Society of Nations has its rights, the Church has her rights. But all these rights must respect each other.

Hence:

(i) All that brings these different societies into conflict and makes for *strife among themselves* is evil, as is also all that tends to destroy their distinctness.

(ii) All that makes them disregard and *keep apart* from each other can be admitted only as a temporary and local necessity, as a lesser evil.

(iii) All that tends to *unite and co-ordinate* them is normal and excellent.

Thus, man comes to God through Jesus Christ with a sure and peaceful step, on the one hand led and guided towards his eternal end by the supernatural society, the Church, and on the other hand sustained on the way by natural societies, restored and ennobled: the family, the vocational group, the political community and the international society.

Thereby comes the full realization of the words of St. Paul: "*Omnia vestra sunt. . . Vos autem Christi: Christus autem Dei.*" "All things are yours. . . And you are Christ's. And Christ is God's."<sup>37</sup>

<sup>37</sup> *A Code of Social Principles*, n. 199 (179). See also the magnificent passage in *Divini Redemptoris* which analyzes the nature of man and society and which culminates with the same text from 1 Cor. 3:23; *AAS*, XXIX (1937), 79-80.

PART TWO: *The Economic Common Good*

The title of this paper suggests that something should be said about the economic common good in particular. I should like to do this, first, by recalling the program for economic well-being enunciated by Pius XI in *Quadragesimo anno* and accepted by Pius XII, and secondly by considering the obligatory character of one point in this program with reference to present conditions in the United States.

A. *The Papal Program*

The primary and direct concern of the author of *Quadragesimo anno* was to formulate a plan for general economic well-being, not as an isolated end in itself, but as a necessary part of a Christian social order. This goal is described as follows:

For then only will the social economy be rightly established and attain its purpose when all and each are supplied with all the goods that the wealth and resources of nature, technical achievement, and the social organization of economic life can furnish. And these goods ought indeed to be enough both to meet the demands of necessity and decent comfort and to advance people to that happier and fuller condition of life which, when it is wisely cared for, is not only no hindrance to virtue but helps it greatly.<sup>38</sup>

Such is the goal. The program for attaining it includes an equitable distribution of property, just compensation for workingmen, the formation of an organic society, and moral reform. Leaving aside the question of moral reform, I should like to indicate very briefly how the common good is a determining element in each of the other points.

First, as regards property, the entire discussion of *Quadragesimo anno*—which is largely a repetition of *Rerum novarum*—centers about the twofold aspect of property, individual and social. The right must be preserved, but the use must be subjected to certain limitations. One readily sees that the limitations are demanded by the common good because the social nature of property requires that “the goods which the Creator destined for the entire family of mankind may

<sup>38</sup> *QA*, 75.

through this institution truly serve this purpose."<sup>39</sup> Emphasis on the connection between the social aspect of property and the common good should not blind us, however, to the fact that the common good also demands the right itself. There can be no general economic well-being without the preservation of this right.

Discussing the compensation of workmen, the Pope suggested that the wage contract be modified by some form of partnership contract; then he spoke at some length about wages. It is worth noting, however, that previous to this discussion he had referred to the conflict between capital and labor over their respective shares in their product. With Leo XIII, he asserted that neither is entitled to all; each is entitled to a share. Without attempting in this place to give specific norms of division, he simply declared that the division must have regard for the common good.<sup>40</sup> His proposal regarding wages is very specific, but it must be understood in the light of the general norm already given: the common good.

Three points are to be considered in estimating the just wage.<sup>41</sup> First, it must be kept in mind that the worker should receive enough to support himself and his family. Secondly, the condition of the business must be taken into account. And thirdly, the effects on the public, e.g., in the form of increased prices and unemployment must be considered. Only in the third point does the Pope explicitly mention the public good; and this seems to have led many to think that only this point is concerned with the common good. I suggest that the common good is a prime factor in each of the points and that here we have one example of the important distinction between the *de facto* and the *de jure* common good. If this distinction were kept

<sup>39</sup> *QA*, 45.

<sup>40</sup> *QA*, 57. "Therefore, the riches that economic-social developments constantly increase ought to be so distributed among individual persons and classes that the common advantage of all, which Leo XIII had praised, will be safeguarded; in other words, that the common good of all society will be kept inviolate. By this law of social justice, one class is forbidden to exclude the other from sharing in the benefits."

