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## Pacem in Terris - Parts I and II

John PP. XXIII

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# PACEM IN TERRIS —

## PARTS I AND II<sup>†</sup>

JOHN PP. XXIII  
VENERABLE BROTHERS AND DEAREST SONS  
HEALTH AND APOSTOLIC BLESSING

**P**EACE ON EARTH—which man throughout the ages has so longed for and sought after—can never be established, never guaranteed, except by the diligent observance of the divinely established order.

### Order in the Universe

2. That a marvelous order predominates in the world of living beings and in the forces of nature, is the plain lesson which the progress of modern research and the discoveries of technology teach us. And it is part of the greatness of man that he can appreciate that order, and devise the means for harnessing those forces for his own benefit.

3. But what emerges first and foremost from the progress of scientific knowledge and the inventions of technology is the infinite greatness of God Himself, who created both man and the universe. Yes; out of nothing He made all things, and filled them with the fullness of His own wisdom and goodness. Hence, these are the words the holy psalmist uses in praise of God: “O Lord, our Lord: how admirable is thy name in the whole earth!” And elsewhere he says: “How great are thy works, O Lord! Thou hast made all things in wisdom.”<sup>2</sup>

Moreover, God created man “in His own image and likeness,”<sup>3</sup> endowed him with intelligence and freedom, and made him lord of creation. All this the psalmist proclaims when he says: “Thou hast made him a little less than the angels: thou hast crowned him with glory and honor, and hast set him over the works of thy hands. Thou hast subjected all things under his feet.”<sup>4</sup>

<sup>†</sup>Translated by Rev. H. E. Winstone from the Latin text and printed with the permission of The Catholic Truth Society, London, England and The Pope Speaks Magazine, Washington, D.C.

<sup>1</sup> *Ps.* 8:1.

<sup>2</sup> *Ps.* 103:24.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. *Gen.* 1:26.

<sup>4</sup> *Ps.* 8:6-8.

### Order in Human Beings

4. And yet there is a disunity among individuals and among nations which is in striking contrast to this perfect order in the universe. One would think that the relationships that bind men together could only be governed by force.

5. But the world's Creator has stamped man's inmost being with an order revealed to man by his conscience; and his conscience insists on his preserving it. Men "show the work of the law written in their hearts. Their conscience bears witness to them."<sup>5</sup> And how could it be otherwise? All created being reflects the infinite wisdom of God. It reflects it all the more clearly, the higher it stands in the scale of perfection.<sup>6</sup>

6. But the mischief is often caused by erroneous opinions. Many people think that the laws which govern man's relations with the State are the same as those which regulate the blind, elemental forces of the universe. But it is not so; the laws which govern men are quite different. The Father of the universe has inscribed them in man's nature, and that is where we must look for them; there and nowhere else.

7. These laws clearly indicate how a man must behave toward his fellows in society, and how the mutual relationships between the members of a State and its officials are to be conducted. They show too what principles must govern the relations between States; and finally, what should be the relations between individuals or States on the one hand, and the world-wide community of nations on the other. Men's common interests make it imperative that at long last a world-wide community of nations be established.

<sup>5</sup> *Rom.* 2:15.

<sup>6</sup> *Cf. Ps.* 18:8-11.

### PART I

#### ORDER BETWEEN MEN

#### Every Man Is a Person with Rights and Duties

8. We must devote our attention first of all to that order which should prevail among men.

9. Any well-regulated and productive association of men in society demands the acceptance of one fundamental principle: that each individual man is truly a person. His is a nature, that is, endowed with intelligence and free will. As such he has rights and duties, which together flow as a direct consequence from his nature. These rights and duties are universal and inviolable, and therefore altogether inalienable.<sup>7</sup>

10. When, furthermore, we consider man's personal dignity from the standpoint of divine revelation, inevitably our estimate of it is incomparably increased. Men have been ransomed by the blood of Jesus Christ. Grace has made them sons and friends of God, and heirs to eternal glory.

#### The Right to Life and to a Worthy Standard of Living

11. But first We must speak of man's rights. Man has the right to live. He has the right to bodily integrity and to the means necessary for the proper development of life, particularly food, clothing, shelter, medical care, rest, and, finally, the necessary social services. In consequence, he has the right to be looked after in the event of ill-health; disability stemming from his work; widowhood; old age; enforced unemployment; or whenever through no fault of his own he is deprived of the means of livelihood.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>7</sup> *Cf.* Pius XII's broadcast message, Christmas 1942, *AAS* 35 (1943) 9-24; and John XXIII's sermon, Jan. 4, 1963, *AAS* 55 (1963) 89-91.

