

## GESTA DOCTRINAMQUE

*Let the brothers reflect on and make known the teaching and achievements (gesta doctrinamque) of those in the family of St. Dominic who have gone before them, while not forgetting to pray for them (Cf. LCO 16).*

### INTRODUCTION TO TOMÁŠ TÝN

*Fr. Giovanni Cavalcoli, O.P.*

**F**ather Tomáš Týn, in many ways the perfect example of a saintly theologian with a solid Thomistic foundation after the Second Vatican Council, was born in Brno, Czech Republic, on May 3, 1950. Having expressed an early desire for priestly and religious life following his studies in France and Germany, Tomáš Týn joined the Order of Preachers in Bologna, beginning his development of a post-conciliar *aggiornamento* faithful to Church tradition.

At his priestly ordination in Rome by Pope Paul VI on June 29, 1975 (ordained alongside Raymond Cardinal Burke), Father Týn offered his priestly life for freedom in Czechoslovakia. This offering was fulfilled fifteen years later, when Father Týn died at 39 of lung cancer, on January 1, 1990, the year his motherland was freed from the yoke of a Communist regime.

Father Týn's years at Bologna were spent in studying, teaching, and preaching with the zeal of a true follower of St. Dominic. The theological virtues, the relationship between grace and free will, Mariology, and the Eucharist were among his favorite topics. His *magnum opus* remains his volume on metaphysics, the analogy of being, and the concept of participation, published posthumously in 1991. More than of merely speculative interest, Father Týn

developed a robust notion of the person in this work, defending the dignity of the weak, disabled, and dying against more relativistic positions.

Shortly after his death, many in Italy (where he lived) and the Czech Republic (where he is regarded as a national hero) promoted the cause of his beatification, which was solemnly opened in 2006 and is currently under way. The dedicated web site is at [www.studiodomenicano.com](http://www.studiodomenicano.com).



FR. Tomáš Týn, O.P.

The lecture translated here addresses a complex topic. Nevertheless, the Servant of God shows his firm command of moral theology, a discipline he taught at the Dominican studium in Bologna during the 1980s.

In this lecture, one detects a characteristic trait of Father Týn: his ability to apply universal and eternal moral principles to the particular situation of our time, taking into account the views expressed by contemporary authors. Father Týn links the duty of tolerance to the moral principle that requires us to bear the conduct of those persons who are not capable of fully exercising virtue, or are even prone to vice. In this way, by bearing their conduct which we do not approve, we may contribute to their moral correction, in a manner that is respectful of their freedom.

At the same time, the Servant of God does not hesitate to identify a duty, to be carried out in an appropriate way, to be intolerant against today's attitude of laxity toward sin and of moral relativism. Father Týn knew too well that a relativistic approach, deprived as

it is of a solid objective criterion to distinguish good from evil, ends up suppressing freedom and authentic cultural diversity.

An important theme of Father Týn's reasoning reflected here is his attribution of tolerance to the subjective dimension of ethics, and of intolerance to its objective dimension. Tolerance has to be modulated according to the particular conditions of the person, always requesting the exercise of that degree of virtue of which the person is capable, while tolerating the moral deficiency that a person, even with his best will, is unable to overcome at that time.

**I**ntolerance, on the other hand, is justified by the imperative to defend those moral values that are necessary to the life of each individual person and society. In this respect, intolerance must prevail over tolerance, so that every moral agent may find the rule of his conduct in those objective, universal, and unchangeable values of ethics which are the end of the virtues. Hence, while tolerance may well make allowance for a person's weaknesses, it cannot go beyond the limit where the very good of the person and society would be compromised.

Father Týn ends up criticizing two radical positions which, while apparently inconsistent with one another, in reality reach the same effect of compromising the right balance between tolerance and intolerance. On the one hand, there is the wrong tendency in relativist liberalism of turning tolerance into an absolute value, against the need to obey laws based on objective and universal values. On the other hand, there is that inhuman intolerance which, in the name of a common good interpreted in totalitarian and collectivistic terms, suppresses and coerces individual freedom.

Finally, Father Týn stresses how beneficial Christianity has been and continues to be for the good of the individual and society. This is why the soon-to-be canonized John Paul II called on governments to take into account, in the care of the common good, the law of Christ, not in the manner of a certain Islamic

coercive integralism, but as that heritage which is at the basis of Western civilization and all civilized societies alike.