<sup>41</sup> *QA*, 71-74. In *Forty Years After* (St. Paul: Radio Replies Press, 1947), n. 70, Raymond J. Miller, C.S.S.R., observes that the wage demands made by Mr. Walter Reuther and Mr. Philip Murray were based on points similar to those given in *QA*.



in mind, it might clarify some of the disputes that have arisen over the precise title to a family wage. A wage, from the very nature of the case, seems to be something due in commutative justice; but the computation of the wage itself must differ according to the conditions of society.

How does this distinction apply to the three points? I would say that the first point, taken by itself, refers to the social order as it should be (therefore, to the *de jure* common good). In such an order the minimum just wage (and I mean commutative justice) is undoubtedly the family wage. But the second and third points refer to a social order which is perhaps not what it should be. In such an order compromises may be necessary for the preservation of at least the *status quo* (i.e., the *de facto* common good). The complete computation of the minimum just wage, therefore, in any existing set of conditions is the family wage *insofar as* the condition of business and the general state of the economy will sustain it.

I trust I shall not seem to belabor the obvious if I put this in the concrete terms of an illustration. Suppose the requirements for decent family living would be \$100 per week. In a well-adjusted social order this would be the minimum just wage. But suppose the condition of business and of the public economy would sustain only \$80 per week. Granted this condition, \$80 is the minimum weekly wage—and this means that it satisfies the minimum requirements of commutative justice.

What is to be done for the worker when conditions do not permit the paying of the family wage? He might be helped by almsgiving; but this would not be a wage, even when supplied by his employer. He might also be helped by public subsidies, such as family allowances. Principally, however, he should be helped by the changing of conditions so that the *de facto* common good will coincide with the *de jure* common good. This is the function of social justice as regards wages: the establishing of conditions which allow for the payment of the family wage.<sup>42</sup>

<sup>42</sup> *QA*, 71: "But if this cannot always be done under existing circumstances, social justice demands that changes be introduced as soon as possible whereby such a wage will be assured to every adult workingman." Especially good on the respective functions of commutative and social justice as regards the

How is the proper state of economic well-being to be attained? The answer to this question brings us to the main part of *Quadragesimo anno*, its characteristic contribution to the papal teaching on the true social order. What Leo XIII proposed in germ, so to speak, Pius XI proposes in full-flowered maturity. I refer to his insistence on bridging the gap between the individual and the state and of ending the conflict between the classes by the formation of an organic society—a society of men, organized according to their respective occupations and co-operating in their respective spheres for the common good of all.<sup>43</sup>

A few examples will suffice to show that this program enunciated in *Quadragesimo anno* is part and parcel of the social teaching of the present Pope. For Pius XII, the purpose of the national economy is “to secure without interruption the material conditions in which the individual life of the citizens may fully develop,”<sup>44</sup> or, as he phrased it in another place, the essential scope of economic life “is to assure in a stable manner for all members of society the material conditions required for the development of cultural and spiritual life.”<sup>45</sup>

The need of a redistribution of property is a central point in his teaching. “The fundamental point of the social question is this,” he declared in *Sertum laetitiae*, “that the goods created by God for

family wage is Nell-Breuning, *Reorganization of Social Economy* (Milwaukee: The Bruce Publishing Company, 1936), 177-82.

<sup>43</sup> Cf. *QA*, 83, where the Pope uses the word “ordines,” which has been translated as “vocational groups,” “occupational groups,” “the industries and professions,” etc. For a good discussion of the terms, see Joseph Husslein, S.J., *Social Wellsprings*, II (Milwaukee: The Bruce Publishing Company, 1942), 207-08. The classic statement on “The Church and Social Order,” issued by the Administrative Board, NCWC, Feb. 7, 1940, refers to them as vocational groups or guilds, and gives this outline of their characteristics: “The chief qualifications of these vocational groups or guilds, as noted by Pius XI, are that they are autonomous, embrace whole industries and professions, are federated with other constituent groups, possess the right of free organization, assembly, and vote, and that they should dedicate themselves to the common good and with governmental protection and assistance function in the establishment of justice and the general welfare in economic life.” Cf. Raphael M. Huber, O.F.M.Conv., *Our Bishops Speak* (Milwaukee: The Bruce Publishing Company, 1952), 341.

<sup>44</sup> *AAS*, XXXIII (1941), 222.

<sup>45</sup> *The Catholic Mind*, XLVI (1948), 422.

all men should in the same way reach all, justice guiding and charity helping."<sup>46</sup> Subsequent pronouncements have reiterated the same theme.<sup>47</sup> Not without good reason does John F. Cronin, S.S., say that Pius XII may well be called the Pope of private property,<sup>48</sup> that is, of extensive ownership of private property as a basis for human freedom.

