

# philippine studies

Ateneo de Manila University · Loyola Heights, Quezon City · 1108 Philippines

---

## **Catechism on the Social Doctrine of the Catholic Church by Vitaliano Gorospe, S.J.**

Review Author: Walter B. Hogan

*Philippine Studies* vol. 2, no. 2 (1954): 183–185

Copyright © Ateneo de Manila University

---

Philippine Studies is published by the Ateneo de Manila University. Contents may not be copied or sent via email or other means to multiple sites and posted to a listserv without the copyright holder's written permission. Users may download and print articles for individual, noncommercial use only. However, unless prior permission has been obtained, you may not download an entire issue of a journal, or download multiple copies of articles.

Please contact the publisher for any further use of this work at [philstudies@admu.edu.ph](mailto:philstudies@admu.edu.ph).

<http://www.philippinestudies.net>

a judicial impartiality, he sometimes places on an equal footing interpretations of the evidence which differ markedly in probability. He concludes with the statement that there is an underlying incompatibility in the dual role of the Soviet Union as a center of political power and as agent of world revolution, and that "Soviet statesmanship has as its major task the problem of their reconciliation." One is inclined to suggest that on Belloff's own showing, the problem does not exist for Soviet statesmen; as far as they are concerned, the two roles are complementary, if not identical. But non-Soviet statesmen would do well to recall that there is often a divergence, if not actual contradiction, between *their* political objectives and the legitimate aspirations of those peoples for whom Communism exerts so fatal a fascination; and that therefore *their* major task is how to reconcile these objectives with the necessity of presenting a united front to a common enemy.

H. DE LA COSTA

---

CATECHISM ON THE SOCIAL DOCTRINE OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH. By Vitaliano Gorospe, S.J. Catholic Trade School, Manila. 1954. Pp. 226. ₱2.65.

Here is a book on the social order which has long been badly needed and it is very well done.

For years the complaint has been heard that the Papal Encyclicals make hard reading and all too few have the courage to read and master Catholic Social teaching in the original documents. Both those who would like to be acquainted with the social teaching of the Church but shy away from thick volumes, and high school teachers who despair of having their students study directly from the originals will find the answer to their prayer in Father Gorospe's Catechism.

A catechism is not an attempt to say something new. The less new things that it says and the more clearly it sums up old doctrines the more successful it is as a catechism. Father Gorospe makes sure to say nothing new and says very little in his own words, choosing, for the most part, to let the answers come in the exact words of the Popes from the documents which Pope Pius XII has told us are binding on all Catholics and not a matter of choice. Consequently the book speaks with authority and you can be sure that you are getting not Father Gorospe's opinion on the social question but the clear teaching of the Church. For the Catholic who wants to

know what the Church teaches on wages, strikes, company unions, all the answers are there and there in such fashion that the last excuse will be taken from those who plead ignorance when they refuse to grant to their workers the rights stoutly defended by the Popes, like the right to join a union, the right to a living wage and the right to be treated in all things as a child of God.

About one-fifth of the book is devoted to the general background of the social question, the Dignity of Man, the Family, the State, the Church, Education and International Society. The other two hundred pages deal with the economic side of the social order and make an excellent ready reference for the Catholic businessman, union member or government official charged with labor affairs. Those not familiar with Papal social teaching will be surprised to find that far from being just a general exhortation to justice and charity the Papal plan descends to practical details and Father Gorospe has done an excellent job in catching these details. For example in the chapter on a just wage the catechism asks (p. 136):

"How is the payment of a family wage a remedy for the social problem?"

and answers:

"The payment of a family wage will enable the non-owning worker to save money and buy some property."

Then come the words of Pope Pius XII to Spanish Catholic Employers and Workers:

"There are many factors which must contribute to a greater diffusion of property. But the principal one always will be a just salary . . . a just salary and a better distribution of natural wealth constitute two of the most impelling demands in the social program of the Church."

Catholics who read that will not waste their time in advocating a postponement of all wage improvements until some far-off mythical day when the economy shall have been improved. The Pope says here and elsewhere that the very improvement of wages constitutes a social lever on which the economy can be improved and property (even if not enough to go around adequately) will be at least better distributed. It is comforting to think that if the Catechism is given wide use in our high schools under competent teachers the time should come fairly soon when Catholics will not be found defending doctrines which patently contradict the Papal teaching. A fine detailed index makes it easy to dig out a Papal quotation on any part of the Social Order. This catechism fills a real need in the schools and should be added to the home

library of anyone who wants to be able to discover quickly and conveniently just what the Church holds on some aspect of the social problem.

WALTER B. HOGAN

**THE RIDDLE OF KONNERSREUTH.** A Psychological and Religious Study of Theresa Neumann. By Paul Siwek, S.J., Ph.D., S.T.D. Translated by Ignatius McCormick, O.F.M. Cap. Bruce, Milwaukee. 1953. Pp. xvi-228. \$3.50.

**PSYCHOLOGY. THE UNITY OF HUMAN BEHAVIOR.** An Introduction to General Psychology. By Timothy J. Gannon, Ph.D., Foreword by Thomas Verner Moore. Ginn & Company, Boston. 1954. Pp. xii-482.

Near Waldassen, a little Bavarian town, in the tiny village of Konnersreuth, lives Theresa Neumann, aged 56, the daughter of simple countryfolk, who, since the beginning of Lent 1926, has been one of the most fascinating *mystical cases* of our day. For more than 28 years, large crowds of devotees, the curious and many scientists have gone to Konnersreuth to glimpse the remarkable phenomena of which Theresa is said to be the subject: healings, stigmata, ecstasies, visions, the gift of tongues, prophecy, clairvoyance and the marvelous fast which, it is claimed, she has kept since 1926.

As always happens in such cases, many readily accepted the *miracles* of Theresa and sided with her "worshippers" (p. 45). Others, with the same enthusiasm, opposed her, and occasionally went even to the extent of ridicule and calumny. Men of science, generally unsatisfied because of the obstacles to accurate observation put in their way, often shrugged their shoulders with skepticism. The Church remained and remains silent, prudently avoiding any official statement about the *problem of Konnersreuth*.

Father Siwek, with the authority of a specialist in psychology and theology, and with a broad experience in psychopathology and parapsychology, approaches the data available on the case. His purpose is not to decide whether Theresa is a *saint* or not; neither is it to explain the phenomena; he only wishes to analyze with strict scientific method the events of Konnersreuth, and decide whether or not the preternatural intervention can be proved. His conclusion is: *non constat*. "It is not clear."

Reading this book, though our attention is captivated by the interest of the topics, we are conquered by the power