

SIGN, FAITH AND SOCIETY

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Our Holy Church through its leading theologians has always distinguished between sanctifying and actual grace, the latter being some «motion» produced in the will leading a man to accept God's sanctifying grace, grace in the full sense of the term. This same theological tradition, without exception to my knowledge, has divided actual grace into any «person, place, or thing» which moves the whole man, intellect and will, emotions and predispositions, to accept that saving grace which sanctifies. I doubt gravely whether any instructed Catholic would quarrel with these definitions.

Grace does not come to a man in the abstract, not because grace is limited in its power and efficacy, but because there is no man in the abstract. Even the «anonymous Christian» of Karl Rahner must be triggered somehow into accepting salvation. God does not work in a human void because he has not created man in a void. How could He have done so? Man by his very nature is a social being, created always by a direct act producing him out of nothing, but created within a social fabric surrounding him, nourishing him, influencing him, buoying him up in the innumerable crisis each man confronts in his life, or oppressing him. For the political philosopher and for the theologian of politics it is by no means difficult to arrive at the conclusion that man is saved by God or damned by himself within some society in which he is born, nurtured, raised.

Epistemologically, this proposition is perhaps best validated when we take account of the truth that in man to understand is to communicate: *intelligere est communicare*. Receiving its highest articulation in the thought of both St. Augustine and St. Thomas Aquinas, intellection is completed or terminated only in some *verbum* —a word of the spirit— in which each man says to himself what it is that he understands. Symbolized in my country in older cartoon

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strips in which a light bulb goes off in the head of someone who has now gotten the point, seen the light, because he can say to himself what he understands, St. Thomas insists that nobody understands anything until and unless he can «say it» to himself. Knowledge at its point of perfection is self-knowledge but this communicative structure of the act of knowing in man is distended in that he says to himself what he knows through the instrumentality of signs, symbols, which gesture to the word what he has come to understand. It follows that self-communication is consubstantial with communicating to «the other», the other man, the human world surrounding us, the content of our understanding.

It follows that understanding and the movements of the will following on and often conditioning understanding are not exercised in isolation. We live in some society and that society adumbrates forth the corporate affirmation of its members. No man is an island, as somebody once put it. No movement of the heart towards God is done in an island.

Defoe's Robinson Crusoe was shipwrecked on an island and he kept a diary, writing down everything he did and thought, from the wood he gathered for his primitive house to his deepest meditations on his life in isolation. Ultimately he found the man whose footprint he had seen in the sand of the beach: his Man Friday. But Caruso's «Man Friday» in a profound sense was Crusoe himself, an artistic substantialization of his prolonged conversation with himself. I once knew, without knowing, an old man whom I saw on the bus every day at the same time when I was studying at the University of San Francisco after the War. This fellow always crouched in the back of the bus and muttered to himself: «Don't give your money to her; put your money in the bank; don't give it to her; put it in the bank.» This was not, as some shallow people insist, a mark of insanity. Talking in this way to yourself is a last grip on sanity. Old people do this very often because there is nobody who cares to talk to them. Communication is identically intellection in man. The poor devil who is forced to live alone necessarily invents and *alter ego* and he carries on a lively dialogue with this self-created puppet who is the last moving shadow on the backdrop of his consciousness, separating him from the loneliness of insanity.

To understand is to communicate to both self and other and in this act man becomes himself. A Christianity cut off from the other man is not only *not* Christianity which is a corporate religion but it is not even human. In communicating my Faith to myself I communicate it to others. An hermetically sealed Christian affirmation is not only bad theology: it is bad psychology and bad epistemology as well. It is natural that man gesture forth to the world his faith and it is natural that the society around him gesture forth its faith to him. No man is an island. Yet a secularized Christianity, if indeed it can be called Christianity at all, would divorce the Faith from the forum and restrict the Christian to the status of a Robinson Crusoe before he found his Man Friday.

