

# INSTRUCTION on the SOCIAL APOSTOLATE

## TO ALL PROVINCIALS

Dear Father,

Fr. General asked me to send you this "Instruction on the Social Apostolate." Sufficient copies are enclosed to be sent to those of your Province who work in this apostolate.

That this Instruction might be used most effectively, Fr. General has decided that it should be read at table in all Our houses. In addition, you are to convene a special meeting of your consultors as well as a few other Fathers with experience in the social apostolate. They should have enough time before the meeting to read the Instruction and consider the conditions of the Province so that they will be well-prepared to proceed. At the meeting, they should consider before the Lord and discuss with religious freedom what should be done in the Province with respect to the social apostolate now, as well as in the future, according to the norms of the Instruction. Afterwards, please send Fr. General a report of the social apostolate in your Province and the decisions taken in this special consultation.

Antonius Maria de Aldama  
Secretary of the Society

10 October 1949

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# INSTRUCTION on the SOCIAL APOSTOLATE

Rev. Father General John Baptist Janssens, S.J.

1. In our anxiety to meet the threats that are at present confronting us in daily increasing numbers, there is danger that we may fix our attention on the present evil effects rather than on their root causes and thus, overlooking the wider and more enduring good, dissipate the apostolic efforts of the Society in the pursuit of immediate and less important objectives. The last two General Congregations sought to provide some remedy against this error in several of their decrees. But due to the clamour of World War II and the ensuing unrest, as well as to the fear of still another conflict, we have been prevented from carrying out these decrees in an orderly and persevering manner. It is our duty however "amid the changes of the world to keep our hearts fixed where true joys are to be found."<sup>1</sup> Our vocation demands that we should occupy ourselves in procuring the salvation of souls by the most efficacious means, whatever the external circumstances may be; whether we can freely exercise our ministries, or, because of persecution, we are hindered in them.

2. The present situation is serious. Danger threatens all Christians, as the enemies of God and man, the materialistic atheists, who have already subjected by force a great portion of the world, put forth all their efforts to extend their sway farther. And there is some foundation for their hope that, with the wide diffusion of their doctrines, the whole world will shortly be under their rule. The inequitable condition, both temporal and spiritual, of by far the greater part of the human race provides a most fertile soil for subversive doctrines. For thereby the wise and gracious plan of Divine Providence has been thwarted and life on earth, consequent to the disregard of social justice and charity, has for millions of people become like a cruel purgatory, not to say hell itself. Still, we shall seek in vain to win our fight against Communism unless "a proper social order is established according to those principles which our more recent Supreme Pontiffs have so brilliantly expounded."<sup>2</sup>

## Liberal Materialism

3. And opposing the communistic atheists, there is another form of materialism which is called "liberal." Its disciples are to be found among the wealthy and property-owning classes who have lost their faith in God and in Christ, or at least disregard or deny it in practice, especially in public affairs. It is their own comforts and privileges they seek to promote rather than the common good of the whole human race, believing that the wretched state of the common man is to be corrected by merely economic and material adjustment, or by force – even, if necessary, by force of arms. They do not realize that great wealth, unless its use be regulated by the Ten Commandments, will rather foster wickedness, particularly that unrestrained selfishness and lust by which man descends to the level of the beast, and that it will increase those very evils of which we complain. Then too, in many cases, in place of the despotic rule of political parties or of the state, by which Communism deceives the working man, they substitute the tyranny of plutocratic corporations which allow whole nations to be tortured by poverty and starvation rather than lessen or forego their profits.

4. Yet, in many parts of the world today, not only in those regions which we call mission countries, but even in the so-called Christian nations, the ferment of the Gospel which has

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<sup>1</sup> From the Collect of the Mass for the Fourth Sunday after Easter.

