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— Is the Church un-Am.  
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# Is the Church Un-American?

By

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The Other Pamphlets in this Series are:

- I. Is the Church Intolerant? II. Is the Church Arrogant?*
- IV. Is the Church Officialous?*
- V. Is the Church a National Asset?*

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## Is the Church Un-American?

**D**URING the last twelve months and more the public press has been devoting a good deal of space to discussing the question whether or not Catholicism is in harmony with the American spirit, its ideals, traditions and Constitution. True, the loyalty of Catholics individually is not usually challenged, but the Church is suspected. In some quarters it is being represented to the nation as necessarily un-American and antagonistic to everything the word *American* stands for. It is flaunted in our faces that notwithstanding our civic conduct, actually and in reality merely because we subscribe to the doctrines and obey the authority of the Church, we Catholics cannot be wholeheartedly and one-hundred-per-cent American.

The unfortunate thing is that the charge is made not only by the ignorant or the bigoted, but by a goodly number of well-meaning and apparently sincere men and women. The accusation which is neither fair nor true cannot be glossed over in any study of the modern indictment of Catholicism.<sup>1</sup>

Needless to say, when we are defending Catholicism against the charge of un-Americanism, we are not defending Catholics individually. Unquestionably there are Catholics as there are Protestants, Jews, and pagans, who in their private lives fail to measure up to the ideals of patriotic living. Our Federal and State penitentiaries witness that. But the problem is not whether the Catholics, Brown, Smith and Jones, are or are not loyal to the Government, but whether the Catholicism they profess is out of harmony with its principles so that their religion is really the basis of their disloyalty.

Needless to say, too, when we are defending Catholicism

<sup>1</sup>This is the third of a series of pamphlets by Father Lonergan under the title, "The Modern Indictment of Catholicism." The others are: I. Is the Church Intolerant? II. Is the Church Arrogant? IV. Is the Church Officious? V. Is the Church a National Asset?

as in no sense antagonistic to what is understood by the word *American*, we are not answering the query, "Is the Church un-American in the sense that she is not merely a national church, or that she has not the same form of government as the American commonwealth?" Obviously the Catholic Church is a supra-national, a universal, not a national religion; her very name means that: and as for her government, she is not a republic. The question is, "Does she fit in, is she adapted to our country, as other religions are?" And we answer most emphatically, yes.

#### WHAT DOES "AMERICAN" MEAN?

In our discussion we use the term *American* in its undiluted Constitutional sense, as the Founders of this Republic understood it, as a word that stands for the best in democracy and in the safeguarding of personal, civil and religious liberties. There is a good deal that goes by the name *American* today, that is absolutely counterfeit, that is not the genuine article, that does not ring true. With these things we may say that the Catholic Church is pretty much out of harmony.

The K. K. K. is referred to by its defenders as a great American ideal: well, if it is, then Catholicism is un-American. Education without religion is often referred to as something characteristically American; if it is, then, again, Catholicism is un-American; the whole educational system of the Church is a forceful repudiation of the principle it implies. The spirit of the religious lobbies in our national and State capitals is often referred to as ideally American; if that is the true American spirit, then once more, Catholicism is un-American. Indeed quite often the charge of un-Americanism levelled at Catholicism is based precisely on the fact that the Church does not measure up to the notions of the busybodies who organize for this, that and the other thing, and almost prostitute the epithet *American* by including it in the title of their organization.

So far as all these people and movements are concerned, Catholicism does not shame to plead guilty to being un-American. But that is not the present issue. The question

is whether or not the Catholic Church, the Catholic religion, is out of harmony with Constitutional Americanism. Literally, of course, she is not, for the Constitution guarantees the free exercise of religion to every man and so far as the letter of the law is concerned Catholicism measures up to it. But what of the spirit of the Constitution? Is or is not Catholicism in accord with it?

### CATHOLIC PHILOSOPHY OF GOVERNMENT

At the outset it may be profitable to remind ourselves what Catholic philosophy and theology hold about the nature of government and the duties of citizenship, irrespective of time, place and nationality.