<sup>8</sup> *Cf.* Pius XI's encyclical "*Divini Redemptoris*,"

### Rights Pertaining to Moral and Cultural Values

12. Moreover, man has a natural right to be respected. He has a right to his good name. He has a right to freedom in investigating the truth, and — within the limits of the moral order and the common good — to freedom of speech and publication, and to freedom to pursue whatever profession he may choose. He has the right, also, to be accurately informed about public events.

13. He has the natural right to share in the benefits of culture, and hence to receive a good general education, and a technical or professional training consistent with the degree of educational development in his own country. Furthermore, a system must be devised for affording gifted members of society the opportunity of engaging in more advanced studies, with a view to their occupying, as far as possible, positions of responsibility in society in keeping with their natural talent and acquired skill.<sup>9</sup>

### The Right to Worship God According to One's Conscience

14. Also among man's rights is that of being able to worship God in accordance with the right dictates of his own conscience, and to profess his religion both in private and in public. According to the clear teaching of Lactantius, "this is the very condition of our birth, that we render to the God who made us that just homage which is His due; that we acknowledge Him alone as God, and follow Him. It is from this *ligature* of piety, which binds us and joins us to God, that

religion derives its name."<sup>10</sup>

Hence, too, Pope Leo XIII declared that "true freedom, freedom worthy of the sons of God, is that freedom which most truly safeguards the dignity of the human person. It is stronger than any violence or injustice. Such is the freedom which has always been desired by the Church, and which she holds most dear. It is the sort of freedom which the Apostles resolutely claimed for themselves. The apologists defended it in their writings; thousands of martyrs consecrated it with their blood."<sup>11</sup>

### The Right to Choose Freely One's State in Life

15. Human beings have also the right to choose for themselves the kind of life which appeals to them: whether it is to found a family — in the founding of which both the man and the woman enjoy equal rights and duties — or to embrace the priesthood or the religious life.<sup>12</sup>

16. The family, founded upon marriage freely contracted, one and indissoluble, must be regarded as the natural, primary cell of human society. The interests of the family, therefore, must be taken very specially into consideration in social and economic affairs, as well as in the spheres of faith and morals. For all of these have to do with strengthening the family and assisting it in the fulfillment of its mission.

17. Of course, the support and education of children is a right which belongs primarily to the parents.<sup>13</sup>

*AAS* 29 (1937) 78; and Pius XII's broadcast message, Pentecost, June 1, 1941, *AAS* 33 (1941) 195-205.

<sup>9</sup> Cf. Pius XII's broadcast message, Christmas 1942, *AAS* 35 (1943) 9-24.

<sup>10</sup> *Divinae Institutiones*, lib. IV, c.28.2; *PL* 6,535.

<sup>11</sup> Encyclical "*Libertas praestantissimum*," *Acta Leonis XIII*, VIII, 1888, pp. 237-238.

<sup>12</sup> Cf. Pius XII's broadcast message, Christmas 1942, *AAS* 35 (1943) 9-24.

<sup>13</sup> Cf. Pius XI's encyclical "*Casti connubii*," *AAS* 22 (1930) 539-592, and Pius XII's broadcast message, Christmas 1942, *AAS* 35 (1943) 9-24.

### Economic Rights

18. In the economic sphere, it is evident that a man has the inherent right not only to be given the opportunity to work, but also to be allowed the exercise of personal initiative in the work he does.<sup>14</sup>

19. The conditions in which a man works form a necessary corollary to these rights. They must not be such as to weaken his physical or moral fibre, or militate against the proper development of adolescents to manhood. Women must be accorded such conditions of work as are consistent with their needs and responsibilities as wives and mothers.<sup>15</sup>

20. A further consequence of man's personal dignity is his right to engage in economic activities suited to his degree of responsibility.<sup>16</sup> The worker is likewise entitled to a wage that is determined in accordance with the precepts of justice. This needs stressing. The amount a worker receives must be sufficient, in proportion to available funds, to allow him and his family a standard of living consistent with human dignity. Pope Pius XII expressed it in these terms:

"Nature imposes work upon man as a duty, and man has the corresponding natural right to demand that the work he does shall provide him with the means of livelihood for himself and his children. Such is nature's categorical imperative for the preservation of man."<sup>17</sup>

21. As a further consequence of man's nature, he has the right to the private ownership of property, including that of productive goods. This, as We have said elsewhere, is "a right which constitutes so efficacious a means of asserting one's personality and exercising responsibility in every field, and an element of solidity and security for family life, and of greater peace and prosperity in the State."<sup>18</sup>

22. Finally, it is opportune to point out that the right to own private property entails a social obligation as well.<sup>19</sup>

### The Right of Meeting and Association

23. Men are by nature social, and consequently they have the right to meet together and to form associations with their fellows. They have the right to confer on such associations the type of organization which they consider best calculated to achieve their objectives. They have also the right to exercise their own initiative and act on their own responsibility within these associations for the attainment of the desired results.<sup>20</sup>

24. As We insisted in Our encyclical *Mater et Magistra*, the founding of a great many such intermediate groups or societies for the pursuit of aims which it is not within the competence of the individual to achieve efficiently, is a matter of great urgency. Such groups and societies must be considered absolutely essential for the safeguarding of man's personal freedom and dignity, while leaving intact a sense of responsibility.<sup>21</sup>

<sup>14</sup> Cf. Pius XII's broadcast message, Pentecost, June 1, 1941, *AAS* 33 (1941) 201.

