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Participation of Catholics in Mixed Groups

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By ANNA DILL GAMBLE

ONE of the most pressing problems confronting the Catholic laity today is the question of participation in mixed groups. This is because, in an increasingly secularized society, the decay of dogmatic Protestantism has created a corresponding decay in moral principles. In spite of a divergence on many questions, Catholics and Protestants have hitherto felt more or less that they shared a common Christian civilization, so that it has been possible in the past to cooperate in maintaining certain common standards.

Today all this is changing. We are witnessing the collapse of Christian ethics not only in regard to sex and the family, but in the development of dangerous nationalistic ideas regarding the rights of the state in the field of morality and religion on the one hand, and an equally dangerous Communist-led internationalism on the other, which would substitute the needs and desires of what is called a "creative society" for the moral teachings of traditional religion. These new ideas both nationalist and internationalist, based on the will of an absolutist state or on a collectivist will rather than on divine authority, subtly permeate the thinking of many of the leaders of public opinion today, and inspire them to many of their activities.

An Opportunity for Catholic Leadership

There has been something dismaying to Catholics in thus finding themselves increasingly unsupported by Protestant opinion in public questions involving traditionally Christian modes of thought. This increasing isolation on the part of Catholics is creating difficulties and embarrassments, as for instance when we are sometimes forced

to appear almost alone before legislative bodies in opposition to such popular movements as the legalization of contraceptive information or the sterilization of the unfit. But who can deny that such a situation has extraordinary opportunities for moral leadership that is nothing short of providential? The successful campaign waged by the bishops in the Legion of Decency against immoral films must inevitably come to mind in this connection.

Many Protestants themselves are realizing the moral as well as the economic crisis in which we as a nation are involved; and insofar as they do realize it there is still hope for cooperation with mixed groups. But unless we ourselves fully face the fact that the situation within mixed groups has silently undergone a complete revolution, we are going to find ourselves in an increasingly compromising position. Whether we are prepared for it or not, today cooperation with non-Catholics is forcing upon us the leadership, or at any rate clear-cut decisions in their counsels. To be silent partners in such cooperation is no longer possible.

Many non-Catholics are themselves bewildered, with their own leadership divided, and with the majority of their spokesmen surrendering to the time spirit which would drag our civilization back into the darkness of paganism. I believe that most of the rank and file of our citizenship as yet wish that the social life of America should remain Christian, but as sheep without a shepherd they have lost all power of direction. To be sure, as a result of the attack on Christianity in Germany, there is discernible even here in America a reawakened interest among Protestant leadership in the ideals of Christianity, and one can see a desire among some of these leaders to be loyal to Christian principles, in order that their own religious bodies may escape state domination or collectivist extinction. But this spiritual quickening, while entirely Protestant, seems to be friendly, rather than hostile to Rome, even to the point of expressing open admiration for that which a few generations ago was Protestantism's greatest criticism of the Church, namely, her

strong organization, and what we call "authority," but what they call her "leadership," in resisting the evils of the times.

Therefore, there can be little question that the power of direction in the many movements of the day lie mainly between those teachings that would end in the definite renouncement of Christian principles—and the teachings of the Catholic Church. In the no-man's land between these two positions in the struggle of Christ and anti-Christ wander millions of bewildered Americans waiting "to be told."

The Mixed Group and Public Opinion

Now I think it will be agreed that it is a very real calamity, both to the Church and to the nation, that so many Catholics scattered through the numberless mixed groups in our country, are so little prepared to have a directive influence upon such groups. It seems to me, therefore, that the time has come for Catholic organizations to begin to train their members to definitely aggressive action to take the place of the old defensive position which is no longer useful. The days of an aggressive Protestantism are definitely over; and an aggressive atheism should not be allowed to get sufficient headway to take its place.

