

THE LOST CONDEMNATIONS OF COMMUNISM OF VATICAN II

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What follows are three preparatory schemas of the Second Vatican Council, drafts of proposed declarations which sought to address the menace of communism, to prescribe a program to oppose it and “shatter its audacity.” These documents and all similar proposals were discarded following the takeover of the council’s commissions by the bishops of the “Rhine group,” a coalition of liberal prelates from Germany, France, and Holland, and their allies, who acted in a highly-coordinated way to achieve their goals. LifeSite is now presenting these lost schemas to the English-speaking world in what we believe is their first translation into any vernacular language.

ON THE CARE OF SOULS WITH REGARD TO CHRISTIANS INFECTED WITH COMMUNISM

(DE CURA ANIMARUM PRO CHRISTIANIS COMMUNISMO INFECTIS)

Chapter VI of Part 2 of *Praecipuae de Animarum Cura Quaestiones*,
a preparatory schema of the Second Vatican Council
approved in February, 1962 by the Commission
on Bishops and the Supervision of Dioceses,

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Holy Mother Church, following the steps of her Divine Spouse and Teacher and obeying his commands, labors assiduously so that all men “may have life and may have it more abundantly” (Jn. 10: 10).

However, in recent times, a danger has arisen that menaces the doctrine and activity of the Church, that is, atheistic communism, whose specific purpose is to radically overturn the social order and to subvert the foundations of Christian civilization.¹

For communism teaches a doctrine and pursues a program of action that exceedingly fosters materialism and atheism.

Although it is sometimes moved by an impulse against injustices which we have received in our day as an inheritance from an unjust economic regime,² communism nonetheless offers a false kind of redemption. “And it is thus pervaded, in a pseudo-mystical way, with a certain false idea of justice, equality and fraternity for all in the administration of their needs and labors, for the purpose of inflaming the masses by enticing them with deceitful promises, by which they are aroused as if by a virulent contagion.”³ And thus communism is altogether devoted to delivering a vision to mankind of an “organic life,” offering a false religion without God, and abolishing the very notion of the eternal Divinity and the hope of another life.⁴

What follows is the plundering of man’s liberty, in which the spiritual norm of living consists, and likewise the overturning of human dignity and the desecration of human life, as well as the removal of the authority of parents to educate their children.⁵

Seeking, therefore, to bring about a new political order, “an association of men that expels God from the earth,” atheistic communism, “like a new gospel and like a form of salvific redemption, preaches its message to all of humanity.”⁶

The Catholic Church, however, as it is the legitimate and authentic interpreter of the moral law, has the duty to denounce all acts perpetrated against the divine law, to confirm the faithful, and to illuminate them regarding imminent dangers as well as the social application of its principles.

The Church, as the Mystical Body of Christ, unceasingly labors to unite all men, even those who are erring, through the preaching of the Gospel, and through the love and grace of Christ.

This holy and noble duty first of all obligates “the higher members of this mystical Body, especially those from whom the divine Head will someday render an account for our souls,”⁷ indeed, the bishops, “whom the Holy Spirit has appointed to rule over the Church of God.”⁸

Therefore, to the Church belongs the right and duty of fighting against atheistic communism regarding doctrine and regarding action or methods of activity.

It is important to diligently distinguish this activity or evangelical duty of the Church from merely political or economic anticommunism, which has a different purpose. On the other hand, however, “the Church does not only have the right and the duty to uphold principles regarding religion and the integrity of morals, but also to exercise its authority to make pronouncements regarding the way those principles are brought into effect.”⁹

In such circumstances necessity urges and impels that the Christian faithful, under the leadership of the bishops, be made sufficiently aware of the danger faced by the faith, that they become more knowledgeable about the fundamentals of the faith that are under attack (e.g. the existence of God, the liberty of man, the value of labor, etc.) so that they may be imbued with the doctrine of the Church regarding charity and social justice, and so that they may come to know and faithfully adhere to the most salutary Papal documents regarding social issues,¹⁰ so that the Church may renew the moral and social order in Christ through the aid of the priesthood and the apostolate of the laity.

As the Church of God is by no means directly advocating any particular economic and social systems, but seeks “to construct modern civilization in accordance with standards of humanity and evangelical doctrine,”¹¹ a spiritual struggle against atheistic communism, or “this invention so full of errors and delusions,”¹² must be carried out so that the Christian faithful might be

strengthened, and more apt ways might be offered for the effective carrying out of apostolic activity, especially among laborers.

This pastoral activity should be carried out:

I – to aid the Christian faithful living in regions not oppressed by communism;

II – to reeducate young people educated under communism;

III – in favor of the “silent Church” of the oppressed.

*Art. I – On the Christian faithful living in
regions not oppressed by communism*

1. As the lamentable weakness of piety and religion are the principal cause of so many Christians self-identifying as communists, and as Christian doctrine and the proper activity and practice of the Christian life are the strongest bulwark against atheism and materialism, pastors of souls and instructors of the youth should strive to educate the minds of the faithful so that they might not be troubled by any reasonable doubt nor by any commonly accepted social injustice.

