

# Text of Statement of Bishops of United States On 'Crisis'

By N.C.W.C. NEWS SERVICE

### WILL GUIDE N.C.W.C. FOR THE COMING YEAR

**WASHINGTON, Nov. 19.**—The annual meeting of the National Catholic Welfare Conference, which opened today in Washington, D. C., will be devoted to the study of the "Crisis of the Church in the World."

Christianity faces today its most serious crisis since the Church came out of the catacombs.

We the members of the Administrative Board of the National Catholic Welfare Conference, deputed in the annual meeting of the Bishops of the United States to express their mind on the crisis of Christianity, declare as shepherds of souls that our concern is the supreme interest of religion. Our thoughts therefore, turn to the two greatest evils of today which would destroy all spiritual values. We find two subversive forces, both in control of powerful governments, both bent on world dominance. They are Nazism and Communism.

However plausible their constitutions and their propaganda, the alarming reality is that neither system understands or permits freedom in its true Christian sense. Both systems usurp arbitrary power over the lives and destinies of men; their dictators assume a power which belongs to God alone.

Our late Holy Father significantly issued his epochal Encyclical on Nazism and a hostile Communism within five days of each other.

#### CONDEMNATION OF NAZISM

His Holiness condemned the abominations of Nazism, its denial of God in the true Christian sense, its defilement of the State, its usurpation of the powers of God, of religion and of parents, its falsification of Christian terminology, its betrayal of the eternal principles of objective morality, and its rejection of the rights and dignity of every human being. Pope Pius XI with prophetic vision, declares that "its (Nazism) machinations from the beginning had no other aim than a war of extermination." He branded the Nazi oppressors of the Church in Germany as the nullifiers and destroyers of the Christian West.

The late Holy Father while condemning the Nazi system, expressed his love for the German people in these words: "Before our eyes stands the countless throng of faithful sons and daughters for whom the suffering of the Church in Germany, and their own suffering has in no way diminished their devotion to the cause of God. . . nor diminished their cheerful readiness to remain true to what they have believed and have received from their forefathers as a sacred inheritance. From a heart that is deeply moved, we send them our paternal greetings."

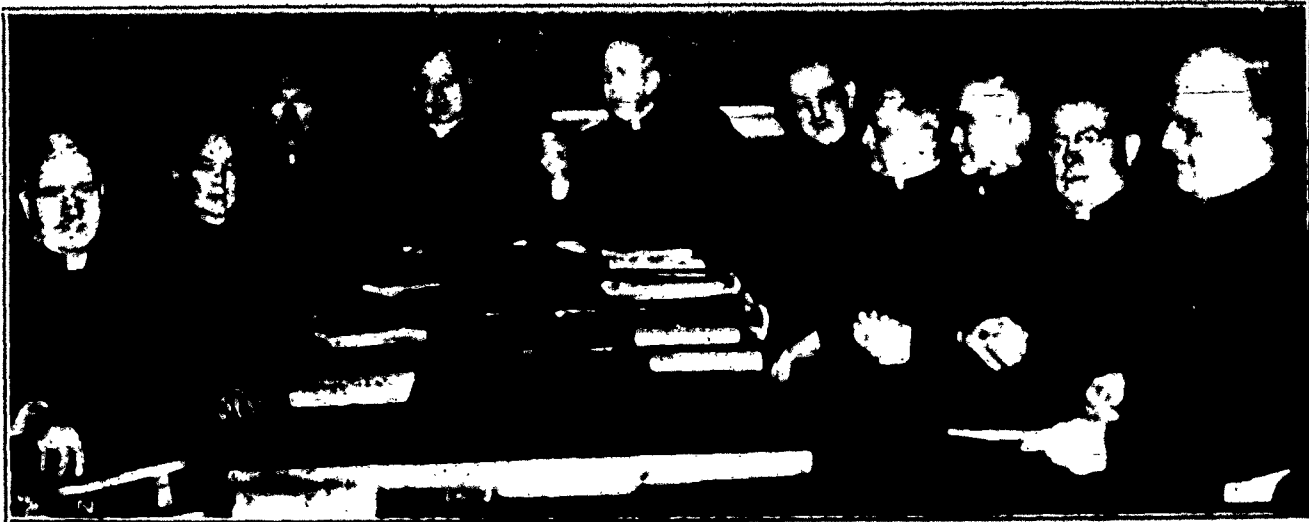
The Holy See has condemned atheistic Communism. Pope Pius IX, Leo XIII, Pius XI pronounced their solemn condemnations of the system. Exercising their God given commission, the Roman Pontiffs could take no other course than to condemn the errors, the tactics, the satanic designs of Communism. At no time, can there be any possibility of compromising with an ideology that proclaims and acts upon the denial of a personal and omnipotent God, rejects contemptuously the Divine Saviour of the world, all Christian principles and Christian culture, ruthlessly persecutes religion and brutally murders its ministers. The leaders of atheistic Communism have done this nefarious work. Under their only anti-God and anti-Christian propaganda can have liberty of action.