The Catholic Church has quite a definite theory regarding civil society. Briefly, she teaches that civil society is the logical outcome of natural human tendencies. It is not something that has grown out of a pre-historic social contract. The germ of society is in the nature of man, given him by the Creator. He is essentially a social being. Hence the State whatever its form, and even though it have its artificial elements, fundamentally and radically derives from the Author of nature, God Himself. Now essential to the realization of its end, which is the procuring of the common good, is sovereignty or political authority. This is as natural as the State itself and consequently, like it, is also ultimately derived from God, though, as most Catholics hold, indirectly and through the people. It is for this reason that all legitimate civil authority is said to come from Him. That the sovereign power take this or that specific form, monarchic, democratic or republican, is a matter of human devising and arranging, but once settled and its officials selected, the Government is entitled to loyalty, respect and obedience, and its laws constitutionally enacted bind all subjects to whom they apply.

In this theory patriotism is a virtue to be fostered as much as any other social virtue, and men must be prepared if needs be even to shed their blood in defense of their country. It would be an altogether un-Catholic principle for one to say, as some of our radical Pacifists say, "Under no

condition will I ever bear arms on behalf of or in defense of my country." If the war which one's country is waging is a just one (and there is such a thing as a just war) and she needs my assistance to defend herself, then from the Catholic viewpoint my patriotic duty is clear.

### THE THEOLOGY OF CITIZENSHIP

This practical obligation of loyalty to Government which is a dictate of sound philosophy, Christ Himself has, so to say, ratified and sanctified. He expounded His theory of government and citizenship in a nutshell when He laid down the general principle, "Render to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and to God the things that are God's." He lived up to it in obeying His country's Roman masters from the cradle to the grave. He was born in Bethlehem precisely because Mary and Joseph pursuant to a decree of the Roman Emperor had gone down there from Nazareth to be enrolled. He paid the prescribed tax, though He had to perform a miracle to get the wherewithal to do it. He allowed Himself to stand for judgment before the tribunals of both Pilate and Herod. In this connection it may be noted that when the self-complacent Governor rather preened himself on the power of judgment which he enjoyed and said to Him, "Know you not that I have the power to deliver thee up and the power to release thee?" even while Jesus obeyed and revered him, He taught him a lesson on the origin of that power by saying most authoritatively, "You would not have any power if it were not given you from above."

Ideals of government and citizenship similar to Christ's are emphasized by St. Paul in his letters to his first Christian converts. He bids them obey their temporal rulers according to the flesh with fear and trembling in the simplicity of their hearts, as to Christ "not serving to the eye as it were pleasing men, but as the servants of Christ doing the will of God from the heart, with a good will serving as to the Lord and not to men." And he, too, practised what he preached. He was proud of his Roman citizenship; he



was inflexible in upholding sovereign authority; he was ever loyal and law-abiding.

From the first century to our own the Fathers and Doctors and theologians of the Catholic Church have repeated the injunctions of Christ and His great Apostle for each succeeding generation of Christians, and today every Catholic knows just what his relations to the State are, and just what the State has the right to expect of him.

We Catholics, then, believe that civil authority whatever its form, comes ultimately from God, and that for that very reason we owe our governments, whether we be ruled over by a czar, emperor, king, president or governor, the fullest civic allegiance. This is our theory of Statehood and of our civic duties, and to it every faithful Catholic fully subscribes. Theoretically, certainly, there is nothing un-American in this. Indeed, there is nothing more thoroughly American than this, and we may say without fear of honest refutation that no religion propounds a fuller, saner or more adequate patriotic program.

