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Résumé de l'article

The importance of close and harmonious collaboration between public authorities on the one hand, and the various associations, organizations, and institutions established independently of government initiative, and generally called « intermediate bodies », on the other, has always been stressed in Catholic social teaching.

Two reasons prompt us to devote our annual Labour Day Message to this basic theme. We wish to set it out in terms as concrete as possible, and to review it in the light of the recent and memorable social encyclicals of the late Pope John XXIII, *Mater et Magistra* and *Pacem in Terris*.

Que tous et chacun multiplient les contacts directs et les négociations discrètes de préférence aux déclarations publiques qui trop souvent provoquent et tendent les esprits. Que tous prennent, selon l'expression de Jean XXIII, « la vérité comme fondement des relations, la justice comme règle, l'amour mutuel comme moteur et la liberté comme climat ». (Jean XXIII, *Pacem in terris*, no 149).

Une évolution progressive.

Rappelons en terminant, qu'à notre avis, le souci sincère de vouloir progresser rapidement et de vouloir réaliser dans notre pays, le plus tôt possible, des œuvres de grande valeur, voire même de rattraper certains retards, ne devrait pas nous induire cependant, à brusquer les étapes.

En effet, la précipitation dans l'évolution économique et sociale susciterait des résistances et des refus qui pourraient être évités, deviendrait facilement génératrice de polémiques puis de conflits, qui à leur tour, plongeront les hommes et les groupes dans la discorde. Et tôt ou tard, après de dures épreuves et certains échecs, il faudrait, qu'on le veuille ou non, envisager la dure nécessité de reconstruire lentement, et d'une façon plus rythmée cette fois.

Ainsi que l'écrivait Jean XXIII, « il ne manque pas d'hommes au cœur généreux, qui, mis en face de situations peu conformes ou contraires à la justice, sont portés par leur zèle à entreprendre une réforme complète, et dont l'élan, brûlant les étapes a alors des allures quasiment révolutionnaires.

« Nous voudrions leur rappeler que la progression est la loi de toute vie et que les institutions humaines, elles aussi, ne peuvent être améliorées qu'à condition qu'on agisse sur elles de l'intérieur et de façon progressive ». (Jean XXIII, *Pacem in terris*, no 161 et 162).

Le présent message n'entend nullement déprécier ce qui a été fait jusqu'ici ; il veut simplement préciser aux yeux de tous les responsabilités de chacun. Puisse-t-il contribuer à l'évolution féconde et harmonieuse de notre pays !

INDISPENSABLE COLLABORATION BETWEEN PUBLIC AUTHORITIES AND INTERMEDIATE ORGANIZATIONS

Message of The Canadian Catholic Hierarchy

The importance of close and harmonious collaboration between public authorities on the one hand, and the various associations, organizations, and institutions established independently of government initiative, and generally called « intermediate bodies », on the other, has always been stressed in Catholic social teaching.

Two reasons prompt us to devote our annual Labour Day Message to this basic theme. We wish to set it out in terms as concrete as possible, and to review it in the light of the recent and memorable social encyclicals of the late Pope John XXIII, *Mater et Magistra* and *Pacem in Terris*.

Our rapidly changing society

In a country in such total evolution as ours, when so many plans, programs and reforms are being drawn up at the same time in all sectors and at all levels, municipal, provincial and federal, it becomes imperative to unite all the energies, talents, and goodwill available for this extensive task.

It is important, moreover, that all who are involved, both governed and governing, share, discuss, and approve studies, decisions and actions that can have far-reaching consequences. Any action that is only one-sided, though taken by government with the best of intentions, runs the risk, in the long run, of discouraging the free flow of public opinion and suggestion, and of snuffing out the citizen's sense of responsibility and initiative, so indispensable to the general well-being of society.

