

Augustine himself, despite the warning of the patriarch Photius, is often crossed off the Orthodox calendar (though allowed the title, it is true, of 'blessed') because of his 'heresy'. One cannot ignore the fact of this acute disagreement among the Orthodox in theological matters. To invoke in this case the freedom of theological thought is beside the point. The theory of the 'economy' of the Church is little help here; it rather obscures and confuses the theological problem. Before judging the opportuneness of a 'meeting' with Roman Catholics from the exigencies of international peace and collaboration, Orthodox theologians and ecclesiastical authorities in the Orthodox Churches ought to put the question, openly and sincerely, of the very nature of the 'Roman Church' or of the 'Roman schism'. And that requires doctrine on the Church to be worked out in all its fulness and complexity.

Be that as it may, the convocation of a new 'general council', even only within the canonical limits of the Roman Church, is undoubtedly a new ecumenical fact, a great and important ecumenical event, whatever its immediate and closest consequences may be. As such, it calls for the sustained attention of Orthodox theologians themselves.



THE MOVEMENT FOR A BETTER WORLD

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IN writing, not long ago, of what he has found in the Movement for a Better World, Fr Ludwig Tovini, Italian Dominican member of the movement's promoting group, referred, amongst other things, to an *equilibrium* between the grandiose wish to change the world and the realistically moderated belief in the possibility of change, and advocacy of it, without utopian optimism that would banish the existence of evil from the earth. Such equilibrium, difficult to maintain on account of continually having to avoid the danger of falling into one excess or another, is not so common, Fr Tovini went on to say, even in the Catholic field, ours being an age when 'whimsical hankerings after originality often lead to the taking up of unbalanced or eccentric positions . . .'

A 'better world' Pope Pius XII defined as being a world 'more according to the heart of God', giving to this *relative* concept an essentially Christian value.

Proclaiming himself, on the eve of the feast of our Lady of Lourdes, February 10th, 1952, 'herald of a better world, willed by God', Pope Pius declared: 'It is an entire world that we must remake from the foundations, that we must transform from savage to human, from human to divine . . .'. He said he was appealing for a 'mighty reawakening of thought and action . . . to include all without exception, clergy and laity'.

In response to this appeal, Fr Lombardi, already well known in many countries as a religious orator and preacher of the 'crusade of love', came forward to dedicate himself without reserve. Not unlike the way in which, over a hundred years ago, there was formed round Fr Pallotti (precursor of the apostolate of Catholic Action and founder of St Peter's Italian church, London) 'a new body committed to the revival of faith, the enkindling of charity and its diffusion throughout the world', a movement began to grow, of universal aim, with charity the key-note—love of God, and love of fellow beings for God's sake.

The course of exercises that was devised and has been increasingly given, at the Pius XII international centre and elsewhere, to clergy, and also laity, in enclosed retreat, for the inculcation of this spirit, has, as its true and essential aim, the driving home of the need for reforms to be carried out not only in our individual lives, but also and especially in our associated living.

Throughout the course there are what are termed 'individual meditations'; and most people are fairly familiar with the principle of these from the making of ordinary retreats, even if the subjects of them are fresh: the spirituality of builders of a better world, radical impediments in the life of the mystical body, how to arrive at mutual charity, Mary and the mystical body, to name one or two. These meditations are made in the morning. The conferences, four daily, are referred to as 'collective meditations'. They are upon such subjects as concern all Catholics, and indeed the whole human race, such as for example the collective state of the modern world, and the purpose of history, and they are made together, not only with the individual's personal relationship to God in mind, but also with regard to the responsibility of Catholics in common, in unity, as members of

the divine society of the Church, and saviours of the world.

None can deny there is room for improvement here. The impetus imparted is certainly to the mind and heart, but particularly to the *will*. Magnificent forces flourish in the Church today, many with the precise aim of increasing unity in charity. There is holiness of life, both in individuals and in associations, such as perhaps has never been in the history of the world. Authority itself has never been stronger, or more respected. Most are even in complete agreement with the idea of renewal being necessary in teaching methods, family life, institutions, the press, entertainments, political life, to meet the urgency of modern times. But where is the particular strength coming from to do, and make permanent, what so far seems never to have been done before? The movement for a better world places the emphasis on combined efforts, on a spirit of 'revolt' together: a revolution of the sons of God. This implies a pacific, but complete, change of mentality, by means of brotherly love.

Isolation, withdrawal into self, and egoism being the chief enemies to be fought against in the arduous work of drawing nearer together in every possible way in a spirit of unity and in the mystical body of Christ, the brotherly agreement and charity, which the exercises for a better world make it their chief purpose to create or to augment, must be not only between the *conférenciers* and their audience, but particularly also, and if possible without exception, among those following the course.

Silence during breaks and between conferences is not encouraged, rather the reverse, so as to help people to get to know one another, and exchange experiences. Importance is also given to the evening recreation time, in which all are expected to take part at least by being present, if not by contributing a turn. Towards the end of each course an improvised show of some sort is insisted on as part of the curriculum, and there is much hilarity.