<sup>2</sup> GC 29, D.29, preamble.

been entrusted to the Church has not leavened the mass of mankind, because, as some have remarked, it has not been put into the mass but alongside it. Meanwhile the mass of the working classes, blinded by materialism, has for the most part no knowledge of the Church, whatsoever. To the working man, she is the Church of the upper classes only. For what poor man, they ask, enjoys the leisure and social position required of her members? Or else they consider her as demanding merely the external fulfilment of certain ceremonies. For it seems that they have never heard of her as the representative of a kind, gracious Father, proclaiming the Beatitudes on earth and in the everlasting life to come. The situation, it is true, is not the same everywhere, but in many of our industrial cities and towns, the number of those in the working class, who profess and live the faith, is so small that one could easily find a greater number in mission countries. Granted that the rich, too, have their share of those who are indifferent to the faith or who have abandoned it, still a far greater proportion is to be found among the working classes. And yet we read: "He hath sent me to preach the Gospel to the poor, to heal the contrite of heart."<sup>3</sup>

5. With us, Christ's love is a compelling motive. And Christ, in an untold number of His members, still suffers hunger, nakedness, exile and contempt. Let us turn our eyes attentively to sights which daily meet our eyes and, in the light of truth, study conditions to which we have grown accustomed and even indifferent. They must not be tolerated; there must be a change. Is it right that the sons of God and the members of Christ's Mystical Body should live in the filth and corruption of slums, which so many millions inhabit not only in Asia and Africa, but in many parts of America and Europe as well — slums where neither health of body nor purity of soul can be preserved without a miracle? Was this the reason that "God so wondrously established the dignity of human nature, and yet more wondrously restored it"?<sup>4</sup> That a few rich men might heap up wealth and condemn so many of their brethren in Christ to destitution? Was not this, rather, the reason why God in His bounty enriched the earth: that not only the few, but the majority and even all men might lead, if not a comfortable, at least the ordinary and endurable life which is necessary if one is to observe the Commandments?<sup>5</sup>

## Ordinary Folk

6. Now works which are founded for the benefit of the poor who cannot provide for themselves, for the aged, for orphans and for the sick are certainly praiseworthy. It is fitting to love Christ and to serve Him in His suffering members. Moreover, the common good of society requires that they be not abandoned, nor forced to obtain sustenance for themselves and their families by dishonest means; and for this reason such charitable work is rightly called "social" at times. This work too is certain to receive its reward from the Divine Judge

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<sup>3</sup> Luke 4:18.

<sup>4</sup> From the Ordinary of the Mass.

<sup>5</sup> "To each, therefore, must be given his own share of goods, and the distribution of created goods, which, as every discerning person knows, is labouring today under the gravest evils due to the huge disparity between the few exceedingly rich and the unnumbered propertyless, must be effectively called back to and brought into conformity with the norms of the common good, that is, social justice." Pius XI, "*Quadragesimo anno*." *Two Basic Encyclicals*, Washington, Catholic University Press, 1943, 127.

"The immense multitude of the non-owning workers on the one hand and the enormous riches of certain very wealthy men on the other establish an unanswerable argument that the riches which are so abundantly produced in our age of industrialism, as it is called, are not rightly distributed and equitably made available to the various classes of people." *Ibid.*, p 129

"It is not rash by any means to say that the whole scheme of social and economic life is now such as to put in the way of vast numbers of mankind most serious obstacles which prevent them from caring for the one thing necessary, namely, their eternal salvation." *Ibid.*, p. 175.

who said: "Come ye blessed of my Father ... for I was naked and you covered me..."<sup>6</sup> Nevertheless, I do not now intend to treat of such charitable work, which I may call extraordinary and which is exercised toward those members of the poorer classes, who, because of special circumstances, must be sustained by alms. Rather I will treat of those ordinary folk who, although they have the strength to earn a decent living, are prevented by the imperfection of the social order of today from providing for themselves and their families, even though they live hard-working, frugal and thrifty lives. And they are actually deprived of spiritual benefits also, such as a more refined education and a deeper supernatural life, which, while they afford joy, peace of soul and a tranquil hope for future happiness, usually presuppose a certain amount of temporal possessions.<sup>7</sup> Now such people actually constitute by far the greater proportion of the human race.

7. Accordingly, the social apostolate of which I am speaking should aim at procuring for as many men as possible, or rather, in so far as conditions permit for all men, an abundance of both temporal and spiritual goods even in the natural order, or at least that sufficiency which man of his very nature needs that he may not feel depressed or looked down upon, nor be exposed to trials or temptations which only men of heroic mould, aided and sustained by extraordinary grace, are able to withstand. Or, more exactly, we should strive to reduce to practical effect the wise plan of the Divine Creator, so that all the children of God may duly attain that happiness for which the infinitely generous and self-diffusive goodness of God has destined them.<sup>8</sup>

8. It will be in vain, however, that I exhort Ours to this social apostolate, unless "the interior law of charity and love which the Holy Ghost is accustomed to write and imprint in our hearts" guide them from within.<sup>9</sup> In vain will you urge the man who is not inflamed with the love of God and of his neighbour "to have compassion on the multitude" in any meaningful way. Therefore, before all else Ours must be trained to that sincere and active charity which today is called "a social attitude" or "social-mindedness." They must learn the correct teaching of the Church, and all must learn, each for himself, to work for the preparation and formation of a better world.