#### PRACTICAL CATHOLIC LOYALTY

But Catholic loyalty to civil authority is no dead theory. To say nothing of the rest of the world, in the United States from the days of the earliest Catholic settlers until today, it has never been proved that in any place or at any time the Catholic Church has followed any other policy in practice, or has in any way hampered our Governments, State or Federal, in their legitimate functioning. Rather she has ever shown herself a potent force in constructive civic upbuilding, fostering the highest spiritual, moral and cultural ideals, and helping not only her own but those of other faiths to their realization. She has been a great bulwark of liberty, of morality, of education, of social improvement and it was from her that the first colonists got their primer lessons in practical religious toleration.

Catholics have filled with credit some of the highest positions with which their fellows could honor them. Two of them have been raised to the judicial ermine in the United States Supreme Court, both of them Chief Justices, Roger Taney and Edward D. White. The first Governor

General that she appointed to the Philippine Islands was a Catholic, the Hon. James F. Smith. Catholics have served in her legislative assemblies from Charles Carroll in the Continental Congress right on down to the last session, in which there were five Catholic Senators and thirty-five Catholic members of the House of Representatives.

In the various States the same story has been repeated and men and women of no creed and of every creed have by their attitude at the ballot box indicated that they had no fear in entrusting their local governmental authority to distinguished Catholic citizens. Massachusetts, a traditional Protestant stronghold, did not hesitate to elect the Hon. David I. Walsh her Governor before her electoral vote sent him to Washington, and in the State of New York, anything but a Catholic State so far as the religious affiliation of the majority of its citizens is concerned, for several years the Chief Executive was another Catholic man, whose loyalty to his oath of office, despite his professed allegiance to Rome, not even his bitterest political foes dared challenge.

Nor have Catholics served their country only in time of peace. From the War of Independence on, and especially in the world catastrophe in which we were embroiled a decade ago, Catholics contributed their full quota of heroic and self-sacrificing men and women who have been ready to spend themselves for the country. The Census Bureau reported in July, 1918, that Catholics constituted just under seventeen per cent of the population. The latest reports would seem to show that Catholics constituted slightly more than this percentage of the new national army. No national crisis, civil or military, has ever found them wanting in loyalty and patriotism. When a change in the personnel of our Federal Government takes place in Washington, no change takes place in either the Catholic theory or practice of patriotism and when Mr. Herbert Hoover took his oath of office and became the thirty-first President of these United States, nearly twenty millions of Catholics from the Atlantic to the Pacific unreservedly offered him the same loyal allegiance they have shown his every predecessor from Washington to Coolidge.



## CATHOLIC PATRIOTISM QUERIED

Yet with all our theoretical protestations and all our practical demonstrations of patriotism through the history of the American commonwealth, the suspicion of disloyalty and un-Americanism remains, and a campaign of whispering is indulged in that would set our fellows against us as traitors on principle and at heart to everything we externally profess to be civilly, politically and patriotically pledged to. There are those even among Catholics who would probably question my statement about these suspicions and whisperings. But they are either ignorant or dishonest. Through the press, on the platform, in the air, in the very halls of Congress, our patriotism is assailed by most damaging calumnies and that not always by irresponsible morons, but by men and women who because of their educational opportunities or the positions they hold should be presumed to know better.

Like the indictments of intolerance and arrogance which other pamphlets in this series have discussed, that of un-Americanism includes many distinct counts. Substantially, however, we are told that there are three chief charges against us. We are accused of having a dual allegiance; our Church is said to aim at dictating political policies and at bringing about a union of Church and State; and, finally, the Church is challenged for its opposition to the public schools. There are points of lesser moment, mostly, however, when analyzed but different phases of these three fundamental calumnies.

## THE DUAL ALLEGIANCE OF CATHOLICS

Have Catholics a dual allegiance? Yes. The fact is not in question. We do make a double profession of unqualified loyalty to the American Constitution and to our Holy Father the Pope. But not every dual allegiance is to be condemned. All men have very many claims on their loyalty. Many a man has attended two or three colleges and is a faithful alumnus of each; many a man has membership in two or three social or commercial clubs and

finds no difficulty in adjusting himself to their demands. Many a man is an Elk and a Knight of Columbus, a Holy Name member and belonging to the American Legion. It is only when there is some essential antagonism between two people or institutions that a dual allegiance implies a contradiction. A man cannot at the same time profess loyalty to the Democratic and Republican platforms, to the Prohibitionist and anti-Prohibitionist movements, to Protestantism and Catholicism, for the ideas are mutually exclusive. To attempt such a combination would be like attempting to walk north and south simultaneously, and it just can't be done.