*Translated by Maurizio Ragazzi, student of Fr. Týn.*

## THE DIFFICULT ETHICAL WAYS OF TOLERANCE AND INTOLERANCE

*Tomáš Týn, O.P. (1950–1990)*

### A FUNDAMENTALLY ETHICAL QUESTION

**E**vidently the presentation of the topic of this conference, “Intolerance: Similarities and Divergences within History,” has considered tolerance primarily as it comes to be fully known in light of its opposite, intolerance. It is astonishing to note that, while the ethical allusions as a matter of principle are certainly not entirely missing, they hardly receive the primacy that is rightfully theirs amidst the preponderance of debates regarding “application.” All this will be likely credited to that pragmatic spirit—evident from Galileo onwards—which does not like to “grab hold of essences.” Nevertheless, the debates surrounding tolerance provide an exquisitely ethical, and better yet metaphysical, problematic inasmuch as they concern themselves with human action and motivation. Therefore, we are permitted to compensate a little for this lack by initially daring to raise the question of (Socrates help us!) “what is it,” so as to arrive at the others: “how to use it” and “where is it applied.”

It is not simply scholastic style to bother with the etymologies of Isidorian memory, accused mainly of pedantry by our

contemporaries, but because of the conviction that the names of things are generally chosen for good reasons. It is useful to recall that in Latin the verb *tolerare*—while subject to many nuances, as often happens in this admirable and unfortunately rather forgotten language—can be translated comprehensively as “to bear or endure.” Nowadays it seems that each of us has undoubtedly many occasions to bear or endure certain circumstances in life, generally credited to other people with whom we live and whom we meet. To have patience belongs to the demands of everyday life, and if that is not enough to be convinced of its good sense, the authority of divine Scripture is rather abundant in this regard. Think of St. Paul’s exclamation: “Bear one another’s burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ” (Gal 6:2). Furthermore, patience is that virtue which consists in bearing or enduring par excellence, and it is specified as a spontaneous effect of charity (see 1 Cor 13:4)—of the communion of man with God Himself.

That said, it is customary to immediately raise the claim dictated by superficiality: “Behold the purity of the Gospel, which the institutional Church has disavowed by adopting intolerant attitudes in the course of its history.” It arises from environments that pride themselves on secularism. They are further enriched by self-harm, coming from those who continue to identify themselves as Christians, and by the beating of chests—though not their own, but rather that of the Holy Church of God. These simpletons forget that the same Apostle who sings the hymn to charity—that it is patient—bursts into decisively “inquisitorial” condemnations when confronted with the dangers of heresy or immorality in the Christian community (see 1 Cor 5:5). Given that, despite a decidedly energetic nature, irrationality does not characterize St. Paul, perhaps it would be appropriate to refrain from hasty accusations and to pause a moment for reflection.

How is it that tolerance can tolerate intolerance alongside of it? Apart from the authority of Scripture, the answer might be



located in the nature of tolerance itself. Given that human action receives its determination from the object (the end), it is necessary to inquire what is the subject matter wherein one employs the above-mentioned forbearance. While the answer is so easy that it seems almost banal, it is of decisive importance. One does not tolerate that which is a good, and of genuine value, but rather an evil—something burdensome and unbearable in itself.

To raise tolerance to the heights and to likewise authoritatively condemn intolerance (one might want to say intolerantly) presume the obliteration of the object. This is explainable, certainly, in the

current climate of subjectivism but unforgivable to anyone who wants to address the issue with an authentically critical spirit (and able to discern without anger or partiality). Norberto Bobbio offers an extraordinary intervention on the part of the laity (who may have much to teach certain men of the Church who might not remember or perhaps are ashamed of their own history and tradition) when he boldly states that “the reasons for tolerance do not exclude the fact that intolerance also has its reasons.”

Let us first examine the attitude, the *forma mentis* (mindset), of the tolerant man on the level of the individual. As we have seen, it is a matter of patience, and patience is “the virtue of the strong,” because it pertains to the cardinal virtue of fortitude. Being strong, morally speaking, does not mean abandoning the moral good (*bonum honestum*) because of a fear related to losing something in the context of the useful good (*bonum utile*). Among other things, it also preserves peace of mind before all types of regrets. A certain spiritual magnitude (magnanimity) is required, which does not mind the small matters of life that are more or less congenial. Man overcomes it only by waiting generously for some great and noble goal that he undertakes to fulfill in his life.