His solution to the problem of dividing the fruits of production is likewise the same as his predecessor's, the common good. "The time has come," he told a delegation of Catholic workers, ". . . to realize that higher unity which is a bond between all those who cooperate in production, formed by their solidarity in the duty of working together for the common good and filling together the needs of the community."<sup>49</sup> He has clearly and repeatedly voiced the need of a family wage, yet he praised working men and women who, "conscious of their great responsibility for the common good," did not press their claims in an hour of universal distress<sup>50</sup>—a clear application, it seems to me, of the distinction between the *de jure* and the *de facto* common good as regards wages.

Finally, he sponsors the plan for organic society. He told farmers, in 1946, that it is important for them to recognize the necessity

<sup>46</sup> *AAS*, XXXI (1939), 653.

<sup>47</sup> E. g., in the Christmas broadcast of 1942, he spoke of the "fundamental obligation to grant private ownership of property, if possible, to all," and later asserted that the perfection of the social order requires "an assured, even if modest, private property for all classes of society." Cf. *Principles for Peace*, nn. 1840, 1851. And for other texts see Cronin, *Catholic Social Principles*, pp. 469-71.

<sup>48</sup> *The Catholic Mind*, XLIX (1951), 680.

<sup>49</sup> *AAS*, XXXVII (1945), 71. *The Catholic Mind*, XLV (1947), 710.

<sup>50</sup> This in his address to Italian workers, June 13, 1943. See *The Catholic Mind*, July, 1943, p. 3. Previous to this (p. 2) he said: "Our predecessors and We Ourselves have not lost any opportunity of making all men understand by Our repeated instructions your personal and family needs, proclaiming as fundamental prerequisites of social concord those claims which you have so much at heart: a salary which will cover the living expenses of a family and such as to make it possible for the parents to fulfill their natural duty to rear healthily nourished and clothed children; a dwelling worthy of human persons; the possibility of securing for the children sufficient instruction and a becoming education; of foreseeing and forestalling times of stress, sickness and old age." Cf. *AAS*, XXXV (1943), 172-73.

for union with all the other professional groups that are supplying the various needs of the people.<sup>51</sup> The following year he wrote to the *Semaines Sociales* that his teaching on corporative society is the same as that of his predecessor.<sup>52</sup> And in 1949, in a memorable address to Catholic employers, he said:

Our Predecessor of imperishable memory, Pius XI, had suggested the practical and timely prescription for this community of interest in the nation's economic enterprise when he recommended in his Encyclical *Quadragesimo anno* "occupational organization" for the various branches of production. Nothing, indeed, appeared to him more suited to bring economic liberalism under control than the enactment, for the social economy, of a public-law statute based precisely on the common responsibility which is shared by all those who take part in production. This feature of the Encyclical stirred up a host of objections. Some saw in it a concession to modern political trends, while for others it meant a return to the Middle Ages. It would have been incomparably more sensible to lay aside the prejudices of the past and to get down to work sincerely and courageously to make the proposal, with its many practical applications, a living reality.<sup>53</sup>

#### B. *Application to the United States*

The plan for organic society is rightly called the main point of the papal program for social reconstruction in the economic sphere. The literature on this particular point is so bewilderingly vast that I have been able to read only a sample; yet I believe the sample is sufficiently representative to justify the stating of a few fundamental facts. The purpose of this last section of my paper is to present these facts briefly, with special reference to the United States, and to make a moral appraisal of the facts in terms of obligatory membership in associations required for the organic functioning of our economy. By membership, I mean not merely joining one of these associations

<sup>51</sup> AAS, XXXVIII (1946), 436-37.

<sup>52</sup> AAS, XXXIX (1947), 444-45.

<sup>53</sup> AAS, XLI (1949), 284. This address contains the graphic passage: "Employers and workers are not implacable adversaries. They are co-operators in a common task. They eat, so to speak, at the same table. . . ." For English translation of the address, see *The Catholic Mind*, XLVII (1949), 445-48.

but also taking a reasonably active part in them according to one's capacity.

What are the facts? First, as regards papal teaching, it is clear that economic reconstruction is imperative for the common good of society. Secondly, the same papal teaching makes it clear that this necessary end cannot be properly attained without the promotion of the organic concept of society. Essential to this concept is the supplanting of class conflict by co-operation for the common good; also essential is such organization as will provide for the application of the principle of subsidiary function throughout the various levels of the national (and international) economy. Beyond these essential lines, the organic concept is elastic and it may be accommodated to different countries in different ways.