9. That true charity will be better stirred up and sustained if Ours are taught to see clearly the actual lot of by far the greater part of mankind. Since most of Ours were raised in comfortable circumstances, or else were isolated from their youth in a minor seminary, there are very few who could learn to know for themselves the actual daily life led by the working man and the farmer, by the clerk and by the lowest employees in the courts and in business. Yet it is necessary that Ours should see what it means to spend a whole life in humble circumstances, to be a member of the lowest class of mankind, to be ignored and looked down upon by other men; to be unable to appear in public because one does not have decent clothes nor the proper social training; to be the means by which others grow rich; to live from day to day on nothing but the most frugal food, and never to be certain about the morrow; to be forced to work either below or above one's strength, amid every danger to health, honour and purity of soul; to be

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<sup>6</sup> Matthew 25:34, 36.

<sup>7</sup> "Nevertheless, an abundance of corporeal and external goods is likewise a characteristic of a well-constituted State, the use of which goods is necessary for the practice of virtue." Leo XIII, *Rerum Novarum*. *Two Basic Encyclicals*, 45.

<sup>8</sup> "For, according to Christian teaching, man, endowed with a social nature, is placed on this earth so that by leading a life in society and under an authority ordained of God he may fully cultivate and develop all his faculties unto the praise and glory of his Creator; and that by faithfully fulfilling the duties of his craft or other calling he may obtain for himself temporal and at the same time eternal happiness." Pius XI, *op. cit.*, p.167.

<sup>9</sup> *Const.*, proem., n.1, [134]; *Summ. const.*, n.1.

unemployed for days and months, tormented by idleness and want; to be unable to bring up one's children in a decent manner, but rather to be forced to expose them to the common dangers of the public streets, to disease and suffering; to mourn many of them who, lacking the tender care which they need, have been snatched off by death in the bloom of their youth; never to enjoy any decent recreation of soul or body; and at the same time to behold about one the very men for whom one works, abounding with riches, enjoying superfluous comforts, devoting themselves to liberal studies and the fine arts, loaded with honours, authority and praise. Now while they think this over, let Ours consider how many there are in their own country who enjoy privileges and how many there are who live in humble circumstances. And if there are any who think that this unbalanced state of mankind is not all that unjust and that the poor should accept it with patient resignation, let them consult the pontifical documents, beginning with the Encyclical *Rerum Novarum* and continuing right down to the allocutions of our happily reigning Pope Pius XII, and they will see what is the attitude of Christ our Lord.

### **Training of Ours**

10. The desire for a more perfect reign of justice, equality, and charity in the world should be instilled in our young men from the novitiate onwards. They should be taught to love and esteem workingmen and ordinary folk as daily benefactors. At the time of the novices' hospital and catechism trials, the master and socius should strive to open their eyes to the lot of the workingman. Superiors should not be afraid to propose to me certain changes by which some of the novices' experiments may be adapted, wherever needed, to improve their formation. I have willingly granted permission already for novices, under certain conditions, to beg from door to door for the poor and to distribute in the hovels of the needy whatever alms they collect.<sup>10</sup> In some places, too, I have allowed certain picked men to be sent into factories for a short time, to work with the men and share their life. And in more than one place, novices working as helpers in our retreat houses have, with great profit, come to appreciate members of the working class making their retreat there. Above all, that worldly notion of what I would call social caste should be completely uprooted from the minds of the novices. I mean that notion which considers a man more worthy than others of esteem and respect and the bestowal of spiritual care merely because of his family's prestige, or his wealth. What would you think of a man imbued with this spirit, who, on meeting our Lord and His Blessed Mother as they lived on earth – poor certainly, and living by the toil of their hands – would look down with contempt on them, or, at least, would be indifferent to their lot and pass them by? "As long as you did it to one of these, the least of my brethren, you did it to me."<sup>11</sup>

11. In the remaining time of their formation, in their literary and scientific studies, wherever occasion offers itself, the defects and needs of the modern social order should be brought briefly, for the most part, and in passing, to the attention of Ours. As I shall indicate later on, while speaking about the colleges, this can and should be done without adding new lectures or courses, and even without lengthy, irrelevant digressions.