Not surprising then is the Pauline connection of patience and charity, if you agree that this end unites the soul to God—the supernatural final end of human life. Similarly, it is easy to get a glimpse of patience or “tolerance” in the soul as a certain indifference from more immediate wishes and likes—a certain “liberal” disposition of the soul (obviously in the moral sense of the word) that confers upon the man who possesses it an intangible but spiritually recognizable magnanimity and inner sublimity.

The tolerant man is not only free in himself, but also manages to surround himself with an atmosphere of freedom with his neighbor. He is ordered to benevolence because he possesses the meaning of the others’ freedom. Without it there is no respect, which is the condition and fulfillment of every good friendship.

What could be more beautiful than inner freedom—namely, freedom respecting the other person? It seems easy then: it is sufficient to be tolerant and that is it. However, as usually happens, even here the most obvious and easy way leads, if not to perdition, at least to deception.

In fact, the magnanimous man does not insist upon the trivialities that make up a major part of human events, though he does turn out to be unmovable on those few things that are of importance to him. For certain, the benevolent man respects his friend, but even more respects that greater good that, if shared, becomes a basis for friendship itself. Paradoxically, it could be said that intolerance respects any fundamental, basic condition and makes authentic tolerance truly possible with respect to various derivative and secondary realities.

**T**his is most apparent if you pay attention to the very essence of freedom, which consists in the realm of one's own choices. To choose is in fact equivalent to having the means to the end, and it is precisely because he who chooses determinately wills an end that he is able to submit to the means that lead to his fulfillment. Something analogous occurs also in intelligence. The evidence of principles alone allows one to reach many conclusions. In both cases—those intellectual and those moral—so-called “open-mindedness” rests firmly on a decisive adherence to the true and the good.

On the contrary, “open” minds at the level of principles prove to be rather dull, petty, and quarrelsome in terms of practical consequences. Additionally, they establish a limit to freedom. The attempt to “liberate” man from God, as the French Enlightenment failed to do, does not necessarily guarantee that the above-mentioned liberty might not turn into “destructive fury.” It is not enough to proclaim that one's neighbor is to be respected; rather it requires making reason count and regulating moral norms. In fact, what can be said of the mean and tyrannical disposition (narcissistic infantilism) of the so-called “Libertines” from a

psychological point of view (assuming that you are not repulsed by the object of such studies)?

Freedom, properly understood, is situated in the realm of means and established in the adhesion to ends. It does not exclude but seeks and requires the obligation to improve oneself. “It is a happy necessity that compels us to what is better,” as Saint Augustine says. However, Leszek Kołakowski has both surmised and wished that the Church had abandoned “the traditional Augustinian concept of so-called ‘positive’ freedom,” and denies that it belongs to “the dogmatic body of the Church.” Rather, the roots of positive freedom are founded in the same divine Scriptures: “But thanks be to God, that you who were once slaves of sin have become obedient from the heart to the standard of teaching to which you were committed” (Rom 6:17).

The tolerance or forbearance of evil cannot be absolute, since evil has to be suffered sometimes, but at other times it must be tackled and gotten rid of. Excessive tolerance becomes permissiveness, such as when an exaggerated intolerance provides a means for tyranny. Both extremes are closer allied than is commonly thought. This sense gives support to V. Strada’s hypothesis, according to which the “total negation of self” (anarchy) and “the false positive sense of intolerance” (totalitarianism connected with the Marxist thesis of the “transformation of the world”) must be overcome, which expects neither to interpret nor to transform the world, but to rescue it.

This attempt at “rescuing,” however, neglects the fact that intolerance is “transformative,” i.e., revolutionary. Though, in this sense, far from being the practice of the good, intolerance is placed against the very nature of man and society, such that it is not intolerance as such. In this case, as always, it is a question of the object, as tolerance adjudicates by way of a sound discernment that which may or may not be tolerated. That this thesis is “interpretative” of the world becomes wrong only if it degenerates

into skepticism, such that it would have you falsely believe that there is an impartiality between opposites.