2. § 1. Therefore there is the need for a broader, deeper, and more thoroughly disseminated knowledge of the principles of the science of eternal salvation, which must be conveyed in catechisms published under ecclesiastical authority, in which it is of primary importance to explain the doctrine of the Mystical Body of Christ and its implications for the activities of life.

§ 2. Catechesis is to include a well-ordered and clear explanation of the social teaching that is contained in the treasury of Catholic doctrine.

3. It is necessary for men of the Church to be imbued with a social spirit that flows forth from Christian doctrine, as well as the constant application of social principles in practice and in daily life.

4. Moreover, the bishops should strenuously and constantly defend the wise allocutions of the popes regarding peace, regarding the principles by which a friendly companionship and harmony should be maintained between the social classes, and regarding the principles by which the less developed and poorer nations are to be aided, as opposed to a contented “racism.”

5. A precise and more profound knowledge of the principles upon which communism depends, and a solid doctrinal assault on the “organic worldview” and metaphysics of the communists must be brought about in accordance with the guidelines established by the bishops in each nation.

6. For this purpose, students are to be educated in seminaries and likewise priests in particular courses are to be instructed regarding the doctrines of communism itself, of the truths of the faith it attacks, and of the most apt pastoral method for defending the faith.

7. The bishops in the National Conferences should promote a firm and constant action against the errors of the communists through the use of experts, and likewise should ensure that in each province or nation there should be a specified group of men who, as true experts in communist doctrine, zealously combat the errors of the same doctrine with meticulous care.

8. Because pastoral activity should be addressed to all men, not excluding militant communists, the bishops should ensure that in each province or nation a select group of priests and laity be designated, men who are outstanding in knowledge or reputation, and particularly in the zeal for their apostolate, who strive to win for Christ those who are followers of communism or who are infected by its erroneous doctrines.

9. Apostolic activity consists a) in the integrity of the Christian life in personal habits and conduct, b) in the contempt for riches in accordance with the evangelical spirit, c) in the condemnation of immoral practices that violate social justice, no matter who is guilty of them, including Catholics, d) in the profound knowledge of the social principles of the Church and their application in the life of the community, e) in a mutual and active intimacy with the poor and oppressed, f) in scientific and practical efforts to raise the people to a higher level of dignity, for example, in public legislative bodies, in fraternal unions of workers, etc., g) in the dissemination of the Gospel and of the doctrines of the Church, especially among young students, men of refinement, skilled artisans, and more affluent workers or technicians, h) in showing that Catholic doctrine offers better solutions and approaches to problems.

10. There is a need for an influx of workers’ guilds and a common association of laborers for the purpose of counteracting or eliminating the influx of atheistic communism among simpler souls, who have a poor understanding of the nature of communism and do not support it strongly, although they might vote in favor of communism for economic reasons.

11. § 1. Regarding the clergy and Catholic militants, there a need for the greatest zeal, a fervent charity, a spirit of self-abnegation, faith in the value of Christianity – even in temporal matters – and in its final victory, as well as a heart that burns for the establishment of a Christian social order.

§ 2. A careful study of the psychological method that which has been applied extensively by communists among the people, is to be undertaken and developed by learned men.

§ 3. In each region, having examined the strategies of the communists there, the bishops should select men who will diligently undertake the study of the means by which the “psychological method” of the communists should be opposed.

§ 4. Christian worker’s guilds (*unions*), Catholic Action and other such organizations and works for aiding workers, emigrants, and all of the people of the proletarian class, should be vigorously promoted.

Bishops and priests should strenuously defend the rights of the workers and foster their progress.

§ 5. This evangelical struggle of the Church against the enemies of the Faith must be carefully distinguished from political or economic anticommunism, whatever just and legitimate civil action might be directed against communism by Catholics and others who hold public office.

§ 6. The direct or indirect acts of communists who strive to exploit the activities and publications of Catholics for their own purposes should be immediately denounced, and should be opposed by the bishops wherever they occur.

§ 7. Catholics who, infected by “progressive” doctrines and zealous for revolution, or because of a false so-called “idealism,” or a wavering judgment, or an erroneous notion of charity, or because of fear of Soviet power and a foolish shame of the judgment of man, impede action against atheistic communism, should be publicly silenced by ecclesiastical authority.

Priests delinquent in this regard are to be severely admonished, and, if the case so merits, inflicted with penalties.

§ 8. Those, however, who, whether they are bishops or priests or laity, act to counter atheistic communism in a healthy way, are to be lauded and assisted and, if it is necessary, defended.

12. An international commission of bishops and of lay experts should be instituted, which, under the leadership of the Holy See, has the task of overseeing and supporting all of those who seek to defend and liberate mankind from the errors of atheism and communism.

13. It will be the principal duty of this international commission to promote and coordinate the studies, works, ordinances, and laws that debilitate communism and shatter its audacity.

