

Mater et Magistra: a Challenge to the Catholicity of the Church

Mater et Magistra : un défi à la catholicité de l'Eglise

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Article abstract

L'histoire de la dernière encyclique, *MATER ET MAGISTRA*, illustre d'une façon dramatique, dans notre société contemporaine, la division du travail entre les relations publiques et le domaine académique. Dans le monde anglo-saxon au moins cette encyclique est celle qui a connu la plus large diffusion et qui a été la mieux reçue de toutes les encycliques sociales. Par ailleurs, il semble évident que moins qu'à toutes les autres on a apporté un intérêt soutenu.

On a pas à chercher bien loin pour trouver la raison de cette indifférence générale. *MATER ET MAGISTRA* n'est pas seulement un document à l'occasion d'une crise ou, d'un problème. Elle est l'aboutissement de tout un siècle de développements académiques. D'une part, la doctrine sociale est seulement un segment d'une demi-douzaine de champs théologiques revitalisés. D'autre part, le fossé entre les sciences sociales et les champs de pensée plus traditionnels s'est graduellement rétréci. *RERUM NOVARUM* (1891) a ouvert la théologie à la science politique, *QUADRAGESIMO ANNO* (1931) a évidemment utilisé les principes économiques modernes et maintenant *MATER ET MAGISTRA* (1961) utilise la sociologie. Les experts en sciences sociales sont bien conscients de l'intérêt croissant chez leurs collègues depuis plusieurs générations au sujet du bien-être, des valeurs, des lois naturelles, des insuffisances du pragmatisme.

Lorsque les dimensions proprement académiques de cette encyclique sont reconnues, il s'en suit immédiatement que cette doctrine nécessite pour son exposition un statut académique approprié. En premier lieu, il ressort de la structure de *MATER ET MAGISTRA* que l'étudiant de la théologie sociale doit nécessairement s'appuyer sur le spécialiste en sciences sociales. En second lieu, l'étudiant de la théologie sociale doit reconnaître que l'homme moderne désire une philosophie sociale adéquate. C'est une exigence beaucoup plus englobante que celle des encycliques précédentes. Il ne suffit plus maintenant de condamner l'individualisme et le scientisme du XIX^e siècle, ou d'encourager davantage l'association — une union par-ici, une coopérative par là. Comme le préconise avec insistance le Pape Jean, une option morale positive de l'organisation ou de la socialisation est nécessaire à tout homme dans la société moderne.

Alors qu'il est évident pour celui qui analyse ces questions que tout le pouvoir moral de la religion sera nécessaire afin de dissiper l'ensemble des accréditations religieuses et de la loi naturelle acceptées par l'individualisme de notre société industrielle ou le socialisme des autres traditions, la question présente de nouveaux aspects. Il y a déjà une évidence abondante que les professeurs des matières philosophiques et théologiques traditionnelles ne réaliseront pas la nécessité actuelle d'une philosophie sociale articulée s'ils n'empruntent pas aux spécialistes des sciences sociales la signification et l'importance de la socialisation aujourd'hui. De plus, c'est seulement de l'esprit en sciences sociales que le philosophe social apprendra l'apport réaliste de la remarque du Pape Jean à l'effet que dans le milieu social moderne un certain déterminisme ne cause pas de préjudice à la liberté. La récente étude de Robert A. Brady sur la place des standards dans la civilisation en est un excellent exemple (*Organization, Automation, and Society*, ch. IV). L'importance croissante de l'étudiant des sciences sociales est aussi un autre indice du rôle croissant de l'apostolat laïc pour l'avenir de la doctrine sociale.

Mater et Magistra: a Challenge to the Catholicity of the Church

J.A. Raftis, C.S.B.

Now, approximately one year after the first appearance of the social encyclical *Mater et Magistra*, we find ourselves under the necessity of taking a hard look at this document. At its first appearance *Mater et Magistra* was apparently the most widely reported and best received of any modern social encyclical. Of the various reasons for this favourable public response, those commonly cited were the faith and confidence of the Church that Pope John brought to modern man, the realism of his actual assessment of modern life, and the spirit of human liberty and social progress evoked by this encyclical letter.

But the honeymoon of first impressions is over! Surveys now indicate that the vast majority of Catholic dioceses (85%) and organizations have been unable to come up with a practical study program for *Mater et Magistra*. However, I have found no adequate proof for the charge that Pope John's encyclical is getting the « silent treatment » from American Catholic leaders. Rather, this document is simply facing a situation discovered well before the appearance of *Mater et Magistra*. Upon the occasion of the studies undertaken at the silver jubilee of *Quadragesimo Anno* (1956), it was made clear that we have not come up with a successful teaching programme for the social encyclicals in our colleges and seminaries, and indeed those institutions founded in response to certain emphases of the encyclicals — such as the Labour Schools of the 1930's — have declined in importance over the past decade. It seems to me that we cannot avoid looking at *Mater et Magistra* in the context of this general situation with respect to the social encyclicals. For, of course, this encyclical is placed in the context of its predecessors by Pope John himself.