An understanding of mixed groups and of the participation of Catholics in such groups is all the more important when we realize what will be the effects of the abandonment of a common moral point of view in American life, not only upon non-Catholics but upon Catholics as well, disturbed and unsettled as everyone is by the gradually increasing uproar of the new paganism that is invading every movement in American life. This should force the Catholic laity to take full stock of their own relationship to the powerful mixed groups that are today leading public opinion.

These groups, representing large blocks of private citizens, hold innumerable conferences and conventions,

which increase both in attendance and in the importance of the subjects discussed. Some of them meet for the purpose of ironing out social difficulties and bringing together divergent groups and views. These belong to what I would classify as the "discussion group." Others represent "causes" or "interests." Still others are merely homogeneous groups meeting together to hear the questions of the day discussed, so that they may form opinions but feel no responsibility as groups to decide about issues. These last organizations are growing fewer each year since zealous advocates of "causes" within the organizations are forcing them ever more rapidly into the "pressure" class.

The Growth of Propaganda Groups

When homogeneous national groups in America thus become conscious of a "mission," they are no longer satisfied to influence their own groups or even remain within national bounds. The American propagandist group seems always to acquire an irresistible urge to expand into the international sphere. This has been particularly noticeable since the World War. The World Y. M. C. A. and the World Y. W. C. A. are of course of longer standing; but since the World War, we cannot but be amazed at the extraordinary activities of the National Woman's Party, a small but indefatigable group of women which has forced recognition from the Pan-American Union in the Inter-American Commission of Women and which is now busy at the League of Nations. Then we have the Inter-American Union of Women, sponsored by the League of Women Voters, the International Association of University Women, the World Federation of Education Associations, an outgrowth of the Foreign Relations Committee of the National Education Association and the International Federation of Business and Professional Women. I could go on indefinitely without even touching the professedly international groups primarily interested in the question of world peace. Several years ago I sent out a circular letter to about fifty national organizations

to inquire as to their programs in the international field. With but one or two exceptions, they all confessed to international activities or ambitions.

Propaganda and the Minority Report

I think we are all agreed that Catholic organizations should be particularly cautious in having official representation in propaganda groups. The point, of course, is what constitutes propaganda. Now I should like to lay it down as a general principle that any organization that passes resolutions in regard to political, social or religious questions, is to that extent a propaganda group. A convention that takes action on public questions in order to advance principles or to promote action proclaims its corporate determination to propagate the ideas or causes embodied in its resolutions. The power and influence of the entire organization is put behind these resolutions, and it is vain for minorities to hope to escape responsibility for the action of the majority.

There are, however, some mixed groups in which a minority report may serve a good purpose. But if it does not receive official recognition by the group, as well as adequate publicity in the newspapers, a minority report may serve only as a protest, and does not clear the minority of responsibility for the action of a majority. The cases where minority reports serve a very useful purpose are when a mixed group of great public importance issues recommendations to which the minority cannot agree. When the public is alive to the issues, the minority report sometimes receives more publicity than the majority report. This happened, as we all know, to the Wickersham report on prohibition, and this minority report undoubtedly had an important part in bringing about the repeal of the Eighteenth Amendment. Where there is Catholic representation on government commissions or committees, or where Catholics serve in mixed groups, public or private, that have the dispensing of public funds, and where the recommendations of the majority are unsatisfactory, minority reports are not only

useful, but absolutely necessary to clarify the situation. Under no circumstances should Catholics resign from bodies that make use of public money, either raised by taxation or by public subscription. To do so would be to surrender the rights of Catholic citizens who have contributed towards these funds. Even where the minority is unable to change the recommendations of the majority, minority reports will keep the Catholic objections before the public eye.

A good illustration of the usefulness of a Catholic minority opinion will be found in the reports issued by the National Advisory Committee on Education appointed by President Hoover in 1929. The majority report while showing that "a decentralized school management is best adapted to a democratic nation of wide geographical expanse and varied economic, social, and other human conditions," yet inconsistently recommended that a Department of Education with a Secretary of Education be established by the Federal Government. A minority report showing this inconsistency and protesting against the establishment of such a Department was signed by the two Catholic members of the committee, the Rt. Rev. Msgr. Edward A. Pace, and Rev. Dr. George Johnson. It was printed with the majority report in the same pamphlet, through the unanimous consent of the entire committee.

