

---

## HIS TESTAMENT OF PEACE—

### A Memorial to the Late Pius XI

---



FROM the first hour of his pontificate when the newly-elected Achille Ratti announced, "Pius is the name of peace. Therefore, desirous as I am of dedicating my efforts to the work of world pacification, to which my predecessor, Benedict XV, consecrated himself, I choose the name of Pius XI," until the last moment of his long reign when he breathed, "Jesus. Mary. Peace to the world. Peace," the idea of world harmony and order dominated his work. A study of his varied encyclicals and briefs which, in their simplicity and profundity, have served as moral grammars for both the theologian and the man in the street, discloses this theme of peace as the woof and warp of the great tapestry of social reconstruction conceived by Pius XI and applied by him to the individual, social, economic and ecclesiastical problems of the day. Accordingly, a few selected texts from the late Pontiff's writings are here recalled, from multiple sources and in reference to widely divergent problems, yet one in their prime idea—the peace which consists in tranquillity of order. Since the press, both religious and secular, has already written up his life so splendidly, this is the most appropriate tribute that we know of for the late Protector of our Order of Friars Preachers. But it is more than an epitaph. It is not just a memorial to the dead; it is a challenge to the living. It is the spiritual legacy of Pius XI to men and nations of today and tomorrow. It is his testament of peace.

\* \* \*

**Motto** "Pius X, in taking as his motto 'To restore all things in Christ,' was inspired from on High to lay the foundations of that 'work of peace' which became the program and principal task of Benedict XV. These two programs of Our Predecessors We desire to unite in one—the re-establishment of the Kingdom of Christ by peace in Christ—the peace of Christ in the Kingdom of Christ."<sup>1</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> "The Peace of Christ," Dec. 23, 1922.

**Notion of Peace** "Order, as the Angelic Doctor well defines, is unity arising from the apt arrangement of a plurality of objects; hence, true and genuine social order demands various members of society, joined together by a common bond. . .<sup>2</sup>

"That blessed tranquillity, which is the effect of an orderly existence and in which the essence of peace is to be found, no longer exists, and in its place the restless spirit of revolt reigns. . .<sup>3</sup>

**The Cause of Present Disorder** "The fundamental cause of this defection from the Christian law in social and economic matters, and of the apostasy of many workingmen from the Catholic Faith which has resulted from it, is the disorderly affection of the soul, a sad consequence of original sin, the source of these and of all other evils. By original sin the marvellous harmony of man's faculties has been so deranged that now he is easily led astray by low desires, and strongly tempted to prefer the transient goods of this world to the lasting goods of Heaven. . .<sup>4</sup>

**The Role of the Church** "To meet the weakness of man's fallen nature, God in His Goodness has provided the abundant helps of His grace and the countless means with which He has endowed the Church. . .<sup>5</sup>

## THE PROGRAM OF RECONSTRUCTION

### 1. PERSONAL

"First, and most important of all, for mankind is the need of spiritual peace.<sup>6</sup> . . . Another error against which the Apostolic word, divinely inspired, wishes to fortify us, is that of supposing that true external peace can reign between men where there is not internal peace. . .<sup>7</sup>

**Prayer** "Mindful then of our condition, that we are essentially limited and absolutely dependent on the Supreme Being, before everything let us have recourse to prayer. . . Men who in every nation pray to the same God for peace on earth cannot be at the same time bearers of discord among peoples. . .<sup>8</sup>

<sup>2</sup> "On Reconstructing the Social Order," May 15, 1931.

<sup>3</sup> "The Peace of Christ."

<sup>4</sup> "On Reconstructing the Social Order."

<sup>5</sup> "Christian Education of Youth," Dec. 31, 1929.

<sup>6</sup> "The Peace of Christ."

<sup>7</sup> Allocution, Dec. 24, 1930.

<sup>8</sup> "The Sacred Heart and World Distress," May 3, 1932.

