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The Church and...  
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THE  
**CHURCH AND THE STATE**

*Is There Any Conflict?*

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THE CIVIL AND RELIGIOUS  
ALLEGIANCE OF CATH-  
OLICS EXPLAINED

BY

RT. REV. JOHN P. CARROLL, D.D.,  
*Bishop of Helena, Montana*



**NATIONAL CATHOLIC WELFARE CONFERENCE**

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# The Church and the State

## *Is There Any Conflict?*

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A SERMON DELIVERED AT THE OPENING OF  
THE FOURTH ANNUAL CONVENTION OF  
THE NATIONAL COUNCIL OF CATHOLIC  
WOMEN IN THE CATHEDRAL OF  
ST. LOUIS, ST. LOUIS, MISSOURI,  
NOVEMBER 9, 1924

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Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's.—*

MATT. XXII, 21.

This is the first time the annual convention of the National Council of Catholic Women is held outside the city of Washington. I congratulate St. Louis on the honor that has come to it of acting as host to so numerous and so noble a body of Catholic women at the beginning of their peregrinations to the principal cities of our land. The policy inaugurated today cannot but be fruitful in spreading throughout the country a fuller knowledge of the aims and purposes of the organization and in awakening a greater enthusiasm for the work it is endeavoring to accomplish.

The National Catholic War Council was the greatest creation of the World War, and its continuance as the National Catholic

Welfare Conference is evidence of the wise foresight of the Bishops of the United States in providing by common counsel and united action for the solution of the problems of peace. The Department of Lay Organizations under episcopal supervision has unified the Catholic body and has given the Catholic Church in America an opportunity for service such as it has never had before in all its history. In concert with the National Council of Catholic Men—but, I believe, more effectually than it—the National Council of Catholic Women is responding to the cry of the Church for intellectual and spiritual lay leadership.

My message to you today, my dear women, is based on the gospel of this twenty-second Sunday after Pentecost, which I have just read. It is the clarion call of the Divine Founder of the Catholic Church to patriotism and piety:

*Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and  
to God the things that are God's.*

It is a command to make use of the opportunity given you as members of a nation-wide organization to broadcast the Catholic doctrine regarding the relations of Church and State—so little understood and so grossly misrepresented by some of our fellow-citizens.

## I

### NO CONFLICT BETWEEN CHURCH AND STATE

There is no conflict between Church and State. Jesus Christ Himself has said so.

*Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and  
to God the things that are God's.*

The Pharisees claimed that all authority, both spiritual and temporal, was lodged in their religious government and that, there-

fore, it was unlawful to pay tribute to the Roman emperor. They were wrong. Temporal things belong to Caesar. These must be rendered to Caesar. Spiritual things belong to God. These must be rendered to God. Pope Leo XIII, in his great encyclical on *The Christian Constitution of States*, makes clear the Catholic doctrine that the Church and the State are each in its own sphere independent of the other. He says:

*The Almighty has appointed the charge of the human race between two powers, the ecclesiastical and the civil, the one being set over divine, the other over human things. Each in its kind is supreme.*

And in his encyclical, *Satis Cognitum*, he censures those who declare that the Catholic Church seeks control of human governments:

*This is the office appropriated unto the Church by God: that it may watch over and may order all that concerns religion and may without let or hindrance exercise according to its judgment its charge over Christianity. Wherefore, those who pretend that the Church has any wish to interfere in civil matters, or to infringe on the rights of the State, know it not, or wickedly calumniate it.*

Some there are who maintain that the Pope's claim to temporal sovereignty is inconsistent with the doctrine of the mutual independence of Church and State enunciated by Christ and by the Pope himself. There might be truth in the statement if the Pope claimed temporal sovereignty over all the nations or over any of them. But he does nothing of the kind. The Pope merely claims that as spiritual head of the universal Church, a Church that exists in every nation, he must be the subject of no nation. Otherwise he would not be free and untrammelled in the exercise of his spiritual prerogatives. If during the World War the Pope were a subject of Italy or France, or England, or



America, what tremendous influence would be brought to bear on him to promote the cause of the Allies against Germany! If he were a subject of Germany, what pressure would be used to win him over to the defense of the Central Powers! In either case he would be shackled by his environment, and the cause of religion would suffer. As it was, his very claim to temporal sovereignty set him apart from the warring nations and enabled him to exercise that perfect impartiality which is now the admiration of the world.