In essence, the movement for a better world (which is not a new religious order, nor another Catholic organization, but a movement in the purely etymological sense of the word, of ideas and people—a *new spirit*) may be summarized as follows:

1. Many more people to be transformed into sons of God—and *therefore* brothers—with an ever-increasing degree of this divine life.
2. The raising of human social relations to this sublime level.

3. Reorganization of every social department of life so as to make it permanently worthy of the one great human-divine family, and so that society, as a whole, may glorify God with his divine unity.

The minimum concrete framework for the spreading of this spirit is seen to be:

- (a) A promoting group, made up of priests, religious and some lay helpers, of different orders, dioceses and nations.
- (b) A concentrated, systematized course of exercises, given to all categories of people, clergy and laity alike, with appropriate subjects and periods of time. The course is in three parts: (I): main outlines of creation, the goal of history, the peril and risk of history, the call for a better world; (II): individual renewal; (III): renewal of collective action.
- (c) A chain of centres and secretariats, some already donated to the holy see and entrusted by the holy see to the movement. Centres and secretariats are contemplated in many nations. At present they are in three, with provisional or projected secretariats in others.
- (d) Intimate gatherings, for free and spontaneous discussion on a given theme, led by a priest, in a spirit of simple and brotherly charity.
- (e) A new popular type of mission, based on the teaching of the mystical body of Christ and the communion of saints, with a one-year preparation period, and two successive phases of preaching, and fruits. The new mission has been described by Archbishop Gilla of Novara (one of the fourteen Italian bishops to have been the first to initiate it in their dioceses and under their direction) as a 'huge project of mission activity aimed at reawakening faith, and revivifying Christian life in all the diocese, in the various organizations of Catholic activity, the parishes, the different social spheres, and above all in us priests'. Closest collaboration is sought of all qualified persons in the diocese—clergy secular and regular, religious, women religious, lay leaders, so that the mission may become not only the task of the few to the many, but also combined action on the part of every single soul, with mutual encouragement, checking, and support.

According to schematized 'sectors' of *truth, grace, social justice, charity, the lay apostolate, and vocations*, the movement for a better world points the way to greater unity in charity at the various levels: family, parish, deanery, diocese, nation and eventually the world.

The expression 'movement for a better world' is open to more than one interpretation. There are, generally speaking, three accepted interpretations. Firstly, all those who want the transformation of the world in the light of Catholic social teaching and the mystical body of Christ, and are doing something about it (but not necessarily with direct reference to the particular appeal of Pope Pius XII), make up the movement in its very broadest sense. Secondly, there is the movement in its narrower sense: all who want the transformation of the world in this way and are doing all they can, with direct reference to this papal message. The movement, thirdly, in its narrowest interpretation is the promoting group, which numbers no more than about a score of dedicated members in Italy, Spain and Mexico. Theirs is neither to govern, nor organize (having no juridical authority), but rather to sow, in hearts and minds, the seeds of an ascetical reform, in utmost subordination of self, towards the attainment of better understanding and collaboration in every form of the Catholic apostolate, and with very special care for the directives of the holy see and the pastoral teaching of the bishops.

This is the group that Pope Pius XII, after repeatedly encouraging and blessing in a series of signed documents, finally approved by autographed letter of August 26th, 1958, only a few weeks before his death.

Pope John XXIII (who, when cardinal patriarch of Venice, himself followed a course of the exercises for a better world together with the members of the Venetian episcopate) also wrote an autographed letter, of further blessing and encouragement, on June 3rd, 1959.

To quote again what Fr Tovini has written:

With the progress of civilization, and of means of communication that make distances as nothing and enable men more easily to get mutually acquainted, mankind in this century is heading toward ever greater unity.

Ever more the tendency is toward state federations, or at least toward the gradual lessening, if not disappearance, of

frontiers, and barriers of culture too. International agreements become more and more numerous and extensive.

The Church cannot remain aloof from this human process, having the aim through her profoundly unitarian constitution and supernatural organism of leading all the peoples of the world to a single and close union in Christ. She has the finest and most vital doctrine of unity that it is possible to conceive.

From this it plainly follows that now, more than ever before in the world, is the hour of the Catholic Church.

Not only this, it is also the hour in which the Church must intensely christianize, not only individual beings, but our whole collective life.

So that the Church may attain these ends, there is needed a collective movement of spirituality which stresses and increases in Catholics a supernatural and collective sense of life, based on the teaching of the mystical body.

This is what the movement for a better world is working to promote, as deeply and widely as possible, for a world unified in Christ, but without diminishing the value of individual spiritual lives.

To change the world (starting from the psychological manoeuvre of persuading ourselves, and others, that it is possible) *men* must first be changed. Many, very many, seek themselves, and for material ends; few, very few, for spiritual ends, seek others. This is why the exercises for a better world, in the second part, concentrate on the individual's inward renewal. Three principal distinctions are made: *union of the individual with God*; *union of the individual with the world*; and *union of the individual with others*.