But there is not the shadow of incompatibility between the fullest allegiance which we Catholics pay to the Church and her Government, and to our country and its Government—and this applies to Catholics of any and every nation. The two societies, Church and State, have been established for distinctly different purposes, and employ distinctly different means to attain their ends. The Church is a spiritual society; the State a civil society. The Church is directly concerned with the welfare of men's souls and the future world; the State with men's material interests and this life. The Church is a religious body; the State political. Both are complete and perfect in their own lines; neither is above the other, as neither is directly dependent on or subordinate to the other. They run along, so to say, on parallel lines. They complement each other. They are meant to help each other, just as in a great commonwealth charitable, political, scientific, educational and commercial organizations, if they function properly and do not overstep their purposes, all help toward a fuller civic and social life. There is no more difficulty about Catholics harmonizing the allegiance which they profess to their religion with what they owe their country than there is for non-Catholics.

#### CHURCHMEN AND PATRIOTS

In the concrete four men stand out today as pre-eminently representing the Church in this country because

they are officially Princes of the Holy Roman Church, their Eminences the Cardinal Archbishops of New York, Boston, Chicago and Philadelphia, yet there is not one of them who, in the community in which he resides, is not a real civic asset, standing for law and order, for loyalty to the flag and to the country, for social and civic betterment, and for the defense of Constitutional principles. Only a downright bigot would exclude any one of the four from the ranks of our genuine one-hundred-per-cent Americans. And what is true of them is true of their predecessors in the cardinalial dignity. The country never had a better citizen than the late Cardinal Gibbons, yet there was never a more loyal or devoted son of Holy Mother the Church. For well nigh fifty years one President after another was Cardinal Gibbons' personal friend and practically everyone has left on record a tribute to his patriotism and to his splendid personal worth.

#### THE HEAD OF THE CHURCH AN ALIEN

It matters not that the head of our Church happens to be a foreigner. Tomorrow he could be an American. However, the national origin of the Holy Father does not alter the relations of Catholics to the American commonwealth. There are Americans in this country members of Greek and Oriental churches, the head of whose religion is equally a foreigner, yet their political allegiance to the United States is practically never questioned. The Salvation Army is as verily a religious as it is a philanthropic organization, and is the loyalty of its members to the United States mooted just because its Commander-in-Chief is a subject of His British Majesty?

#### THE TEMPORAL SOVEREIGNTY SCARE

It matters not either that the Papacy lays claim to temporal power and the Pope maintains that he is a temporal ruler, for the temporal power of the Pope is not a geographically universal power like his spiritual sovereignty. The Holy Father claims political dominion nowhere except in

the small stretch of territory known as the Vatican State. Up to the time of the signing of the agreement between Cardinal Gasparri and Premier Mussolini on February 11 of this year, he laid claim to all the territory known in 1870 as the Papal States and unjustly taken from him at that time by the Italian Government. In the new treaty between the Quirinal and the Vatican the Holy Father renounced his title to most of that territory, so that though his temporal sovereignty remains, its geographical limitations have been considerably diminished. His political subjects number at most about 200.

As temporal ruler, in the capacity of a temporal sovereign, even in the palmiest days of the Papacy, no Pope ever maintained any claim to the direct civil allegiance of Catholics throughout the world, or those who were not citizens of the Papal States. The few Catholics who may be in the Vatican State, juridically owe the Holy Father both a spiritual and a political allegiance, for he is both their King and their Bishop. The rest of the Catholic world owes him only spiritual allegiance and he and they know it well. The temporal and spiritual offices of the Pope, though vested in the same person, are absolutely distinct and divisible.