<sup>15</sup> Cf. Leo XIII's encyclical "*Rerum novarum*," *Acta Leonis XIII*, XI, 1891, pp. 128-129.

<sup>16</sup> Cf. John XXIII's encyclical "*Mater et Magistra*," *AAS* 53 (1961) 422; *TPS*, v. 7, no. 4, p. 311.

<sup>17</sup> Cf. Pius XII's broadcast message, Pentecost, June 1, 1941, *AAS* 33 (1941) 201.

<sup>18</sup> John XXIII's encyclical "*Mater et Magistra*," *AAS* 53 (1961) 428; *TPS*, v. 7, no. 4, p. 316.

<sup>19</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, p. 430; *TPS* v. 7, no. 4, p. 318.

<sup>20</sup> Cf. Leo XIII's encyclical "*Rerum novarum*," *Acta Leonis XIII*, XI, 1891, pp. 134-142; Pius XI's encyclical "*Quadragesimo anno*," *AAS* 23 (1931) 199-200; and Pius XII's encyclical "*Sertum laetitiae*," *AAS* 31 (1939) 635-644.

<sup>21</sup> Cf. *AAS* 53 (1961) 430; *TPS*, v. 7, no. 4, p. 318.

### **The Right to Emigrate and Immigrate**

25. Again, every human being has the right to freedom of movement and of residence within the confines of his own State. When there are just reasons in favor of it, he must be permitted to emigrate to other countries and take up residence there.<sup>22</sup> The fact that he is a citizen of a particular State does not deprive him of membership in the human family, nor of citizenship in that universal society, the common, world-wide fellowship of men.

### **Political Rights**

26. Finally, man's personal dignity involves his right to take an active part in public life, and to make his own contribution to the common welfare of his fellow citizens. As Pope Pius XII said, "man as such, far from being an object or, as it were, an inert element in society, is rather its subject, its basis and its purpose; and so must he be esteemed."<sup>23</sup>

27. As a human person he is entitled to the legal protection of his rights, and such protection must be effective, unbiased, and strictly just. To quote again Pope Pius XII: "In consequence of that juridical order willed by God, man has his own inalienable right to juridical security. To him is assigned a certain, well-defined sphere of law, immune from arbitrary attack."<sup>24</sup>

### *Duties*

<sup>22</sup> Cf. Pius XII's broadcast message, Christmas 1952, *AAS* 45 (1953) 36-46.

<sup>23</sup> Cf. Pius XII's broadcast message, Christmas 1944, *AAS* 37 (1945) 12.

<sup>24</sup> Cf. Pius XII's broadcast message, Christmas 1942, *AAS* 35 (1943) 21.

### **Rights and Duties Necessarily Linked in the One Person**

28. The natural rights of which We have so far been speaking are inextricably bound up with as many duties, all applying to one and the same person. These rights and duties derive their origin, their sustenance, and their indestructibility from the natural law, which in conferring the one imposes the other.

29. Thus, for example, the right to live involves the duty to preserve one's life; the right to a decent standard of living, the duty to live in a becoming fashion; the right to be free to seek out the truth, the duty to devote oneself to an ever deeper and wider search for it.

### **Reciprocity of Rights and Duties Between Persons**

30. Once this is admitted, it follows that in human society one man's natural right gives rise to a corresponding duty in other men; the duty, that is, of recognizing and respecting that right. Every basic human right draws its authoritative force from the natural law, which confers it and attaches to it its respective duty. Hence, to claim one's rights and ignore one's duties, or only half fulfill them, is like building a house with one hand and tearing it down with the other.

### **Mutual Collaboration**

31. Since men are social by nature, they must live together and consult each other's interests. That men should recognize and perform their respective rights and duties is imperative to a well-ordered society. But the result will be that each individual will make his whole-hearted contribution to the creation of a civic order in which rights and

duties are ever more diligently and more effectively observed.

32. For example, it is useless to admit that a man has a right to the necessities of life, unless we also do all in our power to supply him with means sufficient for his livelihood.