If we translate these propositions, themselves metaphysical and epistemological, into political terms it follows that whatever an individual man knows and whatever decisions follow on his knowing are necessarily conditioned by the world surrounding him, even as he conditions that same world. After all, we can only know what is there to be known. If what is there to be known is conducive to the reception of sanctifying grace, so much the better. If what is there to be known is hostile to the reception of grace, so much the worse. The enemies of a Christian society, of an order of things inclining to the reception of grace, if indeed they be Christians (most of them today, of course, are not) must argue their case on other grounds: liberty, the pluralist society, democracy, and I know not how many other points of departure. Since the secularized society which is the norm in our age pretends to base itself upon some ultimate principles, that society —defecated of the Things of God— must necessarily seek its justification elsewhere: the majoritarian principle as though 50% plus one equals truth even though this ephemeral majority shifts with the capricious winds of fortune. The very articulation of the majoritarian principle is sufficient to disqualify it as a criterion for governing a community. Whoever found the truth of things by counting noses? or the principle of total liberty, but in this case a liberty cut away from ends which are loved: nobody, teaches St. Thomas, is free about his ends —he is free about indifferent means to achieve his love, his end. Liberty as an end is a contradiction in terms. Nobody knew this better than Lenin when he said to Trotsky on a train outside Moscow after the revolution in answer to Trotsky's «but now we are going to have liberty, are we not?» Lenin: «Liberty, for what?» Lenin's ends were evil but his epistemology was exactly on target. All liberty is for the sake of what we love. Nobody is free when he is in love. He might and often does lose his love, change his love, forget his love, but so long as he loves he is not free. There is something eternal about love even if it lasts for only a moment.

The secularist's apologia for a totally secularist society on grounds of the primacy of liberty, democracy, or any other presumed good related thereto, is not only bad philosophy: it is an instance of bad faith, of a failure to understand man as he really exists. We are created to love and our liberty of choice emerges when we seek means to achieve our love.

Ab esse ad posse valet illatio. From being to possibility is a valid inference. This basic law of logic finds a splendid verification in history if the question arises about the existence of a sacral society. Such have existed. Therefore they are possible. The more ultimate question is the following: are such societies desirable? Although their remains clutter the highways of Europe, such communities have largely ceased to exist. Surrounded as we are by the visual remains of a Christian order —in architecture, in song, in customs— there is not one political State in Europe today that is confessionally Catholic. It would be

interesting to postulate a visit by a man from another galaxy to this continent who had already mastered our languages. What would he think when he landed at Reims, or at the Escorial, or at St. Peter's? What would this poor fellow think as he passed through the byways of Bavaria —with its wayside shrines, its churches? He would have to conclude —being an intelligent chap from beyond— that this continent is totally and wholly Christian, Catholic, sacral. Then he would begin to read books —always a dangerous proposition; then he would study constitutions, usually a worthless occupation, and he would come up with the most contradictory conclusions: these people, in everything they built are Catholic; these people in everything they write, are anti-Catholic, or —at least— secularist. How can I, this fellow from beyond the moon, figure this out? A society whose every byway, crook and corner, expresses and breathes the Faith and a society whose written documents and laws either deny or set aside as irrelevant that same Faith. What have we got here? An enormous cultural schizophrenia —what was built was Christian: what is said and affirmed is either non-Christian or anti-Christian. The laws are against the Faith. The buildings affirm the Faith. What is visual is Catholic. What is written is not so. My man from beyond the moon is not so utterly fantastic. Take a man from America —myself— here I am surrounded by the signs of the Faith in a continent that progressively denies it. As somebody who has done some work in the Philosophy of Communications —I wrote two books on the subject— I confess my perplexity. Visually —a continent saturated by the Faith. Given the written word and the power of the State, I confront an order that denies the very buildings in which it signs its decrees and executes its laws. Since buildings are not made by themselves, I —am American— must conclude that Europe has ceased to believe in itself. Just think of France where it is estimated that there are more practicing Islamics than Christians.

The ambiguity of Europe in this regard is not altogether negative. Europe is materially Catholic even though it would be hard to argue that Europe today is formally Catholic. God calls upon us to rework His Creation and fashion it in such manner that it is worthy of Christians. Europe is largely already reworked. It bears the mark of Christian men everywhere, almost around every corner, looking out on every field, breathing over every farmhouse, celebrating every holiday which is a Holy Day, alighting on every wayside shrine, re-vivifying itself in every procession, the cross everywhere. What Europe needs to do is come home to itself, not to go anywhere else. It is as though we are the old barbarians camped in the ruins of Rome, blind to their meaning. One human sense, the visual, is wrenched away from speech and its significance and contemporary man lives in a kind of Platonic or Cartesian duality in which part of him is ignorant of what the rest is doing. G. K. Chesterton once wrote that the lights of Broadway on a clear night would be the most poetic of all visions provided we were illiterate and could not read the neon signs. In Europe today we

see the remains of a Christian Order, and they are of an unsurpassed beauty, but we have lost faith in what they portend.