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Not yet Common Doctrine

There are several explanations for this situation on the practical level: first of all, until the time of Pius XII major encyclical teachings were occasioned by crises — notably, in *Rerum Novarum* the abuses of the industrial worker, in *Quadragesimo Anno* the financial dictatorship emerging from capitalism, and so on with the totalitarian extremes of socialism, communism, fascism, and national socialism. As a result the social encyclical has tended to be taught only in the context of crises, to be employed as a sort of stop-gap applied according to stages of depression or recession in the business cycle, social-political tensions, etc. Hence social encyclicals were widely taught in labour schools in the 1930's in order to organize unions, or in study groups in order to strengthen the co-operative movement, or after World War II to support industry councils, and in the 1950's to oppose communism. Not surprisingly, from this failure to become a generally known and understood teaching, the social encyclical has tended to become more and more an arsenal for social indictments rather than a common mind or a common programme for positive social action: in the name of the social encyclicals the new party is proscribed, as well as the older parties; organized labour as well as the lack of organized labour; high taxes as well as the inadequacy of taxation; socialized medicine as well as the failures of the medical profession, and so on all the way down the line.

Another reason to explain our failure to develop social thinking from the encyclicals is the pragmatic nature of our way of life. We are not keen on developing doctrines about anything. We are a people who live and move by precedent and institutional habit, and unless there is a crisis, so far have been little likely to become excited by the wars of ideas that convulse other parts of the world. This is of course less and less a reason for smugness, for we are finding ourselves more and more unable to challenge inherited weaknesses as these must be challenged in order to face a changing world. We could probe this matter further: in one direction to academic roots, where we would find that traditional Catholic philosophy has experienced little contact with the social sciences, and the social sciences have derived little vitality from traditional philosophy. The effects of this are seen in a polarization. On the one hand that of science, which through industrialization and socialization demands a scientific formula to embrace all aspects of

social life. Hence for the scientist socialization so often demands socialism¹. At the other pole the person is recognized to be above all temporal institutions, and especially the technological development of industrial society, so that the increased socialization of modern life ultimately involves only technical matters to be handled by the experts. Social problems are more and more problems for experts only. What the individual needs to balance socialization is more personal development rather than social doctrine. As a result of this type of argument the theological and philosophical voice of the Church is not being heard in new areas of our society (e.g. public health, social work, community planning).

The question of the failure of the social encyclicals to provoke an intellectual activity could also be probed in the direction of the pedagogy hitherto employed in teaching such encyclicals. When we consider the professional training necessary for public life to-day it is understandable how a social encyclical, a further guide as it were to that life, cannot be adequately taught through the few minutes available to the pulpit, the few lines available to the press, the occasional hierarchical statement, or even the short conference of a day or two. The popular effect of this inability to understand, of this separation of principles and life, tends to be a fideism — a taking on faith social teaching that is not matter for an act of faith but for practical understanding — or a moralism, the passing of moral judgement upon specific events without a competent understanding of the morality involved.

But is the picture merely negative, and discouraging for the study and teaching of social doctrine? By no means, for both the Church and our society are pointing the way to positive developments for this teaching.

A New Era in Teaching in the Church

Undoubtedly the failure to react in a positive intellectual and academic fashion to the social encyclicals may be largely explained as part of our tardy apostolic recognition that we are entering a new era in the history of theology, indeed in the history of teaching in the

(1) GEORGE P. GRANT, *Philosophy in the Mass Age*, Copp Clark, 1959. See especially the chapter on Marxism.

Church. Increasingly with the passage of time it becomes clearer that the 19-20th century papal directives on philosophy and theology, sacred scripture, liturgy, church history, church unity, and so forth, signal a strikingly fresh departure worthy of comparison with those major periods in the history of theology: the wedding of sacred scripture and classical education; the rise of monastic schools; the organization of universities; or the formation of seminaries. No doubt the fact that the encyclical — as a circular letter — is the oldest « teaching instrument » in the Church (going back to the epistles of St. Paul), and that this letter like all letters follows a traditional form; and that a formal letter is more suited perhaps to the handling of traditional doctrinal points (dogma rather than moral), and is rendered less flexible by dint of speaking to a world-wide audience with a common faith but a difference in nearly everything else: all these factors have tended to obscure the more essential fact that the encyclical and related discourses have become a new teaching institution by the manner of their use over the past 100 years. In this of course we are only realizing that for theology as well as other areas of knowledge the modern revolutions in the technology of communications (with its necessary correlative the notion of popular education) have and will transform traditional educational patterns. But more than this, the Church is concentrating her energies in teaching that before were concentrated on civil establishment and the greater detachment with which the Church has coped with the change and complexity of modern society, so much the greater has been her growth and vitality².