In philosophy however and theology, GC 28, D.29 may be appropriately applied: "Let Ours be well acquainted with the principal doctrines of the Church on the social order; these ought, moreover, to be properly presented to our Scholastics in philosophy and in theology" (n.10). Here again, there is no need for the introduction of new courses; but care should be had that

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<sup>10</sup> Cf. *Constitutions IX*, c.3 E [748].

<sup>11</sup> Matthew 25:40.

courses in ethics, in social economics, in moral and pastoral theology be applied to modern times and needs. Now there are many textbooks, especially in moral theology, which we have long used, but which do not satisfactorily meet modern needs in this matter. The outcome of our courses and the attitude of those who followed them are ample proof of this fact. Therefore, it will be the professor's duty to supply what is lacking and thoroughly to explain the social doctrine of the Roman pontiffs, while treating in short summary certain other points in his tract which are easier or somewhat out-of-date.

12. The aim of tertianship is, and ought to remain, not pastoral training for the work of the ministry, but training for a more profound and solid interior life. To this end everything else should be subordinated, not the reverse. Nevertheless, during this time the Tertians should be more thoroughly instructed both in the theory and practice of the ministries proper to the Society. Hence the Instructor, calling to his aid, if need be, a man more skilled in such matters, ought to explain what the Institute, and in particular, what the last two General Congregations have to say about the social apostolate. It is his task, too, to direct the first trials of the Tertians in the ministries which, during the time of this probation, should be exercised especially among the poor and workingmen. Wherever the Instructors propose it, I shall allow the Tertians more readily than novices to go into workshops or factories, either for spiritual ministry alone, or even to work with the men themselves, provided they never be forgetful of their priesthood. By all means they should visit the working classes and the poor in hospitals, in institutions, and, under proper circumstances, even in their homes. They will learn to know the wretched state of their homes, their poor food and clothing, by actually seeing it; they will learn to know their ignorance, their lack of refinement and education; by actual experience they would see the difficulty – I almost said the impossibility – of true Christian virtue, which we ourselves could not cultivate in the same circumstances. Unless they have actually experienced these things, and not merely heard about them, there is a danger that later, while preaching Christian resignation, justice and chastity, they may seem to make light of the poor, and even make themselves and the Church objects of scorn.

### **University Formation**

13. At home in the Provinces but especially in the missions, certain Fathers of suitable talents, industrious, and of reliable and strong character, should be trained in theoretical and practical studies for the express purpose of directing and taking part in social work. In theoretical studies, I say, and those of the highest type, in one of the few graduate schools or universities in Europe or America where they are properly taught. They should join to these studies some months or even a year of practical social work in different fields, in those regions especially where Catholic social work has already begun and already borne fruit.

The more learned of these Fathers should form a "Centre of Information and Social Action" unless, of course, such a centre already exists.<sup>12</sup> The function of this centre should not be so much to further actual social works, but to teach the theoretical and practical social doctrine to others, especially to priests, educated laymen, and the better educated workingmen, and to help them by counsel and advice.<sup>13</sup> This centre will spread the social doctrine of the Church as has already been done in certain places, by publishing books, by periodicals and various writings, by conferences, lectures, conventions, and the like, and it will strive to apply that doctrine to the needs of particular regions.

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<sup>12</sup> GC 28, D.29, n.7; GC 29, D.29, n.1 (*Epitome*, n.680).

<sup>13</sup> GC 29, D.20, n.1 (*Epit.*, n.680).

14. I think that there are two types of institutes which will be especially fruitful in social action; both are in harmony with the spirit of our Society. We should have, either separately or together, schools and courses for the employers in which they would be taught their rights and duties, and schools and lectures on social doctrines for the better educated and more capable members of the working class. Since, as can be seen, the future leaders of labour will be those only who come up from the ranks, and since there is a paramount need to save many, or even the mass of labour, and lead them along the right paths, this second type of school seems to be more important and of greater moment now. This is especially true, if anywhere, of our missions in Asia and Africa.