Cooperation and Participation

It might be well here to draw a distinction between cooperation and participation with mixed groups. In the case where a Catholic group affiliates with a national mixed organization, this participation involves an actual becoming a part of, and therefore of sharing the responsibility for the whole policy of this group. Cooperation on the contrary involves nothing more than working together with a mixed group, or a number of mixed groups for some specific purpose that is approved by the Catholic group. Catholic organizations are increasingly being invited to cooperate with mixed groups in regard to the

many urgent social problems of the day, and undoubtedly should render such cooperation wherever possible. But even here, eternal vigilance is the price of escaping compromising situations.

It is individual membership in mixed groups, however, that affects the greatest number of Catholics. There are very few Catholic men or women who do not belong to at least one mixed group. Take the labor and professional and business groups alone, without reference to the social groups, the propaganda groups, and all the welfare organizations, and one realizes the vast network of organizations that influence the lives of most of us.

Analyzing the Mixed Group

It is not easy to make an analysis of the multiplicity of mixed groups, so characteristic of the life of today. I think, however, that they fall roughly into six classifications: first, the "classified" clubs which have wide ramifications in the business world; second, the propaganda group; third, the technical, professional, labor and commercial groups; fourth, the pure conference or forum, existing for the clarification of public questions and making no attempt to act as a unit in regard to matters discussed; fifth, the public welfare groups, both government and private; and sixth, the character-building, or youth organizations.

Service Clubs No Particular Problem

Under ordinary circumstances the "classified" or "service" clubs offer no special problem for our consideration. They include such organizations as Quota, Zonta, Altrusa and the Soroptimist Clubs, among business and professional women, and Rotary, Kiwanis and Lions, etc., among men. They call themselves "classified" clubs because their membership is limited to one representative in a given locality from each of the various lines of business and the professions on a classified list. They all specialize in some service, either to the handicapped or in

vocational guidance. While these clubs invite speakers on public questions to address them at their luncheon and dinner meetings, yet they take no action either at their local meetings or at their national conventions, their resolutions being confined to routine matters. However, the action of the Rotary and Lions Clubs in going to Mexico City for their international conventions, at a time of revolutionary changes, shows how even these groups can be used by governments for propaganda purposes through the new methods used with such effect by Soviet Russia for the manipulation of tourist psychology.

In regard to the other groups, it should be obvious at once that the principal reason why they challenge our attention here is that while they apparently form five distinct groups, it is so very hard to decide how many of them are definitely free from propaganda. As a matter of fact, almost all national organizations of both men and women, with the exception, as I have said, of the "classified" clubs, really combine propaganda with discussion, or are under definite pressure from their leaders. Witness the groups of social workers, and recently the General Federation of Women's Clubs, which have permitted the Birth-Control League to take an honored place on their programs, and to dictate action on that question. Witness, also, how not so many years ago, bar associations and medical societies passed resolutions to change the fundamental law of the land in regard to the drinking habits of the people. Even the most learned of scientific societies have been known to pass resolutions favoring half-baked theories on eugenics.

Tactics of Character-Building and Welfare Groups

Some character-building and welfare groups, as well as most frankly propaganda groups, seek Catholic participation, sometimes with great persistence. But many of them welcome Catholics only in a subordinate capacity. What they are out for are passive, not active Catholics, the sort that are interested in the personal benefits to be gained from the organization rather than for its principles

and policies. Such organizations are anxious to encourage Catholic membership. For the most part the appeal is made to the young and inexperienced or to the humble and illiterate Catholic. The contrast between two such character-building groups as the Scout Movement and the Y. M. C. A. and the Y. W. C. A. immediately comes to mind. In the former, Catholics are welcomed on boards and in executive positions, as well as in the rank and file. In the latter, only rank and file membership is sought. In Latin-American countries, what might be called "show-case Catholics" are usually put on boards of the Y's; but the executive positions are even there retained exclusively by trained Protestant leaders.