More striking perhaps, is the change in content of the social encyclicals. At no time throughout the history of the Church, including those so-called Christian centuries of the Middle Ages, does one find in church councils, pastoral letters, canon law, or scholastic treatises, a detailed social teaching comparable to that now developed through the social encyclicals! To this we can add now from reading *Mater et Magistra* that for the first time in a major encyclical the pope is speaking to « one world » — to a world facing common problems or at least with common aspirations. No longer can anyone argue that the social encyclical is only for certain problems in certain places but not for here!

(2) E.E.Y. HALES, *The Catholic Church in the Modern World*, N.Y. 1958, provides a useful study of this point. The opening address of Pope John to Vatican II has now given a fresh theological dimension to this question. Valuable studies in the same area by non-Catholic theologians are being undertaken by the Commission on Faith and Order of the World Council of Churches.

The conclusion appears unavoidable from the above that both the priest and the layman must grow and work in this new apostolic structure of the modern Church — to be more a teacher than ever, but detached in a new way; to have a specific knowledge of and interest in social matters, but in a more « catholic » manner than ever. We may miss the point of the apostolate of the Church in the modern social order if we simply assume that the Church has all the answers, and criticize too much ourselves and the modern world for not having employed these answers. It is by seeking this new relation of the Church to the world that we will be inspired and will inspire others. From history we see how the social encyclical did not anticipate but followed upon the industrial revolution. Even modern terminology has only been a period of trial: the term « social justice », for example, was employed by theologians for decades before being given an official status by Pius XI; or even the term « social doctrine », more and more used by Pius XII, only now with *Mater et Magistra* has been employed in a major encyclical. In all this we see how the Church does not anticipate the direction and growth of the natural order, rather the Church must leave the natural order to its properly free development and only build on this order; in classical theological language this is to say again that grace builds on nature, in terms of modern industrial society this has meant that Catholic social teaching must follow the development, and the study of the meaning of the development, of the new society. The tremendous rate of change to-day, and the fact that industrial civilization owes so little in its inspiration to Christianity, means that the classical principle of grace building on nature must be understood more articulately to-day than ever before in the history of Christianity. How this can be done brings us to the second encouraging element to be noted.

A New Era in Social Knowledge

The Church is accepting and using new academic discipline to-day. What was experienced in the past with respect to philosophy and the arts is happening in other fields to-day. Once again in the history of the Church we have that fascinating paradox whereby the growth of theology — that intellectual activity inspired by faith — is closely associated with a new chapter in the history of achievements of the human intellect. The social encyclicals and related documents have gradually come to provide a theological structure for the natural sciences and the social sciences. In *Mater et Magistra* we have an

integral theological statement recognizing the place of *both* the natural sciences and the « laws » of social life (the matter of the social sciences) in the study of modern industrial society. Over the past two generations the situation has gradually changed to make this possible. For example, whereas in the liberalist climate of the time of Leo XIII and the first decade of this century the Church was fighting for the validity of her place in world history (cf. Leo XIII on the Church and culture) or for the validity of her priests' concern for economic matters (Benedict XV), we have now progressed beyond this to academic requirements of the Holy See in these areas: a training in history and sociology is now expected of the student of theology.

But such theological recognition would be of little avail if modern sciences were not more and more seeking a theology, albeit through a scientific glass in a dark manner. For example, it was I believe impossible to wed classical economics to traditional Christian philosophy and theology; but the welfare economics that has developed over the past generation gives some scope for the core of Christian economic thinking, the notion of the common good. The same is true in varying degrees and fashions with other sciences. Clyde Kluckhohn of Harvard pointed out how anthropology and related fields have turned from the study of the aberration to the study of the regular, i.e. of law and order, in society³; he also found that by the late forties anthropologists were beginning to grant spiritual values the status of realities⁴. The same interests were coming to the fore with increasing emphasis by the social psychologists over the 1950's. In short, those sciences that have arisen over the past few generations in order to make possible industrial man's study of himself, no longer necessarily exclude Christian philosophy and theology by either scientific presupposition or scientific purpose. These sciences and scientists can now add to the life of the Church as never before.

Knowledge of Society as the First Obligation of Mater et Magistra

I have emphasized in the previous paragraph what might seem to be merely an academic point, because it is important for what is to

(3) « Common Humanity and Diverse Cultures », in *The Human Meaning of the Social Sciences*, Meridian Book, p. 249.

