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BISHOPS' STATEMENT

Summons All Men 'To Return To Christ'

Complete Text Given Of Bishops' Statement

Here is the complete text of the Statement on The Church and Social Order, issued by the Archbishop and Bishops of the Administrative Board of the National Catholic Welfare Conference from the N. C. W. C. headquarters at Washington.

INTRODUCTION

1. With sublime pathos Pope Pius XII in his first encyclical letter pleads with the people of the world to turn from the conflict to the healing ways of charity and wisdom. He reminds a forgetful world of the universality of divine love; he consecrates the whole human family to the Sacred Heart of the Divine Redeemer, and summons the men to return to Christ, he reaches the entreaty raised so often by his predecessors: "Behold your King." (Jno. XIX, 14)

2. To re-enthroned Christ in the minds and hearts of men, to establish His kingship in human society; to impregnate the laws and institutions, the aspirations and final purposes of all nations with His spirit, is the supreme hope and purpose of Our Holy Father.

3. "Perhaps—God grant it—one may hope," with Pope Pius XII, "that this hour of direct need may bring a change of outlook and sentiment to those many who, till now, have walked with blind faith along the path of popular modern error: a recognition of the treacherous and insidious grounds on which they tread. Perhaps the many who have not grasped the importance of the educational and pastoral mission of the Church will now understand better her warnings, issued in the false security of the past. No defense of Christianity could be more effective than the present straits. From the immense vortex of error and anti-Christian elements, there has come a fierce and poignant disaster so to constitute a compensation surpassing in its consciousness any merely theoretical reflection." (1)

4. With all our hearts we thank him for his guidance and with such strength as we possess we emulate his example. We reaffirm the primacy of Our Lord Jesus Christ, who is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of every creature. For in Him were all things created in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible. . . . And He is before all, and by Him all things consist. . . . Because in Him it hath well pleased the Father, that all fullness should dwell." (Col. I, 15-19)

5. The peace which all right minded men so earnestly desire, must be based upon a comprehensive program of restoring Christ to His true and proper place in human society. We must bring God back into government; we must bring God back into education; we must bring God back into economic life; we must bring God back indeed into all life, private and public, individual and social. The truth of God, the law of God, the justice, mercy and charity of God, must, by conscious and willing submission be made to permeate all our social intercourse and all our public relations.

6. In the midst of human society, God has set His Church as "the pillar and ground of truth." To the Church Christ has given the divine mission to teach all things whatsoever He has commanded. The divine mandate permits no curtailment of the law no matter how diverse the circumstances and conditions under which men live and work, nor any compromise with the full measure of its application to human conduct. The obligation comprehends the actions of man in his private and public life as an individual and as a member of human society.

7. Man is not an isolated individual living in a social vacuum but a social being destined to live and work out his salvation in association with his fellow beings. He is a member of a community and he has, in consequence, duties of commutative justice and duties of social justice and duties of charity which emerge from this relationship. On no other foundation can men build a right social order or create that good society which is desired so ardently by the great mass of mankind.

8. Inasmuch as the right and duty to teach the fullness of the moral law and in particular to deal authoritatively with social and economic problems," (p. 14) (2) are challenged in some quarters or are too frequently misunderstood in others, we judge it wise and opportune to reaffirm the jurisdiction of the Church as the teacher of the entire moral law and more particularly as it applies to man's economic and social conduct in business, industry and trade. To make our pronouncements authentic and to interpret truly the mind of the Church, we follow closely the teachings of our late lamented Pontiff, Pope Pius XI.

9. First, let it be made clear that the Church is concerned only with the moral aspects of trade and industry and does not enter the field of business in matters that are purely material or technical. The Church is not concerned with the accuracy of economic surveys or the resultant data, nor with the problems of scientific organization, production, cost-accounting, transportation, marketing and a multitude of similar activities. To pass judgment on their application and results is a technical and not a moral or economic question and business administration

(Continued from Page 1)

duties of charity which emerge from this relationship." It is brought out, "On no other foundation can men build a right social order or create that good society which is desired so ardently by the great mass of mankind."