Union with God

If it is a great mistake to remain alone with God whilst neglecting others, it is a very great mistake to remain with others whilst neglecting God. Any saint's life, it is said, might be written in a single word: *prayer*. So, 'the occupation and pre-occupation of all who wish to work for the building of the age of Jesus', Fr Lombardi writes in *Hope for a Better World*, 'must be to make Jesus present in themselves. This they will cause to occur by the art of unceasing prayer, well exercised. I mean total prayer', the well-known Jesuit adds, 'and this is neither mere murmured words, nor a simple act of the intelligence, but much more: a

giving of the will to God. This is the prayer that must go on until it becomes the complete union of the person with Jesus. . . .’

During a course of the better world exercises, free discussion and questions are invited after every conference. But this rule is broken after the conference called the mountain of prayer (which goes through the various stages from the prayer of the purgative life, to that of the illuminative, and unitive) when the exercitants are expected to pass from the hall without speaking, and make their way, if possible, to the blessed sacrament.

Union with the world

Today, the man of goodwill who is struggling to sanctify himself still more, and sanctify others, not only often finds his own isolated efforts, understandably, unfruitful; he also, rather mysteriously, frequently finds that his endeavours united to this or that group or association are out of all proportion to the time, energy and thought generously given. He is constantly up against currents of subtly unchristian propaganda unremittingly sent out, by press, cinema, radio and television. New efforts are needed to remedy this.

In a Spanish work, *Pastoral Renovation*, the author, Fr Santos Beguiristain, pauses to examine the movement for a better world, ‘this interesting movement supported and approved by the holy see’. ‘Fr Lombardi’ (says Fr Beguiristain) ‘shows himself as having two ideas that may be called obsessive: that of bringing to light our qualities and forces, individual and social, and that of uniting them, through collaboration. The movement for a better world would open people’s eyes to the spiritual desolation in which the contemporary world is sunk, whether in philosophy, politics, or any other social department. . . . The great modern means of publicity must be exploited by us, the gospel message—of freedom without anarchy, justice without tyranny, love without licence, work without slavery—broadcast to the four corners of the earth, counteracting the propaganda of antichrist with the propaganda of the cross, that invites men to peace, hope, sacrifice, duty and principles of justice.’

Though Italy is professedly one of the most Catholic countries, it is a fact, as reported by the better world press agency, that, in a single year, fifty-four out of one hundred and fifty films were morally unacceptable. In this most important field, probably not

even the united will of an entire Catholic nation's forces can win the day, so vast are the resources required for expert modern film production. But why could not all the Catholics of the world acquire and combine thousands of cinema theatres ensuring a profitable showing of morally good films to the managers as well as a guarantee in the cost of their actual production? Six million Catholic film-goers throughout the world are by no means an inconsiderable force, spiritually or materially. An international body could even be formed, having the sole aim of creating a better cinema.

Union with others

Few things are so plain a mark of the devil among us as divisions. And if it is a very great mistake to remain with others whilst neglecting God, it is also a great mistake to remain with God whilst neglecting others. The modern saint must above all keep an open mind to every idea of working together with others in brotherly understanding, ever ready to add what he can to the common activity. The art of arts lies in seeking and enlisting the aid of others. The price of such indispensable collaboration will be charity; humility the hidden root.

Indeed there *are* very many everywhere who, from more or less religious or ethical motives, would not dream of doing to others what they would not have done to themselves. But the charity of an apostle goes much further than that, in actually seeing and serving the person of Jesus in others, even in endeavouring to love others as the Saviour loved us. . . .

Thousands of young men and women of the *Oasis* movement (a branch of the movement for a better world founded by Fr Virginio Rotondi, s.J., director of the Pius XII centre) have taken a private vow of purity (with the consent of a priest) having this supreme end in view. The great strength of marxist teaching, especially with the young, lies in its assertion that whereas the philosophers have always interpreted the world, marxism wants to change it. So do we—but by the power of love.

'The need for sanctifying ourselves and others, then, is urgent', Pope John XXIII told two hundred priests of the better world movement, at a general audience in the Vatican on November 16th, 1958. 'And this apostolate must be carried out, not with weapons and hard words, but with gentleness and charity, which,

indeed, constitute the beauty and the light of the better world, which it is hoped to bring about.'

FATIGUE

Fatigue hangs as heavy as leaves of lead or of iron,
Hanging downwards, dumb, earth-pointing,
Heavily ruminant of piercing the earth to rest.

No sound
Stirs in the cloying dusk; no dreams
Roost in the trees, and no fears
Bat-like.

Fatigue, like a plummy, funebrous cloak,
Hangs from the gnarled shoulders and twisted arms
And the unbowed, weight-dazed head of the tree.

Fatigue is numb and dumb,
But it asks, like an idiot child, to be carried . . .
'You must carry the Cross ere the Cross carry you'.
So the idiot child is borne,—the bitter, innocent burden,—
Is wrapped in the arms,
Close against the hungry heart.

Fatigue is a draining away,
A subtraction, a shadow of death,
Collapsing, collapsible,—a curtain to hide or show
The Light rise on the tree and call it to glory;
The angel shine in the face of the idiot child;
The crowned Hero welcome from the jewelled Cross.

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