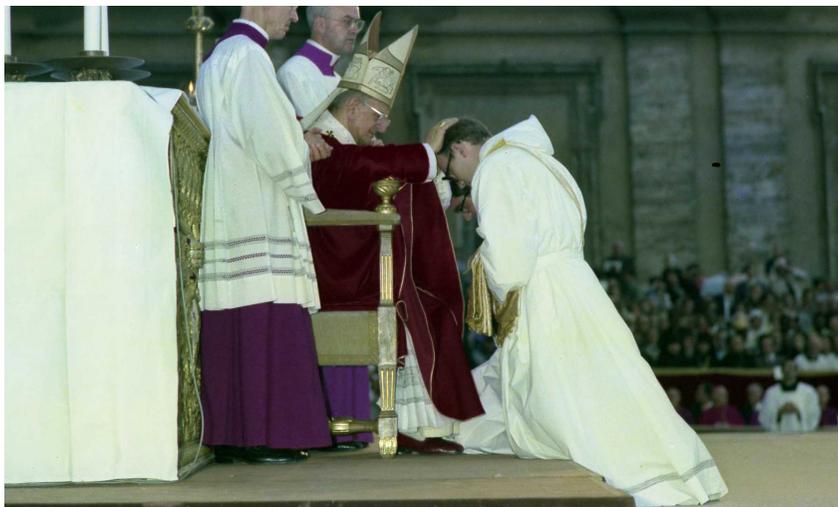
Indeed, more than opposition, it is a matter of a cause (anarchic liberalism) that produces an effect far more monstrous still (collectivist totalitarianism), which Plato himself knew already and exposed with admirable lucidity. The solution, which attempts to “rescue” the world and human nature, must not simply extend beyond but improve upon the alternatives of “tolerance/intolerance.” Such an endeavor will succeed only if one knows to relativize the latter combination. This is, however, something far from easy in the mindset which, forgetting the object, caters only to subjective attitudes.

**I**n fact, tolerance is relativized only if it narrows the scope it deserves, namely, that of the subject. On the contrary, intolerance fulfills the laws and the requirements of the object (the objective good, as such, is not the same as the evil, but conscience can err or have difficulty discerning one from the other).

Indeed, once again we must look to the principle of human action: that it nevertheless pertains to a rational, deliberate, or free act that it can and must submit to certain finalistic orientations inscribed in human nature itself and likewise expressing moral norms. Again, it is exemplified in the relationship between the subject (free action) and the object (the moral good that is due). Therein lies the very essence of morality. In such a relationship, the object is (morally) due and therefore creates around itself the necessity of intolerance. On the contrary, the action which proceeds from the operating subject is (psychologically speaking) free, and creates around itself an atmosphere of tolerance, as has been stated.

So, in ethics freedom and obligation belong to each other. Similarly, tolerance places demands upon the subject. Worthwhile intolerance cannot be thrown off halfway by limitations placed upon the subject, which ought to be summoned imperatively by its laws. From this it seems that a perfect equality cannot exist

between the relativity of tolerance and that of intolerance. Indeed, the object is established as a measure and rule of the subject to which it is subordinated. Intolerance, provided it is trained to a good object, will in turn be good if further moderated by prudence.



Instead, tolerance presents itself on the side of a free subject, which is not realized properly. If man freely adheres to the good, it is absurd to speak of tolerance. This is evidenced with respect to the one whom, expressing his freedom, lacks the realization of the moral value due, so that “tolerance,” strictly speaking, is doubly relative. It is relative when it is confined to the sphere of subjective freedom, and it is relative in the genuinely urgent instance when freedom is not properly realized on moral grounds (it is not the virtuous, but, if anything, the sinner who is to be treated with “forbearance”).

#### TOLERANCE WITHIN CIVIL COEXISTENCE

Since every serious social ethic starts from the indisputable fact that the individual is the foundation of social life, it is necessary to examine the essence of tolerance, primarily in terms of the single

person as the subject of morality. This individual is neither a type of substance in his own right, nor a monstrous *automaton* whose dialectic passes over our heads and, if necessary, over our bodies.

This does not mean, however, that the first and privileged application of tolerance (or intolerance) occurs precisely at the level of complicated social relations. Not only does it occur between individuals themselves, but also and especially in the relationship between individuals and society. This delicate ordering of the individual citizen to the political multitude is neither due to chance nor to historical circumstances or contractual initiatives (think of Rousseau), but once again to nature. Man is by nature social; and this nature is immutable in itself, though by this we do not mean inert or inactive.

The foundation of the natural tendency to social life is twofold: One is related to concupiscible love (passionate love, in the good sense), which consists in the need to let ourselves help our fellow man (since left alone we have little chance to live decently, indeed even to survive in the most basic sense). The other one comes from the natural benevolence or friendship that every human being practices with his neighbor, except in pathological cases. Man delights in this kind of benevolence, when he does good for another. And with due discretion, he desires it spontaneously.