But all these considerations return us to our theme. In a world without the signs of salvation, salvation will be still possible, but very difficult indeed. Let us consider the nature of the sign. Every sign makes known what it signifies. This is true of traffic signs and of other neutral signs. A neutral sign is one that can be changed at will. This switching of signs is a mark of man's spirituality but the issue is complicated when the sign becomes a symbol. Every symbol not only points to something, its signification beyond itself, but in some way it participates in the reality signified. For this reason we burn blessed palms when they are no longer of use to us for fear they might be violated by some profane use. For this reason we abhor the violation of the flags of our own nations, their burning or being trampled in the dust. The symbol lives the life of the symbolized.

John of Saint Thomas put it splendidly when we insisted that the «signified» was present in «the sign» *in alio esse*, in a new being or existence. Personally I think this startling affirmation is difficult to defend if we deal with what I like to call «neutral signs» which can be changed at the command of man with little or no alteration in his personal reaction to the sign itself. But when the sign becomes more than itself, when it becomes a symbol, then indeed the affirmation of John of St. Thomas takes on an awesome truth. The being signified, signed, does indeed live within the symbol in another mode of existence. The sign in this instance takes on the sense of the magical sign which produces what it signifies. The Navaho rain dance not only is a sign of rain but it is supposed to produce, effectively bring into being, the rain it signifies. All symbols are of this nature. We need only think of the plain and unattractive woman who makes herself attractive through all the magical potions of modern cosmetics. In looking attractive, she becomes attractive. Advertising is an instance, possibly at times a debased instance, of the truth in question. Very few signs indeed are totally neutral. Most of them somehow insinuate into their very reality the being of the signified. The symbol works upon the emotions, the memory of a history lived by one's ancestors, in such fashion that it stirs the will which in turn moves the intelligence to ponder. In all of this the whole man, the human *person*, is moved in the deepest recesses of his being. A wayside shrine with its cross and possibly the faded flowers at its base is easily passed by a man on a train in a hurry, looking absent-mindedly out of the window. But if that cross is come upon by a pilgrim walking slowly up the slope crowned by this simple edifice it might very well trigger into consciousness a whole theology the consequences of which finger Eternity. Such a shrine for such a man is an actual grace.

Our Catholic religion is an incarnate Faith in which we believe in a God, the only God, Son of His Father, who became Man. The Incarnation of Our

Lord —God— Man who fried fish for his disciples after His Resurrection and who permitted, earlier, Doubting Thomas to place his hands in the wounds of His Cross, by an internal dynamism gestures itself out to the world, both physical and social, both personal and political. As does every man communicate what he knows and loves for the world by an inbuilt dynamism which is one with his nature, so too do Christians sign the world with the signature of their Faith. We bless everything that comes our way with the Sign of the Cross and in so doing some mysterious efficacy passes over into the reality thus blessed: bread at table, sons seeking the approbation of their fathers as they enter into the adventure of life, kings at coronation time for every coronation in the Catholic West is a sacramental; God everywhere even in the pots and pans as insisted St. Teresa of Avila. Abstractly everything in nature is neutral; existentially very little is neutral. Nature is either sacralized or de-sacralized. The world is charged with God, as the Jesuit poet Gerald Manly Hopkins reiterated in his verse.

The most profound ontological problem with the secularized West today is that its presuppositions operate on a purely abstract level. Church is not State. Politics is not Theology. Theology is not Philosophy. Some of these propositions can be entertained and even defended abstractly. Such distinctions are foreign to the thrust of my thinking in this lecture. St. Thomas Aquinas insisted that being, existence, his understanding of *esse* —*hoc quod dico esse*— is in the first instance absolute act, that without which there is simply nothing at all, but in the second instance —in realities with composed natures— *esse* or being, «to be,» is the synthesizing into unity of all of the principles of nature, their being annealed in the catalyst of existence. The composition of matter and form makes up a substance but the being of that substance is reductively neither the form nor the matter, but the being, the «izzing» of form in matter or (in the case of man) the «izzing» of matter in form, soul. Nor are the myriad secondary determinations of any substance identically the substance itself. Yet all of them are *one* in being. A Catholic Order is one in being. Scholars can —indeed should— differentiate the religious from the natural, but all these distinctions —in sacral societies— are annealed into a unity of existence in such fashion that a man from afar can walk through the streets of any village in this order and experience, say to himself, I have come home: this is a Catholic Society. In talking to himself as a Catholic he is talking to and through a world itself Catholic in existence.