15. Certain Fathers who will take part in these social works may receive less scientific training. It will be of great advantage for them, either in Tertianship or later, to visit frequently the workers in their homes, and learn at firsthand the condition of their lives. It will also profit them, if their health and the requirements of Christian prudence allow it, to take part in the actual manual toil of the mines, the factories, or the workshops.<sup>14</sup> The Fathers who are destined for the Social Centre would profit especially by such experience.

### **Role of Laymen**

16. Ordinarily the promotion and direction of the social works is not our task but that of laymen. Such works pertain for the most part to the temporal order, and Ours, since we have had little experience in conducting temporal affairs, would come to them unprepared; such interests too, would withdraw us from that spiritual function which only a priest can perform. It is our task, as I have just indicated, to instruct the laity, and to help them by our counsel in moral and doctrinal fields. But, outside the sphere of our priestly function, we leave to them autonomy in their own affairs.

In certain regions, however, where laymen capable of this leadership are not yet at hand – this frequently happens in the missions – it will be our task, for the time being, out of charity towards the leaderless masses, not only to promote economic undertakings, and other corporal works of mercy, but to direct and regulate them as well. This method has already been used with success in certain places where successful and effective social works are now conducted by laymen, trained by their clerical predecessors.

17. It is certainly necessary, especially in some provinces, that superiors make sure our ministries are not almost exclusively conducted among the rich and the cultured.<sup>15</sup> I admit that inspiring such men with the right norms of Christian charity is a matter of no small merit. For not only owners of shops, but many who are professionally educated, namely doctors, lawyers, technicians, and bankers, have too often abandoned the spirit of the Gospel, and have striven by every possible means to further their own private gain only, and not the common good or the good of the majority.

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<sup>14</sup> GC 29, D.28, n.2 (*Epit.*, n.680).

<sup>15</sup> "To priests in a special way We recommend anew the oft-repeated counsel of Our Predecessor, Leo XIII, to go to the workingman. We make this advice Our own, and faithful to the teachings of Jesus Christ and His Church, We thus complete it: 'Go to the workingman, especially where he is poor; and in general, go to the poor.'

"Let our parish priests ... dedicate the better part of their endeavours and their zeal to winning back the labouring masses to Christ and His Church. Let them infuse the Christian spirit into quarters where it is least at home. The willing response of the masses, and results far exceeding their expectations, will not fail to reward them for their strenuous pioneer labour." Pius XI, "*Divini Redemptoris*," *Catholic Mind*, XXXV (1937), 467.



But it is not sufficient to minister to these classes alone. Let us not depart from the spirit of Christ our Lord, nor from the mind of our Founder, nor from the directions of the General Congregations, especially of the more recent ones. To prevent our Society from justly being classified with the rich and the capitalists, we must direct with utmost zeal many of our ministries towards the poorer classes. Our Society has never lacked praise for such a course of action, especially in the mission lands; it now remains for us to see that in those places where many men are engaged in the ministry of the colleges, the remaining members devote a like, and even greater, care for the poor than they do for the rich. Our residences would be suited for such an apostolate, if, turning over the faithful flock for the most part to the care of other shepherds, they centre their zeal especially on the scattered sheep that are lost.

18. Up till now, I have dealt with those phases of the social apostolate which the most recent General Congregations explicitly demand of us. I shall now take up those opportunities – by no means to be belittled – which the ordinary, time-honoured ministries of the Society offer us. For in these customary ministries of the Society, in our colleges, in our giving of retreats, in our sodalities, in our missions, in our ordinary parish work, and in our publication of periodicals, we can and should accomplish much which will greatly help to establish a right social order.<sup>16</sup> There is no need for me to go through all these activities; I shall merely refer to some of the more important ones by way of illustration.

### **Role of Our Schools**

19. It is perfectly clear how much good can and should be done by the foundation of chairs or faculties dealing with social questions in our universities. By university, I mean all our schools of higher studies, no matter how they are actually designated in different regions. I wish superiors to be alert to the need for such chairs and faculties in the universities of their foreign missions. And let them not delay, I beg of them, as has happened in the past in some parts of Europe, until materialism will have infected the minds of the people.