"If men in our century . . . refuse the Holy Rosary, there is an innumerable multitude of holy men of every age and every condition who have always held it dear. . . . They have used it as a powerful weapon to put the demons to flight, to preserve the integrity of life, to acquire virtue more easily, and in a word to attain real peace among men. . . . This practice of piety . . . admirably diffused by St. Dominic, not without the heavenly suggestion and inspiration of the Virgin Mother of God, is without doubt easy for all.<sup>9</sup>

**Penance** "But to prayer we must also join penance, the spirit of penance and the practice of Christian penance. . . .

Penance is of its nature a recognition and re-establishment of the moral order in the world that is founded on the eternal law, that is, on the living God. . . . Is there not, perchance . . . in this spirit of penance also a sweet mystery of peace? . . .<sup>10</sup>

"What more suitable occasion can we point out to you . . . for such a union of prayer and reparation than the approaching Feast of the Sacred Heart of Jesus? . . . Let the faithful hasten in large numbers to the Eucharistic Board, hasten to the foot of the altar to adore the Redeemer of the World under the veils of the Sacrament. . . . Prayer then and penance are the two potent inspirations sent to us at this time by God, that we may lead back to Him mankind that has gone astray. . . .<sup>11</sup>

## 2. SOCIAL RECONSTRUCTION

### a. *Principles*

"But before proceeding to discuss these problems, We lay down the principle long since clearly established by Leo XIII that it is Our right and Our duty to deal authoritatively with social and economic problems. . . .<sup>12</sup>

**Education** "It is . . . as important to make no mistake in education, as it is to make no mistake in the pursuit of the last end, with which the whole work of education is intimately and necessarily connected. . . . Education is essentially a social and not a mere individual activity. . . . Christian education takes in the whole aggregate of human life, physical and spiritual, intellectual and moral, individual, domestic and social, not with a view of reducing it in any way, but in order to elevate, regulate and perfect it in accordance with the example and teaching of Christ. . . .<sup>13</sup>

<sup>9</sup> "On the Recitation of the Rosary," Sept. 29, 1937.

<sup>10</sup> "The Sacred Heart and World Distress."

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>12</sup> "On Reconstructing the Social Order."

<sup>13</sup> "Christian Education of Youth."

**Family** "It behooves Us, above all else, to call to mind that firmly established principle . . . that whatever things have deviated from their right order cannot be brought back to that original state which is in harmony with their nature except by a return to the divine plan which, as the Angelic Doctor teaches, is the exemplar of all right order. . . In order, therefore, to restore due order in this matter of marriage, it is necessary that all should bear in mind what is the divine plan and strive to conform to it. . .<sup>14</sup>

**Labor** "For unless human society forms a truly social and organic body; unless labor be protected in the social and juridical order; unless the various forms of mutual endeavor, dependent one upon the other, are united in mutual harmony and mutual support; unless, above all, brains, capital and labor combine together for common effort, man's toil cannot produce due fruit. . .<sup>15</sup>

**Property** "Now the natural law, or rather, God's Will manifested by it, demands that right order be observed in the application of human resources to human needs; and this order consists in everything having its proper owner. . .<sup>16</sup>

**State** "When We speak of the reform of the social order, it is principally the State We have in mind. . . It is an injustice, a grave evil and a disturbance of right order for a larger and higher organization to arrogate to itself functions which can be performed efficiently by smaller and lower bodies. . . Now this is the primary duty of the State and of all good citizens, to abolish conflict between classes with divergent interests, and thus foster and promote harmony between the various ranks of society. . .<sup>17</sup>

b. *Principles in Practice—Catholic Action*

"It was Jesus Christ Himself Who laid the first foundations of Catholic Action. . .<sup>18</sup>

"Catholic Action, like the Church whose support it is, has a spiritual and not a material object. . . This it will achieve by extending the Reign of Christ in the life of the individual, the home and society, by means of the ordered activity of all who offer themselves for the apostolate. . .<sup>19</sup>

<sup>14</sup> "On Christian Marriage," Dec. 31, 1930.

<sup>15</sup> "On Reconstructing the Social Order."

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

<sup>18</sup> "On Catholic Action," June 29, 1931.

<sup>19</sup> Letter Addressed to the Patriarch of Lisbon, Nov. 10, 1933.