33. Hence society must not only be well ordered, it must also provide men with abundant resources. This postulates not only the mutual recognition and fulfillment of rights and duties, but also the involvement and collaboration of all men in the many enterprises which our present civilization makes possible, encourages or indeed demands.

#### **An Attitude of Responsibility**

34. Man's personal dignity requires besides that he enjoy freedom and be able to make up his own mind when he acts. In his association with his fellows, therefore, there is every reason why his recognition of rights, observance of duties, and many-sided collaboration with other men, should be primarily a matter of his own personal decision. Each man should act on his own initiative, conviction, and sense of responsibility, not under the constant pressure of external coercion or enticement. There is nothing human about a society that is welded together by force. Far from encouraging, as it should, the attainment of man's progress and perfection, it is merely an obstacle to his freedom.

#### **Social Life in Truth, Justice, Charity and Freedom**

35. Hence, before a society can be considered well-ordered, creative, and consonant with human dignity, it must be based on truth. St. Paul expressed this as follows: "Putting away lying, speak ye the truth every man with his neighbor, for we are members

one of another."<sup>25</sup> And so will it be, if each man acknowledges sincerely his own rights and his own duties toward others.

Human society, as we here picture it, demands that men be guided by justice, respect the rights of others and do their duty. It demands, too, that they be animated by such love as will make them feel the needs of others as their own, and induce them to share their goods with others, and to strive in the world to make all men alike heirs to the noblest of intellectual and spiritual values. Nor is this enough; for human society thrives on freedom, namely, on the use of means which are consistent with the dignity of its individual members, who, being endowed with reason, assume responsibility for their own actions.

36. And so, dearest sons and brothers, we must think of human society as being primarily a spiritual reality. By its means enlightened men can share their knowledge of the truth, can claim their rights and fulfill their duties, receive encouragement in their aspirations for the goods of the spirit, share their enjoyment of all the wholesome pleasures of the world, and strive continually to pass on to others all that is best in themselves and to make their own the spiritual riches of others. It is these spiritual values which exert a guiding influence on culture, economics, social institutions, political movements and forms, laws, and all the other components which go to make up the external community of men and its continual development.

#### **God and the Moral Order**

37. Now the order which prevails in human society is wholly incorporeal in nature. Its foundation is truth, and it must

<sup>25</sup> Eph. 4:25.

be brought into effect by justice. It needs to be animated and perfected by men's love for one another, and, while preserving freedom intact, it must make for an equilibrium in society which is increasingly more human in character.

38. But such an order — universal, absolute and immutable in its principles — finds its source in the true, personal and transcendent God. He is the first truth, the sovereign good, and as such the deepest source from which human society, if it is to be properly constituted, creative, and worthy of man's dignity, draws its genuine vitality.<sup>26</sup> This is what St. Thomas means when he says: "Human reason is the standard which measures the degree of goodness of the human will, and as such it derives from the eternal law, which is divine reason . . . Hence it is clear that the goodness of the human will depends much more on the eternal law than on human reason."<sup>27</sup>

### Characteristics of the Present Day

39. There are three things which characterize our modern age.

40. In the first place we notice a progressive improvement in the economic and social condition of working men. They began by claiming their rights principally in the economic and social spheres, and then proceeded to lay claim to their political rights as well. Finally, they have turned their attention to acquiring the more cultural benefits of society.

Today, therefore, working men all over the world are loud in their demands that they shall in no circumstances be subjected to arbitrary treatment, as though devoid of

intelligence and freedom. They insist on being treated as human beings, with a share in every sector of human society: in the socio-economic sphere, in government, and in the realm of learning and culture.

41. Secondly, the part that women are now playing in political life is everywhere evident. This is a development that is perhaps of swifter growth among Christian nations, but it is also happening extensively, if more slowly, among nations that are heirs to different traditions and imbued with a different culture. Women are gaining an increasing awareness of their natural dignity. Far from being content with a purely passive role or allowing themselves to be regarded as a kind of instrument, they are demanding both in domestic and in public life the rights and duties which belong to them as human persons.

42. Finally, we are confronted in this modern age with a form of society which is evolving on entirely new social and political lines. Since all peoples have either attained political independence or are on the way to attaining it, soon no nation will rule over another and none will be subject to an alien power.

43. Thus all over the world men are either the citizens of an independent State, or are shortly to become so; nor is any nation nowadays content to submit to foreign domination. The long-standing inferiority complex of certain classes because of their economic and social status, sex, or position in the State, and the corresponding superiority complex of other classes, is rapidly becoming a thing of the past.

### Equality of Men

44. Today, on the contrary, the conviction is widespread that all men are equal in natural dignity; and so, on the doctrinal and

<sup>26</sup> Cf. Pius XII's broadcast message, Christmas 1942, *AAS* 35 (1943) 14.