The secularization of the West has left all of his behind even through its visual husk remain to both instruct and trouble the man from afar. I take as revealed the following proposition: God wills every man to be saved. I take it as evident that he is more easily saved in a society that buoys himself up in the Faith, that surrounds him with symbols of his salvation. Given that my major premise is evident within a Xian context, my minor premise —some societies

render it easier to attain salvation than do others: i.e., sacral societies, my conclusion is inevitable: man is better off in a sacral order than out of it.

Permit me to hammer this point home. Is it better to make salvation hard by surrounding man with the pornography of the media, the atheism of state education, the savage jungle of the streets all over our world where drugs poison our youth, —is it, where the inner city becomes a killing ground, better to suffer all of this in the name of a new god, «democracy,» or were it indeed better to see him reared within a thoroughly Christian Order? To me the very posing of the alternatives permits only one answer: give us again, Lord permitting, a Catholic social order where women can walk through the streets of a city at two in the morning (I knew this in the Spain of General Franco); where little children playing on the side walks will not be the prey of perverts; where the media do not scream the desirability of extramarital sex; where decent folk can turn the corner and find the Cross of Christ as a reminder of the mystery of their own lives.

We need, in attempting to understand these issues and in laying them before the table at this congress, to speak plainly and not to avoid offending a world press and a mass prejudice against all things Catholic that suffocates sane discussion throughout the entire western world. I do not defend the Catholic Enterprise because it is compatible with or forwards democracy or the free market as does Dr. Michael Novak in the United States.

I am by no means suggesting that we return to the Middle Ages. No man can undo time. This irreversibility is part of its inbuilt sadness. Who can go home to the innocence of his childhood? But I am suggesting that every paradigm for the future is always crafted out of materials drawn from the past. Our very past is structured around the drive of our future. We remember what is of use to the intentional thrust of our existence. This at least Heidegger can teach us. Everything else from our past we tend to forget. Show me what a man remembers of his past, both personal and corporate, and I will tell you what kind of a man he is. The Americanists in our presence look back to the late eighteenth century. I look back to both the High Baroque of the Counter-Reformation and, more distantly, to medieval Christendom. Both of us must look back when we talk about the future because the future, as future, is a blank. The present is a past the moment we think about it. This is the way we are built as men. Even gnostics do this as did the French Revolutionaries when they aspired to a new classical antiquity. I look back to Christendom.

Medieval man had a firm grip on the difference between distinction and separation: poetry and morality, economy and technology, the temporal and the spiritual were distinguished one from another and these distinctions lie at the basis of the delicate hierarchy articulated by the men of the thirteenth century. But where distinctions abounded, sometimes without reason, no one element of cultural life was separated from, or permitted to, dominate the whole.

An archaic compactness governed medieval society which saw itself as a closed world of meanings branching out in different directions abstractly, but which were fused into a cultural unity by the catalyst of existence.

Medieval man sacramentalized the whole of being. This sense of the symbolic issued into a fruitful and dense mingling of things formally distinct. Thus the Holy Roman Emperor wore a blue, star-spangled robe, representing the arc of the heavens and he carried the imperial globe signifying the world. He symbolized the temporal fellowship of all Christians in Christendom and his coronation in Rome at the hands of the Pope proclaimed the very dependence of the globe on the creative will of God.

As with political existence, so too with man's life in space and time. The Word is incarnate in a Body, and the Church is that Body Mystic. Now all bodies are extended in space. It follows that the Church must extend herself through space: thus the Episcopal seat means the headship of Christ; and as the head has a body, so to is the local church building the extension, the situation of the Incarnation. The church building, in turn, stands in the same analogical relation to cemeteries, chapels, and wayside shrines. In this manner the Church spreads through the open spaces and hallows the land.

The symbolization of space is paralleled by that of time. The earthly pilgrimage moves seasonably through the years, and, since we are saved by a Man who lived out His years and died on this earth, each day and month and year of man's life repeats the life of Christ. Hence the great liturgical feasts weave themselves into the rhythmic pauses of the seasons as they return forever upon themselves. But lest fall back upon the «eternal decadence» of the pagan cycle, he is brought up short by the vision of the Judgment —confronting him in stone and glass all over Europe. The drama of present existence approaches, at the moment of death, the mystery of the timeless freedom of the angels in an act admitting neither progress nor decline. The eyes of God are upon every man and the world circles around his body as its very center. Hell is at his feet and heaven just above his head. He is separated from the Absolute by the thin crust of a world that might dissolve any moment leaving him standing before his Judge. By no means only European, Willa Cather in her novels has spoken of the grim *santos* in my own American Southwest: «the church decorations were sombre, the martyrdoms bloodied, the grief of the Virgin more agonized, the figure of Death more terrifying».