Danger of "Advisory" Memberships

This use of "show-case Catholics" has often been effective in propaganda groups in the United States as well. As I have been betrayed into this position myself, I do not intend this expression as a term of opprobrium, but as a literal description of what I found the position to be. Prominent and unsuspecting Catholics are often put in honorary or "advisory" positions; but the advisory position is usually entirely nominal, as the "adviser" is seldom if ever consulted. The main purpose of this "advisory" position is that an influential Catholic name may appear on official letter paper to catch the unwary.

Propaganda of Professional Groups

It may sometimes happen that the interests of certain professional groups dictate their propaganda. One can see the strong professional bias influencing the N. E. A. propaganda for a Federal Department of Education with a teacher in the Cabinet. Group propaganda is almost inevitable, since the very purpose of an organization is to protect or advance the special interests or ideals of its members. But it is one of the tragedies of a secularized society that so many Catholics in business and professional life feel that they belong first to their business and profession, and are Catholics afterwards.

An illustration of a professional bias, amounting to a subtle, if unconscious, propaganda, I observed in a Business and Professional Women's Club, before which I was invited to speak. After my address, the group sang a little ditty ridiculing the idea that woman's place is in the home. A large proportion of the women present were Catholics, several of them entrusted by their pastors with the leadership of parish organizations of young girls. I watched these good Catholic women as they sang uncritically and with zest this song, and wondered whether through mass psychology their gray matter had ceased to function, or whether they really did not know the fundamental place the home takes as the very basis of our civilization.

The propaganda of the professional group, however, may be perfectly legitimate and may show no tendency to run counter either to the general good or to Catholic teaching. In spite of the unpleasant connotation that of late years has become attached to the word, there is nothing objectionable in propaganda in itself. Much of the propaganda of mixed groups may not only be regarded as "safe" but may even be deserving of Catholic support.

The Role of the Pressure Group

Some time ago a whole number ¹ of the *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* was devoted to the question of "Pressure Groups and Propaganda." In a foreword to this study it was pointed out that "in a world of group struggles for opinion control, the state itself often assumes the rôle of a pressure group," and the question is inevitably raised as to the future of democratic ideals of liberty, the place of religion and education, and the objective search for truth in a world where propaganda and pressure groups, to use the words of the *Annals*, "have become very definite fixtures in the social framework."

The danger of the compromise of Catholic truth by Catholics participating in the multiplicity of mixed

¹ For May, 1935.

groups attempting this "opinion control," therefore becomes extremely serious. Few Catholics are as yet equipped to follow closely the policy of national mixed groups; for it is always a difficult and delicate matter to gauge correctly the forces beating upon such organizations to control their policy. Too much is at stake for a Catholic minority in such a group to take its chances without establishing some definite method of protection against unwitting acquiescence in or implied approval of positions directly opposed to Catholic teaching. This is true not only on the grounds of Christian morality, but in regard to the more complicated question involved in the non-Catholic assumption of religious equality. Religious syntheism with the majority of intellectuals is now taking the place of old-fashioned Protestantism; and it is on this basis that many well-meaning non-Catholics seek cooperation with Catholics. This is undoubtedly true in regard to the psychology of non-Catholics interested in problems of international or racial peace; and for Catholics thoughtlessly to accept this way out of group-conflicts, is the greatest surrender it is possible for a Catholic to make.