In this way, the union of many individuals becomes a society by virtue of an order moved towards a social end, which is a political friendship. It is a good shared by all, but it is also greater than all, because while all are together, society is not necessarily attributed to one in particular. Political friendship is of fundamental importance, as participation is to the advantage of each one. This is the well-known *bonum commune omnium* of Thomistic memory.

Since this good surpasses every individual, as is obvious, the individual is organically subjugated to it. This might seem to suggest a totalitarian view, insofar as the individual good serves the greater good of the society. Yet this is not the case, as the dimension of the moral good (*bonum honestum*) in the individual

is in fact the ultimate end, and not just a means with respect to society.

St. Thomas Aquinas likes to distinguish between two types of common good: one immanent, which is the communal peace intrinsic to the body politic; and the other, even higher and transcendent, which is the full, moral realization of man, the achievement of his own happiness and the ultimate goal of his life. We know of it as the social ethic (or social doctrine) of the Church, which rests on the twin principles of solidarity and subsidiarity. The first expresses precisely the subjugation of the individual to the common good, while the other expresses the respect due by the society to smaller entities, and, ultimately, to the individuals who live within it.

Here, too, it is easy to see how intolerance (adherence to the common good) and tolerance (respecting individuality), far from excluding each other, postulate and complement each other. It is evident that large communities rely upon a sizeable individuality, while great men find their connatural setting in a society ideally attracted to serving with loving dedication.

What is particularly interesting is precisely that good, delightfully pertaining to the *bonum commune omnium*, to which we assign the enigmatic term, “an ideally attractive society.” This pertains to an especially exquisite reality that great nations realized at fortunate moments in their history and is commonly called “culture.” The current inflation of this term is a sign of a bad omen, because only decadent cultures like to speak excessively of culture. By contrast, those who have it “in their blood,” so to speak, live it almost inadvertently.

Take even a superficial reading of Oswald Spengler. One may disagree with him on many points, but his profound insight regarding what he calls “the morphology of cultures” is undeniable. His understanding supports an important conclusion: culture does not exist where a people does not share in a spiritual, and ultimately

religious, heritage. It can disappoint the so-called secularists, but religions are the midwives and nurses of all cultural peoples. The religion must not simply be a natural religion but supernaturally revealed such as it is in Western culture, which is Christian to the “marrow of its bones.” Where it is no longer so, the culture tellingly loses its identity.

**I**n these periods of “grace” in the life of a nation, it is superfluous and misleading to speak in terms of tolerance/intolerance. Everyone thinks in these categories, which is obviously of little intelligence, though the surprise is that everyone thinks so, spontaneously and without constraint. The nations of culture are therefore neither tolerant nor intolerant in themselves. If anything they respect those who are not their own, as has been very well highlighted by Lellia Cracco-Ruggini: “What mattered was the difference of culture. The barbarians who acquired Greco-Roman culture were considered, even by the more deeply rooted ‘barbarian-phobic,’ ‘Romans’ through and through.” Medieval Christianity is treated similarly regarding its views on intolerance. The critique is furthered by a more or less hidden bad faith, which is in bad taste and unfortunately widespread. In other words, to tolerate or “to bear” with those in the body politic who think otherwise is a typical requirement of an era that sees its culture (spontaneous adherence to a common heritage of ideals) crumble little by little.