As for our colleges, I shall make a few suggestions for the studies which are generally called secondary. It is our aim above all in educating the young men we have accepted in the name of the Church, to instill in their hearts the charity of Christ as it is applied to modern problems in the encyclicals and other papal documents. We should not allow the prejudices which they have perhaps learned at home to take a deeper root while they remain with us. There should be no distinction in our colleges between rich and poor. They should not acquire any spirit of a special, privileged social class, which I have earlier designated as a social caste. The students should learn to have a spirit of reverence and gratitude towards the workingman. They should be taught not to set their hearts on wealth, but on "having food and sufficient clothing, with these let us be content."<sup>17</sup> Let them hunger and thirst after justice, the justice which sees to it that all men receive the due reward of their labours and that there be a more just distribution of temporal goods. They should learn that all men deserve the name and affection of a brother of Christ; that those who have received gifts in greater abundance do not have the right of use and abuse, as the law of the pagans proclaimed, but the obligation of using these gifts for the good of the majority, and indeed, of all men, if that is possible.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> GC 29, D.29, n.3 (*Epit.*, n.680)

<sup>17</sup> 1 Tim 6:8. "To be sure of eternal life, therefore, and to be able to help the poor effectively, it is imperative to return to a more moderate way of life, to renounce the joys, often sinful, which the world today holds out in such abundance; to forget self for love of the neighbour." Pius XI, "*Divini Redemptoris*." p.464.

<sup>18</sup> "The substance of all this is the following: whoever has received from the bounty of God a greater share of goods, whether corporeal and external, or of the soul, has received them for this purpose, namely, that he employ them for his own perfection and likewise, as a servant of Divine Providence, for the benefit of others." Leo XIII, *op.*

It is not desirable, either in our colleges or in our scholasticates, to increase the number of lecture periods. The young men will acquire an elementary knowledge of the encyclicals from their religion classes; but over and above this, it is of special importance that the teacher himself, eager with the charity of Christ, should use every opportunity to fill the hearts of his students with love for the masses. Lectures on the ancient writers, on history, on the native literature of each country, will offer many an occasion by a passing reference for forming these attitudes. For in literature and history we are constantly confronted with the conflict between the selfishness of the kings and nobles and the misery of the people, by whose labour the former indulge in great pomp, wage wars, and win glory for themselves. In this way let the young men learn to hate social evils, which far outweigh those which afflict mere individuals; let them learn, too, to love the virtues which have a wider scope and tend to the common good; and let them practise these at once within the modest limits of their own family, school and friends, with the desire to cultivate them on a broader and fuller scale later on.

In keeping with these constant reminders our students should take up the practice, according to their age, of visiting the homes of the poor, the workshops and mines of labourers, and their social centres; let them not only hear the words of their teacher exhorting them, but let them see with their own eyes and touch with their own hands the proof of how truthfully he speaks to them. The Society will certainly achieve a work of no small merit in the eyes of God, if from her colleges young men, freed of that pagan mentality which adores riches, go forth steeped in that charity which seeks above all the good of others and is ready to work with the Church in bettering the temporal and spiritual conditions of the greatest possible number of human beings.<sup>19</sup>

## The Spiritual Exercises

20. It is obvious to anyone who pauses to reflect on the matter that nothing solid and lasting can be obtained in social reform unless the souls of men are inwardly conformed to the true principles of the Gospels. If the captains of industry and other rich men are filled with greed for amassing limitless wealth and for enjoying without restraint luxuries and the pleasures for which these prepare the way; and if workingmen, in their lower state are likewise filled with self-love, envy, sloth and a similar craving for wealth and pleasure; if in neither management nor labour, the benevolent, humble and generous charity of Christ holds sway, then to no purpose will either private groups or governmental agencies strive to accomplish anything worthwhile for the benefit of the labouring classes. Greed on one side, hatred on the other, will make dissension more acute and breed ever greater evils.<sup>20</sup> Hence it follows that the

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*cit.*, p.31.

<sup>19</sup> "We desire therefore ... that this divine precept, this precious mark of identification left by Christ to His true disciples, be ever more fully explained by pen and word of mouth; this precept which teaches us to see in those who suffer Christ Himself, and would have us love our brothers as Our Divine Saviour has loved us, that is, even at the sacrifice of ourselves, and, if need be, of our very life." Pius XI, *Divini Redemptoris*, p.463

<sup>20</sup> "Since religion alone ... can remove the evil, root and branch, let all reflect upon this: first and foremost Christian morals must be reestablished, without which even the weapons of prudence, which are considered especially effective, will be of no avail to secure well-being." Leo XIII, *op.cit.*, p.81.