The Conference on the Cause and Cure of War

The Conference on the Cause and Cure of War is a good illustration of how the leaders of an admirable forum for the education of public opinion, have been unable to resist the desire to exercise "opinion control." This Conference was organized, as its name indicates, to study war as a social evil, and to find its remedy. Neither leaders nor delegates were supposed to know all the answers. The speakers on the formal programs were, to be sure, usually experts on their chosen subjects, and the discussions were always clarifying. But no impartial observer could have felt that the "findings" at the end of these meetings and the resolutions passed, had any value whatever. They were in themselves neither expert opinion, nor were they representative of the bodies from which these women came. On the contrary, the delegates

were expressly instructed by the chairman not to vote according to the views of the organizations by which they were delegated, but to "vote their own opinions." Nevertheless, resolutions so arrived at, have been sent by the Conference year after year to the President of the United States and to the State Department, as expressing the will of twelve national organizations of women on important questions involving our national policy. It is clear, therefore, that trying to find the cause and cure of war was not the primary purpose of these meetings. Rather was it an attempt to influence the policy of our government by pretending to represent public opinion.

At the inception of the Conference, the National Council of Catholic Women was invited to participate; and for two years the Board of the Council was represented at the meetings by an unofficial observer. As a result of these observations the N. C. C. W. declined to participate in the Conference stating in a letter to its president that if it were "truly and solely a Conference where every expression of a position would stand with equality on its own merits as given, the N. C. C. W. would be most happy to make its own contribution and give due consideration to that of others;" but that since the purpose seemed to be "to secure a common decision on governmental methods and policies, and to exert influence to make such methods and policies effective," the Council felt itself unable to participate. This statement concluded with the suggestion that the Conference on the Cause and Cure of War would gain in sincerity and efficiency were it to limit its activities "to training its component bodies in international thinking, and thus persuade them to pass resolutions consonant with their own principles within their own bodies. In such a purely dispassionate educational movement, the National Council of Catholic Women might well participate."

A Serious Question for Catholics

The question we will all have to face sooner or later is this: how is it possible for Catholics to remain within

great national bodies whose leaders persist in committing the entire organization to a majority opinion on matters affecting Catholic faith and morals?

This whole trend, absent from an earlier American psychology, and contrary to real democratic theory and practice (which has always respected the rights of minorities) is the direct result of a growing dependence on what is called "group-thinking," or what is really mass-psychology.

The only method, short of complete withdrawal, by which Catholics may defend the rights of their conscience within such groups is always to act together as a determined and militant minority, opposing with energy and persistence the taking of any vote that would commit the Catholic minority to acquiescence in a matter against their consciences. It is determined minorities that in the end win majorities. Passive minorities have always been mere victims. Merely to resign from an organization can have little social effect. If we must resign, let us make our reasons perfectly clear, not only to the membership, but also to the public, particularly if we hold positions of social or official importance. To resign without making your reasons clear to a puzzled membership or community, is certainly not fulfilling one of the most important of the corporal works of mercy, "counseling the doubtful."

Dealing With Birth-Control Propaganda

As an example I will cite the fight against the birth-control propaganda that has been made in many local and state organizations of the Federation of Women's Clubs, as well as in other groups. A very few women, but with sufficient courage and determination, have forced the recognition of the principle that a federation of clubs, by its very nature, should never take a vote involving the religious principles of its members. When the majority realize that by voting on such questions, it is actually forcing a religious test on a minority, traditional Americanism is still strong enough to persuade it to desist. I

have found that it is not that the majority desire so much to register their opinion on these questions or to commit their organization to them, but that pressure groups outside of the organization and zealous propagandists within, together with a desire on the part of leaders to "swing" or manipulate mass-sentiment, are creating everywhere difficult situations for both Catholic and conscientious Protestant members of these organizations. I was astonished to discover also that most club women had never even heard the arguments against contraception. The federated clubs were plunged into this controversial issue by their national and state leaders on the assumption that the question is settled, so far as women are concerned, and that no sensible woman is against contraception. I think the day is past when we should deplore the discussion of this question in mixed groups. On the contrary, we should invite it, and have our arguments ready. There is nothing more deadly than the present assumption that all women are united on this question. I have witnessed the presentation of arguments against this practise awaken a few brain-cells into action, and I know that a real opposition can be created, if only Catholic women will not treat the matter as hopeless.