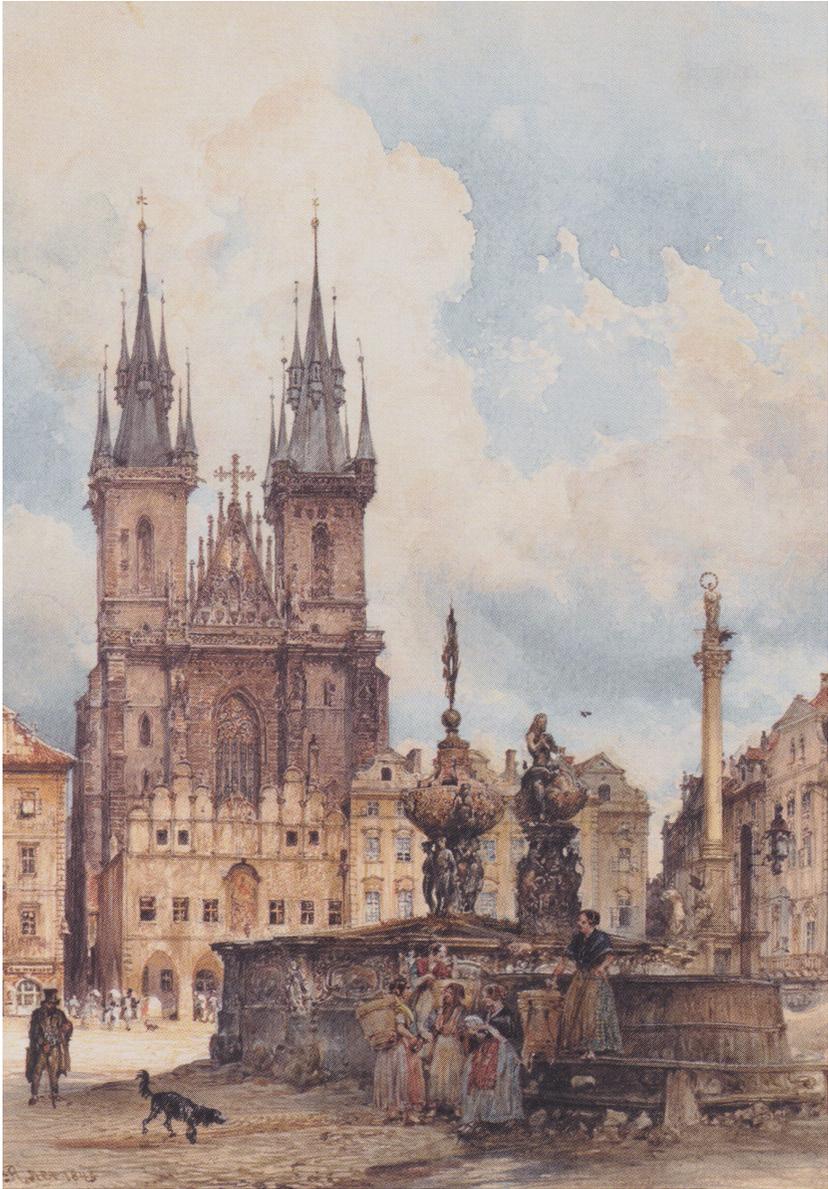
The individual/society relationship is first and foremost a matter of justice—that of law and obligation. Man is by nature subject to law. By virtue of his spiritual dimension, man arises from the surrounding world. He is not possessed, but instead possesses. At the same time, however, the individual, who is a ruler of particular things, is submissive, not to things, but to the common and global good of which he forms a part. This is expressed clearly in the fundamental right to private property, which St. Thomas Aquinas understands as a means to acquire and distribute. St. Thomas notes that the use of goods is for a common nature, certainly not in the sense that everyone uses everything indiscriminately, but in

the sense that the well-being of individuals must be ordered to that of the society.

Similarly, the individual enjoys within himself inalienable rights that the society cannot but approve. At the same time, he also has specific obligations in this respect. This means that every properly ordered society is composed of a system of freedom. So as to not equivocate over a rather compromised term with respect to the individual, the same is applied to institutions, which order the individual to the good of all. There is not much thought given to income or the like, because the common good, more than the national earnings, consists in a good of another kind and of another standard. This is the spiritual heritage before which the individual finds himself, and it shows to what he must avert. He must not squander with foolish contempt the clear obligation to administer wisely.

Tzvetan Todorov proposes a certain (and very fair) asymmetry between tolerance and intolerance, but unfortunately he uses Enlightenment terminology for freedom and equality, affirming the need to limit the first and to establish the second unconditionally. Rather, it is not freedom which needs to be limited but tolerance, inasmuch as freedom is sovereign and directed toward the good. Meanwhile, tolerance is the forbearance of evil, and it is clear that the domain of one's actions is in itself moderated by the final good end. If not, freedom is achieved psychologically but fails morally, and is no longer freedom in the fullest sense. By contrast, the forbearance of evil has precise limitations, dictated by political prudence, which are externally imposed.

Equality, therefore, is not as absolute a value as one would like it to be, or at least we need to clarify what we mean by equality. The only real equality is of a metaphysical or ethical kind, inasmuch as human nature does not permit variations of degree. There either *is* or there *isn't*, but there cannot be *more* or *less*. This fact expresses itself in equality before the law. But, positive law, if it is wise, knows



RUDOLF VON ALT - VIEW OF THE OLD TOWN SQUARE  
WITH CHURCH IN PRAGUE

how to distinguish between different social situations within its order, because on the social level—and this is the great deception of the Enlightenment—equality is more an anti-value than a value. Indeed, it is said: extreme right may produce extreme wrong.