(4) In « The Scientific Study of Values », *University of Toronto Installation Lecture*, p. 28.

follow: the first obligation indicated in *Mater et Magistra* is to *know* our society. Pope John looks at the life chosen by modern man by his use of science and he finds this choice good in itself. But the first takes out time to describe this life in all its complexities at the end of Part I and the beginning of Part II. Here is something not found in earlier encyclicals. Commonsense experience is no longer enough, and much less adequate is a nostalgic looking back at the « good old days ». The Pope stresses again in Part IV that we are to *see*, that is to *know*, before we judge and act. And he begins the new part of this encyclical by taking a look at the total situation...

We cannot possibly know that life described by Pope John without great dependence upon experts. Information has not only become an educational necessity for modern life, information has become a new human right because it is so basic to existence. We will not get off the ground in social doctrine if we fail to depend upon experts for information, interpretation, assistance. This is not a competition to social doctrine or to the free will of the man in the street, it is a *service* required to stay free, independent and in control of our society. In our schools and universities we have hundreds of experts in natural and social sciences whose duty it is to inform the people; in our community on a half-dozen levels from the federal government to the local municipality we have trained officials whose duty it is to inform and work for the public. Again, social doctrine does not compete with these people it uses them.

The Second Obligation of Mater et Magistra,
to judge, or correct the conscience of modern man

There might be no great urgency for the Christian to know and understand modern society if he were not being called to perform some very Christian office. And this office is a traditional one, the correction of a problem of conscience in modern life. This problem of conscience is the key to this encyclical. If it is not resolved we shall remain confused about those traditional problems, dealt with in Part II, and worse still, we shall not have the necessary moral conviction to face the challenges of Part III. For this reason Pope John faces this problem at once at the beginning of Part II: the problem of the morality of organization.

This problem is a huge one in our civilization, present indeed in so many different ways that — as with original sin — we tend to take it

for granted. The problem is present because of an incorrect conscience from the heresy of liberalism. The liberalist condemned by the Church had no true place for a positive morality of organization, and so this natural expression of human life was condemned by liberalism, as other natural expressions have been condemned by negative moralities down through history: sex and marriage, economic activity and property, power and political organization. The efforts of *Rerum Novarum* and *Quadragesimo Anno* to establish a morality of association and organic structures are best examples of the Church's efforts to overcome this liberalist heresy. To-day so many people are confused by this dilemma of the liberal in an organized world, the « conflict of values » as it is called. We see this in the studies of « togetherness », of the « organization man », bureaucracy, etc.

The problem is present in another way because organization often began without a proper moral inspiration in our modern society: capital organization was dominated by individualism; banking and credit organization so often tended to financial dictatorship; technological development subordinated man to the machine, assembly line, or automatic process; political organization was vitiated by nationalism or socialism; labour organization came under power control. One by one each of these excesses is gradually being brought into a moral framework in our society: the anti-trust and anti-cartel laws; the control of finance from the 1930's; limitations to labour power from the 1940's reaction against welfare government in the 1950's; and increasing criticism of « inevitable automation » over the past decade. If we have had to be so suspicious of various species of organization in the growth of the modern world, it is not surprising that we have not too much conviction for the generic principle of organization itself. We have had to oppose modern organization often with a direct appeal to the natural law. Or, when worse came to the worst, we organized against organization to establish a balance of power. Because naive theories of progress accepted industrial development as an inevitable evolution that would determine the structure of Church, state, family, labour, and even person in its wake, unions or political parties were forced to organize to redress the balance. But such experience with organization as a necessary evil to redress the balance of things by power was not designed to give the notion of organization a very lofty position in our moral system.

However, Pope John is not satisfied that we re-iterate natural law rights against organization, and that we fight organization abuse by

organization, he asks that we accept the generic principle of organization itself as necessary for social justice to-day. How and why can he demand such a revolutionary moral conviction from us? The proximate answer is quite simple. As Pope John says, organization has become the dynamic principle of modern life..., and in itself this is a natural tendency of man. But the more fundamental reasons for this conviction are not so simple: in payment for a greater freedom, a greater control over matter, man must assume more responsibility to-day for the determinism in his life. Industrial society is the free choice of man as no other society has been; the fact that we take this choice for granted does not make it any the less fundamental. But by taking this choice for granted we have overlooked some consequences; our failure to develop an adequate « philosophy of matter », a « sense of social laws », and a responsible concern for necessary planning. We are not accustomed to look sufficiently far ahead in our actions.

We have taken so much for granted because the catalyst of change is natural science, and the focus of scientific change is man's control over matter, nothing more or less. An important deduction must follow: by these scientific decisions man does not change the intrinsic nature of matter itself, its deterministic element, so that the many scientific decisions made in our society cannot fail to have a deterministic effect on human life (matter still equals matter after processing and packaging). It is naive to suppose that there is a loss of freedom here; this is essentially an area of quantities, not of freedoms. Our history tells us how the geological strata, the natural resources, the climate, *determined* how Canadians eat, dressed, where they lived, and how they travelled. Science interposes itself now between ourselves and the elements, shifts the determination of matter from the land to the lab, and from the farm to the factory and back again; but the basic drives for science are still the material needs of the same elemental unit of the human species (as expressed in standard of living, guaranteed wages, or full employment), the basic drive of science to conquer need is as impersonal as those things of nature that it handles, and therefore more efficient, more successful when applied as widely as possible (be it by automation, mass production, or mass marketing).