"By all means in their power let them strive for the well-being of peoples; and especially let them aim both to preserve in themselves and to arouse in others, in the highest equally as well as in the lowest, the mistress and queen of the virtues, Charity. Certainly the well-being which is so longed-for is chiefly to be expected from an abundant out-pouring of charity; of Christian charity, We mean, which epitomizes the law of the Gospel, and which, always ready to sacrifice itself for the benefit of others, is man's surest antidote against the insolence of the world and immoderate love for self; the divine office and features of this virtue being described by the Apostle Paul ... is not self-seeking ... bears with all things ... endures all things." *Ibid.*

Spiritual Exercises, conducted for the owners and managers of industry and also for the workingman, must be reckoned among the most effective means for promoting this social-mindedness. From the Exercises, these men will effectively imbibe a spirit of abnegation in regard to temporal things, a spirit of poverty and humility, reverence for the commandments of God, and finally, love of God and their neighbour. This will be all the more surely accomplished if the director of the Exercises applies them to modern conditions, as he ought, and shows just where the duties of justice, equity and charity rest today for the owners and for the workingmen.<sup>21</sup>

21. The man who understands the genuine rules of the Sodality of Our Lady will easily appreciate how much they contribute to the common good either by those sections devoted to study or by those devoted to apostolic work. If we wish, we can easily make the Sodality of Our Lady the principal instrument for instructing both rich and poor in the interior life and in charity, as well as in the teaching of the encyclicals, for the betterment of their personal lives and the lives of their subordinates and associates.

22. In some provinces, the Sodalities of Our Lady or colleges and residences of the Society have very wisely established schools in which young workers, the poor or orphans or those otherwise deprived of help, are instructed in a trade, and receive a literary and spiritual training at the same time. I urge that in addition to these, especially in our colleges, classes should also be conducted in which workingmen who are somewhat older and experienced in their trade may devote themselves according to their ability to literature and the liberal arts, which up to the present have been almost exclusively the privilege of those who were quite well-to-do. For social tranquility and genuine progress of the under-privileged, it is not sufficient merely to provide for their material needs. Even in the natural human order the maxim is true: "Not by bread alone doth man live." A somewhat more liberal education, moreover, will be of advantage to the promising labour leaders of the future.<sup>22</sup>

### **In and Out of Season**

23. There is no reason why I should delay on the other ministries of the Society. It is clear how the preacher, in parish missions especially, or how the pastor in his parish, or especially how the writer for one of our periodicals, particularly for the ones that are cultural, can and ought to drive home, "in season, out of season," a knowledge of the true teachings of the Church, wisely indeed and prudently, but with all human respect thrown aside, since the truth will never please everybody!

24. In regard to our missions however I cannot refrain from stressing not only the necessity of teaching the true social doctrine, but even more of promoting social works and a public order

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<sup>21</sup> "But above all, let them hold in high esteem and assiduously employ for the good of their disciples that most valuable means of both personal and social restoration which, as We taught in Our Encyclical, *Mens Nostra*, is to be found in the Spiritual Exercises. In that Letter We expressly mentioned and warmly recommended not only the Spiritual Exercises for all the laity, but also the highly beneficial Workers' Retreats. For in that school of the spirit, not only are the best of Christians developed but true apostles also are trained for every condition of life and are enkindled with the fire of the heart of Christ. From this school they will go forth as did the Apostles from the Upper Room of Jerusalem, strong in faith, endowed with the invincible steadfastness in persecution, burning with zeal, interested solely in spreading everywhere the Kingdom of Christ." Pius XI, *Quadragesimo anno*, p.181.

<sup>22</sup> "That these whole classes of men may be brought back to Christ Whom they have denied, we must recruit and train from among them themselves, auxiliary soldiers of the Church who know them well and their minds and wishes, and can reach their hearts with a tender brotherly love. The first and immediate apostles to the workers ought to be workers; the apostles to those who follow industry and trade ought to be from among themselves." *Ibid.*, p.189.

that is in conformity with justice and human dignity. For there is danger, since we are not aroused by what has become customary, that we shall hardly notice to what degree most of the natives are deprived of the condition of life that befits a human being and a Christian. How often the lot of workers and farmers, especially in Asia, must be judged not only hard but inhuman! Unless we are impelled by the charity of Christ to work zealously for the bettering of their condition of life, we open the door to atheistic Communism and expose our neophytes to the danger of presently learning about social progress elsewhere in an atmosphere devoid of all Christian spirit, and thus easily losing their faith. For it is not merely souls but men that we must love in Christ.