The Discussion Method, Its Advantages and Its Potentialities

It is therefore clear that wherever the discussion method only is used, with no attempt to go on record as to issues, the Catholics participating are not only protected from religious compromise, but have a very real opportunity for correcting misunderstandings. If the Catholic viewpoint on the social problems of the day is ever to reach the non-Catholic, it would seem that the conference or institute would be the most obvious method by which this may be done. It is the logical method for overcoming error and prejudice; and among a heterogeneous people such as we have in America, Catholic minorities might in this way develop opportunities for free self-expression if we cared to

do so. Of course there is here no suggestion of entering upon religious debates or of holding religious forums. However, if we as Catholics are interested in the preservation of Christian principles in our social life, or of the development of a Christian social order, then we cannot be indifferent to the extraordinary growth of the forum movement throughout the United States. I have always felt that a more active Catholic participation in such long established institutes for the clarification of public questions as the Academy of Political and Social Science at Philadelphia, and the Institute of Public Affairs at the University of Virginia would be of great benefit to the cause of truth and social progress. Ideas bearing upon the social and political questions of the day are at these meetings discussed at their source among the leaders of public opinion. So that a clarifying of Catholic thought here has always had far-reaching results.

But the discussion of social problems is no longer confined to academic circles and political and national group leaders. It is now a widespread popular movement and the plain man and woman are having their own forums. Perhaps America has always had unofficially such discussion groups in the cracker-barrel arguments of the corner grocery. But today these debates are being organized and even supervised under the name of "adult education." Forums are springing up everywhere and millions of our fellow citizens are discussing public questions in lecture halls, schoolrooms and community centers. The United States Office of Education has estimated that an audience of 4,000,000 people in seventeen states is reached by their civic education program.² At these meetings, we are told, pamphlets are sold or distributed, and library books circulated. Attempts have been made to list the many hundreds of independent forums that are growing in numbers and importance,³ many of them inspired by the well-

² "Forums Booming All Over the Nation," *New York Times*, January 3, 1937.

³ *Ibid.* The United States Office of Education has compiled a list of 430 large and small independent public forums in twenty-two states and the District of Columbia. The American Association for Adult Education records the names of a number of local and well-established forums that attract large audiences.

known "Town-Meeting of the Air."⁴ When we add the neighborhood discussion groups among the farm population, promoted by the United States Department of Agriculture, estimated at 80,000 in thirty-five states, and still growing, the movement as a means for the expression of public opinion calls for careful attention. It is true that many of these forums are small, amounting to little more than study clubs of a dozen or two members. Others run into the hundreds. But the probabilities are that the smaller the group the more sincere is the exchange of views, and the more intensively the lesson learned. In any case the potentialities for good or for evil in this popular and widespread use of the study club and of the forum, cannot escape the thoughtful. We are reminded of the lessons of history, and cannot but reflect upon the part played by the Jacobin Clubs during the French Revolution. They were at the beginning quite harmless affiliated debating societies. What they became in the midst of public turmoil and under the rule of men like Marat and Robespierre, is well expressed in a report from the Ministry of the Interior in 1792, in which these clubs are described as "a pulpit of defamation where citizens of every age and both sexes are admitted day by day to listen to a criminal propaganda." There is no intention here of drawing a real comparison between the American discussion movement and the Jacobin Clubs of France; but who can deny that any rural forum in America, or any "left wing" debating group in our large cities, might easily be turned into "a pulpit of defamation" toward the Catholic Church should another wave of bigotry arise, this time strengthened by the malice of militant atheism. One need not, however, indulge such forebodings to be quite sure of the wholesome effect on American public opinion of an intelligent Catholic participation in neighborhood or community group discussions.