#### THE ITALO-PAPAL ACCORD

Of course the recent Italo-Papal accord is occasioning much ignorant and bigoted comment in various quarters. In a New York Methodist church the reverend pastor was quoted as saying in the pulpit that the signing of the pact between the Cardinal and the Premier was most unfortunate.

It is contrary [he said], to the program of allowing each "faith" to win its own way without external aid, not to say force . . . Why, then, should a head of a spiritual organization seek an earthly throne with exemption for Church dignitaries from current civil law? . . . Can the Catholic Church escape a real charge of that sort [interfering in politics] when the Pope demands a position as head of a secular Government which will give him a legal seat at every conference of nations and logically require our Government, as well as others, to receive an Ambassador at Washington and to

send one to Rome? . . . We can only hope that this apparent grasping at secular power by the head of a church will have no imitation here.

To anyone even superficially familiar with the state of the question, every one of these remarks is false. One is strongly impelled to suspect their sincerity.

What right has anyone to imply that in consequence of the treaty Faith is going to win its way any place by force? The speaker assumes that the accord was making the Pope what he was not before, a temporal sovereign. It is merely an acknowledgment of his claims, not the creation of any new status. The Italian treaty actually excludes the Holy Father from conferences of nations and as for an exchange of Ambassadors between Washington and the Vatican, well we have had an Ambassador there before, and no Papal flag waved in consequence over the White House. Moreover, if European and South American nations have no hesitancy about having Ambassadors at the Vatican, and about twenty-seven nations are now diplomatically represented there, what has the United States to fear?

A writer in the correspondence column of a New York paper, who bears the name of a distinguished American family, taking exception to the accord as a retrogression on the part of Italy to what he calls "the old days of medievalism" and branding it as "utterly subversive of every principle of civil and religious liberty as we understand them and to evince a religious intolerance on a par with an age of unhappy memory and that all enlightened people who have more regard for the welfare of humanity than for the aggrandizement of any particular religious organization has hoped was gone forever," added: "The Pope is now a temporal as well as a spiritual sovereign," as if he hasn't been a temporal sovereign for over a thousand years. "Catholics the world over owe him allegiance in both capacities." While the writer cannot be called an intentional calumniator, for he may be merely ignorant, the statement can be categorically denied as absolutely false. "How," he asks finally, "will they reconcile the incompatibility of their duty and allegiance to an alien and foreign temporal sovereign to that they owe their respective

countries?" The fact that the Pope is a temporal sovereign, the fact even that Italy has come to recognize that position, is absolutely irrelevant to the question of any Catholic's American allegiance. The accord with Italy has not affected it one iota.

#### WAR WITH THE VATICAN

It is equally irrelevant, though those who call Catholics un-American make much of the point, that just because the Pope is a temporal ruler a crisis could arise between him and our Government that might test our allegiance. The whole thing is an idle speculation. The possibility is as remote as that the United States will go to war next week with the little, insignificant principality of Monaco or with Switzerland. Besides, have we not been promised that the Kellogg Pact is going to make war impossible for the world?

But even assuming the fact of a crisis between Washington and the Vatican over some temporal diplomatic problem, what would we Catholics do? We would do just what the Church herself tells us to do, following Christ's own dictum: we would render to Cæsar the allegiance that is his. A war between the Vatican State and the United States would not mean that Catholics in this country would have to fight for the Pope against America. When in olden times the Papal Government, as sometimes happened, was at war with various other European Governments, even Catholic Governments, the Catholics in those countries were able to shoulder arms in defense of those Governments, some of them violently anti-Catholic. They did not have to join the Papal troops against their countries.