There are several ways to approach this situation: first, to assume that science will resolve all problems as with the socialist economics which are assumed to automatically guarantee their moral complement, or at the other extreme, the *laissez faire* attitude of the businessman who fails to realize that his industrial decisions determine whole areas of

human existence beyond the economic. Both these systems of thought assume that science will dispose of basic limitations in human nature. A second approach is to oppose the whole thing, fight against science and all its consequences. The third approach is that of Pope John, to anticipate the consequences of science. In order to do this it seems to me that we need very badly a study of the psychology and philosophy of the use of material things by man in industrial society⁵. The power of science to use our natural resources, to plan our cities and countryside, to organize our housing, our employment, our recreation, is such that we are sinning against freedom by omission by *not* controlling matter more, by *not* planning more, by *not* adverting to social laws sufficiently.

We shall only begin to measure the consequences of scientific action, and be able to take steps to assume proper responsibility, when we are sufficiently mature to accept the reality of social laws and planning. Now, by human decision, we affect our way of life, where in earlier ages we depended more directly on the acts of God (climate, season, soil, etc.). We can avoid much concern for this problem by simply facing up to the facts of the situation in the manner of Pope John:

« For socialization is not to be considered as a product of natural forces working in a deterministic way. It is, on the contrary, as we have observed, a creation of men, of beings conscious, free and intended by nature to work in a responsible way even if in their so acting they are obliged to recognize and respect the laws of economic development and social progress and cannot escape from all the pressures of their environment. »

This notion of laws is by now an elementary consideration of the social sciences, just as the norms of the new economic morality indicated by Pope John — standard of living, full employment, planned production, etc. — are ordinary considerations in economic policy. But our general thinking is much too far behind the work of the natural scientist and the social scientist. This is true unfortunately for Catholic philosophy and theology as well — not having yet incorporated the realities of the natural and social sciences into their thinking such bodies of thought tend to stress only the prudential act and free will and to miss conse-

(5) This problem of « philosophy » for the social sciences is well expressed in the early chapters of R.A. Brady, *Organization, Automation and Society*, U. of California, 1961. But the same volume well illustrates the contribution of the social scientist to this question, see especially under « standards ».

quently the real scope of social decisions in modern society. We see some of the results of this in the panic among some Catholic philosophers, moral theologians, and canon lawyers over the use of the word socialization (or the idea however it may be translated) in the recent encyclical — a term really involving a notion about as revolutionary as the necessity of a surveyor for a housing development. Unless these important areas of Catholic thought are willing to adjust their aeriels, large sections of Catholic thought are in danger of missing the meaning of the social aspirations of modern man as completely as some areas of Catholic thought missed the democratic aspirations of European man in the 19th century.

Does this recognition of an area of determinism, of social laws, and of necessities for planning imply a loss of liberty in our total situation, a *submission* to the industrial order at it were? By no means! These steps imply rather a maturity in outlook for our civilization, and bring the freedom consonant with maturity. For this is not so much the accretion of new controls as a challenging of the narrower limits, the narrower laws, by which our society has lived. We might say that the doctrine of *Mater et Magistra* frees us from narrow laws, and from a too close dependence on certain temporal institutions.

First, with respect to laws, the main contribution of the social encyclicals to western society has been to modify so-called laws, a by now built-in yen that we seem to have for an automatic solution to an involved area of human relations. From the more fundamental theological and philosophical perspectives taken in these encyclicals it becomes possible to give due merit to the element of honest aspiration in the modern world, and at the same time to recognize where an excess has entered. The doctrines that have dominated the minds of our age come of course from those naive scientific laws of the 18th and early 19th century: the classical economic laws of diminishing returns, or the iron laws of wages, the Malthusian laws of population, the social theory of market competition and survival of the fittest, nationalism, economic imperialism; over against such doctrines were the Marxist laws of surplus, or the more general socialist laws of absolute human equality as a condition to be enforced by the state. As we all know, these various doctrines were first given the status of « natural law » from the 18th century, then of « scientific law » from the 19th century, and finally in the 20th century an enshrinement in political ideology.