*Art. II – On reeducating the youth who have
been educated under communism*

Let us now consider the miserable fate of those, particularly the youth, who, having been educated under a communist regime, having thrown off the servile yoke of the same and now, dwelling in free countries, live among Catholics who never lost their most sweet liberty, and also among Catholics who, having been oppressed by communism, bewail innumerable evils. Such young people, indeed, returning to the bosom of the Church, cannot be held to be firm and secure Catholics in every respect; indeed they are weary with a hunger for the truth; they desire charity and justice with all their heart, they are carried by a deep antipathy towards communism; but they have not thoroughly rejected all of the things that they imbibed under the communist regime.

They are often are wary and distrustful of the Church, for, expecting the best of it, they want to see only the most exalted of things in the Church and they demand them vehemently; and therefore they are not at all attracted or convinced by a weak profession of religion and of the Faith, but rather are inclined to believe in outstanding works of faith and charity.

1. In each diocese, where there are refugees, suitable priests are to designated who give spiritual care for such youth.

2. It will be most advantageous to select such priests among those who are of the same nationality and are well-acquainted with the psychology, language, and customs of young people and others who are held under the yoke of communism.

3. Those groups of Catholic youth and secular institutes are to be commended which, imbued by a spirit of charity and sacrifice and under the moderating prudence of priests, expend their time and resources on behalf of their unfortunate brethren in regions to which young people educated under communism have fled, so that the latter may recognize the Church in accordance with its true likeness.

Art. III – *On the silent Church*

In the Mystical Body of Christ we are all “members of one another” and continuous vessels in which the spiritual osmosis of the Christian life is fulfilled. “That there might be no schism in the body: but the members might be mutually careful one for another. And if one member suffer any thing, all the members suffer with it . . .” (I Cor 12: 25-26). Therefore Catholics living “behind the iron curtain” and oppressed by a severe persecution, should be aided by the prayers and other charitable works of Christians who have the enjoyment of their freedom, so that their faith may be strengthened and that their terrible suffering may be alleviated.

1. The cooling fires of charity towards the brethren living on the other side of the “iron curtain” should be stirred up, so that between those who carry the cross in regions oppressed by communism, and Christian faithful who live in the free world, there might always be a solidarity and a union of souls, and particularly a spirit of sacrifice and common prayer.
2. It is highly recommended that, day by day, throughout the Catholic world, at particular times, prayers be made for the oppressed Church; either the practice of the “Angelus Domini” or the recitation of the Symbol of Faith may be made, for this intention, or prayers after Mass may be recited for the same purpose.
3. The solemnly proclaimed sacrifice of the Most Holy Mass on behalf of the oppressed Church and its persecutors should be frequently celebrated in each parochial or religious church, in accordance with the form determined by the bishop. Furthermore, the faithful should be invited to have the sacrifice of the Mass celebrated for this purpose.
4. Every year, on the Friday of Holy Week, particular prayers are to be piously poured out for Christians who suffer unjust persecution as well as for the conversion of their persecutors.
5. Offerings also for the oppressed Church should be made in accordance with the form to be determined by the Episcopal Conference.
6. It is very expedient that documents and acts of persecutions in oppressed regions be written up by experts in accordance with sound judgment and critical reasoning, so that the wondrous examples of Christians who have suffered for the love of Christ in those regions may be gathered for the purpose of commemorating them in sacred preaching.
7. Priestly vocations for the oppressed Church should be fostered and prepared in accordance with prudent planning, under the leadership of the Holy See.

8. Bishops of free countries should ensure that public opinion be correctly and unceasingly informed regarding the persecution of the Church and, when the occasion arises, common and prompt intercessions should be made on behalf of the oppressed Church with the highest government authorities of the same countries, to induce them to actively defend religious liberty and human rights.

Text definitively approved in the General Session held on the days of February 5-13, 1962.

FOOTNOTES

¹ Encyclical letter *Divini Redemptoris*, POPE PIUS XI, A.A.S., XXIX, 1937, n. 4, p. 66.

² *Ibid.*, p. 91.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 69.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 70.

⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 70-71.

⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 71-72.

⁷ Encyclical letter *Mystici Coproris*, POPE PIUS XII, A.A.S., XXXV, 1943, n. 7, p. 239.

⁸ *Acts of the Apostles* 20: 28.

⁹ Encyclical letter *Mater et Magistra*, POPE JOHN XXIII, A.A.S., XLIII, 1961, n. 8, p. 45.

¹⁰ Encyclical letter *Rerum Novarum*, POPE LEO XIII, *Acta Leonis*, vol. XI, 1891, p. 97 sqq.; Encyclical letter *Quadragesimo Anno*, POPE PIUS XI, A.A.S., XXIII, 1931, p. 179 sqq.; *Radio address of POPE PIUS XII*, June 1, 1941, A.A.S., XXXIII, 1941, p. 195 sqq.; Encyclical letter *Mater et Magistra* POPE JOHN XXIII, A.A.S., XLIII, 1961.

¹¹ Encyclical letter *Mater et Magistra*, POPE JOHN XXIII, 1. c., p. 46.

¹² Encyclical letter *Divini Redemptoris*, POPE PIUS XI, 1. c., p. 72.