<sup>27</sup> *Summa Theol.* Ia-IIae, q. 19, a.4; cf. a.9.

theoretical level, at least, no form of approval is being given to racial discrimination. All this is of supreme significance for the formation of a human society animated by the principles We have mentioned above, for man's awareness of his rights must inevitably lead him to the recognition of his duties. The possession of rights involves the duty of implementing those rights, for they are the expression of a man's personal dignity. And the possession of rights also involves their recognition and respect by other people.

45. When society is formed on a basis of rights and duties, men have an immediate grasp of spiritual and intellectual values, and have no difficulty in understanding what is meant by truth, justice, charity and freedom. They become, moreover, conscious of being members of such a society. And that is not all. Inspired by such principles, they attain to a better knowledge of the true God—a personal God transcending human nature. They recognize that their relationship with God forms the very foundation of their life—the interior life of the spirit, and the life which they live in the society of their fellows.

PART II  
RELATIONS BETWEEN INDIVIDUALS  
AND THE PUBLIC AUTHORITIES  
WITHIN A SINGLE STATE

**Necessity and Divine Origin  
of Authority**

46. Human society can be neither well-ordered nor prosperous without the presence of those who, invested with legal authority, preserve its institutions and do all that is necessary to sponsor actively the interests of all its members. And they derive their authority from God, for, as St. Paul teaches, "there is no power but from God."<sup>28</sup>

<sup>28</sup> *Rom.* 13: 1-6.

In his commentary on this passage, St. John Chrysostom writes: "What are you saying? Is every ruler appointed by God? No, that is not what I mean, he says, for I am not now talking about individual rulers, but about authority as such. My contention is that the existence of a ruling authority—the fact that some should command and others obey, and that all things not come about as the result of blind chance—this is a provision of divine wisdom."<sup>29</sup>

God has created men social by nature, and a society cannot "hold together unless someone is in command to give effective direction and unity of purpose. Hence every civilized community must have a ruling authority, and this authority, no less than society itself, has its source in nature, and consequently has God for its author."<sup>30</sup>

47. But it must not be imagined that authority knows no bounds. Since its starting point is the permission to govern in accordance with right reason, there is no escaping the conclusion that it derives its binding force from the moral order, which in turn has God as its origin and end.

Hence, to quote Pope Pius XII, "The absolute order of living beings, and the very purpose of man—an autonomous being, the subject of duties and inviolable rights, and the origin and purpose of human society—have a direct bearing upon the State as a necessary community endowed with authority. Divest it of this authority, and it is nothing, it is lifeless. . . . But right reason, and above all Christian faith, make it clear that such an order can have no other origin but in God, a personal God, our Creator. Hence it is from Him that State officials

<sup>29</sup> *In Epist. ad Rom.* c.13, vv. 1-2, homil. XXIII; *PG* 60, 615.

<sup>30</sup> Leo XIII's encyclical "*Immortale Dei*," *Acta Leonis XIII*, V, 1885, p. 120.

derive their dignity, for they share to some extent in the authority of God Himself."<sup>31</sup>

### An Appeal to Conscience

48. Hence, a regime which governs solely or mainly by means of threats and intimidation or promises of reward, provides men with no effective incentive to work for the common good. And even if it did, it would certainly be offensive to the dignity of free and rational human beings. Authority is before all else a moral force. For this reason the appeal of rulers should be to the individual conscience, to the duty which every man has of voluntarily contributing to the common good. But since all men are equal in natural dignity, no man has the capacity to force internal compliance on another. Only God can do that, for He alone scrutinizes and judges the secret counsels of the heart.

49. Hence, representatives of the State have no power to bind men in conscience, unless their own authority is tied to God's authority, and is a participation in it.<sup>32</sup>

50. The application of this principle likewise safeguards the dignity of citizens. Their obedience to civil authorities is never an obedience paid to them as men. It is in reality an act of homage paid to God, the provident Creator of the universe, who has decreed that men's dealings with one another be regulated in accordance with that order which He Himself has established. And we men do not demean ourselves in showing due reverence to God. On the contrary, we are lifted up and ennobled in spirit, for to serve God is to reign.<sup>33</sup>

<sup>31</sup> Cf. Pius XII's broadcast message, Christmas 1944, *AAS* 37 (1945) 15.

<sup>32</sup> Cf. Leo XIII's encyclical "*Diuturnum illud*," *Acta Leonis XIII*, II, 1881, p. 274.

<sup>33</sup> Cf. *id.* at 278; also Leo XIII's encyclical "*Immortale Dei*," *Acta Leonis XIII*, V, 1885, p. 130.