**Model—St. Albert  
the Great**

"Albert is exactly the Saint whose example should inspire this modern age, so ardently seeking for peace and so full of hope for its scientific discoveries. . . . Albert, who in his lifetime labored strenuously and successfully for peace between princes and peoples and individual men, is put before us now as the perfect model of peace. . . . He presented a living image of his Master, Whom Scripture calls 'the Prince of Peace.'<sup>20</sup>

**Clergy**

"The priest is, indeed, both by vocation and by divine commission the chief Apostle and tireless furtherer of the Christian education of youth; in the name of God, the priest blesses Christian marriage . . . ; the priest contributes most effectively to the solution, or at least the mitigation, of social conflicts. . . ; Finally, the priest is the most valorous leader in that crusade of expiation and penance to which We have invited all men of good will. . .<sup>21</sup>

"Now it is of great importance . . . that priests should have a learning adequate to the requirements of the age. For the attainment of this, in addition to a solid classical education, there is required both instruction and training in scholastic philosophy 'according to the method, and the mind and principles of St. Thomas Aquinas.'<sup>22</sup> . . There is no doubt that theology reached the apex of its dignity in the works of Aquinas. . . Wherefore, both in our schools of philosophy and theology, St. Thomas holds the supreme mastership. . . . If in private, in public and in international relations all these things that Thomas lays down were kept holy and inviolate, nothing more would be needed to reconcile man to 'the Peace of Christ in the Kingdom of Christ' which the whole world so ardently desires. . .<sup>23</sup>

**Laity**

"Today it is essential that all should be apostles, and that is why the laity are bound to answer the call of the Church. . .<sup>24</sup>

"We extend Our paternal invitation to Our beloved sons among the laity who are doing battle in the ranks of Catholic Action. . . . The militant leaders of Catholic Action . . . will be the first and immediate apostles of their fellow workmen. They will be an in-

<sup>20</sup> Decretal Letter, Dec. 16, 1931.

<sup>21</sup> "On the Catholic Priesthood," Dec. 20, 1935.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

<sup>23</sup> "On St. Thomas Aquinas," June 29, 1923.

<sup>24</sup> Letter Addressed to the Archbishop of Toledo, Spain, Nov. 6, 1929.

valuable aid to the priest in carrying the torch of truth, and in relieving grave spiritual and material suffering. . .<sup>25</sup>

**The** "Never will Italy have any loss to fear from this  
**Concordat** Apostolic See, for the pope, whoever he may chance to be, will always be the one to say 'I think the thoughts of peace and not of affliction. . .<sup>26</sup>

"We believe, with deep satisfaction, that We have given God back to Italy, and Italy to God. . .<sup>27</sup>

**Church** "No prerogative of the Church has been assailed more  
**Unity** bitterly by 'the enemy' than this unity of government, by means of which the 'unity of the spirit' is joined 'in the bond of peace.' . . . We invite most sincerely the Schismatics to join with Us in this unity of the Church. . .<sup>28</sup>

\* \* \*

**His Life** "To this unarmed but invincible power of prayer let  
**For Peace** the people have recourse once again, that God— in Whose hands resteth the destinies of the world—may sustain especially at these moments in those who govern, confidence in the pacific ways of faithful negotiations and of lasting agreements, and that He may inspire in all sentiments and actions corresponding to the reiterated word of peace, which will be suited to foster peace and to establish it upon the secure basis of law and of the Gospel teachings. . . . We offer for the salvation and for the peace of the world this life which . . . the Lord has spared and even renewed. . .<sup>29</sup>

**His Hope** "The interior peace—that peace which comes to any-  
**And Ours** one with full and clear knowledge that one is arrayed on the side of Truth and Justice and that one is striving and suffering for these virtues—that peace which only God can give and which the world, in the same way that it cannot give, neither can it take away—that blessed and consoling peace has never left Us, thanks to Divine goodness and mercy; and We have fullest confidence that, come what may, it will never leave Us."<sup>30</sup>

May that peace never leave him! May his soul which so valiantly worked for, now rest in, peace!

<sup>25</sup> "On Atheistic Communism," March 19, 1937.

<sup>26</sup> "The Peace of Christ," (1922).

<sup>27</sup> Address of Feb. 13, 1929.

<sup>28</sup> "On St. Josaphat," Nov. 12, 1923.

<sup>29</sup> Radio Address to the World, Sept. 29, 1938.

<sup>30</sup> "Catholic Action," (1931).