ON THE CARE OF SOULS AND COMMUNISM *

(DE CURA ANIMARUM ET COMUNISMO)

A preparatory schema of the Second Vatican Council,
approved by the Commission on the Discipline
of the Clergy and the Christian People, February, 1962

Found in:

ACTA ET DOCUMENTA CONCILIO OECUMENICO
VATICANO II APPARANDO, SERIES II (PRAEPARATORIA),
vol. 3, pars 1, pp. 401-406

There are a large number of people in many nations who, although they were not born into ignoble families and they were even baptized and educated in the Catholic Church, are enticed by communism, enlist in communist organizations, and vote for communists in political and administrative elections.¹ Many of them, indeed, do not adhere to communist philosophical doctrines in their hearts, and the only basis of their merely practical support for the communist cause, or at least the principal one, is that they regard it as an effective way to bring about the perfect establishment of social justice, and, in fact, for obtaining a better salary or wage for less work, for receiving an equal part of the division and distribution of wealth and material goods, and for living a more comfortable and easier life. However, those who favor communism only for economic convenience are mistaken. Indeed, they should attentively consider the fact that communism seeks to alter social conditions in an unjust way, and that in fact they themselves are augmenting its power to gravely disrupt civil society, and furthermore that it is ever more frequently the case that those who favor communism while claiming to reject its philosophical doctrines, are infected in the end by both the principles of anarchism and atheism upon which communism depends.

It is important, therefore, that warnings, counsels, and precepts, particularly those that have been published by the Roman Pontiffs Leo XIII, Pius XI, Pius XII, and John XXIII, be most insistently asserted, and, in whatever way it might be beneficial, be more precisely specified or even more aptly accommodated to the present circumstances in which the Church strives to fortify the faithful against the dangers and harms of communism, and likewise to clearly present the Christian doctrines by which the justice and equity desired by man in social and economic matters can most truly and suitably be achieved. It is not expedient, however, for ordinaries^{TN1} and pastors to directly and expressly oppose communism regarding the unjust way it promotes and brings about the social and economic good, for activity of this kind by pastors of souls

would allow communists and other people hostile to the Church to easily defeat their purpose by accusing the Church of engaging in merely political activity.

Care is to be taken, therefore, that the light of the faith be brought into the minds of the faithful, and that they be nourished with the safe food of the gospel and be fortified by the sustenance of heavenly grace through the reception of the sacraments. The faithful, however, especially those who are endowed with a greater capacity to act, should be encouraged to bring about the realization of Christian social doctrine, lest they lend their ears to fallacious doctrines that do harm to the prosperity and liberty of the people as well as to the spiritual goods of individuals, and lest they give opportunity to the enemies of the Church to falsely accuse it of being unconcerned even about the necessities of this life.

Regarding all of these carefully-weighed matters, the following proposals are offered for consideration:

I. For the purpose of repelling grave dangers that menace the Church and civil society relative to materialistic and atheistic communism, to which are added naturalism and technicism,^{TN2} the clergy should receive proper preparation so that in exercising the sacred ministry they might always and everywhere fortify the faithful who haven't yet been infected by communism, and so that they may lead back to the love of God and to his service those who have been induced by communism to abandon the faith and the living of the Christian life.

II. Pastors of souls should take the greatest care that all of the faithful be perfectly instructed in the Catholic faith and in good morals, so that they will eschew egoistic and hedonistic individualism.

III. [The Church's] doctrine should be clearly explained regarding the dignity of man, created in the image of God, who is able to reach objective truth by the activity of his intellect, and who, basing himself on the preambles of faith and the motives of credibility,^{TN3} can render a reasonable service to God by assenting to supernatural revealed truths.

IV. Moreover, the doctrine of the Church should be clearly and fully explained, particularly insofar as it is the mystical body of Christ, the members of which are all of the baptized, and thus the faithful should be urged to always bear themselves in accordance with the dignity of their condition.

V. Likewise, pastors of souls should strive with great ingenuity to explain and clarify the social doctrine of the Church, which is accurately explained in the Encyclical Letter of Leo XIII, *Rerum*

novarum, of Pius XI, *Quadragesimo anno*, of John XXIII, *Mater et magistra*, as well as in many documents of Pius XII, while clearly demonstrating that the social doctrine of the Church can be completely sufficient for properly refuting or answering all questions and difficulties regarding particular laws and governmental structures that pertain to economic and social matters.

VI. So that the social doctrine of the Church might be better and more fruitfully explained and disseminated, the laborers, workers and technicians are to be taught such things in a way that is accommodated to their capacities, insofar as catechetical instruction is given to them separately. Moreover, classes should be added that address philosophical and theological disciplines and are particularly destined for the laity, and are already frequently present in many places, and should highly commended and held everywhere.

VII. Diligent care should be taken so that topics regarding the social doctrine of the Church, are ever more frequently studied in Catholic schools of at all levels as obligatory subjects, especially, however, in ecclesiastical seminaries and in religious institutes.