25. GC 29 wisely remarked that our private life should agree with the doctrine we preach, so that our preaching may be the more sincere and effective.<sup>23</sup> If we really see Christ in our brothers, how can we be resigned to see ourselves deprived of nothing and even treated sumptuously while beneath our very eyes our neighbour is destitute of everything, and tortured by hunger and cold? Is the disciple above his Master? It is true that the Institute does not ordinarily impose on us a very austere poverty; it does commend however the spirit and practice of greater abnegation, which in these days must be insisted upon more forcefully. Those European provinces which were tried by two wars have discovered how many and how great are the things, formerly considered almost necessary for life itself, that can be taken away without detriment to health or work; nay rather, with benefit to both. Let each member of the Society in the spirit of the Constitutions, see what he can give up, as he ponders the love of Christ for the poor. Let us as religious reject especially whatever modern times have devised for the mere convenience of a more comfortable life, and thus we shall imitate the example of Christ suffering in His poor. GC 29 praised those of Ours who in the rooms where they live, the clothes they wear, and the ordinary food they eat, are content with the standard of living common to the workingmen in their country.<sup>24</sup> Our young men especially, as far as a prudent care of their strength permits, should accustom themselves to a more austere way of life, from which they have banished the superfluous use of candy, finer drinks, tobacco, easy chairs, journeys and public amusements. The older members whose health allows it ought to set an example in this to the younger men.<sup>25</sup>

## Our Helpers

26. To this good example of austerity we must add that of justice, equity and charity in dealing with our servants, workmen, and all our lay helpers, especially those who are teachers and professors. They should receive a just wage according to the norms of the encyclicals;<sup>26</sup> in the matters of food, dwelling, clothing, in their allotted schedule of work, they ought, *mutatis mutandis*, to be on a par with Ours. For these are the things which are in keeping with the dignity of the human person and a Christian man. A great many men of today are not ready to admit that religious, professing poverty, be treated more sumptuously at table and in the other phases of their daily life, than their spiritual and temporal assistants. To these fellow-workers Ours must show due reverence, respect and love. Superiors are to correct anyone found guilty of pride or harshness towards our servants or workmen; it is Christ Himself whom he has contemned and injured. Let those who work for us be considered sons and brothers of our family; and let it be clear that in this matter, too, religious think and act differently from those of the world.

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<sup>23</sup> Cf. GC 29, D.29, n.5 (*Epit.* n.680).

<sup>24</sup> Cf. GC 28, D.25 (*Epit.* n.478); GC 29, D.29 (*Epit.* n.680).

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>26</sup> Cf. *Cod.Iur.Can.*, can. 1286.

27. Finally – and this is practically a summary of the whole matter – let our principal aim in the social apostolate never be anything negative, no matter what form it takes in practice. Our task is by no means finished when we fight against materialism, whether it be against Communism, or against those who abuse capitalism. Our task is positive: to spread the Kingdom of God and Christ on earth, and to make sure that the human race, according to the plan of its Creator and Redeemer, will some day come, after a life in every way worthy of sons of God and members of Christ, to the eternal company of the Supreme Good. The Kingdom of God is "the kingdom of justice, love and peace."<sup>27</sup> As long as Christ suffers injustice and is treated harshly in even the least of His brethren, as long as there is hatred between men individually and as members of conflicting social classes, it would be treason for us priests and religious, or for any Christian at all, to rest from labour. Even if Communism or some other form of materialism were not plotting against the Church and actually persecuting her, the obligation would still rest on us to come to the assistance of all our brothers in Christ, by striving for a more equitable distribution of both material possessions and goods of a higher order.

28. May our Saviour grant to us in His kindness the grace to lay aside completely the spirit of the world and, in obedience to His spouse, the Church, to bend every effort to restore the Beatitudes of the Gospel not only in the private lives of individuals, but in the life of society as a whole. "A brother that is helped by his brother is like a strong city."<sup>28</sup> How much the Society will accomplish if only we unite our forces, and in a spirit of oneness, gird ourselves humbly and resolutely for the work before us!

Ioannes Baptista Janssens, S.I.  
Rome

10 October 1949

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<sup>27</sup> From the Preface of the Mass of Christ the King.

<sup>28</sup> Proverbs 18:19.