#### A DUAL POLITICAL ALLEGIANCE

Incidentally in this whole matter of a dual allegiance there is a point that very many overlook. We all have a dual political allegiance. As citizens of the respective sovereign States of New York, New Jersey, California or Nevada, we owe our respective Governments complete and



absolute loyalty. By the peculiar disposition, however, of our country, we are simultaneously citizens of the federated United States, and owe the Government in Washington also full and unqualified loyalty. Is there any inconsistency in these two allegiances? Theoretically, there should not be and practically there is not. The reason is because they are not mutually hostile and antagonistic but complementary.

Could there be antagonism? Not so long as each tends to its own business. Absolutely speaking, however, there could be. That is just what happened to cause our Civil War. In that day the people had to choose between their dual State and Federal allegiance, and should there be a repetition of the problem of State's rights against Federal rights, the choice would have to be made again. That remote possibility, however, offers no reason why here and now anybody should question one's allegiance to New York, New Jersey, California or Nevada, respectively, and to the United States.

Now, if it is not incompatible for a citizen of California or of New York, with political allegiance to the Constitutions of those respective States, to give political allegiance simultaneously to the Federal Government and the Constitution of the United States, it is not inconsistent for Catholics to profess spiritual allegiance to the Vicar of Christ, the while they give political fealty and loyalty to the Government at Washington and the Governments in Albany or Trenton or Carson City or Sacramento.

#### DECIDING A CONFLICT

But it is urged that however much we speak of Church and State being independently sovereign, in a conflict the Church would claim the right of deciding the issue. Mr. Charles C. Marshall in his controversy with Governor Smith made much of that point. Theoretically that is true, but properly understood, it carries no implication that the State is directly subordinate to the Church. It flows from the fact that the spiritual and eternal are above the material and temporal. Somewhat the same would occur in a dispute between one of our States and the Federal Govern-

ment. It would be the United States Supreme Court which would decide the merits of the issue, not the Louisiana or Illinois courts, yet that feature would not reflect on the complete sovereignty of the respective States. Again, however, the question is purely speculative. The possibility of a conflict is as remote as the possibility of the enforcement of the Volstead Act or the Jones' Law, and judging by present forecasts that is never going to occur in our lifetime.

The whole question of a dual allegiance on the part of Catholics is a straw man. We have two allegiances but they are not antagonistic. In fact it is our proud boast that if Catholics practically live up to the demands of their religion, they will be better, not worse citizens. The reason is because their religion impresses very definitely on them their civic duties for which some day they will have to give as strict an account to God as they have to give of fidelity to their religious and domestic obligations. In the Catholic code if disobedience to the Holy See is a sin, so too is disobedience to legitimate civil authority constitutionally functioning.

#### ECCLESIASTICAL INTRIGUES

The second count in the indictment of un-Americanism levelled against the Catholic Church is that she is said to aim at dictating political policies and at bringing about a union of Church and State. Again we can categorically and unequivocally deny the charge.

Separation of Church and State is a fact in this country. Free churches in a free State was one of the principles on which our fathers framed the Constitution and established our Government. Though neither irreligious nor atheistic, as the whole tenor of our State documents and national traditions shows, the American Government has no official ecclesiastical alignment and shows no preference for any denomination. Now there is not one iota of evidence that the Catholic Church or her Hierarchy or her people has ever attempted or is now attempting to disturb that situation.

Logically anybody who believes in Christianity must concede that theoretically and under ideal circumstances a people would be best served were its government officially and formally to cooperate with the Church established by Jesus Christ, for governments as well as individuals are amenable to His Divine jurisdiction, and the spread of His doctrines and moral principles is bound to be to the interest of the State. Our whole civilization is historically the outgrowth of the spread of Christianity. But such formal cooperation of Church and State is impossible where very large numbers of citizens have not a common belief, though as a fact it is had in England notwithstanding professing Anglicans are in the minority, and it will soon be had in Italy.