In these sacral societies, be they here in Bavaria or in New Mexico, existence is less an envelope encasing eternity than a stained glass window, not letting the light in from without but releasing that light from within itself. There are the Things of God *in alio esse*. And the elucidation and defense of such a society is—in words of Cardinal Danielou— «the politics of prayer».

In only one awful instance does the sign become the Thing Signified, the Sacrament of the Altar. The Holy Eucharist alone dissolves the distinction bet-

wen *Bild and Bedeutung*, between reality as an essence-sign and the existence to which it points. The Bread and Wine not only mean Christ. They are Christ. And the Eucharist is the centre, both spiritually and spatially, of the Catholic City. Here *is* The Incardinate God. Every meditation, be it aesthetic or political, on incarnational theology must begin and end in the Eucharist. And every person, place, or thing in Christendom must imitate, in its own finite way, this bringing of heaven to earth, of God to man. When this call to sanctify the world is damaged or refused man suffers and he might, for all we know, suffer throughout his eternity.

In our time a thesis has been advanced according to which an adherence to the natural law is the very best to which Christian men can aspire in our highly divided and secularized western world. Indeed some thinkers, such as the late Jacques Maritain, confined the older sacral order to the infancy of Christianity and urged in many books a collaboration between Christians and others in the building of a secular world quickened by Christian principles but «lay», although not «laicist» (to use Maritain's distinction) in its institutional configuration. In my own country the justly illustrious Fr. John Courtney Murray, S.J., in his famous book *We Hold These Truths* defended the thesis that the natural law was the basis of the consensus that united Catholics, Protestants, and Jews. I have noted in a book due to be published early this fall that Murray's thesis reflected the optimism of the 1950's in the United States. A natural law consensus for a few years did in fact seem a viable possibility but that hope soon faded away. We have a public religion in America and it is called secularism. The myriad abortuaries with their daily slaughter mounting into tens of millions over the past few decades is a living proof gainsaying the hopes of Fr. Murray. No natural law consensus exists anywhere in the West today.

We must grant that abstractly the natural law could be forwarded under any kind of polity, be it democratic, aristocratic, or monarchical or in any of the very many ways in which the goods enshrined in these diverse finalities might be combined, «mixed» to use the scholastic term. But a political order dedicated to the natural law in isolation from the Faith has never worked historically. Because it has never worked historically, I am prohibited logically from denying that it ever could, but I am permitted, even commanded, to note that the natural law, itself a participation in the Divine Law, without an authoritative voice competent to interpret its very often difficult applications, is a tiger without teeth. Even more: in the severe crises each one of us faces from time to time in our lives, it is the grace of God that gets us through the adverse tides of temptation and the storms around. Although we might well be guided by the natural law, it is the Grace of God proffering His Divine Will, united always with the Cross of Christ, which saves and alone saves, that pulls us through. A social and political order adhering solely to the natural law isolated from Faith has simply never worked historically in the large and certainly has never worked

concretely in the anguish of decision when a man faces the awesome visage of hell of that same salvation won for us on a terrible Cross.

Unless man —most men at the very least— are buoyed up by a society surrounding them that breathes the Faith symbolically they are going to fall and, in most cases, they will fall badly. I am thinking, among other things, of a system of education in which the Cross presides over the classroom. And I am utterly unconvinced by the argument of the followers of Jacques Maritain that the Cross can preside in the heart of the teacher without publically being nailed to the wall of the classroom itself. Our Faith is incarnational and if the Cross weaves its grace into my heart and mind, then I will gesture it into physical existence by nailing it to my desk, office, place of business, and certainly in any building in which I presume to teach. An anonymous Christian *a la* Karl Rahner ought to be anonymous only because, if otherwise, he would be thrown in jail. And even then he might possibly choose jail to his eternal benefit. Tens of thousands have done it behind what until yesterday was the Iron Curtain. A secular democracy, itself not secularistic, *a la* Maritain, is not only defective theoretically but it is a psychological impossibility. If I know The Good News, I proclaim it everywhere. If to understand and to love are communicative, then I cannot love and understand the Faith unless I sign the world, scribble my signature, on every wall and tower, in every legislative assembly, and in every chancery to which I might be privy. Romano Guardini once wrote that there was a Catholic way to climb a tree. Frankly, I never discovered it and I, for one, in my childhood usually fell off the trees I tried to climb. But the principle annunciated by the German theologian is admirable. No man, again I repeat the truism, is an island. No Catholic ought ever to be alone.