51. Governmental authority, therefore, is a postulate of the moral order and derives from God. Consequently, laws and decrees passed in contravention of the moral order, and hence of the divine will, can have no binding force in conscience, since "it is right to obey God rather than men."<sup>34</sup>

Indeed, the passing of such laws undermines the very nature of authority and results in shameful abuse. As St. Thomas teaches, "In regard to the second proposition, we maintain that human law has the *rationale* of law in so far as it is in accordance with right reason, and as such it obviously derives from eternal law. A law which is at variance with reason is to that extent unjust and has no longer the *rationale* of law. It is rather an act of violence."<sup>35</sup>

52. The fact that authority comes from God does not mean that men have no power to choose those who are to rule the State, or to decide upon the type of government they want, and determine the procedure and limitations of rulers in the exercise of their authority. Hence the above teaching is consonant with any genuinely democratic form of government.<sup>36</sup>

### Attainment of the Common Good Is the Purpose of the Public Authority

53. Men, both as individuals and as intermediate groups, are required to make their own specific contributions to the general welfare. The main consequence of this is that they must harmonize their own interests

<sup>34</sup> *Acts* 5:29.

<sup>35</sup> *Summa Theol.* Ia-IIae, q.93, a.3 ad 2um; cf. Pius XII's broadcast message, Christmas 1945, *AAS* 37 (1945) 5-23.

<sup>36</sup> Cf. Leo XIII's encyclical "*Diuturnum illud*," *Acta Leonis XIII*, II, 1881, pp. 271-273; and Pius XII's broadcast message, Christmas 1944, *AAS* 37 (1945) 5-23.

with the needs of others, and offer their goods and services as their rulers shall direct — assuming, of course, that justice is maintained and the authorities are acting within the limits of their competence. Those who have authority in the State must exercise that authority in a way which is not only morally irreproachable, but also best calculated to ensure or promote the State's welfare.

54. The attainment of the common good is the sole reason for the existence of civil authorities. In working for the common good, therefore, the authorities must obviously respect its nature, and at the same time adjust their legislation to meet the requirements of the given situation.<sup>37</sup>

### Essentials of the Common Good

55. Among the essential elements of the common good one must certainly include the various characteristics distinctive of each individual people.<sup>38</sup> But these by no means constitute the whole of it. For the common good, since it is intimately bound up with human nature, can never exist fully and completely unless the human person is taken into account at all times. Thus, attention must be paid to the basic nature of the common good and what it is that brings it about.<sup>39</sup>

56. We must add, therefore, that it is in the nature of the common good that every single citizen has the right to share in it — although in different ways, depending on his

tasks, merits and circumstances. Hence every civil authority must strive to promote the common good in the interest of all, without favoring any individual citizen or category of citizen. As Pope Leo XIII insisted:

“The civil power must not be subservient to the advantage of any one individual, or of some few persons; inasmuch as it was established for the common good of all.”<sup>40</sup>

Nevertheless, considerations of justice and equity can at times demand that those in power pay more attention to the weaker members of society, since these are at a disadvantage when it comes to defending their own rights and asserting their legitimate interests.<sup>41</sup>

### The Spiritual, Too

57. In this connection, We would draw the attention of Our own sons to the fact that the common good is something which affects the needs of the whole man, body and soul. That, then, is the sort of good which rulers of States must take suitable measure to ensure. They must respect the hierarchy of values, and aim at achieving the spiritual as well as the material prosperity of their subjects.<sup>42</sup>

58. These principles are clearly contained in that passage in Our encyclical *Mater et Magistra* where We emphasized that the common good “must take account of all those social conditions which favor the full development of human personality.”<sup>43</sup>

59. Consisting, as he does, of body and

<sup>37</sup> Cf. Pius XII's broadcast message, Christmas 1942, *AAS* 35 (1943) 13, and Leo XIII's encyclical “*Immortale Dei*,” *Acta Leonis XIII*, V, 1885, p. 120.

<sup>38</sup> Cf. Pius XII's encyclical “*Summi Pontificatus*,” *AAS* 31 (1939) 412-453.

<sup>39</sup> Cf. Pius XI's encyclical “*Mit brennender Sorge*,” *AAS* 29 (1937) 159, and his encyclical “*Divini Redemptoris*,” *AAS* 29 (1937) 65-106.

<sup>40</sup> Leo XIII's encyclical “*Immortale Dei*,” *Acta Leonis XIII*, V, 1885, p. 121.

<sup>41</sup> Cf. Leo XIII's encyclical “*Rerum novarum*,” *Acta Leonis XIII*, XI, 1891, pp. 133-134.

<sup>42</sup> Cf. Pius XII's encyclical “*Summi Pontificatus*,” *AAS* 31 (1939) 433.