Catholic members of a forum realizing how often program-makers fail to do justice to the Catholic point of

⁴ The poll for 1937 of the Women's National Radio Commission reports that 75 per cent of the votes cast were for the Town-Meeting of the Air, showing that this broadcast is undoubtedly the most popular educational program on the air.

view, sometimes grow discouraged in participating in such forums. But it should be remembered that such failures are not always the fault of program committees. No conference can really afford to be accused of unfairness or of deliberately ignoring the convictions of its constituency, so that private protests usually produce results. The real difficulty is to find Catholic speakers willing or able to take the platform on social and economic problems. Discussions from the floor are of a much more simple nature. It should be remembered that it is not always necessary to present an argument if the Catholics present are not prepared to do so. A well-put question sometimes exposes the weakness of a position, and arouses fruitful thought.

Needed: Trained Catholic Observers and Participants

One of the functions of lay organizations, it seems to me, is to develop more trained Catholic men and women who, in an objective manner and with a complete and thorough grasp of Catholic philosophy, may be able to report on the meetings of mixed groups, whatever the type. It should be the purpose of such observers to keep the men's and women's Councils in touch with intellectual as well as popular movements. The field is vast, and the number of the laity fitted and willing to study and appraise these popular movements, few. The use of the Catholic study class in such training is quite obvious. Anyone who should undertake to lead a study class on international peace, on Latin-America, on industrial problems, on the Christian family, on Catholic education, or on any of the Papal Encyclicals, would naturally qualify as an observer of modern movements, and would be able to participate intelligently in any forum.

The Defensive and the Adaptive Catholic

There are two types of Catholics, however, whom I would consider quite unfitted to undertake the reporting of conferences of mixed groups, or to represent Catholics

in any discussion, large or small. I would label these two types: the defensive Catholic and the adaptive Catholic.

The defensive Catholic tends to harden into a fixed mold. By an unintelligent defensiveness he forms the habit of defending not the Church only, but his own personal views on politics, social problems and economics. He is inclined to identify his prejudices with his Catholicism and his outlook is entirely subjective. He defends the past against a modern world and thinks he is doing the Church a service. By his habit of being always on the defensive about the Church, he allows himself to be driven into fighting for more than the Faith—for what, in short, belongs to a whole passing generation, and what, if he only knew it, has its roots in a culture alien to Catholic thought. He knows little about the Papal Encyclicals, and what little he knows bores him.

The adaptive Catholic, on the other hand, is always enthusiastically assuming that the modern world is right about everything. He is always blaming the Church in Spain or Mexico or France for permitting herself to be persecuted, and for not adapting herself better to the time-spirit. If the world should go Communist these people would go Communist without any qualms, just as their predecessors in past generations went economic liberalist—not because of sympathy for the poor, but because lip-service to the “proletariat” is just as popular today as was lip-service to “freedom” in the piping times of Adam Smith. The adaptive Catholic is not any more interested in the Church’s solution of economic problems than is the defensive Catholic, and has no more time for reading the encyclicals because he is too busy keeping up with the latest pronouncements of the world’s latest “authority,” which he snatches haphazard from the headlines of the daily press. As a matter of fact, the adaptive Catholic of past generations, has become the defensive Catholic of today; and the ideals the latter defends as though they belong to the deposit of faith, are simply the ideals of the nineteenth century time-spirit, carried over to the present day. In an age in which social systems are crumbling

on every hand, the Catholic laity must learn to disentangle essentials from non-essentials, and to be well-grounded in principles, else we may repeat the errors committed in Europe by those who identified the interests of monarchy or the principles of liberalist capitalism with those of the Church.