A sacral society appeals not only to the intellect and to the will but to man's sensibility and emotions. We might recall here with benefit St. Thomas Aquinas's insistence that the human person is the *totem*, the totality of any man in existence. Not even my soul is my person argued The Common Doctor: my soul is *personale*, personal, and although the resurrection of the body cannot be demonstrated by natural reason, that resurrection is suggested by the very unity of the human person, body and soul, emotions and will, intellect and senses. It is the whole man standing on the soil of this earth who is the person. To dissect one part of him —the religious— from the whole —the political from the religious, man as worker from man as player: *homo labor* from *homo ludens*: the economic from the familial; the aesthetic from the social, is to sunder into smithereens he who is a unity in existence. Humpty-Dumpty, once shattered on the ground below, it is impossible «to put Humpty-Dumpty back together again». So too, if man's integral life is severed into slivers that man's unity is gone. So too with a social and political order. Secularism in the west has divorced man's religious affirmations from his political life. The sacral unity which

once covered this continent is now gone —except, as I pointed out earlier, in the visual reminders of what Europe once was.

I take it as evident that something is awry in a man who is a Catholic and who has to forget that truth when he becomes a politician or a professor or anything else. Such a man is harmed psychologically because he is harmed ontologically. He has to wear two or three masks at once, shifting from one to the other as he moves through life. We have become so accustomed to this masked ball, this charade, that often enough we are not even aware of the damage being wrought in the depths of our being. We have become «Sunday Catholics» and we behave ourselves at work, in our parliaments, in our daily walk through life, as though what we most deeply believe must not be articulated publically for fear of offending secularist sensibilities. All I can say here is that let secularists look to their sensibilities; ours have been offended ever since the French Revolution and it is time that in re-evangelizing the West we occupied the homes of power that are our own by inheritance.

«Europe is the Faith and the Faith is Europe» was a gauntlet thrown down by Hilaire Belloc some seventy years ago. It seems to me that the first half of the proposition is abstractly defective: the Faith can incarnate itself in any society and in so doing it can sanctify the customs and art of the culture it penetrates and transforms. But «the Faith is Europe» is almost an oxymoron: what would Europe be without the Catholic Faith? The Faith created Europe as well as more than twenty Latin-American countries and the very contours of the soil, the lift and lilt of towns over hills and in valleys, the ring of its songs, the swath cut by its processions with cross and crozier through streets often enough bathed in roses as in the *Corpus Christi* of Toledo —the swords and bayonets shielding the Eucharist carried by Catholic men proud of Their Incarnate God— sing a sacramental order. That order must be recovered, bettered, and in so doing we will carry back the world to its Author, Our Father, through Christ —the Son— and in the Holy Ghost.

Re-evangelization demands re-sacralization. A personal regeneration in the souls of isolated and privileged individuals will not cut the ice. What is needed —I have argued the thesis here— is a corporate, including an aesthetic, restructuring of society so that the Incarnation itself —with all its consequences— signals its sacred meaning to men everywhere. The world, including the political world, must again become a Sign of Salvation. Secularization in the West can go no further. It has reached its apex. Politically and socially we could hardly secularize anything more. The curve of secularization has been drawn to its conclusion, its perfection. That very perfection is the seed of its destruction. We have spent four centuries and more in chasing God out of the forum. The whole enterprise had no other motive in mind. It succeeded and in so doing secularism will now give way to something else. We must invite the Lord back

into the forum. This calls from us, I am convinced, a single response. We must convert the world to the Church of God. Each one of us become an apostle and this means that each one of us, in the measure of his role in society, must educate himself in apologetics. Do we not belong to a Church bearing four marks, according to the famous dictum of St. Robert Bellarmine: «One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic?» Nothing there about accommodation! We are called, each one, to be an apostle. If each one of us in his live could bring but one soul to Christ, all the while caring for the souls under his or her own charge, and if that convert could bring another into the Fold, exponentially we would conquer the world in a matter of years and offer it back to the Father, through the Son, and in the Spirit.

Were we to do this, each of us would be a sign, a symbol, an actual grace, flashing to the world his conviction that everything begins, perdures, and ends in Jesus Christ, King of Kings. In the *Piazza di San Pietro* in Rome, we all know there is an enormous obelisk, the largest of some dozen or so in the city. All were spoils from the pagans and under this, the greatest of all, pagan inscriptions chiseled out, are the words: *Christus vincit: Christus regnat: Christus imperat.*