The Church has always opposed this narrowness of modern man — his tendency to dependence upon inexorable scientific progress, his

tendency to set off organization against the individual or person. Now, in *Mater et Magistra*, the Pope is recognizing that the potential of science and the organizational possibilities of man free from a direct dependence upon science and industry; rather science and industry can by organization be put more directly at the service of human needs. Industrial society more than many other societies of the past requires a spiritual challenge. Otherwise the powerful material orientation of this society becomes that religion of secularism that Will Herberg already finds to be challenging the churches in America. Organization can put modern life at the service of the natural law — the person, the family, the common good. Indeed, organization is the instrument whereby those twin norms of Catholic social doctrine, the person and the common good, can be implemented, can give vitality to our society:

« In the development of the organizations of modern society, order is realized ever more with a renewed balance between the need of the autonomous and active collaboration of all, individuals and groups, and the timely coordination of the direction of the public authority.

« So long as socialization confines its activity within the limits of the moral order, along the lines indicated, it does not of its nature entail serious dangers of restriction to the detriment of individual human beings. Instead, it helps to promote in them the expression and development of truly personal characteristics. It produces, too, an organic reconstruction of society, which Our predecessor Pius XI in the encyclical « *Quadragesimo Anno* » put forward and defended as the indispensable prerequisite for satisfying the demands of social justice. »

In our non-intellectual American society this social doctrine may be of practical significance by freeing us from actual narrow institutional dependence rather than freeing us from narrow doctrines that we do not realize we hold. Again, let us recall here that organization is not only an acceptable principle, organizations are the instruments of free development to-day. Free action is not restricted to the individual alone on one hand, nor is social development predicated on the state on the other hand. Perhaps the greatest danger to-day lies in political adherence. We have tended more and more to be « tuned-in » only to political ideologies. How many of us failed to get a favourable « glow » from *Mater et Magistra* because it was not « against » something, did not take « political » sides. Those writers who have welcomed *Mater et Magistra* as a victory for one group over another, liberal over conservative, or welfare state over right wing, do a disservice to this social theology of the Church. Of course there are and must be parties, commitments, natural tendencies in various directions of the left or right.

By the peculiar value of the papal social doctrine, and in fact the necessity for the voice of the Church in such temporal affairs, is in indicating the first and most important common good that cannot be neglected for the individual or the individual party.

One whole area that must be singled out for blame here is the teaching of our schools, especially through history, as an ideological formation in nationalism. How many in our society who decry socialism are willing to admit that socialism has never been an effective force without nationalism, and that dangers to socialism will wither without nationalism, our nationalism! The spiritual resources of our society are committed in many and subtle way to nationalism, this modern religion as Carlton Hayes describes it. For example, Frank MacKinnon, no enemy of public education systems, had this to say recently: « No other activity, institution or profession is in this extraordinary position. Education in North America is now the most completely socialized activity in modern society »⁶. There are other important educational gaps with respect to this matter: for example, it can only be for political reasons that our public educational system does not give a better training in industrial relations. It has been my experience that well over ninety percent of business and labour representatives still find it necessary to revert to « political » types even when on an adult education platform. Some businessmen are of course suspicious of the very intent of such a platform; others admit in private that they have a broader social doctrine (for example, many to-day have taken the Harvard course in community and industrial relations) but they feel it necessary for political « public image » reasons to revert to 19th century jargon on the public platform. As a consequence the best minds of our country never discuss some of our most important social problems through proper educational channels. Through this failure to educate, both business and labour are fostering the notion that many problems are only political in form, and therefore, ultimately only political in resolution. This unhealthy political morality, somewhat like the morality of prohibition, makes the last state worse than the first.

Mater et Magistra can help us get out of this unfortunate drift, for in this papal doctrine we find defined the scope for healthy government activity... At the same time, and perhaps more important, this encyclical makes clear how socialism is not merely an alternative, it is **obsolete** as a system of government. Socialism arose in the nineteenth century as

(6) *The Politics of Education*, Toronto, 1960, p. 4.

an extreme antidote to individualism. The organization abilities of twentieth-century man renders both systems obsolete. In the words of Pope John social development has shifted away from these extremes to intermediate bodies.

«Moreover, We consider necessary that intermediary bodies and the numerous social enterprises, *in which above all socialization tends to find its expression and its activity*, enjoy an effective autonomy in regard to the public authorities and pursue their own specific interests in loyal collaboration between themselves, subordinate, however, to the demands of the common good. For it is no less necessary that the above-mentioned groups present the form and substance of a true community, that is, that the individual members be considered and treated as persons and encouraged to take an active part in their life. »

Throughout the remainder of this Part (II) Pope John illustrates his principle of intermediate vitality. Taking as the supposition a growing economy to which scientific progress is being applied, he finds that all must adjust to this advance — artisan, co-operative, private property. But he finds in every case that the economic unit is able to adjust in turn to the persons involved in new ways, that this adjustment is made easiest on the local level through the criterion of community, and on the national and international level too by the notion of common growth and common participation in growth... Again, the state has an essential function to perform in all this, but the state is not the principle of organization.

