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Impressive Ruin : The Catholic Church in World Affairs

Edited by Waldemar Gurian and M. A. Fitzsimons

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the social agency. A set of rules for the worker and the agency are proposed and explained, stressing the advantages and necessity and the means of observing secrecy with regard to confidential matters. A list of questions for self-evaluation of the worker and the agency add to the usefulness of the work. The style is clear; the format is very pleasing to the eye. The whole is easy to read and singularly free from typographical errors.

It is written on the purely ethical plane with no reference or appeal to the supernatural. There is no mention of the Eighth Commandment, nor of sin and its theological species. The actual Civil Law practice with regard to confidential communications made to the social worker is not made clear. There is only a very general explanation of just what matters fall under professional secrecy. The great experience of the author in this field of social service makes one suspect that these omissions were perhaps deliberate, with a view to further writings on social service work, a field with unlimited possibilities in the Philippines today.

G. HEALY

IMPRESSIVE RUIN

THE CATHOLIC CHURCH IN WORLD AFFAIRS. Edited by Waldemar Gurian and M. A. Fitzsimons. University of Notre Dame Press, Notre Dame, Indiana. 1954. Pp. 420. \$4.25.

The Catholic Church in World Affairs is a collection of sixteen essays. The first eight discuss general problems; the rest treat of the Church in various countries.

In an introductory essay Waldemar Gurian quotes the Protestant theologian and sociologist Ernst Troeltsch, who in the last century described the Church as an impressive ruin surviving from the middle ages. When this statement was made, belief in reason, science, humanity was the accepted religion, destined to bring man to Utopia while the Church disappeared.

Today except in a few intellectual backwaters, belief in progress and science as saviours of mankind has disappeared. The secularist world is on the defensive. The medieval ruin has somehow refused to crumble into dust; on the contrary it has suddenly become a bulwark.

Father John Courtney Murray, S.J. begins the series with a profound essay "On the Structure of the Church-State Problem." He observes that the problem has always been essentially the same. The Church has maintained that there are two societies,

with the Church enjoying a primacy in their relations. The state on the contrary has tended to unify the two. This perennial conflict has been realized in different settings; and this historical variety has introduced into the Church's action a variety of emphases and a variety of allies. Because of these transitory associations the Church has seemed to approve that contemporary political arrangement which at a given phase of the conflict best contributed to the emergence of her own principles. In the French Revolution the Church adhered historically to the *ancien régime* and opposed the exaggerated freedom proposed by the revolutionaries. She thus seemed to frown upon political freedom in general. Now a hundred years later with human freedoms in danger from totalitarian heresies, the Church has changed her emphasis and has become the protector of the citizen's freedom against the state.

"The Doctrinal Issue between the Church and Democracy" by Ives R. Simon of the University of Chicago is one of the best papers of the collection. The author traces the alleged incompatibility between Catholicity and democracy to a wrong interpretation of democracy which he (after Courier) labels the "cab-driver theory." In this view of democracy the people are led by the government where *they* want to go, as passengers are taken by the cab-driver to a destination indicated by them. Thus the people do not obey the government; the government obeys them. Maritain calls this "masked anarchy," because there is no *authority*. Obviously the Catholic Church cannot accept this interpretation of democracy.

Democratic government must always remain sensitive to the will of the people but once these have elected their rulers, the latter thenceforward have real authority and must be obeyed. However Professor Simon notes here an important and interesting modification. He says:

... democracy impresses upon the transmission of power (to the rulers) a distinctive mark, inasmuch as it never allows it to be complete. Every democracy remains in some important respects a direct democracy... The unwritten law of democracy gives great power to the opinions and desires of the people expressed by newspapers, petitions, street demonstrations, polls etc. In the United States of America there are actually three political assemblies; one of them never meets formally but never adjourns: it is the people of the United States.

One slight disagreement: the author says that "there is no doubt that for St. Thomas as well as for Suarez civil authority resides primarily in the civil community." His reference here is to the well-known passage in I, II, Q. 97, a. 3, ad 3. But we do not know what St. Thomas held on the subject, and the text in question upon analysis and comparison with other places loses its *prima facie* force.