It is made clear that "the Church is concerned only with the moral aspects of trade and industry and does not enter the field of business in matters that are purely material or technical," and that "the Church does not prescribe any particular forms of technical economic organization of society, just as she does not prescribe any particular political organization of the state."

Man can claim "no absolute or unlimited ownership" as if he were free to follow his own selfish interests without regard to the necessity of others; the statement declares, adding that "man is truly the steward of his possessions in the sight of God and has therefore definite responsibilities both of justice and charity toward his fellow man with respect to the use he makes of his property."

Lamenting the fact that "large numbers of working men have been reduced to a state of dire need," the statement asserts that, to bring back those who have suffered loss of faith, "it is necessary to re-establish the sound principles of Christian social teaching."

"To make our program sure and effective," the Archbishops and Bishops hasten to add, "we must recruit and train leaders from within the various ranks of society who have the mentality and motivations of their respective classes and who with kindly fraternal charity will be able to win both their minds and their hearts."

"The statement attacks unfair wages due to greed for excessive profits, and insecurity due to false and immoral economic principles, as leading directly to undernourishment, bad housing, inadequate clothing, and indirectly to irregular family relations, child delinquency and crime."

Excessively long hours of work in some industrial areas and processes are declared to "create definite restrictions on the health of working men, and impoverish whole families through infection, disease and premature death."

has almost fallen back into paganism" (p. 45).

27. To bring back those who have suffered loss of faith and hope and charity, it is necessary to re-establish the sound teaching. To make our program sure and effective we must recruit and train leaders from within the various ranks of society who have the mentality and aspirations of their respective classes and who with kindly fraternal charity will be able to win both their minds and their hearts. "Undoubtedly," as Pius XI says, "the first and immediate apostles of the working men must themselves be working men, while the apostles of the world should themselves be employers and merchants. It is your chief duty Venerable Brethren, and that of your clergy, to seek diligently to select prudently from the ranks of the laity, as apostles, amongst working men and amongst employers" (p. 46).

28. In existing circumstances the obligation of the Church is manifest. When the close relationship between economic injustice and a long train of evils, physical, social and moral! Unfair wages due to a greed for excessive profits and insecurity due to false and immoral economic principles lead directly to undernourishment, bad housing, inadequate clothing, and indirectly to irregular family relations, child delinquency and crime. Excessively long hours of work in some industrial areas and in some industrial processes create dangers to life and limb, impair the health of the working man and impoverish whole families through infection, disease and premature death. Because human beings and not animated machines are in industry therefore the Church has the duty to defend the rights of human personality nor fail to declare unreservedly the moral obligations of industrial and economic life.

29. Today most controversy concerns itself with these questions: (1) Ownership, (2) Property and Labor, (3) Security, (4) Unemployment, (5) Social Order. We shall here present the Catholic doctrine regulating these matters and in doing so we shall follow the exposition given by our late chief pastor of souls, Pope Pius XII, in his celebrated encyclical.

I. OWNERSHIP

30. The Church has always defended the right to private property and also to bequeath and inherit it. We have vindicated this right even to the point of being falsely accused of favoring the rich against the poor. The Church teaches the right to own property is based on the natural law of which God Himself is the author. By the law of nature man must provide for himself and his family and he can fully discharge this obligation only if there exists an established system of private ownership (p. 16).

31. It is essential to remember that the right to own property in its complete responsibility to other persons and to the common good.