The universal spiritual sovereignty of the Pope, therefore, requires for its full and free exercise independence of all temporal sovereigns, and this independence implies a certain territory in which he shall exercise independent civil dominion. Was it not solicitude for the free and unhampered exercise of the federal executive, legislative and judicial powers of our country that dictated the disfranchisement of the District of Columbia and its segregation from the territory of the sovereign states of the American Union? The political wisdom of America finds its model in the spiritual wisdom of the Papacy.

#### POPE AS SPIRITUAL CHIEFTAIN OF THE CHURCH

The old cry that Catholics owe allegiance to a foreign potentate has again been heard in the land. If this means that Catholics owe spiritual allegiance to the Pope as the head of the Catholic Church, there is truth in the cry. But the Pope as spiritual chieftain of the Church is no foreigner in America, or anywhere else in the world. Was it not to the Apostles, and through them to their successors, the Pope and the Bishops, the teaching and governing body of the Church, that Christ issued the command:

*Go ye into the whole world, and preach the gospel to every creature; he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, but he that believeth not shall be condemned.*

Was it not to them also that He said:

*Going, therefore, teach ye all nations, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded . . . he that heareth you, heareth me; he that despiseth you, despiseth me, and he that despiseth me, despiseth Him that sent me.*

If, therefore, the Pope be a foreigner to Americans, and the Church of which he is the head be a foreign institution in America, so is Christ a foreigner and His religion a foreign institution. And if Christ, the Son of God, be a foreigner, so is God the Father who sent Him a foreigner, not only in America, but in the whole world which He made and which He rules by His Providence.

If the old cry means that Catholics owe temporal allegiance to the Pope, the very purpose of the temporal power of the Pope, as just outlined, ought to be sufficient to stifle that cry forever. The Pope's claim to temporal sovereignty implies and necessitates his total removal from the temporal jurisdiction of every nation on earth, just as the independence of the American colonies meant their removal from the civil jurisdiction of Great Britain. And, correlatively, just as the establishment of American sovereignty involved the recognition of England's independence of America, so the papal claim to temporal sovereignty involves recognition by the Pope of the civil independence of all the nations of the world.

#### UNION OF CHURCH AND STATE OPPOSED

Union of Church and State may be an ideal condition in a country that is wholly Catholic. It is not practical or desirable in America, and if it were referred by the United States government to the people, the Catholic hierarchy and the Catholic laity of America would unanimously vote against it. The constitutional guarantees of religious liberty are sufficient for American Catholics, and they neither need nor want a legal union of

Church and State "in this happy country of ours," to quote the words of Theodore Roosevelt, "where religion and liberty are natural allies."

## II

Notwithstanding the Catholic doctrine of the mutual independence of Church and State, certain organizations in our country contend that the Catholic Church is not sincere. What she grants in theory, they say, she denies in practice. America establishes schools for the children of the Republic. The Catholic Church builds up a separate system of schools for her children. They say: "As there is but one flag, so, there should be but one school. A divided school makes a divided nation."

This argument is based on three false assumptions: (a) The public school is the only American school; (b) the State has the sole right to establish schools; (c) the Parochial schools do not inculcate whole-hearted loyalty to America.

### FIRST AMERICAN SCHOOLS WERE RELIGIOUS

(a) And first of all, the public school, as at present constituted, in which religion is not taught, dates only from 1840. For upwards of two hundred years, namely from colonial days down to the time of Horace Mann, all the schools of America were religious, and religion was then omitted from the curriculum, not because of any antagonism to it, but merely because of the practical difficulty of furnishing suitable religious instruction to children of the rapidly increasing number of religious denominations. It was thought the home and the Sunday school would supply the need of religious instruction. How lamentably they have failed is evident from the decimation of the Sunday school and from the fact that about two-thirds of the American people are without religious affiliations of any kind. The wisdom of the



Catholic Church in maintaining her religious schools after tax support was withdrawn in 1840 is now generally admitted by patriotic Americans, and a rapidly growing movement to secure credit for religion taught outside of school and even to dismiss school for one or more hours a week that religion may be taught is meeting with hearty favor by leading non-Catholic denominations. Let us hope that the real American school, the religious school of the days of our forefathers, will be reinstated all over our broad land before religion has lost its hold on the minds and hearts of our fellow-citizens.