Safeguarding the democratic way of life

In a political system, the spirit of democracy is not manifested only in the right of citizens to vote freely, and from time to time, but also in the effort of the elected representatives to exercise their mandate in close and continuous collaboration with their electors. «To express his own views of the duties and sacrifices imposed on him; and, not to be compelled to obey without being heard — these are two rights of the citizen... From the solidity, harmony, and good results produced by this between the citizens and the government, one may decide which democracy is really healthy and well-balanced, and what is its life energy and power of expansion.» (Pius XII, Radio Message, December 24, 1944)

In the modern State, the intermediate bodies have become, for all practical purposes, the principal and most reliable means of expression at the disposal of the public; therefore they should be heard and respected as such. The voice of the isolated voter makes little impression in our day. Only intermediate bodies assuming all their responsibilities can save our country from the horrors of arbitrary action or that political tyranny which other so-called democratic countries have sadly experienced. It is only by working together, and not by opposing each other, that our civic authorities and intermediate bodies can keep up a truly democratic system of government.

Let us consider, in concrete terms, some of the responsibilities incumbent on both the intermediate bodies and the public authorities, which, by their nature, demand close and indispensable collaboration.

I — SOME RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE INTERMEDIATE BODIES

WITH REGARD TO THE PUBLIC AUTHORITIES

The intermediate bodies should :

1.—Recognize that their responsibilities are increasing. Paradoxical as it may appear, these responsibilities must increase in proportion to that «more frequent and extensive intervention by public authorities in the economic and social fields.» (Mater et Magistra, 49). The effective and representative work of groups, therefore, must be more evident than ever. Any evasion or systematic obstruction of their role by government intervention would be regrettable and harmful to the balanced evolution of our country.

2.—Broaden their horizons with a view to closer co-operation in seeking and promoting the common good. « Individual citizens and intermediate groups are obliged to make their specific contributions to the common good. One of the chief consequences of this is that they must bring their own interests into harmony with the needs of the community, and must dispose of their goods and services as civil authorities have prescribed, in accord with the norms of justice, in due process, and within the limits of their competence. This they must do by means of formally perfect actions, the content of which must serve the common good, or at least be capable of being directed toward that good. » (John XXIII, *Pacem in Terris*, 53).

3.—Pursue and promote a most careful collaboration with civic authorities. Such co-operation should always be close, clear and constructive, conducted in that real « spirit of solidarity » stressed in *Mater et Magistra*. In fact, the life of society can be prosperous and orderly only if private citizens, intermediate bodies, and public authorities work in harmony and unite their efforts.

4.—Take whatever steps or make whatever statements they consider necessary, provided they be truly useful, the fruit of serious study and discussion, representative of the views of their members, free from partisan politics and obviously for the common good.

5.—Set up where possible committees or councils for study and research. These may be private or the joint effort of several associations, working with university centres and government bodies. This would lead to a clearer analysis of facts, a better evaluation of situations, more timely and effective action, and, when necessary, constructive suggestions for legislative and administrative measures.

6.—Place in responsible positions qualified and experienced persons capable of facing, analysing and solving the actual problems. As our civilization is characterized above all by the remarkable achievements of science and technology, « one cannot enter these organizations and work effectively from within unless he is scientifically competent, technically capable and skilled in the practice of his own profession. » (John XXIII, *Pacem in Terris*, 148).

7.—Intensify the contacts between the leaders and members of each group in order to maintain true representation of the group. Sociological observation frequently reveals that as great social organisms develop their structure, there is found a sometimes rather considerable deviation between the thought expressed by the leaders and the real opinion of the rank and file. It is important therefore to our mind that such a situation be recognized and if necessary corrected without delay. For such a division runs the risks not only of astonishing outsiders but also of eventually weakening the practical influence of the intermediary bodies in the image presented to public opinion in general and to the civic power in particular. A recent Pontifical Letter to the « *Semaines Sociales* » in France explicitly says : « That the groups should have as their primary preoccupation, not to increase their power but to serve the true interests of their members in the interest of the common good. This also supposes that the members of a trade union, of a co-operative, of any social or political group should not seek immediate advantages but should be concerned in a common effort to define the aims of their association and its manner of action. » (Pontifical Letter to the « *Semaine Sociale de Caen*, » July 2, 1963). Hence the importance of maintaining continuous exchange of information between officers and members, by means of a proper program of education. Otherwise, how can one know that the public statements of the leaders truly correspond to the real needs and aspirations of the members?