Fairness—Not Secularism

There are many important questions that might be discussed here, if we had the space. I will mention only one more. What is in the mind of people when they use the word “non-sectarian”? Do they mean *secularization*? Is there not in the minds of the leaders of many mixed groups a desire to wean Catholics, and to a less degree Protestants, away from what they call their “prejudices”? There can be no doubt that Catholics who prefer to belong to “non-sectarian” organizations, to the exclusion of Catholic groups, seem to develop a very noticeable religious indifferentism. On the other hand, many Americans when they use the word non-sectarian mean that they wish to be fair to every religious group, Catholic, as well as Protestant. Such a use of the term means an equitable and impartial representation of Catholics and non-Catholics in groups representing the citizenship whether by government appointment or by voluntary cooperation. Besides such questions as the distribution of public money, institutions like public libraries, and groups dealing with educational, health or social problems affecting all the citizenship should be neutral in the sense of being fair, in that the secularist point of view should not be permitted to predominate to the exclusion of the religious point of view. It is, therefore, not merely permissible but often obligatory for Catholics to participate in such mixed groups.

Catholics Should Not Accept Mere Toleration

This brings me to my conclusion. It is this: has not the day passed when Catholics should accept mere toleration in American life? Should we not begin to think

about freedom? Merely to have our opinions as Catholics tolerated is not enough. Should we not have—and *feel* that we have—the right to proclaim the Catholic position on any matter whenever it is necessary? There are a lot of people today talking about their right to what they call “free speech,” that is, the right to teach atheism and the new ideas about sex. Any number of people today are demanding the right as free Americans to be as communist as they like. How many Catholics in mixed groups realize that as Americans they have a great deal better right to be just as Catholic as they like? The catch in the new Soviet constitution of “freedom of conscience” to the followers of Christ, but freedom for propaganda for anti-Christ, is working quite as successfully in the United States among mixed groups. But many Catholics and most non-Catholics of good will are not yet aware of the neatness of the arrangement. The truth is that Catholics first began to fall back into this sort of rear-guard action when so many of them long ago accepted the Protestant assumption that religion is purely a private matter for the individual, and not a social matter as well, as the Church has always taught. The greatest hope for the future is that this secularist heresy is at last being exploded. The repercussions are heard on every side; but the world does not yet know what the noise is about. We can be very sure, however, that secularism is cracking up like a vast melting ice-floe, and that the struggle of the future is between two religious conceptions of society, that of Christ—or that of anti-Christ.

POINTS FOR STUDY

Sections 1, 2, and 3

How do such ideas as a belief in the creative power of a “collective will” (Communism) or of the supreme rights of the State over the individual (ultra-nationalism, Fascism, Nazism) affect morality and religion? What influence do they have on social movements? On education? Is Protestantism equipped to meet this new permeation of thought?

How does the disappearance of a common standard of morality affect the responsibility of a Catholic minority in a mixed group?

Section 4

Study the propaganda of the international groups mentioned in section 4.

Section 5

In what sort of mixed group should Catholics always have representation? When is a minority-report useful?

Section 6

What is the difference between Cooperation and Participation in mixed groups?

Sections 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, and 13

Study the mixed group to which you belong. What constitutes propaganda? When is propaganda in a group legitimate? How are Catholics sometimes used in propaganda groups? (Sections 9 and 10.)

How are groups organized for the study of public questions sometimes used for propaganda purposes? (Section 11.)

How definitely may the Catholic members of a mixed group defend their rights of conscience? (See sections 12 and 13.)

List the groups for international or racial peace, in which Catholic participation would create among non-Catholics misunderstandings involving questions of religious equality or religious syntheism. (See section 12.)

Section 14

Catholic participation in discussion groups and in the forum movement a vital necessity today.

The Catholic study-class essential for the training of the laity for such participation.

Section 15

The kind of Catholic unfitted to represent Catholics in mixed groups or in public discussions.

Section 16

Make clear in your own mind what is meant when a group calls itself "non-sectarian." Does it mean secularism—the weaning of the Catholic away from his Faith; or does it mean fairness—a respect for both the Catholic and what he believes?

Section 17

Do not most American Catholics accept mere toleration in mixed groups? What would be the effect on the group should Catholics insist upon freedom and express themselves as Catholics on moral and social questions like the other members of the organization?