Thirdly, as regards the United States, it may be said that we now have general and substantial agreement among Catholic leaders in the social sciences that the most practical medium for the realization of an organic society among us is the industry council plan.<sup>54</sup> Our own hierarchy sponsors this plan.<sup>55</sup> Other religious leaders also favor it.<sup>56</sup> And there is good reason for thinking it would be acceptable to influential labor leaders and businessmen.<sup>57</sup> It is not proposed as

<sup>54</sup> The name, "Industry Council Plan," was chosen by the American Catholic Sociological Society. In tentative form, the first paragraph of a definition formulated by the ACSS is: "The Industry Council Plan is a proposed system of social and economic organization which would be functional, democratic, legally recognized but not government controlled, and balanced to achieve both the recognition of individual rights and the common good." Cf. Gerald J. Schnepp, S.M., "A Catholic Industrial Program," *The Catholic Mind*, XLVII (1949), 489 ff.

<sup>55</sup> *Our Bishops Speak*, pp. 148-49.

<sup>56</sup> See "Pattern for Economic Justice," *The Catholic Mind*, XLV (1947), 102-05. This is a declaration issued October 16, 1946, by the Industrial Relations Division of the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America, the Social Action Department of the NCWC, and the Synagogue Council of America. Point VI contains the substance of the Industry council plan. The Social Action Department, NCWC, has repeatedly urged the adoption of the plan in its annual Labor Day Statements.

<sup>57</sup> For indications of the possibility of co-operation on the part of labor leaders and businessmen see: Francis J. Haas, D.D., *Man and Society* (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., 1952), 360ff; Miller, *Forty Years After*,

already perfect or as changeless; it admits of improvement. But, despite defects and some vagueness that can be corrected and clarified only by experiment, it offers even in its present form real hope for the necessary reconstruction of our economic order. Nothing else offers a similar measure of hope. To wait till all difficulties are clarified would be to fiddle while Rome burns.

Fourthly, industry councils cannot function properly for the general welfare unless they are truly representative. This means extensive membership in all participating organizations: unions, employers' associations, farmers' associations, and so forth. For example, it is estimated that at least 75 per cent of our workingmen ought to be in unions in order to provide for the proper functioning of the plan.<sup>58</sup> I have seen no estimates concerning the minimum percentages required for other organizations, but there is no reason for supposing it could be less.

On the basis of the foregoing facts, one might formulate this brief moral argument: A necessary means to an obligatory end is itself obligatory. But membership in the participating organizations of the industry council plan is a necessary means to an obligatory end. Therefore membership in these organizations is obligatory.

Perhaps few will question this argument as long as it is phrased in general terms. But the question inevitably arises: "Is this a matter of *individual* obligation, so that every workingman, every businessman, every farmer, etc., is obliged to belong to his corresponding association?" It seems to me that the answer must be in the affirmative: the obligation is incumbent on each individual, unless, of course, the principles of legitimate excusing causes are applicable.<sup>59</sup>

The first reason for insisting on the individual character of the obligation is that the very nature of organic society calls for individual co-operation. The individual is free to choose his occupation;

pp. 127-28, 168-69. See also *Human Relations in Modern Business* (New York: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1949).

<sup>58</sup> Haas, *Man and Society*, p. 360.

<sup>59</sup> The present Pope has been particularly insistent on the individual character of social responsibility and obligation. See, e. g., "Duty of Citizens to Participate in Public Affairs," in *Papal Pronouncements on the Political Order* (Westminster, Md.: Newman Press, 1952), by Francis J. Power, C.S.V. In this section (pp. 7-10) note particularly nn. 12, 17.

but, once he has chosen it, he becomes a member of that group and he is obliged to co-operate with the others in their common function and for the common good. In the industry council plan of organic society this co-operation is possible only in the participating organizations.

Secondly, the nature of the common good itself demands individual co-operation; because, as we have seen, the common good consists in advantages for the individual members of the society and it is effected by their united efforts. Since each individual is destined to benefit from it according to his capacity, he ought to co-operate towards its realization according to his ability.