VIII. The true doctrines and the real purposes of communism, as well as its cunning methods for deceiving the incautious, should be clearly exposed through the dissemination of books and other writings, by way of the modern means of social communication, and through the celebration of conventions or congresses. In particular, pamphlets and flyers, in which communism is judged in accordance with the natural law and the principles of Catholic doctrine, should be generously distributed throughout the general population, among the young, workers, farmers, and technicians.

IX. It is to be strongly recommended that, based on the decree of the Second Vatican Council, the following books should be most carefully written and disseminated as much as possible.

1) A compendium of Christian doctrine which offers a clear explanation of those truths, whether of the natural or supernatural order, which are particularly subject to attack in our time, especially: the objective nature of the truth, the preambles of faith, the notion of sin, the mysteries of redemption and of the mystical body of Christ, and of the final resurrection of mankind.

2) A summary of anthropological doctrine, which contains a careful and clearly explanation of the nature of man, the immortality and moral responsibility of the human soul, the inborn and inalienable rights of mankind, and the essence and nature of civil society.

3) A *codex socialis* in which the whole social doctrine of the Church is brought together in a concise and perspicuous way and arranged in a clear order, excerpted from the documents of the ecclesiastical magisterium as well as from the documents produced during social weeks.^{TN4}

X. So that the faithful may be more easily protected from the contagion of communism, pastors of souls should contend with the greatest zeal to foster in them a Christocentric, liturgical, and ecclesial piety, and to strive to call them away from devotional practices or customs that are unable to nourish true piety; likewise they should rightly teach them fruitful ways to read the Scripture and to live the Christian life, which depends on the spirit of prayer and frequent reception of the sacraments; and also to take great care that their lives truly and openly cohere with norms of the faith that they verbally profess, so that they may shine in the exercise of every virtue, especially justice and charity.

XI. The faithful should be zealously taught that they must be “the salt of the earth and the light of the world,” (cf. Matt. 5: 13, 14), and are required to carry out an efficacious work so that “the kingdom of God may come” (cf. Matt. 6: 10). They are to be urgently admonished of the grave duty to which they are bound, so that they will reject hedonism – by their words, when there is the occasion, but always by the example of their lives – which causes so much damage in individuals, as well as in families and in civil society.

XII. Pastors of souls should diligently ensure that suitable and capable members of the faithful who shine with the probity of their morals are perfectly prepared to fulfill their social duties in an upright and laudable way. All of the faithful, however, who enjoy the right to vote in political and administrative elections should be admonished by their ordinaries and pastors – in a suitable way, prudently but also clearly and vigorously – of their grave duty of electing those candidates who truly seem to have the intention of rightly fulfilling the office which is to be given to them.

XIII. Individual pastors should foster and carry out “social works,” as they are called, as much as possible in their own parishes. All paupers and those living in conditions of distress who abide within the territory of the parish should be embraced with a truly paternal, zealous, and active charity, even if they do not live a Christian life or happen not to belong to the Catholic Church.

XIV. The faithful who are infected with communism, nonetheless, more often than not, do not fail to ensure that their children are given the sacraments of baptism and confirmation and that the same receive their first communion, and likewise do not refuse to enter into a religious marriage and an ecclesiastical burial. Therefore pastors, with the greatest zeal, should use occasions of this kind to attend to such people with benevolence and benignity, thus giving a

practical example of the true nature of the Church so that they might be drawn to it, and finally to the proper and true living of the Christian life.

XV. All of the clergy, and especially pastors of souls, should be an example to all men in their love and exercise of humility and poverty, which manifestly show them to be thoroughly alien to the possession or desire of earthly riches, and to have one thing in their hearts: that is, to seek after souls.

XVI. It is to be earnestly recommended that, insofar as the customs of particular places will allow, there be no accounting of the social conditions of the faithful in carrying out sacred functions on the occasion of first communions, weddings, and ecclesiastical burials.

XVII. The clergy and religious should not be prohibited from rightly and prudently seeking the resources of wealthy or powerful men and applying them to the fulfillment of acts of divine worship, of the apostolate, and of charity, but they are to most diligently beware lest they become altogether subject to such people in any way, or seem to be so; among people of more humble means the Church is more often accused of being the instrument in the hands of those who have control of the economic or civic or political power.

XVIII. Ordinaries are to always be attentively vigilant in ensuring that the principles and norms of social justice are inculcated assiduously and in a suitable way in all of the faithful, and if the situation demands it, they should not fail to denounce – in a most prudent but explicit manner – the more grave violations of social justice which are committed in a publicly scandalous way.

XIX. The faithful who play a role in civil government should never cease to recall that there is much work to do regarding economic activity, which is broader and more well-ordered than in previous times, and that ordinances, offices, legal instruments, and methods are to be appropriately accommodated to carrying out this purpose.²

XX. In accordance with the norms to be pre-established by national or regional pastoral centers, there should be a prudent and exact investigation of the mentality and habits of behavior of the faithful in their fulfillment of obligations that are proper to Christians, so that fruitful pastoral care may be given that is appropriate to the condition of each individual. Care is likewise to be taken to ensure that the faithful who are more suitable to the task are properly prepared to carry out missionary work by which those who are alienated from the Church might be gently led back to the knowledge and consideration of its true nature, so that the Church might be able to exercise the sacred ministry on their behalf more easily and fruitfully.