It is contrary to nature to expect everyone to be as equally strong, healthy, receptive, intelligent, and refined in taste. And, if imposed as a way of “realizing a utopia,” it begets violence, and what is more, unjust violence. Rather, at the social-political level it may be necessary to recognize the twofold link rising from the joint responsibility of the subject with the common good (the value of obligation and duty, based in lawful justice) and that which descends from subsidiarity, uniting the collective to the individual. This unity is, at the same time, to be respected and protected (the value of freedom and law, founded on distributive justice). Only when the two movements join together (as happens in times of cultural crisis) does intolerance enter the picture, since it beckons the individual to respect the common spiritual heritage and the tolerance proclaimed before institutions on behalf of private citizens who do not share in the unwanted burden anymore.

**T**he transcendental values are, in themselves, immutable, yet the approach of men and nations to them is historical, such that each culture expresses temporally (and unfortunately also temporarily) a wonderful reflection of the objective and the eternal True, Good, and Beautiful. Without these Ideas (to use the language of the great Plato), souls and entire populations pass away, and devoid of true prophets they perish. They have laws which are opposed (opposing principles). It is needless to say that even if supported by the masses that are axiologically freed, they can never complain about such things. Indeed, the answer is not in the power to vote for referenda. Yet, attempts to do so are telling proofs that man has lost his sensibility.

How true and wise is the resounding and stern warning of the unforgettable Pope Pius XII, of happy memory, especially in light of recent events: “That which does not answer to the truth and to

moral norms has objectively no right, neither to existence, nor to propaganda, nor to activity.” If the error cannot be counted with the truth, tolerance can represent a lesser evil with respect to the social upheaval that might ensue. Though, under certain decisively upsetting historical conditions there could be the temptation to its absolute suppression. This is recognized, respectively, in Saint Augustine’s exclamation: “What can be said of vulgar harlots...? If you remove harlots from human affairs, you will throw everything into confusion because of lusts. If you make harlots become wives, you will dishonor the latter by stain and misbehavior.” To tolerate means to bear an evil in view of a greater practical good. Though it certainly does not mean exalting the evil so as to weigh it equally with the good, neither does it mean making of tolerance itself an absolute principle.

#### RELIGIOUS TOLERANCE

Above all, it is fitting to accurately distinguish religion from faith. Both obligate man morally with respect to God, but on different levels. While the first belongs to human nature, the other is a supernatural gift, freely given. Both are commonly obligated (although in varying degrees, depending on the awareness more or less explicated by the revealed facts), because universally proposed to everyone by God in Christ, our Lord and Savior. A society which apostatizes from the faith loses a more sublime good. And, an irreligious or ungodly society loses a more fundamental good. Yet, apart from the proper distinction rests the fact that faith, precisely because it is supernatural, presumes and grabs hold of nature by its religious dimension, such that in our cultural context, to lose one means losing the other, and vice versa. One does well to be attentive: to whom much is given, much will be required. While a populace with simple religion can still find faith, a populace that loses its religion and its faith too is deprived of its very soul.

To give due worship to God and to revelation handed down and proclaimed, and to believe in the mysteries of God constitute clear

and objective obligations. But it is obviously an obligation of the moral order, such that these obligations compel one's acceptance subjectively—in freedom and with conviction. It is useless to try to do away with such an essential law of God through the invocation of the tiresome and repetitive antiphon of “changed times.” Changed then in what sense? Morally we are certainly not improved. Joseph Ratzinger once offered a clear and precise condemnation of those attempts to divide the history of the Church into fictional pre- and post-conciliar periods.

**I**n this light (which every Christian believer supernaturally perceives with the *sensus fidei*), it is shocking to talk about “change” in the Church with regard to basic issues such as revelation and of doctrinal errors, invoking no less an authority than Pope John XXIII, of happy memory, as does Giuseppe Alberigo, citing a passage from the inaugural speech of the Second Vatican Council. One recognizes in the text that the sadly missed Pontiff, while hoping for pastoral formulae, not only does not abolish that doctrine—and how could he—but also explicitly demands the adaptation of the formulae. Though he renounces condemnations he does so not because they are no longer valid but for the reason of their excess, given the doctrinal maturity of Christians (so that what changes is not the doctrine, but the historical circumstances in which it is announced. Although, on the latter point, the optimism of John XXIII was “cruelly disappointed” in the words of Joseph Ratzinger).