Thirdly, as a matter of practical necessity, it seems hardly possible to attain the goal without individual co-operation. For this or that individual to say, "I am not needed; I am just a drop in the bucket," may seem harmless on a purely theoretical plane; but if enough individuals use this argument to abstain from co-operation there will not be sufficient water in the bucket either to put out the fire that threatens us or to produce the fruits of common well-being that should belong to us.

(The reason just given suggests a question for possible discussion. I have often wondered whether, as regards matters of social necessity, there might not be a principle of natural law similar to the positive law principle governing laws based on the presumption of universal danger. As we know, an individual is not excused from the observance of these positive laws merely because the danger does not apply to him personally. One reason underlying this principle is that the very possibility of applying such an excusing cause might defeat the purpose of the law. Might it not also be true that, in matters of social necessity, the common good requires individual responsibility and co-operation even in cases in which his co-operation would apparently be of little or no value?)

The argument that I have presented refers to membership in all the organizations required for the functioning of industry councils. Perhaps objections might be raised regarding each of the organizations; but it seems that this would be especially true as regards membership in labor unions. In fact, some very competent scholars have argued against the obligation of belonging to unions; and it

seems only fair to consider these objections briefly before bringing this paper to a close.

One objection to obligatory union membership is based on the assumption that workmen can fulfill their duty of promoting the common good in some other way.<sup>60</sup> The objector does not mention any other way; and it seems to me that in the industry council plan there is no other way.

According to a second objection, the unions are now sufficiently strong to defend the rights of the workers. Sponsors of this view believe that union membership is obligatory only in exceptional cases, e.g., when a particular union would need more strength in order to defend the rights of the workers.<sup>61</sup> The factual implications of this objection might provide material for lengthy discussion; on that point, however, I am content to say that it is hardly true that we in the United States have sufficient unions of sufficient strength to defend the rights of even the majority of our workers.<sup>62</sup> But apart from this, it should be noted that in an organic society self-defense is neither the sole nor the primary purpose of the unions. The principal purpose is something decidedly positive: co-operation for the common good.

"If such an obligation exists, it is being widely ignored by Catholic workers, with scarcely a word of admonition from their ecclesiastical superiors. Only a handful of American bishops have said in plain terms that every worker has a duty in charity or social justice to join a union."<sup>63</sup> The writer admits that some bishops have insisted on the obligation. To this we might add that the Quebec Hierarchy has very definitely enunciated the duty of workers to join unions and of employers to join employers' associations;<sup>64</sup> and the

<sup>60</sup> Cf. *America*, Dec. 29, 1951, p. 346.

<sup>61</sup> Cf. George Clune, *Christian Social Reorganization* (Dublin: Browne and Nolan, 1940), 357; and Francis J. Connell, C.S.S.R., *The American Ecclesiastical Review*, CXVI (1947), 430.

<sup>62</sup> Bishop Haas estimates that about one-fourth of our workers are in unions. Cf. *Man and Society*, p. 360. Others might put it slightly higher.

<sup>63</sup> *America*, Dec. 29, 1951, p. 346.

<sup>64</sup> See *The Problem of the Worker in the Light of the Social Doctrine of the Church* (Montreal: Palm Publishers, 1950). Number 101 reads as follows:



arguments used in the Quebec pastoral letter are substantially applicable in our country. As for the silence of many, or even most, American bishops, I do not think it can be used as a valid argument against the existence of the obligation. It can be reasonably explained as a matter of prudential policy. Perhaps, like John F. Cronin, S.S.,<sup>65</sup> the bishops consider it advisable to educate the workers in the advantages of co-operation before calling attention to the obligation. No doubt, there is much to be said in favor of this pastoral policy, especially in view of the fact that men need education before they can properly participate in unions; but the pastoral policy should not be interpreted as a denial of the obligation.

The treatment of the objections may have been too cursory, but it is time for me to conclude. In doing so, let me say that, though I have stressed the need of an organic society under its economic aspect, I am well aware of the fact that a good society requires good men and that co-operation supposes an interior spirit as well as exterior activity. As Pius XI has said so well: "Indeed all the institutions for the establishment of peace and the promotion of mutual help among men, however perfect these may seem, have the principal foundation of their stability in the mutual bond of minds and hearts whereby the members are united with one another. If this bond is lacking, the best of regulations come to naught, as we have learned by too frequent experience."<sup>66</sup>

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"Every man has the duty to see that all his professional interests are protected and secure. He has the duty to aim at obtaining for himself and his family all that is necessary to lead a truly human life, sheltered against the chances of the future. He has the duty to co-operate for the welfare of his fellow-citizens, especially those to whom he is united by common interests. He has the duty to collaborate for the restoration of a more balanced social order by favoring the respect of justice in all the activities of labor, industry and commerce. The isolated worker cannot achieve this. United with his fellow-workers, he will be able to perform that imperious social duty. In the present state of things, therefore, there is a moral obligation to take an active part in the professional organization." As regards employers, see n. 134.