32. The two great dangers which society faces in the present state of economic organization are first, the concentration of ownership and control of wealth and secondly, its anonymous character which results from the operation of business and corporation law whereby responsibility toward society is greatly impaired if not completely ignored. The civil authority, in view of these dangers, must create the responsibility of property that the burden of providing for the common good be equitably distributed. It must furthermore establish such conditions through legal enactments and administrative policy that wealth itself can be distributed so each individual member of society may surely and justly come into possession of his own goods necessary for his own livelihood. It is not however the government alone which has this responsibility, as will become clear from the further considerations to be noted. Pius XII states:

THE CHURCH AND SOCIAL ORDER

Rights, Duties Set Forth in Details

"It follows from the two-fold character of ownership which we have termed individual and social, that men must take into account in this matter not only their own advantage but also the common good. To define in detail these duties, when the need occurs, whether the natural law does not do so, it is the function of the government. Provided that the natural and divine law be observed, the public authority may specify more accurately the duties and what is meant for property owners in the use of the possessions" (p. 17).

In the application of the principles of social justice an important instrument, therefore, is governmental authority. As Pius XI asserts, the civil authority has the obligation to adjust "ownership to meet the needs of the public good," and by so doing "it acts not as an enemy, but as the friend of private owners" (p. 17).

II. PROPERTY AND LABOR

24. Manifestly if every man worked either on his own land or with his own tools and in his own business, there would be no labor problem. Self-employment however is not the characteristic of our present economic organization. With the advent of machine industry and especially with the development of mass production, the individual developed an intensification of the individualistic spirit, creating new problems for labor.

25. It is freely admitted that modern industry requires considerable concentration of capital, but it is not admitted that concentration of ownership and control is consequently necessary or beneficial to the common good. The concentration of capital however, when mass employment does create a new and more impersonal relationship between capital and labor. The problem is one of providing equity for the distribution of income between those who supply capital and those who supply labor.

26. In too many instances an undue portion of the income has been claimed by those who have ownership or control of capital, whilst those on the other hand who have only their labor to invest have been forced to accept working conditions which are unreasonable and wages which are unfair. This condition arises from the fact that labor policies have been dictated by false principles in the interests of the few or of a part of it. Secondly it arises from the fact that labor frequently has had no voice in the regulation or the adjustment of these problems. Labor can have no effective voice as long as it is unorganized. To protect its rights it must be free to bargain collectively through its own chosen representatives. If labor when unorganized is dissatisfied, the only alternative is to cease work and thereby undergo the great hardships which follow unemployment.

27. To remedy the situation it is necessary to adopt right principles for the distribution of the income of industry. The principles must be both economically sound and morally just. The principle that labor should be compensated to such extent only that it remains physically efficient and capable of reproducing itself in new generations of working men, is a vicious principle, devoid of all respect for human dignity and opposed to all sense of social responsibility. It is true that this principle was never widely held in theory but it has been frequently applied in practice. One such application is found in the policy that labor should be compensated solely according to the principle of supply and demand. This reduces labor to the position of a commodity and makes fluctuating prices in the labor market irrespective of the needs of himself and family. Neither present sufficiency of income nor security for the future play a part in determining the wage standard according to this immoral, very and practice. Such theory or practice is anti-social and anti-Christian for it denies both social responsibility and the claims of the human person in their place substitutes the principles of selfishness and force.

28. New developments in the organization of labor under the great impetus which has been given by recent legislation and governmental policy, make it opportune to point out that the principle of force and domination is equally wrong if exercised by labor under certain conditions by means of a monopoly control. To defend in principle or to adopt in practice the theory that the net result belongs to labor and that capital shall receive only a sufficient to replace itself is an evasion of the rights of property. This is only a more subtle form of the contention that all means of production should be socialized. Clearly all such proposals disregard the contribution which the owner of property makes in the process of production and are palpably unjust.

It is not however the excessive claims of labor on the income from industry which constitute the most immediate problem in labor relations today, but rather the abuse of power which not infrequently results in violence, riot and disorder. Employers at times abuse their economic power by discriminating unfairly against unions, by establishing lock-outs, by importing from outside the community strike breakers who are furnished with arms, and by provoking

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