XXI. Associations of the faithful that are called “professional,” and others that are similar to them, whether of the territory of the ordinary or of the parish, should greatly foster and sedulously ensure that their colleagues, especially those they are placed over, have a full and perfect technical, social, moral, and religious formation, and therefore might be able to approach others of their own social condition or of any other, and, when the moment is right, to easily teach them about the Church.

XXII. Ordinaries should ensure that the sciences and the liberal arts are cultivated by some suitable and capable clerics and religious, so that they might be adorned with academic titles by which they will be able to function well as teachers or chaplains of students in schools of higher education or universities, where the faith and morals of so many young people are in danger because of so many who are teaching or learning dialectical materialism or atheism.

XXIII. It is to be strongly recommended that in universities and in other institutions of higher education of the sciences and arts, particular groups or associations be instituted for professors or students to ensure that they may not only give a public and clear testimony regarding the Christian faith by their truly Christian beliefs and manner of life, but also so they might expressly and efficaciously act to frustrate, or at least restrain, the nefarious work that is carried out hotly and bitterly in the aforementioned schools by so-called communist cells.

XXIV. Whenever it is advantageous to do so, clergy and laity should clearly affirm in words and in writing that it is not true that the Church does not esteem temporal values, nor that it has no concern for calamities, hunger, and war; likewise they should plainly show that the Church rejoices over laudable efforts by which mankind investigates the secrets of nature, and strives each day to use its enormous powers ever more for the purpose of living a more comfortable and happier life, whether at home or in society.

XXV. So that the pastoral center (or the Office of Pastoral Orientation and Coordination, which has been established within the Sacred Congregation of the Council^{TN5}) will carry out its purposes more fully, its members should also include some priests and laity who strive to carry out apostolic work in various nations. The duties of such people are:

- 1) To ensure that a form of pastoral care is always and everywhere given that is truly fitting for the particular circumstances of people, places, and local affairs.
- 2) To pre-establish general norms regarding the exercise of that kind of pastoral care which is to be suitably and opportunely determined by ordinaries for individual regions, and which should

be carried out in various ways in accordance with the mentality of the faithful and their way of living.

3) To collect and analyze documentation regarding the means and methods by which pastoral care in various regions is carried out, and of their strength and effectiveness, so that, whenever it is appropriate, they may be either used or excluded in other places.

4) To ensure that approved books be published both for illustrating or explaining Christian and anthropological doctrine, and for communicating deontological norms for those who work in the medical, legal, and other similar fields.

5) To encourage and to provide aid so that pastoral centers may be established by ordinaries in particular countries, and that they may fruitfully carry out their duties.

Text definitively approved in the General Session of the Commission held February 5-10, 1962.

* The schema was discussed by the Central Preparatory Commission of the Ecumenical Council Vatican II, in the second and third meeting of the sixth session, on the 4-5 of May, 1962. Cf. *Acta et Documenta Concilio Oecumenico Vaticano II apparando*, Series II (Praeparatoria), Vol. II, Pars III, pp. 798-842.

FOOTNOTES

¹ In the month of March, 1961, eighty-seven communist factions (commonly known as “parties”) were in existence, to which many more were later added, particularly in Africa. At the end of 1960, besides those that under the power of Russia, in the rest of the nations there were an estimated total of six million (6,000,000) people who have enlisted with the communists.

² JOHN XXIII, Encyclical Letter *Mater et magistra*: A.A.S., LIII (a. 1961), p. 414.

TRANSLATOR’S FOOTNOTES

^{TN1} The “ordinary” of a place is the person who exercises the ordinary right of making law and executing juridical acts in a particular jurisdiction in the Church. Most “ordinaries” are diocesan bishops, although there are some exceptions.

^{TN2} “Technicism” (*technicismus*) roughly corresponds to the English term “techno-utopianism” – the notion that a perfect society can be created through technical knowledge or technology.

^{TN3} The “preambles of faith” (*praeambula fidei*) are those truths that man is capable of knowing by natural reason alone, that prepare his mind for receiving the supernaturally revealed truths of the Christian faith. The “motives of credibility” (*motiva credibilitatis*) refer to the evidence in favor of the divine origin of Christian revelation and of the Catholic Church.

^{TN4} The *hebdomadae sociales* or “social weeks” were, and are, congresses held in Italy to discuss the social doctrine of the Church. See, for example: https://w2.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/letters/2007/documents/hf_ben-xvi_let_20071012_settimane-sociali.html

^{TN5} “The Sacred Congregation of the Council” was established in 1587 to oversee the disciplinary decrees of the Ecumenical Council of Trent. Its name was changed to the “Sacred Congregation for the Clergy” by Pope Paul VI in 1967, and then by John Paul II to simply the “Congregation for the Clergy.”

