

The Kingship of Christ 1925-1975

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Holy Year 1925

The Feast of Christ's Kingship was instituted 50 years ago when Pope Pius XI decided that the most fitting manner of closing the Holy Year of 1925 would be by *'the insertion into the Sacred Liturgy of a special feast of the Kingship of Our Lord Jesus Christ'*.

In instituting this feast, Pope Pius XI stated (in the encyclical *Quas Primas*) that this would *'provide an excellent remedy for the plague which now infects society...the plague of secularism, its errors and impious activities'*.

He then proceeded to indicate precisely what he meant: *'This evil spirit... (he said) has not come into being in one day, it has long lurked beneath the surface.'*

Christ's Empire Rejected

'The empire of Christ over all nations was rejected. The right which the Church has from Christ Himself to teach mankind, to make laws, to govern people in all that pertains to their eternal salvation, that right was denied.'

'Then gradually the religion of Christ came to be likened to false religions and to be placed ignominiously on the same level with them. It was then put under the power of the State and tolerated more or less at the whim of princes and rulers.' (*Quas Primas*, CTS Edition, p. 16)

It was because of this, he explained, that the world of his time had been *'shaken to its foundations and [was] on the way to ruin'*. He nevertheless expressed the hope *'that the Feast of the Kingship of Christ... may hasten the return of society to our loving Saviour'*, adding that it was *'the duty of Catholics to do all they can to bring about this happy result'*. (Ibid. p. 17)

Duty of Governments

Before concluding the encyclical he made abundantly clear what he meant by restoring society to Christ. *'Nations (he said) will be reminded by the annual celebration of this feast that **not only private individuals but also rulers and princes are bound to give public honour to and obedience to Christ.***' (Emphasis added)

'It will call to their minds the thought of the last judgment, wherein Christ who has been cast out of public life despised, neglected and ignored, will most severely avenge these insults; for His kingly dignity demands that the State should take account of the commandments of God and of Christian principles, both in making laws and in administering justice and also in providing for the young a sound moral education.' (Ibid, p.22)

¹ [Hamish Fraser probably wrote this in sheer frustration after having returned from another Mass on the Feast of Christ the King the sermon of which missed the whole point of the feast. I often heard my father express his frustration after such sermons. Editor, Apropos]

Social Modernism

As we have already pointed out (in *The Social Roots Of Neomodernism*), throughout the whole of his reign Pope Pius XI was obsessed with the problem of combating social modernism (i.e. the phenomenon of Catholics who unquestioningly accepted the Church's teaching on faith and morals but preferred a social ideology grounded in the teachings of Adam Smith or Karl Marx rather than in the social teachings of the Pontifical Magisterium). He certainly made it abundantly clear when he instituted the Feast of Christ the King that his intention was to bring home to the faithful that they must be obedient to Christ **in all things**.

Indeed, he concluded *Quas Primas* by the following words:

All Power in Heaven and, Earth

*'If to Christ Our Lord is given all power in heaven and on earth; if all men purchased by His precious blood, are by a new right subjected to His dominion; **if this power embraces all men, it must be clear that not one of our faculties is exempt from his empire.***

'He must reign in our minds...in our wills....in our hearts....in our bodies and in our members....as instruments of justice unto God.' (Emphasis added)

Keynote of Pius XI's Pontificate

It was precisely because he saw the Kingship of Christ as an infallible remedy for social modernism that the Kingship of Christ was the keynote of the entire pontificate of Pope Pius XI. His motto as Pope was *'The Peace of Christ in the Reign of Christ* and his first encyclical, *'Ubi Arcano Dei'* was *'On the Peace of Christ in the Kingdom of Christ'*

Indeed all his other encyclical letters, including *Quadragesimo Anno*, *Divini Redemptoris* (on Atheistic Communism), and *Mit Brennender Sorge* (on Nazi Germany), would not have been necessary but for the fact that *Quas Primas* had been so completely ignored, and especially by Catholic nations and by the clergy.