#### UNION OF CHURCH AND STATE

Even were the ideal realizable in the United States, it would not mean that churchmen would replace statesmen in government affairs and that civil and ecclesiastical authority would reside in the same individual or group, or be identified. Great Britain has union, so-called, of Church and State, yet the Archbishop of Canterbury, is not the Prime Minister. Spain has union, so-called, of Church and State, yet the Primate of Madrid is not the Dictator. Even where established, union of Church and State merely means that the two work together for the common good. In the Middle Ages when union of Church and State was not uncommon, the Church authorities were not the rulers, nor the ecclesiastical government and the civil government identified. In this country there is not the remotest probability of a union of Church and State, and Catholics least of all are aiming directly or indirectly, openly or secretly, officially or unofficially to bring it about. This is proved by official documents in the pamphlet "The Church and Tolerance" (The America Press).

Neither are they aiming to dictate political policies. There is neither a Catholic party in the country, nor a Catholic lobby in Washington nor in any State capital, though some of them count a great many religious lobbyists and

even the national capital is not free from them. It would seem that some of those who most loudly raise the hue and cry of Catholics attempting to influence legislation in Washington are themselves the most grievous offenders and I doubt if it is an exaggeration to say that a good deal of legislation would be off our statute books today, and especially the Prohibition amendment, if it were not for the activity displayed by organized non-Catholic but professedly religious groups in the promotion of national and local legislation.

#### THE HIERARCHY AND LEGISLATION

As the guardian of faith and morals and for the guidance of her children, the Church and her Bishops will raise their voices for the enlightenment of the Faithful when politicians endeavor to foster legislation that impedes the free exercise of their religious or civil rights or lowers the tone of the national morals, but in this no one has a right to criticize them. This is merely preventing evils, not fostering legislation. This is merely fulfilling a duty of good citizenship. Thus during the 1929 session of the Legislature in Albany, at a public hearing on a proposal to relax the New York State Law on birth control, the Rev. William J. Duane, S.J., President of Fordham University, as spokesman for the Archdiocese of New York, openly opposed the measure as subversive of society because intrinsically immoral and irreligious, understanding by religion not the creed of any determinate church, but rather that solemn obligation binding the creature to serve his Creator which is imposed on every rational creature by the very nature of man. The birth controllers were not slow to raise the cry that the Catholic Church was interfering in politics, "repudiating by their conduct every utterance that had been emphasized by churchmen to the contrary during the recent Presidential campaign," though the measure was in no sense opposed because it was anti-Catholic but because it was legitimatizing an unnatural and vicious practice. If speaking up in defense of the morality of our people is un-American, then Catholicism is guilty, but that is to her praise rather than to her blame.

## CONVERTING AMERICA

It is true that the Catholic Church is out to bring every individual American into the Fold, just as she is out to bring the whole world to the feet of Jesus Christ. Though this ambition will never be realized, this is what she prays for, what she labors for, for it is Christ's will. Her aim is undoubtedly one Fold and one Shepherd. Should this happy event ever be accomplished in the country or in any State, naturally and automatically much of the pagan legislation that clutters our statute books would be replaced by Christian legislation but that would not be because the Church or the Bishops would be ruling the State or would have become the lawmaking body but because the consciences and ideals of the individual statesmen and legislators would have changed. Every religion thus indirectly affects the policies of a country but that does not mean union of Church and State, or that the Church is ruling the State. Certainly a group of law makers who were convinced that sterilization of the unfit, birth control or euthanasia were intrinsically wrong would never be expected to sanction them.

The Hierarchy of this country is not trying to unite Church and State or to get political power. Every Bishop in the country has all he can do to manage the spiritual affairs of his diocese. None of them is seeking any new burdens. All of them doubtless would wish to see a higher practical civic life among our people, but that is a desire they share in common with every patriotic citizen.

On the other hand, however, it might be noted, that the country might fare worse than to have Catholic ecclesiastics holding office. It is a strange phenomenon that in Europe since the World War any number of the nations, even some where Catholics are a minority, have found in the political leadership of churchmen their best stabilizing influence. To anyone familiar with Continental affairs the names of Msgr. Seipel, Dr. Hlinka, Father Koroshets, Msgr. Nolens, Msgr. Kaas, Msgr. Sramek, Dr. Vas, Dr. Schoofer, Dr. Brauns, and others, will at once occur.