The same is true of Leszek Kołakowski's call to reinterpret the principle “*Extra Ecclesiam nulla salus*” (outside the Church there is no salvation). In fact, when this principle was still being dogmatically elaborated and fixed, St. Thomas was already familiar with the expression “God does not restrict his mercy to the sacraments.” The obligation to honor God and submit to His word does not change with the passage of time, and it is not from history. Rather, it is from the essence of moral norms that one can and should expect a just solution to the problem.

We have already seen that the culture of a people is ever full of references to concepts decidedly religious. So it was for Christian Europe wherein the faith gave life to entire peoples who recognized themselves as brothers and sisters in Christ, forming amongst themselves an authentic *res publica christiana* (Christian polity). Heresies subvert both faith and culture and are at the same time disruptive (just think of the iconoclastic fury displayed by various sects from impoverished classes), though they are not able to ruin religious and institutional unity as such. A decisive change, such as a collapse of the aforementioned spiritual cohesion, happened right at the time of the Reformation, where most movements were more or less frantic and whole nations turned away from Catholic unity. Then and only then did one aspect of intolerance emerge, which was the attempt to give the society one or another religious orientation. At the same time we witnessed the progress of tolerance wherein a considerable minority could neither be converted nor subjugated, merely “bared with.” It is Adriano Prosperi who deserves the credit for bringing this state of affairs to light.

Similar circumstances still persist. While apostasy has claimed an increasing number of casualties and has become more monstrous, and while the vast spiritual desert has increased dramatically, it is useful to note again with Norberto Bobbio that if tolerance has a rationale, so does intolerance. Undoubtedly, institutions of the State must educate citizens in virtue. This also entails a certain incentive to remain faithful to the religious principles inherited from our fathers. *Gaudium et Spes* teaches unabashedly of the necessity to incorporate the law of Christ into the institutions of the State, which was eloquently reiterated by Pope John Paul II in his recent address at Loreto.

The distinction between the natural and the supernatural order rightly demands that religion (and faith) respects the autonomy of political life, as the latter pertains to the natural moral order.

However, the consequence of humanity's fall because of original sin also permits societal life to be inspired by the principles of revealed religion, which alone is capable of bestowing upon individuals and society the medicine of healing grace.

What about those who want neither to believe in God nor to praise Him? They are first and foremost invited to correct themselves. Then, if, given the iniquity of time, they cannot manage to do so, they are to be tolerated, but not praised. They are to be respected simply as persons who honestly seek the truth, but not as if they have already found it. This gives a context for the requirement for charity according to the Thomistic doctrine which holds that we are to love our neighbor for God's sake, or because he is already in God, or if unfortunately he is not yet, he will be as soon as possible by a free choice, mature and confident.

As for tolerance elevated to an absolute principle and boasted as pluralism and broadmindedness, it is easy to see, based upon experience, how it leads to indifferentism, relativism, and ultimately, to immorality, since morality and integrity are in fact a whole. To be good one needs to be whole. To be evil is fine enough within a "pluralism" of values fabricated *ad hoc* according to one's own convenience. As it is said, an action is good when good in every respect; it is wrong when wrong in any respect. Such an absolute tolerance, where it is possible, should be amended. If it is unfortunately realized, it is best tolerated, but tolerated truly as one of the gravest evils that can befall a people rich in tradition and culture.

*Translated by Cassian Derbes, O.P.*

*Cassian Derbes entered the Order of Preachers in 2009.*

## PRAYER FOR BEATIFICATION OF SERVANT OF GOD TOMÁŠ TÝN

*Eternal Father, abounding in mercy, you sent your Word into the world to lead it from darkness to the light; we thank you for the gifts that you have granted to your Servant Tomáš Týn. Deign, we beseech you, to raise him to the honours of the altars, so that the exemplary witness that he has given us as a worthy son of our Holy Father Dominic and the Blessed Virgin Mary may be a spur to the many in following Christ, and through his intercession grant us the grace that we ask you. Through our Lord Jesus Christ...Amen. Our Father. Hail Mary. Glory be...*

WITH ECCLESIASTICAL APPROVAL

## ENDNOTES

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