#### POPE PIUS XI'S WORDS

Pope Pius XI, who pronounced the most explicit condemnation of atheistic Communism, expressed in the same Encyclical his paternal and compassionate benevolence for the people of Russia in these words:

"In making these observations it is no part of our intention to condemn en masse the peoples of the Soviet Union. For them, we cherish the warmest paternal affection. We are well aware that not a few of them groan beneath the yoke imposed on them by men who, in very large part, are strangers to the real interests of their country. We recognize that many were deceived by fallacious hopes. We blame only the system, with its authors and abettors who considered Russia the best field for experimenting with a plan elaborated decades ago and who from there continue to spread it from one end of the world to the other."

We the Bishops who here express at this critical hour our judgment in these matters of grav-



Here is the new Administrative Board of the National Catholic Welfare Conference, elected at the annual general meeting of the Archbishops and Bishops of the United States at Washington. The Episcopal Chairman of the N.C.W.C. departments are, left to right: Bishop John Mark Gannon, of Erie, Press Department; Bishop Hugh C. Boyle, of Pittsburgh, Legal Department; Bishop John A. Duffy, of Buffalo, Youth Department; Archbishop John Gregory Murray, of St. Paul, Department of Catholic Action Study; Archbishop Edward Mooney, of Detroit, Chairman of the Administrative Board; Archbishop Samuel A. Stritch, of Chicago, Vice Chairman and Treasury; Archbishop John T. McNicholas, O. P., of Cincinnati, Department of Education; Archbishop Francis J. Spellman, of New York, Secretary; Bishop John F. Nell, of Ft. Wayne, Department of Lay Organizations; and Bishop Edwin V. O'Hara, of Kansas City, Social Action Department. Eight other bishops were chosen to serve as Assistants; Monsignor Michael J. Beahm, was re-appointed General Secretary and the Rev. Dr. Howard J. Carroll, Assistant General Secretary. (From photo)

est import while enjoying as we do a well-ordered liberty in a free country, declare our devotion to His Holiness Pope Pius XII and our loyalty to his leadership as the Vicar of Christ and the Common Father of all nations and peoples. We unite with our Holy Father in praying for the attainment of a peace that will be accepted by all right-thinking governments and individuals as permeated by justice and charity. We earnestly ask our prelates and people to continue their prayers and that a just peace and an ordered prosperity may be restored to a distracted world.

In a Christmas message to the world His Holiness Pope Pius XII, on Dec. 24, 1939, laid down five points for a just and honorable peace. In our own statement of April 1941 we urged the consideration of these conditions proposed by our Holy Father. Again in his message delivered on Christmas eve, 1940 His Holiness reiterated these five indispensable prerequisites for the right kind of a new order in the world. He called them triumphs: the triumph over hate over mistrust, over the spirit of ruthless selfishness over the conflict in world economy, over the false principle that might makes right.