## THE CHURCH AGAINST THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

The third count under which the Americanism of Catholics is challenged is that the Catholic Church is opposed to the public schools. What about it?

In the first place, it is well to recall that though popular education is an American tradition with which the Church is in hearty accord, the public schools as we know them today are not. Not a single one of our great statesmen up to the last half of the last century was trained under such a system. Historically the first common schools in the country were religious and mostly private schools. These were the only ones the Colonists knew. Our original American schools were builded on the principle so splendidly enunciated by Washington and repeated by nearly every President since, right down to Mr. Coolidge, that religion and morality cannot be divorced and that there can be no education without morality.

The fact is today, thanks to Horace Mann especially, God is debarred from our public schools and so too, though not nominally, morality, for without God there is no such a thing as stable morality. It is chiefly on this account that we say that the public schools are unsafe places in which to train our Catholic little ones, though even apart from that we would still defend the right of the private school to function and of the parent to send his children there, a claim that the Supreme Court has justified in its decision a few years ago on the Oregon school law. At most, a school where God is taboo, can bring children up only as high-grade animals, with worldly ideals and influenced only by natural motives.

## EDUCATION AND MORALITY

Catholics believe that children are more than animals and that there is such a thing as another world, and supernatural virtue, and we want our children to imbibe these ideas and share the blessings that go with them. Let non-Catholics, if they like, rear their children in an atmosphere that is religiously indifferent or atheistic. We Catholics



cannot do that. And so at our own expense and at great sacrifice, we have our own schools, from primary schools to universities, and the law of the Church states that Catholics must not go to others without the Bishop's approval, for our children must have religion and the true religion at that. Their faith and their morals must both be safeguarded.

Sad experience proves that both are seriously jeopardized away from a religious atmosphere. Anyone familiar with the conditions of our schools in this country today will confirm the statement if they are honest. In an article in the February issue of the *North American Review*, Judge Samuel D. Levy, of the Children's Court of New York City, states very plainly: "The recruiting ground for the increasing army of American criminals is the public-school system with its 2,000,000 children—one-tenth of the total enrollment—who are below the average mentality."

Many years ago William Jennings Bryant castigated the public-school system even more severely. He went on record as maintaining:

The greatest menace to the public-school system of today, is, in my judgment, its godlessness. We have allowed the moral influences to be crowded out. When I say moral, I mean morality based upon religion. We cannot build a system on any other than a religious basis. We have gone too far in allowing religion to be eliminated from our schools. We cannot afford to have the faith of our children undermined. If I were compelled to choose between the two, I would rather have a child unlearned, but heartwhole, than to have its head developed and the heart's faith destroyed.

Our Catholic school system has nothing to be ashamed of. Thanks to our devoted Brothers and Sisters those schools give the children training in the secular branches as good as they can get elsewhere—their accrediting rating with secular accrediting agencies proves that—and meanwhile their hearts and souls, and their salvation are cared for, as well as their bodies and their chances to make good in this world. In this we are not un-American. The biggest universities in the country, Yale, Harvard, Princeton, were privately founded under denominational influences, and nobody ever questions their Americanism. The Luther-

ans and the Jews also have their denominational schools. Why then question our Catholics when they go to Villanova or Manhattan or Fordham or Notre Dame or Loyola?

From what I have said it will be seen that the whole charge of un-Americanism levelled against Catholics and the Catholic Church is as groundless as those of intolerance and arrogance. Let Catholics then, not be disturbed. The story of their loyalty in the United States is a glorious page, and if men will not accept it at its face value then we can only say, so much the worse for them. Meanwhile Catholics will go on living their civil as they do their religious life, serving the State as loyally as they serve the Church, and making themselves in their daily lives good citizens of this world that they may merit to be happy citizens eternally of heaven.

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