The Third Obligation of Mater et Magistra: Action

It is increasingly clear that the basic morality of industrial society points to new hope, new freedoms for the whole human community. The moral pivot of this new freedom, Pope John stresses, is the elemental right of every human being to subsistence and better than subsistence if possible. The second clause of this morality is that the better is possible to-day through science and therefore everyone has a *right* to science, not as a right to knowledge, but as a right to the fruits of science as basic as the right to breathe! Here is a whole exciting frontier of human endeavour that holds out undreamed of hopes for mankind. Here a hope is held out that would abolish the roots of class war in society, of colonial wars, of nationalist wars — a hope that is as moving and fundamental as the history of the destruction of slavery, or of famine, in our society. The biggest problem with the future of the industrial

world is a lack of faith, or confidence in the great thing Divine Providence has opened to us. A selfish human pessimism still shrouds our thinking. And in Part III Pope John urges us to respond to the challenge of Providence, to face our moral obligation to use science to overcome want, etc., see his statements on population and use of science, and on scientific, technical, financial co-operation among nations.

To implement these improvements Pope John calls upon the principle of organization, the necessity for organization to-day. See the strong statement with respect to agriculture — but also among nations — and especially at the end of Part III . . .

The Fourth Obligation: Spiritual Action

One cannot read, study, or teach the challenge to action of Part III without feeling a flatness, an inability to respond on all sides. The fact of the matter is that the vista of the future is so much beyond our traditional possibilities that we do not feel a real sense of moral obligation. Certainly this is where the obligation to knowledge comes in. But knowledge itself is not enough where such material ends are involved. In Part IV Pope John points out the dangers of materialism from the very nature of this work, and warns that scientific progress must be spiritualized:

« As We have already noted, modern man has greatly deepened and extended his knowledge of the laws of nature and has made instruments that make him lord of their forces...

« Certainly the Church has taught and always teaches that scientific-technical progress and the resultant material well-being are truly good and, as such, mark an important phase in human civilization. Nevertheless, these things should be valued according to their true worth, namely, as instruments or means used to achieve more effectively a higher end, that of facilitating and promoting the spiritual perfection of mankind, both in the natural and the supernatural order. »

Above all must the challenge of modern life be made spiritual when it comes to invoking the principle of organization. In a beautiful passage the Pope points out the spiritual fulfillment to be discovered by working with others, through organization:

« In temporal affairs and institutions, whenever an awareness of values and supernatural ends is secured, there is at the same time a strengthening of their power to achieve their immediate specific ends. The words of our divine Master are still true: « Seek ye, therefore, first the kingdom of God and his justice, and all these things shall be added unto you », children of the light. The fundamental demands of justice are more securely grasped in the most difficult and complex regions of temporal affairs, namely those in which selfishness — individual, group or racial — often causes thick clouds of darkness. When one is animated by the charity of Christ one feels united to others, and the needs, suffering and joys of others are felt as one's own. Consequently, the action of each one, no matter what the objective or what the circumstances in which it may be realized, cannot help being more disinterested, more energetic and more human because charity « is patient, is kind... seeketh not her own... rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth with the truth... hopeth all things, endureth all things. »

This appeal of Pope John to social justice and social charity has a very practical ring in the context of this encyclical. If the practical possibilities of socialism or individualism are obsolete, it still remains true that these systems had and still have a strong emotional appeal. There is an emotional gap to be filled here. In addition, if the 'spiritual' attractions of nationalism and secularism are to be challenged, it would be a serious error to minimize the tremendous moral vacuum left in our civilization by the weakening of these isms. If we were to develop organizations that were not mainly inspired by these 'isms' it would be a veritable revolution considering the position nationalism has had in our culture for some 500 years, and capitalism for 300 years!

This appeal of Pope John to spiritualize the industrial order is much more than a generic pious exhortation. The organization of secular society recognized in Part II by Pope John is joined in Part IV to a new organizational dynamism in the Church, the lay apostolate. The Pope makes his own and carries even further the extensive developments in the theology of the lay apostolate of the past few decades. Here is the form, the soul of the social encyclical. The Church will spiritualize the industrial order through the laity. From this point of view there is less appeal to temporal action by priests than in earlier encyclicals. All the priest has to do is unite the two tendencies, organization in society and the lay apostolate. But from another point of view Pope John is assuming that a mature lay organization already exists in parochial life: social doctrine is to be inserted into the religious instruction programmes of parishes and of associations of the lay apostolate.

Given the nature of the knowledge required for social doctrine today, as seen already, it is not surprising to find that the laity are not to be merely passive or learning subjects with respect to social doctrine: « to this diffusion, Our beloved sons, the laity, can greatly contribute by knowing this doctrine, making their actions conform to it and by zealously striving to make others understand it. » This is surely a teaching obligation on the laity!