<sup>65</sup> *Catholic Social Principles*, p. 420.

<sup>66</sup> *QA*, 137.

## DIGEST OF THE DISCUSSION

Father John Murray, S.J., opened the discussion by favoring a de-emphasis of the structural concept of common good and greater concern for the pluralistic concept. Citing the difference in emphasis apparent in the statements of Leo XIII and those of Pius XI, Father Murray suggested that the problem no longer regards the nature of common good, but rather the manner and means of approaching and achieving it; and that the promotion of the highest possible degree of culture and morality is not the exclusive responsibility of political authority alone, but devolves also upon subsidiary groups. Father Kelly cited his own paper as being in accord with this view, and explained that his initial preoccupation with the more fundamental concept was merely in the interests of order and clarity.

In explicit reference to the Industry Council mentioned by the speaker, Father Bernard Lonergan, S.J., warned against a modern tendency to overlook fundamental moral and economic principles in the attempted solution of labor problems, and called upon Catholic theologians and economists to formulate and agree upon such principles as will enable an Industry Council to operate effectively.

Father Albert Kleber, O.S.B., inquired as to the relation between such councils and the civil government. Would they, he asked, supplant governmental authority in the field of labor? Father Kelly replied that they would more accurately fill a lacuna in our present governmental system, which has proven inadequate in this regard. The Industry Council, he explained, is envisioned as a legislative body fully competent in its proper sphere, an institution distinct from civil government as we know it, and one calculated to do for labor what civil authority does in other fields. To a further question from the same member, the speaker advanced as personal conviction the opinion that by free choice of particular occupations workers would necessarily oblige themselves to abide by the directives of the Council as affecting their respective occupational groups. He admitted that his opinion, stated more baldly, spells out individual obligation to join a union.

From Father Francis Connell, C.S.S.R., came a question regarding the extent to which the Council Plan has so far been realized.

Father Kelly judged that to date organization is rather in potency than in fact, but cited Holland, Belgium, and Portugal as countries which have made basic experiments with the idea, and the city of Toledo as perhaps most notable on the domestic scene.

Father Herron, T.O.R., requested the speaker to define the Industry Council as either a natural or pactitious society, a question which Father Kelly preferred to transmit on the grounds of practical irrelevance. If proven to be a necessary society, he explained, its further nature in no way affects the point at issue. In the purely speculative order, however, the term "quasi-natural" was suggested as appropriate.

Subsuming on the speaker's previous reference to the individual's obligation of joining a union, Father Rock inquired whether the alleged obligation would exist only on the supposition of an existing Industry Council, or would it likewise apply to unions as they currently exist—not all of which, he added, are exemplary unions. Admitting that his previous statement had applied primarily and explicitly to the Industry Council, Father Kelly expressed a personal inclination to extend that obligation so as to include a duty at present to join extant unions, even defective ones if there should be reasonable hope of correcting their defects by membership.

This latter expression of opinion touched off a series of objections against universally obligatory union membership under present conditions. Asked by Father Moffitt, S.J., if he disagreed with the policy of some Catholic institutions which oppose unionization of their employees, Father Kelly replied in the affirmative. To a question from Father Connell, C.S.S.R., as to whether teaching nuns should unionize, the speaker affirmed that they should, only if the common good of that vocational group should require it. When Father Gallagher, S.J., objected against the possibility of thus involving religious in strikes, Father Kelly suggested that separate organizations of such groups would obviate such a contingency. Father John Ford, S.J., thereupon expressed serious doubt as to the certainty of the fundamental obligation alleged. Such a supposit, he insisted, presumes that all extant unions are sincerely aspiring to the ideals expressed by Popes Leo and Pius, a presumption which cannot be verified in every instance. In the concrete, therefore, the obligation

would appear to be either doubtful or—in cases where existing unions are patently malevolent—even non-existent. In defense of his position, Father Kelly cited annual statements provided by the Social Action Department of NCWC in favor of the substantial integrity of the majority of existing unions. Conceding possible defectiveness on the part of the remainder, he reiterated the directive of Leo XIII for reformation and reorganization.

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