Outstanding non-event

In fact, *Quas Primas* proved to be the greatest non-event in the entire history of the Church. So much so, indeed, that in the publication *'The Papal Encyclicals in Their Historical Context'*, edited by Anne Freemantle (Omego-Mentor Books), the encyclical letter *Quas Primas* is not even mentioned in the index, let alone reproduced. Which omission is no doubt explained by Anne Freemantle's prefatory statement that she chose only those documents *'which influenced the history of their times or of all time'*.²

Episcopal Action by Omission

Needless to say, this total ignoring of *Quas Primas* could not have been possible without the connivance of the international episcopate. Instead of resolutely seeking to make the State conform to 'the commandments of God and...Christian principles' they preferred rather to play down the more unacceptable implications of the Church's teaching and at all costs to avoid a

² Significantly while *Casti Connubi* also by Pius XI has been reprinted, *Quas Primas* is now out of print. [This was the position at the time of writing – however, largely through Hamish Fraser's efforts this has been remedied by Traditional Catholic publishing houses].

confrontation with Caesar, particularly in the decisive and sensitive sphere of Church-State relations. And being as circumspect as they were, Bishops chose to act by omission: by *not* intervening to ensure that the doctrine of Christ's social Kingship was given the emphasis it deserved in the seminaries and other institutions for higher education under ecclesiastical control.

Integral Humanism

Under the circumstances it was also natural that they would look favourably on the new concept of 'integral humanism' which Jacques Maritain had enunciated. For while Maritain condescendingly admitted that the mediaeval concept of Christ's social Kingship had been valid enough in 'the epoch of "God first served",³ when temporal society recognised the social royalty of Our Saviour Jesus Christ', he considered it to be completely outdated and irrelevant to conditions in the 'modern world'.

Indeed, 'integral humanism' was so eminently acceptable to prelates anxious to appease Caesar that it could not fail to be accepted.

'Integral Humanism' Appraised

In the words of H. Le Caron, writing in the October 15, 1975 issue of *Le Courrier de Rome*:

'The "integral humanism" of Maritain...is a universal fraternity of men of good will belonging to different religions or none (including even those who reject the idea of the Creator). It is within this fraternity that the Church should exercise a leavening influence without imposing itself and without demanding that it be recognised as the one true Church. The cement of this fraternity is the virtue of doing good, and understanding grounded in respect for human dignity.'

And as the same writer also points out:

'This idea of universal fraternity is neither original nor new, it was already advanced by the philosophers of the 18th century and by the Revolutionaries of 1789. It is also the fraternity beloved of freemasonry and even of the Marxists.'

Role of The Church

*'What distinguishes Maritain's "integral humanism" is the role it allocates to the Church. Within this "universal fraternity", the Church is to be "inspiratrice" or "big sister" and it goes without saying that for the "big sister" to win the sympathy of her "little brother" she must be neither intransigent nor authoritarian. She must know how to make religion acceptable. And so that the truths of faith and morality may be acceptable, Christianity must be practical rather than dogmatic.'*⁴

Anti-Christian Perspective

In effect, whereas like all his predecessors, Pius XI insisted that the role of clergy and laity was to make the world accept Christian terms of reference and think with the mind of the Church,

³ This had been St Joan of Arc's watchword.

⁴ The extent to which Vatican 2 succeeded in transforming the Church in this direction can be seen from Pope Paul's observation on April 2, 1969: '.....a wave of serenity and optimism has spread through the church and world from the council; a consoling and positive Christianity acceptable and amiable, friendly to life, to men, even to earthly values, to our society, to our history.' We might almost see in the Council the intention to make Christianity acceptable and amiable, an indulgent, open Christianity, free from all mediaeval rigorism and from any pessimistic interpretation regarding men, their customs. . . this is true.'

'*integral humanism*', being primarily concerned with the impossible aim of reconciling the Catholic faith and the Revolution, leaned over backwards to see things in the anti-Christian world's perspective and unhesitatingly accepted the terms of reference upon which Jacobins, Freemasons, Marxists - the enemies of the Church - had hitherto been insisting.

Eagerly accepted formula

'*Integral Humanism*' first saw the light of day in the form of a series of six lectures delivered at the University of Santander in August 1934. But even while the author of *Quas Primas* was still reigning, '*integral humanism*' was eagerly seized upon as a means of justifying the relegation of Christ's social kingship to the limbo of things better forgotten. And there was one '*progressive*' theologian, still under forty, a certain Giovanni Battisti Montini (the future Paul VI), who was so enthused and excited by Maritain that he volunteered to translate '*Integral Humanism*' into Italian.

Informed Consensus

Because the generality of Bishops were not prepared to insist on fidelity to the authentic teaching of the Pontifical Magisterium concerning Christ's social kingship, Maritain - not Maritain, the giant of Thomist philosophy, but Maritain the '*guru*' of '*integral humanism*' - was enabled to become the mentor of seminary professors, theologians, and the intelligentsia generally: i.e. of all those who contributed towards determining the consensus of informed Catholic opinion.