The necessity for free, responsible action on the part of the laity is then spelled out in detail by Pope John when he makes the motto of the Y.C.W. 'see, judge, and act' a general directive, and in fact in all of the section entitled 'A task for associations of the apostolate of the laity.' Of special importance perhaps are the opening remarks of this section:

« Education to act in a Christian manner in economic and social matters will hardly succeed unless those being educated play an active role in their own formation, and unless the education is also carried on through action. Just as one cannot acquire the right use of liberty except by using liberty correctly, so one learns Christian behaviour in social matters by actual Christian action in those fields. »

Even if the layman does not have the sole responsibility for teaching, Pope John leaves us with no doubt as to his responsibility in the practical order:

« From instruction and education one must pass to action. This is a task that belongs particularly to Our sons, the laity, since in virtue of their condition of life they are constantly engaged in activities and in the formation of institutions that in their finality are temporal. In performing such a noble task, it is essential that Our sons be professionally qualified and carry on their occupation in conformity with its own proper laws in order to secure effectively the desired ends. »

Here we have the layman placed in the context of Part II. It is the layman who will organize the social institutions; it is the layman who must have the knowledge to form the society of the future.

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MATER ET MAGISTRA: UN DÉFI À LA CATHOLICITÉ DE L'ÉGLISE

L'histoire de la dernière encyclique, *MATER ET MAGISTRA*, illustre d'une façon dramatique, dans notre société contemporaine, la division du travail entre les relations publiques et le domaine académique. Dans le monde anglo-saxon au moins cette encyclique est celle qui a connu la plus large diffusion et qui a été la mieux reçue de toutes les encycliques sociales. Par ailleurs, il semble évident que moins qu'à toutes les autres on a apporté un intérêt soutenu.

On a pas à chercher bien loin pour trouver la raison de cette indifférence générale. *MATER ET MAGISTRA* n'est pas seulement un document à l'occasion d'une crise ou d'un problème. Elle est l'aboutissement de tout un siècle de développements académiques. D'une part, la doctrine sociale est seulement un segment d'une demi-douzaine de champs théologiques revitalisés. D'autre part, le fossé entre les sciences sociales et les champs de pensée plus traditionnels s'est graduellement rétréci. *RERUM NOVARUM* (1891) a ouvert la théologie à la science politique, *QUADRAGESIMO ANNO* (1931) a évidemment utilisé les principes économiques modernes et maintenant *MATER ET MAGISTRA* (1961) utilise la sociologie. Les experts en sciences sociales sont bien conscients de l'intérêt croissant chez leurs collègues depuis plusieurs générations au sujet du bien-être, des valeurs, des lois naturelles, des insuffisances du pragmatisme.

Lorsque les dimensions proprement académiques de cette encyclique sont reconnues, il s'en suit immédiatement que cette doctrine nécessite pour son exposition un statut académique approprié. En premier lieu, il ressort de la structure de *MATER ET MAGISTRA* que l'étudiant de la théologie sociale doit nécessairement s'appuyer sur le spécialiste en sciences sociales. En second lieu, l'étudiant de la théologie sociale doit reconnaître que l'homme moderne désire une philosophie sociale adéquate. C'est une exigence beaucoup plus englobante que celle des encycliques précédentes. Il ne suffit plus maintenant de condamner l'individualisme et le scientisme du XIX^e siècle, ou d'encourager davantage l'association — une union par-ici, une coopérative par là. Comme le préconise avec insistance le Pape Jean, une option morale positive de l'organisation ou de la socialisation est nécessaire à tout homme dans la société moderne.

Alors qu'il est évident pour celui qui analyse ces questions que tout le pouvoir moral de la religion sera nécessaire afin de dissiper l'ensemble des accreditations religieuses et de la loi naturelle acceptées par l'individualisme de notre société industrielle ou le socialisme des autres traditions, la question présente de nouveaux aspects. Il y a déjà une évidence abondante que les professeurs des matières philosophiques et théologiques traditionnelles ne réaliseront pas la nécessité actuelle d'une philosophie sociale articulée s'ils n'empruntent pas aux spécialistes des sciences sociales la signification et l'importance de la socialisation aujourd'hui. De plus, c'est seulement de l'esprit en sciences sociales que le philosophe social apprendra l'apport réaliste de la remarque du Pape Jean à l'effet que dans le milieu social moderne un certain déterminisme ne cause pas de préjudice à la liberté. La récente étude de Robert A. Brady sur la place des standards dans la civilisation en est un excellent exemple (*Organization, Automation, and Society*, ch. IV). L'importance croissante de l'étudiant des sciences sociales est aussi un autre indice du rôle croissant de l'apostolat laïc pour l'avenir de la doctrine sociale.