

Protestants and Catholics can do is to insist on first things first; "Seek ye first the Kingdom of God and His Justice and all these things shall be added unto you." The business of religion is not social planning but soul saving; its end is not political but ethical and moral. And to every Jew, every Protestant and Catholic in the United States who is looking for light and peace and deliverance, and to every rabbi and minister who gives them God and not platitudes, I join hands in the bonds of common fellowship and charity.

The Catholic Church and Ethics

And while admitting the right of every man to adore God according to the dictates of his conscience, no Jew, nor Protestant, nor Catholic, will, I am sure deny me the right to believe, as I do believe with all the intensity of my soul, that the Church of which I am so unworthy a member is the spiritual offspring of Israel and the full and perfect prolongation of the life, truth and way of Jesus Christ and for anyone of its doctrines I would die rather than deny. Bear with me then as I tell you the contribution the Catholic Church is making to the preservation of moral principles and the primacy of ethics over politics. It can be made clear by analogy.

At the present time while long range guns and bombs simultaneously make the corpse and the grave, the British government sends its work of art away from the cities into hiding places from whence they will be brought back when, God grant, peace comes to a free people. Now the Church throughout the centuries has done the same thing with moral principles of right and wrong during times of war. As men forgot justice and brotherly love, and turned their fertile fields into Hacedemas of blood, the Church took the moral law to her bosom for safe-keeping. And when the wars ended and the passions and hatred of men had died away, the Church said: "Here are the principles of right and wrong which you endangered and forgot; I have kept them for you." And nations grateful for the preservation of that

which is greater than art, rebuilt their world on that moral law. The Church is doing that very thing now; whether the nations will want its healing balm after the wounds of battle remains to be seen. There is hope so long as men still believe in right when they do wrong. But there is no hope when men do what is morally wrong and call it politically right.

Today there is evidence that men are now beginning to recognize the necessity of right through experience with evil, as some men come to know the value of health through disease. And, no defense of the Catholic position could be more effective than the present straits for "from the immense vortex of error and anti-Christian movements there has come forth a crop of such poignant disasters as to constitute a condemnation surpassing in its conclusiveness any merely theoretical refutation" (Pius XII).

God grant that even though men do what is wrong, they may never forget that right is right if nobody is right, and wrong is wrong if everybody is wrong. And whatever men may believe in their consciences may they never doubt the lesson of the last 1900 years that though everything material be destroyed, there will be one survival in the future as in the past - the Church bearing the life and truth of Christ, which it has always refused to accommodate even to win an erring world. And there is one lesson all Americans can learn from the Church whatever be their creed, namely - the primacy of ethics over politics, of morality over expediency. Thus will we prove ourselves worthy to have that symbol of a moral America, the eagle flying upward and outwards to the sun and to God.

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Primacy of Ethics Over Politics

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Radio address by the legendary prelate delivered over the Church of the Air, October 27, 1940. This is a timely rebuke to all would-be "Catholic" politicians everywhere.

There is a great difference between ethics and politics: ethics is the science of right and wrong; politics is the science of government. Now since a government may be either good or bad, it follows that politics is a branch of ethics. It was considered that way by the Greeks centuries before Christ, when Aristotle housed his treatise on politics in the wide domain of ethics; it was considered that way by the Jews whose leaders condemned alliances with powerful anti-Semitic neighbors merely because their horses were many and their horsemen strong; and it has been so considered throughout the whole Christian tradition and so taught in our Catholic schools today, even to the point of saying that one may not make use of dishonest, political means to gain an honest end.

But to modern times with its passion for divorce has been reserved the dubious distinction of separating both politics and economics from ethics. Once economics became divorced from ethics a profitable business was called a good business; and once politics became divorced from ethics expediency was identified with justice. "It makes money doesn't it?" said the economists. Yes, but so does gangsterism. And even Hitler can say his politics works; but is it right?

Let me enumerate three samples of the tragic divorce of ethics and politics.

Firstly, the primacy of party politics over individual conscience.

Many an individual in any given party is often convinced in his soul that a certain party policy is

wrong; but he nevertheless follows the party line rather than his conscience. Nothing has done more to wreck the faith of the American people in party politics than this subservience of duty to program and this dethronement of conscience for the sake of a united front.