#### STATE HAS NOT SOLE RIGHT TO MAINTAIN SCHOOLS

(b) The second assumption, namely that the State has the sole right to establish schools, is equally false. The chief purpose of the State is to protect the rights of its citizens. *"To secure these rights,"* says the Declaration of Independence, *"governments are instituted among men."* The preamble to the Constitution says that one of the reasons for the establishment of the Constitution is *"to secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and to our posterity."* And the Fourteenth Amendment to the Constitution declares that *"no State shall make or enforce any law which shall abridge the privileges or immunities of citizens of the United States; nor shall any State deprive any person of life, liberty, or property without due process of law."*

Now, among the citizens of the State parents hold the first place, for they furnish and perpetuate its citizenship. And among the rights of parents the right to educate their children stands preeminent. It is a right bestowed by the Creator Himself who made parenthood the instrument of His design for the perpetuation of the human race. This design of the Creator is not limited to procreation, but includes the development of the physical, intellectual and spiritual faculties of the child, both for its own good and the good of society. Since this development is another

name for education, parents are by nature bound, and therefore have the corresponding right, to educate their children. This right is inalienable because God-given. The State can neither give it nor take it away. Hence, any attempt on the part of the State to deprive parents of this right, for example, by compelling them to send their children to the schools of the State, is an abridgement of parental privilege and immunity, a deprivation of parental liberty and a violation of the Constitution of the United States.

#### BISHOPS' PASTORAL LETTER QUOTED

Of itself, then, the State has no right to teach. But it has a right to insist on the education of its citizens. In the *1919 Pastoral Letter of the Archbishops and Bishops of the United States*, the Bishops make clear their position on this subject:

*The State should encourage among the people such a love of learning that they will take the initiative and, without constraint, provide for the education of their children. Should they through negligence or lack of means fail to do so, the State has the right to establish schools and take every other legitimate means to safeguard its vital interests against the dangers that result from ignorance.*

In other words, the State has the right to teach indirectly, that is, in default of the parents, but its right is derived from the parents and is exercised in their name.

#### CATHOLIC SCHOOLS ARE TRULY AMERICAN SCHOOLS

(c) The third assumption, namely that the parochial schools do not cultivate loyalty to America, is wholly without foundation. As far as the secular branches are concerned, the curriculum of studies is the same as in the public schools and the teachers com-

ply with all the educational requirements of the State. Patriotic exercises are held on national and State holidays, and the flag is always in evidence. The only difference the casual observer could notice between the public school and the parochial school is that in the latter the teachers are for the most part religious men or women who not only teach religion, but who by their habit, manner and especially by their countenance all aglow with enthusiasm for their sacred calling, create a religious atmosphere and radiate reverence for all knowledge, sacred and profane.

Can it be because religion is taught in our parochial schools that they are suspected of disloyalty to America? With us this is the very reason why they ought to be credited with greater loyalty, if possible, to our country than our public schools. For, in addition to the natural and human motives for obedience to civil authority given in our public schools, the teachers in our parochial schools urge the supreme motives of religion. Among these is the command of Christ Himself "*to render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's*" as well as "*to God the things that are God's.*" Among these is the teaching of the Apostle that the authority of the State is from God, that it must be obeyed "for conscience sake" and under pain of "damnation." Loyalty to America, therefore, is taught in our parochial schools not only as a civil, but also as a religious obligation—an obligation just as binding in conscience as the observance of the ten commandments, or the assistance at Mass, or the reception of the sacraments.

#### STATE SEPARATED RELIGION AND EDUCATION

Is it because in our parochial schools Catholic children are separated from the other children of the nation that we are suspected of disloyalty to America? This is not our fault, but the fault of the State, which separated religion from education and, therefore, compelled us to unite them in schools of our own in order to obey the dictates of our conscience. Anyhow, separa-

tion during school hours of Catholic children from other children of the Republic does not mean separation in anything that concerns the welfare of our country. Outside of school hours our children mingle freely with the other children of their locality. In after life they are united with their non-Catholic neighbors socially and in business. There are no Catholic States in the Union, no Catholic cities in our States, no Catholic wards in our cities. When the call to arms was sounded in the World War, graduates of the parochial schools, in numbers even beyond the Catholic proportion of the population, fought shoulder to shoulder with graduates of the public schools and just as freely shed their blood, when need there was, "to make the world safe for democracy."