#### THREE FUNDAMENTAL VALUES

Observing the fiftieth anniversary of the Magna Charta of labor, the Rerum Novarum of Leo XIII, His Holiness Pope Pius XII, on June 1, 1941, spoke of "three fundamental values" which must be kept in mind for the reconstruction of the world after the present devastating war.

The first of these values has to do with the use of material goods. His Holiness quotes from the letter which he addressed to the American Hierarchy, *Sertum Laetitiae*, on November 1, 1939, in which he stated that the goods which were created by God for all men should flow equitably to all, according to the principles of justice and charity.

The second fundamental value considered by His Holiness is human labor. He says: "The duty and the corresponding right to work are imposed on and conceded to the individual in the first instance by nature and not by society. The duty and the right to organize the labor of the people, belong above all to the employers and the workers. It devolves upon the State to intervene in the field of labor and in the division and distribution of work according to the form and measure that the common good, properly understood demands. Every legitimate and beneficial interference of the State in the field of labor should be such as to safeguard and respect its personal character."

The third "value" emphasizes the importance of the possession of private property by the family. His Holiness insists that of all goods which can be held as private property, "none is more conformable to nature than the land." The Holy Father lays stress on the social significance of widespread ownership of land in the form of the family homestead. To him, the function of the family as the root

of a nation's greatness and power is bound up with family ownership of "the holding on which it lives and from which it draws all or part of its subsistence." Without that "stability which is rooted in its own holding, the family cannot be the 'cell of society' which nature destined it to be."

#### PROBLEMS OF EMIGRATION

Domestic progress and peace depend on securing adequate space for the rural family as world progress and peace depend on securing living space for all the nations of the world. Accordingly, an adequate solution of the problems of emigration is of major importance in bringing tranquility to a confused world.

Our Holy Father despite the horrors of war which sadden his paternal heart, and the crushing burdens which his Pontificate has laid upon him is full of hope. His Holiness is looking, as he tells us, to that tomorrow when the rain of this world hurricane is cleared and when the onset of a reconstruction of new social order (which is a desire worthy of God and of man) will infuse new courage and a new wave of profusion and growth in human culture. The words of the Pope of Peace regarding the conditions he lays down for peace and the triumphs to be achieved in the reconstruction of a world order in which justice and charity are to prevail, deserve our most careful study.

With apostolic liberty and with fraternal charity we send our greetings and sympathy to our suffering brother Bishops and their flocks in all countries where subversive forces are persecuting religion and denying freedom of conscience. Our fervent prayers are offered for their liberation for their liberation for their freedom to worship God according to the dictates of their conscience for their freedom of education, their freedom of assembly, their freedom from the slavery of tyranny, the freedom of the sons of God.

Our sympathy goes out again to the peoples of those countries who have been crushed under the heel of the invader, and indeed to all upon whom war has imposed so heavy a burden of suffering and sacrifice. We cannot too strongly condemn the inhuman treatment to which the Jewish people have been subjected in many countries.

#### DAILY PRAYERS URGED

In this hour of cruel torture, we are mindful daily at God's altar of all the innocent victims of the war of all the homeless who exiled the imprisoned and all who are

suffering because of hunger or disease. We ask the faithful to unite with us in offering daily prayers and sacrifices in their behalf.

We support wholeheartedly the adequate defense of our country. Thoughtful statesmen are perplexed, patriotic citizens are divided in their opinions as to the procedure our country should follow. In these crucial times when the vital fabric of every country is threatened and when dictators would destroy all religion we here- with reiterate the position of the Catholic Church in the language of the immortal Pope Leo XIII:

"The Almighty has appointed the charge of the human race between two powers, the ecclesiastical and the civil, the one being set over things, and the other over human beings. Each in its kind is supreme, each has fixed limits within which it is contained, limits which are defined by the nature and special object of the province of each so that there is no overlap of each within which the action of each is brought into play by its own native right. But inasmuch as each of these two powers has authority over the same subjects and as one and the same thing under different aspects but still remaining identically the same, might chance to fall under the jurisdiction and determination of both powers. God Who foresees all things and is Author alike of these two powers, has marked out the course of each in correlation to the other. For the powers that are are ordained of God. (Rom. xiii 1). Were this not so deplorable contentions and conflicts would often arise and not infrequently men like travellers at the meeting of two roads, would hesitate in anxiety and doubt, not knowing what course to follow. Two powers would be commanding contrary things and it would be a perplexion of duty, to either of the two. But to judge thus of the wisdom and goodness of God would be most repugnant. . . One of the two has for its proximate and chief object the well being of this mortal life, the other, the everlasting joys of heaven. Whatever therefore in things human is of a sacred character, whatever belongs either of its own nature or by reason of the end to which it is referred to the salvation of souls, or to the worship of God is subject to the power and judgment of the Church. Whatever is to be under the civil and political order is rightly subject to the civil authority. Jesus Christ has Himself given command that what is Caesar's is to be ren-

dered to Caesar and that what belongs to God is to be rendered to God."

#### ALL AUTHORITY FROM GOD

Pondering this solemn teaching of Pope Leo XIII we must recognize that all lawful authority is from God. "Let everyone be subject to the higher authorities for their exists no authority except from God. (Ep. St. Paul to the Romans 13:1). Disrespect for authority, both ecclesiastical and civil, must be condemned. In the confusion of the hour we deplore the presumption of those who lacking authority, strive to determine the course of action that the Church should take within her clearly defined field. Recognizing the liberty of discussion and even of criticism, which our democratic form of government guarantees, we urge and command respect reverence for the authority of our civil officials which has its source in God."

At the present moment in varying degrees in every part of the world, the peaceful course of events is disturbed. People are called upon to make sacrifices and to suffer. Comparing our conditions in the United States with those of other lands, we must recognize that our country is singularly blessed. But we cannot avoid the repercussions of a world cataclysm. Our faith in a divine Providence ruling the universe should inspire us to have confidence in the benevolent designs of a loving God Who permits suffering to correct evil and to bring forth the fruits of justice and charity and peace."

In this solemn hour when fateful decisions are to be made it is evident that a spirit of exemplary restraint should characterize our prelates and people. In every national crisis and every danger, our prelates have been an inspiration. We are confident that their good example of strong faith and courage founded on the virtue of fortitude will not be lacking now. As moral teachers they show that freedom has its limitations. It is limited first of all by the rights of God and next by the rights of others and by the interests of the common good.

#### FUTURE OF RELIGION

As shepherds of souls we are gravely concerned with the future of supernatural religion in our country. Here, as elsewhere, it is seriously threatened by growing evils of which our Holy Father has but recently warned the world. These are the evils of "false doctrine, immorality, disbelief and reborn paganism." The threat is to our youth, above all. Not only must we have thorough understanding of the thoughts of the youth of our day of its urge for action of its fixed purpose, to put teaching into practice - but, pre-eminently, we must encourage youth to realize the constructive need of Christian doctrine and Christian discipline.

We are hopeful that priests and leaders among the laity will show an ever increasing interest in the cause of the multitudes who, in order to eke out a mere existence, are so largely taken up with the material things of life. We express again our sympathy for labor and we appreciate the

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## Movies Reviewed In 5 Years

Here is the tabulation presented by Archbishop McNicholas at the Bishops' Meeting in Washington showing motion pictures reviewed by the Lexion of Decency in the last five years:

Date	Class A-1		Class A-2		Class B		Class C		Separately Classified		Total
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
Feb-Nov 1937	780	61	380	30	98	8	12	1	0	0	1,271
1937-38	332	42	194	31	32	6	5	1	2	27	525
1938-39	312	54	200	35	50	9	9	167	2	33	573
1939-40	271	50	210	39	47	9	10	2	1	28	539
1940-41	267	51.25	197	37.81	50	9.6	7	1.34	0	0	521