If anyone feels complacent about the state of the Catholic missions, G. Naidenoff's "Present State of the Catholic Missions" will serve as an antidote. Among the sobering facts which he presents are: the relative stagnation of the Catholic population in contrast with the rapid growth of the world population; the spread of atheism (he estimates the number of atheists in the world at a billion); the immense multitudes sealed off from the Church (also a billion); the uneven distribution of priests and their fewness in comparison to the unconverted millions. Looking at the countries of the world he sees some hope in the Anglo-Saxon nations, consoling progress in parts of Africa. But South America is in a lamentable condition; progress in Asia is relatively slow; the "Catholic" countries of Europe are themselves serious mission problems. In proposing the proper strategy for them he makes a statement which could profitably be taken as a slogan for the Philippines: "A disciplined and active minority can do anything on condition that it realize that it is a minority."

"Contemporary French Catholicism" by Adrien Dansette is thorough and stimulating. It is impossible to do more than mention the various subjects that are treated in this article: The Crisis of Modernism, *L'Action Française*, The De-christianization of France, The Intellectual Vitality of the Church, the Rise of a Distinctive Catholic Literature. All of these discussions will amply reward the reader.

The section on Catholic Spirituality, in which M. Dansette, as author of *Histoire religieuse de la France contemporaine*, should be at his best, seems least satisfactory. He says for example that the faithful instead of going directly to God, liked

. . . to follow at the risk of going astray the roundabout ways of particular devotions: the rosary, the month of St. Joseph, of Mary, of the Sacred Heart . . .

And gives as an example of sentimentality:

The cult of the Sacred Heart, as it was generally practised, both the revelations and the messages of Margaret Mary Alacoque, to whom it owes its diffusion, and the bad taste of those images of the Sacred Heart which made it an object of worship *distinct from the Person of Christ* . . . [Italics inserted.]

It is hard to reconcile these statements with certain declarations of the Holy See which on August 28, 1794, reproved:

That doctrine which rejects devotion to the Sacred Heart as novel, erroneous or at least *dangerous*, understanding the devotion as it is approved by the Church . . .

Similarly [that doctrine which accuses] the faithful of adoring the Heart of Jesus with *separation or precision from the divinity*, when they adore the Heart of Christ, the heart namely of the Person of the Word . . . [Italics inserted.]

In the same section the author implies that Benedict XIV

settled the debate concerning the necessity of the mystical state for sanctity. This does not seem to be true. Finally the author says: "Exercises in prayer have given way [in modern French Catholicity] to this permanent prayer which is the very life of the Christian." Perhaps the author is suffering here from his translator (*traduttori traditori!*) but this statement is unacceptable as it stands.

Michele Frederico Sciacca of the University of Genoa and editor of the *Giornale di Metafisica* writes "The Church and Catholic Activity in Contemporary Italy." The author traces the position of Catholics from the beginning of the 19th century through liberalism and Fascism down to the present day.

He analyses the post-war situation and the improved state of the Church. The contemporary struggle is against Communism and "there is no other power in Italy outside that of Catholicism capable of containing Communism." Probably this article was written before the recent unhappy elections, and this fact accounts for the lack of any explanation of the advance of Communism in spite of the Church's efforts. In view of the fact that the Red increment is among *new* voters, the explanation may be found in a brief sentence of the author: "This [education] is a very delicate and complex question; it is well known that the 'lay' school in Italy as in France, zealously defends the prerogatives it has won."

"The Church in Spanish Life since 1936" is by Rafael Calvo Serer, editor of the well-known review *Arbor*. The author insists at the beginning that we cannot understand Spain unless we recognize the omnipresent influence of the Catholic Church in Spanish life.

The leaders of Catholicism in Spain are patriotic and devoted to the Franco regime, but on every national issue — on those very points of the national scene which foreign students of Spanish political life question — the Hierarchy also has voiced clear reservations. They want a greater participation of citizens in government, wider freedom of the press, greater opportunity to offer constructive criticism. They are fully aware of the need of social action, of the pressing problem of poverty, of the burdens of low wages and heavy taxation.

In education, in spite of the completely favorable official atmosphere for the promotion of Catholic schools, the Church is still far from accomplishing her aims. Things have been worked out satisfactorily on the primary level, but not yet on the secondary and university level.

The social apostolate is being pressed by the Hierarchy in the face of a de-christianization that is alarming. The Archbishop of Valencia says: "Let us not entertain any illusions . . . The great mass of workers is not with the Church, does not like the Church, perhaps hates the Church."