ON THE APOSTOLATE OF THE LAITY IN ENVIRONMENTS IMBUED WITH MATERIALISM, PARTICULARLY MARXISM

(DE LAICORUM APOSTOLATU IN AMBITIBUS MATERIALISMO, PRAESERTIM MARXISTICO, IMBUTIS)

Chapter VII of *De Apostolatu Laicorum*, a preparatory schema of the Second Vatican Council, approved by the Commission on the Bishops and on the rule of Dioceses, April 1962

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PREAMBLE

Among those nations that are principally Christian, practical materialism is growing ever more extensive, is strengthening, and is making a covert entrance into people's consciences.

So-called "Marxism," which professes an open and militant atheism, must be regarded as the preeminent form of this materialism, which engages in a systematic effort to advance its doctrines principally – although not exclusively – among the workers, but also among the elites.¹

Therefore, keeping before its eyes this exceedingly grave and universal danger, as well as the love with which Christ seeks after those whom he has redeemed and who have been subjugated by the greatest errors, this Sacred Council wishes to offer helpful guidance by which a more effective apostolate for those who aid the Christian faithful might be initiated and brought to a successful conclusion.

However, so that any ambiguity whatsoever regarding the mind of the Church may be completely dispelled, lest the apostolic activity of those laity who are within the sheepfold also be deprived of effectiveness, the Sacred Council regards it as most opportune to solemnly declare the following:

While Marxism, which Pope Pius XII personally reprobates and condemns,² is the most grave form of materialism and the one most hostile towards the Christian faith, it is yet not the only form of modern materialism. In this day, there are many men who, although they openly profess themselves to be Christians, passively consent to the daily course of events, identify human happiness with technological³ and economic progress, covet riches,⁴ strive to construct a

world based on them,⁵ and gradually withdraw themselves from God, whom they remove little by little from their own lives. This practical materialism to a greater extent infects those who refuse to manifest the social doctrine of the Church,⁶ decline to recognize the rights of the poor and the weak, offend against social justice, and refuse to prevent open and unjust inequalities or at least to diminish them.⁷ All of these undoubtedly open the way to every kind of perverse doctrine.

Marxist materialism cannot be properly combated if these other forms of materialism are not likewise openly rejected; nor can there be any hope whatsoever of someday eliminating Marxist atheism from the world and from the heart of man, while the latter is given over to some other form of materialism, to that, indeed, which is undergirded by a so-called “capitalist” economic regime, and is promoted by the same, and is pervasive in the daily life of man.

Therefore the Christian faithful who work in lay apostolates, insofar as they impugn and condemn Marxist materialism in accordance with the social doctrine of the Church,⁶ do not seek in any way to oppose one faction with another, nor to uphold the privileges of the wealthy, nor in any way to enter into an alliance with terrestrial powers or with those who deceitfully declare themselves to be defenders of the principles of religion and the rights of the Church but really desire to protect their own privileges while covering up injustices – all of which undoubtedly and indisputably redounds to the detriment of the Church.

55. [*Fundamental approaches*]. It is appropriate for lay apostles truly and sincerely to become participants in the condition of life of their fellow man. Nor does it suffice for them to only live and labor or dwell with them; in addition, it is necessary to actively collaborate with them in all of those things that lead to the common good and to work with them to promote the same with all their might.⁹ Moreover, they must altogether firmly refuse those things that contradict the divine law, such as hatred among men, the cult of mammon, the iniquitous use of wealth, the lust for power, lies and deceits, and the employment of immoral means; they should be bold, however, in serving God and aiding their brothers in the spirit of poverty that the Lord commends so much in the Gospel.

56. [*God should be their fulfillment*]. So that they might forcefully and efficaciously combat atheism, it is required, first of all, that the life of the laity be filled with God, a life which obtains its unity from that intimate union together with the consecration of all its works. Nor should they ever cease to pray and intercede for their brethren.

57. [*Prudence to be exercised*]. Necessary prudence is to be exercised by the laity, lest in the course of their daily social interactions they become imbued, slowly and imperceptibly, with various errors that they might hear, see, or read about.

58. [*Apostolic action*]. The laity should show the Christian religion to be not only an abstract doctrine, but should live it in such a way that they come to fulfill the Christian profession they have personally taken up, one that is suitable for social life. For this purpose it is necessary to live a consistently Christian life that is diligently manifested and expressed, particularly in social relations.¹¹

Moreover, the Christian faithful with should endeavor all their heart to renew social life.

With regard to their apostolate, it is necessary for them to improve their knowledge about local circumstances, and to judge them in accordance with the norms of the Gospel and thence to act coherently.

59. [*Instruction and formation*]. A particular kind of instruction and formation is required for such laymen: in particular, they should be advised regarding various Christian doctrines which are called into question by modern atheists and Marxists; they should be educated regarding Marxist doctrines as well as the materialistic mentality, which is also being propagated outside of Marxist groups; they should become better informed about such ways of thinking and acting, particularly among Marxists, so that they may defend themselves from errors more effectively, and indeed may be able to elucidate and communicate the truth more efficaciously to others.

It is necessary that the social doctrine of the Church be learned with accuracy, particularly with regard to these matters.¹²

It is especially worthy of note that a merely negative judgment is not sufficient. As no error ever arises without being mixed together with some truth, it is necessary to teach the laity to properly distinguish good from evil, by recognizing those things that pertain to justice and diligently detecting others that are dangerous, particularly with regard to their means of accomplishment.