<sup>43</sup> *AAS* 53 (1961) 417; *TPS* v. 7, no. 4, p. 308.

immortal soul, man cannot in this mortal life satisfy his needs or attain perfect happiness. Thus, the measures that are taken to implement the common good must not jeopardize his eternal salvation; indeed, they must even help him to obtain it.<sup>44</sup>

### **Responsibilities of the Public Authority, and Rights and Duties of Individuals**

60. It is generally accepted today that the common good is best safeguarded when personal rights and duties are guaranteed. The chief concern of civil authorities must therefore be to ensure that these rights are recognized, respected, co-ordinated, defended and promoted, and that each individual is enabled to perform his duties more easily. For "to safeguard the inviolable rights of the human person, and to facilitate the performance of his duties, is the principal duty of every public authority."<sup>45</sup>

61. Thus any government which refused to recognize human rights or acted in violation of them, would not only fail in its duty; its decrees would be wholly lacking in binding force.<sup>46</sup>

### **Reconciliation and Protection of Rights and Duties of Individuals**

62. One of the principal duties of any government, moreover, is the suitable and adequate superintendence and co-ordination of men's respective rights in society. This

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<sup>44</sup> Cf. Pius XI's encyclical "*Quadragesimo anno*," *AAS* 23 (1931) 215.

<sup>45</sup> Cf. Pius XII's broadcast message, Pentecost, June 1, 1941, *AAS* 33 (1941) 200.

<sup>46</sup> Cf. Pius XI's encyclical "*Mit brennender Sorge*," *AAS* 29 (1937) 159, and his encyclical "*Divini Redemptoris*," *AAS* 29 (1937) 79; and Pius XII's broadcast message, Christmas 1942, *AAS* 35 (1943) 9-24.

must be done in such a way (1) that the exercise of their rights by certain citizens does not obstruct other citizens in the exercise of theirs; (2) that the individual, standing upon his own rights, does not impede others in the performance of their duties; (3) that the rights of all be effectively safeguarded, and completely restored if they have been violated.<sup>47</sup>

### **Duty of Promoting the Rights of Individuals**

63. In addition, heads of States must make a positive contribution to the creation of an over-all climate in which the individual can both safeguard his own rights and fulfill his duties, and can do so readily. For if there is one thing we have learned in the school of experience, it is surely this: that, in the modern world especially, political, economic and cultural inequities among citizens become more and more widespread when public authorities fail to take appropriate action in these spheres. And the consequence is that human rights and duties are thus rendered totally ineffective.

64. The public administration must therefore give considerable care and thought to the question of social as well as economic progress, and to the development of essential services in keeping with the expansion of the productive system. Such services include road-building, transportation, communications, drinking-water, housing, medical care, ample facilities for the practice of religion, and aids to recreation. The government must also see to the provision of insurance facilities, to obviate any likelihood of a citizen's being unable to maintain a de-

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<sup>47</sup> Cf. Pius XI's encyclical "*Divini Redemptoris*," *AAS* 29 (1937) 81, and Pius XII's broadcast message, Christmas 1942, *AAS* 35 (1943) 9-24.

cent standard of living in the event of some misfortune, or greatly increased family responsibilities.

The government is also required to show no less energy and efficiency in the matter of providing opportunities for suitable employment, graded to the capacity of the workers. It must make sure that working men are paid a just and equitable wage, and are allowed a sense of responsibility in the industrial concerns for which they work. It must facilitate the formation of intermediate groups, so that the social life of the people may become more fruitful and less constrained. And finally, it must ensure that everyone has the means and opportunity of sharing as far as possible in cultural benefits.

#### **Harmonious Relations Between Public Authority's Two Forms of Intervention**

65. The common welfare further demands that in their efforts to co-ordinate and protect, and their efforts to promote, the rights of citizens, the civil authorities preserve a delicate balance. An excessive concern for the rights of any particular individuals or groups might well result in the principal advantages of the State being in effect monopolized by these citizens. Or again, the absurd situation can arise where the civil authorities, while taking measures to protect the rights of citizens, themselves stand in the way of the full exercise of these rights. "For this principle must always be retained: that however extensive and far-reaching the influence of the State on the economy may be, it must never be exerted to the extent of depriving the individual citizen of his freedom of action. It must rather augment his freedom, while effectively guaranteeing the protection of every-

one's essential, personal rights."<sup>48</sup>

66. And the same principle must be adopted by civil authorities in their various efforts to facilitate the exercise of rights and performance of duties in every department of social life.

#### **Structure and Operation of the Public Authority**

67. For the rest, it is not possible to give a general ruling on the most suitable form of government, or the ways in which civil authorities can most effectively fulfill their legislative, administrative, and judicial functions.

68. In determining what form a particular government shall take, and the way in which it shall function, a major consideration will be the prevailing circumstances and the condition of the people; and these are things which vary in different places and at different times.