To say that "as there is one flag, so there should be but one school," is just as impractical and un-American as to say: "As there is one flag, so there should be but one church and one political party." Rather the motto of America is, *E pluribus unum*—the union of many races, many political parties, many churches, many schools, under one flag, all rivaling one another in their devotion to the Stars and Stripes which is the symbol of their constitutional rights and liberties.

### III

Flag, Church and School and their proper relations—this is the theme suggested by the gospel of the day. But the theme would not be complete did it not include the Home—without which nor flag, nor church, nor school could exist, much less attain its God-given aim and purpose. Neither would it be proper in this connection to omit consideration of the home in addressing a body of Catholic women banded together to help Church and State and School solve the problems of modern society. For, the home with its influence on society is chiefly what woman makes it. She is its queen, its protector, its defender.

## CHRISTIAN HOME FOUNDATION OF SOCIETY

Some years ago the late Justice Brewer of the Supreme Court of the United States delivered a splendid address in which he declared the flag, the church and the school to be the essential elements of our Christian civilization. Below the platform sat a well-known statistician who said to himself: "No, Mr. Justice, you are wrong. The Christian home is the foundation of our civilization. Without it, the efforts of church and school and flag to create, foster or save civilization would be unavailing."

He thought of France whose churches are the model and despair of modern architecture; whose schools were the glory of the Church in "the greatest of all centuries;" whose flag remained unstained throughout the vicissitudes of a thousand years. It was the flag of Clovis, of St. Louis and of St. Joan of Arc. And yet, he thought, there is something wrong with France. In 1890, France had a population of 38,000,000 and Germany a population of 49,000,000. In 1910 Germany's population increased to 64,000,000, and France still had only 38,000,000. France, he murmured, has dishonored the home in its primary function of cooperating with the Creator in the propagation of mankind, and its glorious flag, its splendid schools and its magnificent cathedrals will not prevent it from becoming a prey to jealous neighbors and from hastening to final decay and extinction.

## OPPOSITION TO BIRTH CONTROL PROPAGANDA

There is reason to fear that the love of ease and pleasure has diminished the affection of many of our American people for the home of the pioneer—a home that was made vocal and glorious by the innocent prattle of many children. The large number of advocates—many of them women, to their shame be it said—of the Birth Control bill, for some time before Congress, only serves to increase our fear and to make us view with alarm the consequences to our country when the present restrictive immi-

gration law begins to make itself felt. Thanks be to God, the Catholic women of our country, led on by the National Council of Catholic Women, have voiced their opposition to this iniquitous measure—a measure which would tend to make more general that willful and sinful sterility which Theodore Roosevelt was not afraid to say “offends God, cheats nature and betrays country.” Keep up the protest. It will shed glory on your Catholic womanhood and rank you among the bravest defenders of our Country.



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name for education; parents are by nature bound, and therefore have the corresponding right, to educate their children. This right is inalienable because God-given. The State can neither give it nor take it away. Hence, any attempt on the part of the State to deprive parents of this right, for example, by compelling them to send their children to the schools of the State, is an abridgement of parental privilege and immunity, a deprivation of parental liberty and a violation of the Constitution of the United States.

#### BISHOPS' PASTORAL LETTER QUOTED

Of itself, then, the State has no right to teach. But it has a right to insist on the education of its citizens. In the *1919 Pastoral Letter of the Archbishops and Bishops of the United States*, the Bishops make clear their position on this subject:

*The State should encourage among the people such a love of learning that they will take the initiative and, without constraint, provide for the education of their children. Should they through negligence or lack of means fail to do so, the State has the right to establish schools and take every other legitimate means to safeguard its vital interests against the dangers that result from ignorance.*

In other words, the State has the right to teach indirectly, that is, in default of the parents, but its right is derived from the parents and is exercised in their name.

#### CATHOLIC SCHOOLS ARE TRULY AMERICAN SCHOOLS

(c) The third assumption, namely that the parochial schools do not cultivate loyalty to America, is wholly without foundation. As far as the secular branches are concerned, the curriculum of studies is the same as in the public schools and the teachers com-



ply with all the educational requirements of the State. Patriotic exercises are held on national and State holidays, and the flag is always in evidence. The only difference the casual observer could notice between the public school and the parochial school is that in the latter the teachers are for the most part religious men or women who not only teach religion, but who by their habit, manner and especially by their countenance all aglow with enthusiasm for their sacred calling, create a religious atmosphere and radiate reverence for all knowledge, sacred and profane.