60. [*Necessity of unity*]. It is appropriate that the laity who are present in a particular province of the apostolate to come together often and meet, so that their activities may be the result of a common effort; which may be brought into effect in various ways, in accordance with various and ever new needs and associated issues.¹³

61. [*The aid of the Church*]. The missionary laity who do such work should be aided by the whole Church: by the local bishop, priests, religious, and all of the Christian faithful, through assiduous prayer, particularly public prayer, as well as by assigning the aid of priests who are suitable for this kind of apostolate.¹⁴

62. [*Christ meek and humble of heart*]. It is proper for all of the faithful of every class to collaborate so that the universal Church might present the image of Christ the Teacher and

Redeemer, so that they might shine with their firmness of doctrine, benignity, humanity, poverty, and especially charity, in accordance with the divine Exemplar.¹⁵

[. . .]

Text definitively approved – with only one vote against regarding chapter VI, Title. II – in the General Session held from April 2-8, 1962.

FOOTNOTES

¹ Modern atheistic communism is explicit regarding its atheism. Without a doubt it combats all forms of religions whatsoever, which it declares to be “the opiate of the people;” it especially opposes the Roman Catholic Church, which it denounces as a merely political power, allied with “capitalism,” for the purpose of defending common privileges

In reality, modern communism is a pseudo-religion, and indeed an eschatological one. The future society that it proposes, without any classes, without any private ownership of the means of production, liberated from all accompanying forms of alienation, will bring about the reconciliation of man with nature and of men with one another, resulting in true liberty. As a victim of robbery, the proletariat has a messianic mission of manumitting, by means of a proletarian revolution, not only itself, but all of humanity, and of dominating nature. The sacrament of this religion is technological progress by which, through human labor, the certain hope is founded of conquering nature, leading humanity to happiness and peace, by means of a progressing economic structure, of which all ideologies are only superstructures. This requires a conflict of classes for the purpose of subduing those who reduce the proletariat to slavery by reserving the means of production to themselves. All of which is required by virtue of the determined and necessary events of dialectical and historical materialism.

Thence man feels himself not to be a person endowed with spontaneous liberty, but as a part of a collectivity (one part of a “mass”), which is simultaneously the creator of the universe and the redeemer of mankind. This religion defends its dogmatic Marxisim-Leninism, condemns heretics and excommunicates schismatics. In this is its mysticism founded, its faith, hope, and charity, and thence flows all of its norms, both ethical and juridical.

² *Divini Redemptoris*, A.A.S., 29 (1937), p. 96. Cf. *Caritate compulsi*, 3 may 1932, A.A.S., 24 (1932), pp. 180-181; Decretum S. Officii 1 iulii 1949, A.A.S., 41 (1949), p. 334.

³ Pius XII, Nuntius radiophonicus in Natali Domini (Christmas eve radio address) 1953 (A.A.S., 46 [1954], p. 9).

⁴ *Caritate compulsi*, A.A.S., 24 (1932), p. 178.

⁵ *Mater et Magistra*, A.A.S., 53 (1961), p. 452.

⁶ *Divini Redemptoris*, *ibid.*, p. 91.

⁷ Pius XII, Radio address of 1 September 1944, A.A.S., 36 (1944), p. 253.

⁸ *Caritate compulsi*, *ibid.*, p. 180; *Divini Redemptoris*, p. 69 et sq.

⁹ *Mater et Magistra*, *ibid.*, p. 456.

¹⁰ Pius XI, Sermo ad adstantes ex Hispania profugos, 14 September 1936, A.A.S., 28 (1936), p. 376; *Divini Redemptoris*, p. 73, p. 95.

¹¹ *Quadragesimo Anno*, A.A.S., 23 (1931), p. 218; pp. 222-223; *Nova impendet*, 20 octobris 1931, A.A.S., 23 (1931), p. 394; Sermo adstantes ex Hispania profugos, A.A.S., 28 (1936), p. 377; *Divini Redemptoris*, *ibid.*, p. 101.

¹² *Divini Redemptoris*, *ibid.*, p. 103; Pius XII, Adhortatio apostolica ad clerum universum (Apostolic exhortation to all of the clergy), 22 September 1950, A.A.S., 42 (1950), p. 697; *Mater et Magistra*, *ibid.*, p. 462.

¹³ *Divini Redemptoris*, p. 102.

¹⁴ Pius X, *Notre charge apostolique*, 2 August 1910, A.A.S., 2 (1910), p. 630; PIUS XI, *Divini Redemptoris*, p. 98; PIUS XII, Adhortatio apostolica ad clerum universum (Apostolic exhortation to all of the clergy), 22 September 1950, A.A.S., 42 (1950), p. 697; *Mater et Magistra*, *ibid.*, p. 462.

¹⁵ *Divini Redemptoris*, p. 98; Pius XI, *Ad Catholici Sacerdotii*, A.A.S., 28 (1936), p. 28 and following.