A second sample is chosen from the international scene where vindictive conquerors impose crushing terms upon the vanquished, and even regard any protest against those terms as a violation of justice. Right and wrong thus become identified with the maintenance of a *Status quo* imposed by force rather than the maintenance of order dictated by conscience.

And the third sample of the divorce of ethics and politics is to be found in the present tendency to seek alliances with nations which suppress every human right merely because one does not like the leader of another nation which also suppresses every human right. Calling Russia a friendly power may be good politics, but it is very bad ethics and it ill behoves a nation which prides itself on the love of righteousness to invoke the Devil to fight Beelzebub.

America cannot champion the cause of the oppressed and the enslaved and at the same time ally itself with that government which has not only oppressed and enslaved 160,000,000 people, but has also joined hands with the Nazis to enslave the world. Why should America be so blind as to believe that Russia, which provoked the war in Europe by demanding an appeasement of Hitler while promising to aid France and England will now for the first time in its history seek any other end than an exhausted world over which it might sweep like a vulture? The answer to this question is not difficult to find. When a nation forgets the universal moral principles of right and wrong, it becomes indifferent to the evil of other nations and at once makes itself an easy prey to Fifth Columnists.

Not having any clear concept of what is right and what is wrong, nations become incapacitated to deal with subversive evil when they meet it. If

the doctors of the United States were as indifferent to disease as some governments are to evil, and if they held that the desirability of health over disease was merely a question of a point of view, the world would long ago have turned into one vast hospital. But what is happening to souls by indifference to morality is far more tragic for like a hidden cancer it works its destruction before its discovery. The blindness of America in thinking that Stalin will do for us what he would not do for France, Poland and Finland is due solely to the collapse of morality in our international outlook.

I know the cheap retort made by those who favor such an alliance of America with Russia through expediency at the cost of morality. They ask: "If your house were burning would you not call in a Communist to put it out?" My answer is: "No, I would not if I knew the Communist started the fire."

Basis of Right and Wrong

There are too many in our land who confuse a personal hatred against a dictator with a hatred of wrong. Hence when they find the same wicked principle at work in others they are left cold. What manifests it better than for a movie for example, to sneer at a Hitler and a Mussolini, but to be silent about Stalin? And why mention only one of three persecutions? No one has a right to be heard on the subject of persecution unless he condemns it irrespective of where he finds it and irrespective of who is persecuted whether it be a Jew, a Protestant or a Catholic. The persecution of a Jew is just as wrong as the persecution of a Protestant, and the persecution of a Catholic is just as wrong as the persecution of a Jew for they are all human beings and all bearers of inalienable rights as the gifts of God.

Furthermore, no one has the right to be heard on the subject of dictatorship if he picks and chooses among his barbarians on the basis of a personal hatred for anyone or any two, but not all. It may be good business - it may be good propaganda in a film to like a red barbarian and

hate a brown or a black barbarian, but it is not good ethics, for ethics is based not on the color of an antihuman flag but on the basis of right and wrong grounded on the Eternal Reason of God. Any other standard of judgment destroys the moral sense of the American people and betrays the hope that justice-loving America will make itself worthy to assume more leadership among the nations of the world.

Jews, Protestants and Catholics have something more in common than the fact that we are fellow citizens. We share not only America, but we share also Americanism, and the essence of Americanism according to its Declaration of Independence is that our rights and liberties come to us, not from the State, not from the Federal Government, not from the will of the majority, but from God the Creator, hence, no earthly power can take our rights away. If our rights come from God, it follows that those who most contribute to the love and service of God in our country are at the same time doing most to preserve our inalienable rights and liberties. Look over the world and you will find that in those countries where religion is most persecuted, there man is most tyrannized.

The burden of preserving God in our national life falls principally on those charged with the responsibility of religious leadership. Sometimes there are betrayals. Generals always talk about the army; admirals about the navy; but religious leaders do not always talk about religion, God and morality. There is often a tendency to judge men by their attitudes to forms of government rather than by their attitude to God. I have spoken on some occasions with men charged with the responsibility of religion who never mentioned the name of God. Instead of judging democracy by its attitude to religion they judged religion by its attitude to democracy.

The last war should have convinced us that there is no such thing as saving democracy alone; democracy is not a root, but a branch - its root is religion. To save democracy we must save religion and that is why I say the first thing Jews,