An '*Integral Humanist*' Council

So long as Pius XII was on the throne, '*integral humanism*' continued to be no more than widespread consensus of intellectual opinion. It was after Pope John had been persuaded to convene Vatican 2 that the '*integral humanists*' deemed it expedient to make a bid for the commanding heights of the ecclesial map. And when after Pope John's death they succeeded in having Maritain's most distinguished disciple elevated to Peter's chair, they lost no time in seeking to impose '*integral humanism*' as the new orthodoxy, and in formulating an appropriate new theology, new catechetics, and eventually a new liturgy, in effect a new post-Conciliar '*integral humanist*' religion.

Not a logical '*Integral Humanist*'

Pope Paul is indeed a disciple of Jacques Maritain. So much so that when one reads a typically Pauline socio-political allocution, one might well be reading Maritain. But Pope Paul is also like Maritain in his refusal to accept the ultimate implications of '*integral humanism*'.

Since '*integral humanism*' rejects the social kingship of Christ and thereby at least implicitly asserts that Christ's empire does **not** include human society, and therefore that Christ is **not** omnipotent, in effect '*integral humanism*' represents an implicit denial of the divinity of Christ, and must eventually lead to the transposition of the Catholic faith into the key of naturalism. Which is precisely what has already been done by the most logical '*integral humanists*'.

But like Maritain, Pope Paul was not a logical '*integral humanist*'. For even if his social ideology is completely at variance with that of all his predecessors - and of this there is no doubt whatsoever - like Maritain, Pope Paul has the faith of Peter. It is this which explains why the Council prompted Maritain to write *The Peasant Of The Garonne* and why Pope Paul found it necessary to write *Mysterium Fidei*, the *Credo of The People of God, Humanae Vitae*, etc.

Drama of Present Pontificate

Indeed, the whole drama of the present pontificate consists in the fact that while Pope Paul has the faith of Peter, and therefore rejects the ultimate implications of '*integral humanism*', it is obvious from his innumerable socio-political allocutions that he nevertheless continues to accept the main

thesis of *'integral humanism'*, which implies the rejection of Christ's social kingship as no longer relevant to the modern world.

It is because of this that Pope Paul is continually at war with himself. That is also why he is continually at loggerheads with the entourage he himself appointed. For though like him they too are enthusiastic *'integral humanists'*, unlike him they are not similarly inhibited concerning *'integral humanism's'* ultimate implications.

Vatican 2 in Perspective

If however we would see all that has happened since Vatican 2 in proper perspective, it is necessary to understand that, like *'integral humanism'*, the New Theology, the New Catechetics and the New Liturgy of the post-Conciliar Church are but logical and inevitable consequences of the rejection of Christ's social kingship.

For Churchmen who no longer acknowledge Christ kingship over human society must sooner or later acknowledge human society's empire over Christ's Church. And since the men responsible for this orientation of Church policy also believe that the future belongs to Socialism/Communism,⁵ which rejects the basic Christian values, it also follows, as night follows day, that the most logical of them must seek to so modify the Church's teaching as to make it acceptable to this new Socialist/Communist world.

The Real Significance of Post-Conciliar Enormities

In effect, the enormities inflicted on the church since Vatican 2, in liturgy no less than in theology and catechetics, are simply a consequence of the decision of post-Conciliar churchmen to drag the Church screaming into conformity with what they imagine the world of tomorrow is going to be like.

Paradox

Yet, paradoxically, the Communist world is already in ruins. It may indeed have at its disposal a military machine of unprecedented might - which is why it appears to be invincible - but already there is virtually no one in the USSR who takes Revolutionary Marxism seriously - not even those who impose it as the official orthodoxy of the regime and make its jargon obligatory.

Today, paradoxically, Revolutionary Marxism's most flourishing clientele comprises Catholic theologians and prelates. Indeed, if it were not so incredibly tragic, the present grotesque state of affairs within the Church would be too funny for words - in that the Church has been completely overhauled in the vain hope of appeasing a regime whose very rulers already instinctively realise that it is doomed.

Social Modernism's Final Revenge

Moreover, this incredible tragic-comedy does at least serve to indicate the extent to which men's minds are conditioned by their social notions. It is indeed social modernism's final revenge on those who would pretend that a man's social ideas are a matter of indifference.

5[Now that Communism is no longer popular, many still cling to Socialism and to the ideas which developed from the French Revolution and which are characterised by various charters or proclamations of human rights. Editor *Apropos*]