It was inevitable that the question of Protestants should be introduced. They are few but they have a good press. The actual law reads as follows: "No one will be molested for his religious beliefs, nor in the private practise of his creed. No other ceremonies or external manifestations than those of the Catholic religion will be permitted."

There are authors in this same volume who disagree with the principles underlying the Spanish position. But that position is still what philosophers call *sententia communior*, notwithstanding growing dissatisfaction with it in recent years. At any rate the point that must never be forgotten is that the issue is philosophical. There is no real persecution of Protestants in Spain. The Spanish Protestants number 10,000 in a population of 28,000,000. When one considers that three times 10,000 Bishops, priests and nuns were killed by the Reds in Spain, often with the most atrocious torments, and that this carnage was received by the Western newspaper world with remarkable sangfroid, one is convinced that the Anglo-Saxon passion for the principle of religious freedom is highly selective.

Father Thomas T. McAvoy's "The Catholic Church in the United States" will certainly not be accused of chauvinism. The author is concerned with the accusation that the Catholic Church is a highly organized national system threatening American life. In showing that the Church has no considerable national stature the author almost shows that it has no stature at all. He does not think highly of American Catholic Universities and says depreciatively: "Catholic Medical schools are not numerous." Actually there are five medical schools and one wonders how many there are in the rest of the Catholic world. Absolutely considered the American Catholic Church is still "an unprofitable servant." But comparatively looked at, it has some things in which its members may take modest satisfaction.

One of these things is discussed in the next essay "Social Activities of the United States Catholic Church" by Aaron I. Abell, who, like Father McAvoy, is of Notre Dame University. This article explains why the labor movement in the United States did not fall into the hands of the Communists as it did in so many countries. The author concludes his paper:

Few deny that Catholic performance in the social field, especially in recent years, has been impressive. Even from persons whose antipathy to Catholicism is intense and frenzied come grudging tributes to the zeal and effectiveness of the Church's battle for social justice.

There are in this volume other excellent essays. "Papal Diplomacy: Its Organization and Way of Acting" by Edward L. Heston, C. S. C.; "The Popes and Peace in the Twentieth Century" by Monsignor Harry Koenig; "Democracy and the Catholic Church" by Oskar Bauhofer; "The Church and Human Rights" by Heinrich Rommen; "The New Situation of Continental Protestantism

After World War II" by Karl Thieme; "Catholicism and the German Public" by Otto B. Roegele; "The Catholic Church in England" by M. A. Fitzsimons; "The Church in Latin America" by Peter Masten Dunne, S.J.

The editors protest that they have not tried to compose a reference work. Nevertheless they have certainly made available information and principles on a great variety of topics, which the index will help the student of contemporary Catholicism to utilize quickly.

LEO A. CULLUM

SUNDAY EPISTLES

THAT WE MAY HAVE HOPE. By William A. Donaghy, S.J. The America Press, New York. 1954. Pp. 205. \$3.50.

The fourth chapter of the work here reviewed concludes with the following paragraphs:

In his *Book of Miracles*, Saint Gregory of Tours has a charming story suited by its simplicity to the season. There is a well, he says, at Bethlehem, where Our Lady drew water; and if the faithful gather round it, a linen cloth over their heads, "to such as are clean of heart, the same star appears that was seen by the Magi." Many may look, but only the worthy see.

Deep as a well is the human heart; and if you look into your own with the cloth, signifying that recollection which shuts out the glamor and clamor of the world, over your head, you may see in the deeps the star which only the worthy behold, the star which leads to Jesus and Mary.

Since Gregory is a saint, and Father Donaghy, if not a saint, (since we do not wish to anticipate the judgment of the Church), is at least a borrower himself, we may reasonably hope for ready pardon if we borrow a bit of their imagery. It is quite apposite. For "deep as a well," and often quite as dark, are the epistles of the Sunday Masses, with which this book is concerned. Their rich content is all too frequently out of sight and out of reach of the ordinary reader. One needs assistance to see the star shining in their depths; help to draw from them their revitalizing message. It is just such aid that Father Donaghy provides in these pages.

The book bears the sub-title, "Reflections on the Epistles for the Sunday Masses and Some of the Feasts." It contains fifty-eight inspirational essays. Each averages three pages in length, and either elaborates on the general meaning of the epistle, or points a practical lesson based on a pregnant phrase from the text.