Can it be because religion is taught in our parochial schools that they are suspected of disloyalty to America? With us this is the very reason why they ought to be credited with greater loyalty, if possible, to our country than our public schools. For, in addition to the natural and human motives for obedience to civil authority given in our public schools, the teachers in our parochial schools urge the supreme motives of religion. Among these is the command of Christ Himself "*to render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's* as well as "*to God the things that are God's.*" Among these is the teaching of the Apostle that the authority of the State is from God, that it must be obeyed "for conscience sake" and under pain of "damnation." Loyalty to America, therefore, is taught in our parochial schools not only as a civil, but also as a religious obligation—an obligation just as binding in conscience as the observance of the ten commandments, or the assistance at Mass, or the reception of the sacraments.

#### STATE SEPARATED RELIGION AND EDUCATION

Is it because in our parochial schools Catholic children are separated from the other children of the nation that we are suspected of disloyalty to America? This is not our fault, but the fault of the State, which separated religion from education and, therefore, compelled us to unite them in schools of our own in order to obey the dictates of our conscience. Anyhow, separa-

tion during school hours of Catholic children from other children of the Republic does not mean separation in anything that concerns the welfare of our country. Outside of school hours our children mingle freely with the other children of their locality. In after life they are united with their non-Catholic neighbors socially and in business. There are no Catholic States in the Union, no Catholic cities in our States, no Catholic wards in our cities. When the call to arms was sounded in the World War, graduates of the parochial schools, in numbers even beyond the Catholic proportion of the population, fought shoulder to shoulder with graduates of the public schools and just as freely shed their blood, when need there was, "to make the world safe for democracy."

To say that "as there is one flag, so there should be but one school," is just as impractical and un-American as to say: "As there is one flag, so there should be but one church and one political party." Rather the motto of America is, *E pluribus unum*—the union of many races, many political parties, many churches, many schools, under one flag, all rivaling one another in their devotion to the Stars and Stripes which is the symbol of their constitutional rights and liberties.

### III

Flag, Church and School and their proper relations—this is the theme suggested by the gospel of the day. But the theme would not be complete did it not include the Home—without which nor flag, nor church, nor school could exist, much less attain its God-given aim and purpose. Neither would it be proper in this connection to omit consideration of the home in addressing a body of Catholic women banded together to help Church and State and School solve the problems of modern society. For, the home with its influence on society is chiefly what woman makes it. She is its queen, its protector, its defender.

## CHRISTIAN HOME FOUNDATION OF SOCIETY

Some years ago the late Justice Brewer of the Supreme Court of the United States delivered a splendid address in which he declared the flag, the church and the school to be the essential elements of our Christian civilization. Below the platform sat a well-known statistician who said to himself: "No, Mr. Justice, you are wrong. The Christian home is the foundation of our civilization. Without it, the efforts of church and school and flag to create, foster or save civilization would be unavailing."

He thought of France whose churches are the model and despair of modern architecture; whose schools were the glory of the Church in "the greatest of all centuries;" whose flag remained unstained throughout the vicissitudes of a thousand years. It was the flag of Clovis, of St. Louis and of St. Joan of Arc. And yet, he thought, there is something wrong with France. In 1890, France had a population of 38,000,000 and Germany a population of 49,000,000. In 1910 Germany's population increased to 64,000,000, and France still had only 38,000,000. France, he murmured, has dishonored the home in its primary function of cooperating with the Creator in the propagation of mankind, and its glorious flag, its splendid schools and its magnificent cathedrals will not prevent it from becoming a prey to jealous neighbors and from hastening to final decay and extinction.

## OPPOSITION TO BIRTH CONTROL PROPAGANDA

There is reason to fear that the love of ease and pleasure has diminished the affection of many of our American people for the home of the pioneer—a home that was made vocal and glorious by the innocent prattle of many children. The large number of advocates—many of them women, to their shame be it said—of the Birth Control bill, for some time before Congress, only serves to increase our fear and to make us view with alarm the consequences to our country when the present restrictive immi-

gration law begins to make itself felt. Thanks be to God, the Catholic women of our country, led on by the National Council of Catholic Women, have voiced their opposition to this iniquitous measure—a measure which would tend to make more general that willful and sinful sterility which Theodore Roosevelt was not afraid to say “offends God, cheats nature and betrays country.” Keep up the protest. It will shed glory on your Catholic womanhood and rank you among the bravest defenders of our Country.