We think, however, that it is in keeping with human nature for the State to be given a form which embodies a threefold division of public office properly corresponding to the three main functions of public authority. In such a State a precise legal framework is provided, not only for the official functions of government, but also for the mutual relations between citizens and public officials. This will obviously afford a sure protection to citizens, both in the safeguarding of their rights and in the fulfillment of their duties.

69. If, however, this judicial and political structure is to realize its potential benefits, it is absolutely essential that public officials do their utmost to solve the problems that arise; and they must do so by

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<sup>48</sup> John XXIII's encyclical "*Mater et Magistra*," *AAS* 53 (1961) 415; *TPS* v. 7, no. 4, p. 306.

using policies and techniques which it is within their competence to implement, and which suit the actual condition of the State. It is also essential that, despite constantly changing conditions, legislators never disregard the moral law or constitutional provision, nor act at variance with the exigencies of the common good. And as justice must be the guiding principle in the administration of the State, and executives must thoroughly understand the law and carefully weigh all attendant circumstances, so too in the courts: justice must be administered impartially, and judges must be wholly incorrupt and uninfluenced by the solicitations of interested parties. The good order of society also requires that individuals and subsidiary groups within the State be effectively protected by law in the affirmation of their rights and the performance of their duties, both in their relations with each other and with government officials.<sup>49</sup>

#### Law and Conscience

70. There can be no doubt that a State juridical system which conforms to the principles of justice and rightness, and corresponds to the degree of civic maturity evinced by the State in question, is highly conducive to the attainment of the common good.

71. And yet social life is so complex, varied and active in this modern age, that even a juridical system which has been established with great prudence and foresight often seems inadequate to the need.

72. Moreover, the relations of citizens with each other, of citizens and intermediate groups with public authorities, and the relations between public authorities of the same State, are sometimes seen to be of so ambiguous and explosive a nature, that they

are not susceptible of being regulated by any hard and fast system of laws.

In such cases, if the authorities want to preserve the State's juridical system intact—in itself and in its application to specific cases—and if they want to minister to the principal needs of society, adapt the laws to the conditions of modern life and seek solutions to new problems, then it is essential that they have a clear idea of the nature and limits of their own legitimate spheres of action. Their calmness, integrity, clear-sightedness and perseverance must be such that they will recognize at once what is needed in a given situation, and act with promptness and efficiency.<sup>50</sup>

#### Citizens' Participation in Public Life

73. A natural consequence of men's dignity is unquestionably their right to take an active part in government, though their degree of participation will necessarily depend on the stage of development reached by the political community of which they are members.

74. For the rest, this right to take part in government opens out to men a new and extensive field of opportunity for service. A situation is created in which civic authorities can, from the greater frequency of their contacts and discussions with the citizens, gain a clearer idea of what policies are in fact effectual for the common good; and in a system which allows for a regular succession of public officials, the authority of these officials, far from growing old and feeble, takes on a new vitality in keeping with the progressive development of hu-

<sup>49</sup> Cf. Pius XII's broadcast message, Christmas 1942, *AAS* 35 (1943) 21.

<sup>50</sup> Cf. Pius XII's broadcast message, Christmas 1944, *AAS* 37 (1945) 15-16.

man society.<sup>51</sup>

### Characteristics of the Present Day

75. There is every indication at the present time that these aims and ideals are giving rise to various demands concerning the juridical organization of States. The first is this: that a clear and precisely worded charter of fundamental human rights be formulated and incorporated into the State's general constitutions.

76. Secondly, each State must have a public constitution, couched in juridical terms, laying down clear rules relating to the designation of public officials, their reciprocal relations, spheres of competence and prescribed methods of operation.

77. The final demand is that relations between citizens and public authorities be described in terms of rights and duties. It must be clearly laid down that the principal

function of public authorities is to recognize, respect, co-ordinate, safeguard and promote citizens' rights and duties.

78. We must, however, reject the view that the will of the individual or the group is the primary and only source of a citizen's rights and duties, and of the binding force of political constitutions and the government's authority.<sup>52</sup>

79. But the aspirations We have mentioned are a clear indication of the fact that men, increasingly aware nowadays of their personal dignity, have found the incentive to enter government service and demand constitutional recognition for their own inviolable rights. Not content with this, they are demanding, too, the observance of constitutional procedures in the appointment of public authorities, and are insisting that they exercise their office within this constitutional framework.

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<sup>51</sup> Cf. Pius XII's broadcast message, Christmas 1942, *AAS* 35 (1943) 12.

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<sup>52</sup> Cf. Leo XIII's apostolic letter "*Annum ingressi*," *Acta Leonis XIII*, XXII, 1902-1903, pp. 52-80.