8.—Try, by all means, to bring together all the professional and non-professional groups that are already so numerous in our society and still continue to multiply. Too often there is division, or repetition that endangers their efficiency, weakens their practical influence with public authorities and even, at times, interferes with their pursuit of the common good. We cannot give enough encouragement to all these groups to look for practical ways of co-ordinating their efforts, of undertaking joint action at times, and even of regrouping their forces.

9.—Make an effort to have the intermediate bodies representing different sectors of our society show due respect for one another. It would seem desirable to set up permanent liaison committees, or something similar, in order to establish regular contact among them, and to facilitate a mutually helpful exchange of views and experiences. This would avoid useless provocations and contradictory statements that are always harmful to the common good.

II — SOME RESPONSIBILITIES OF PUBLIC AUTHORITIES WITH REGARD TO INTERMEDIATE BODIES

The Public Authorities Should:

1.—Fully recognize the existence of associations or intermediate bodies and the need for them. «For the achievement of ends which individual human beings cannot attain except by association, it is necessary and indispensable to set up a great variety of intermediate groups and bodies in order to guarantee the dignity of the human person and safeguard a sufficient sphere of freedom and responsibility». (Pacem in Terris, 24.) It even devolves upon the public authorities to contribute to the creation of a state of affairs that would «facilitate the establishment of intermediate groups which will make social life richer and more effective». (Pacem in Terris, 64.)

2.—See to it «that the citizens no less than the intermediary bodies, in exercising their rights and fulfilling their duties, enjoy genuine juridical protection in their relations with one another and with the public officials» (Pius XII, Radio Message, Christmas, 1942.)

3.—Seek for and foster a real collaboration with the intermediary groups. Instead of seeing these groups as a threat or a luxury, the civic authority should rather draw upon them as a source of light and experience, ally them to itself, seeing them as an indispensable support and aid to that work which is proper to the State, namely, the realization of the common good in the temporal order.

4.—Enter into partnership with these groups in the preliminary study, discussing and working out laws and regulations. As Pius XII declared: «To express his own views on the duties and sacrifices imposed upon him; and, not to be compelled to obey without first being heard — these are two rights of the citizen which find their expression in democracy, as its name implies». (Pius XII, Radio Message, December, 1944.)

5.—To create, where needed, other consultative bodies, superior councils or permanent commissions, like those already existing in our country. These have the immense advantage of bringing together representatives of different groups and of establishing organized relations among them and with the public officials. It is important above all that these

bodies be truly operative. They must, therefore, be given all the financial and technical assistance they need to work effectively.

6.—Encourage all chief officials and technical consultants, specialists and jurists in the service of the various government bodies, to meet often with the leaders and members of these groups. «Who does not see», asked His Holiness Pius XII, «the harm which would result if the last word in the affairs of the State were reserved to the technicians of the organization? No, the last word belongs to those who see the State as a living entity, a normal offspring of human nature; it belongs to those who administer the affairs of the country in the name of the State and do not control the individual immediately, such that he is never, either in his private or social life, crushed under the weight of State administration». (Pius XII, 8th Congress of Administrative Sciences, August 5, 1950.)

7.—Have recourse, continually and officially, to the intermediate groups for their collaboration in both the application and control of laws and regulations. «As to political life, it is of no little importance that citizens of every class should show a growing awareness of their duty to safeguard the common good». (Mater et Magistra, 96.) Such collaboration is necessary to avoid conflicts caused by the difficulty of adapting certain measures, or by inevitable differences of interpretation; but it is necessary also in order to involve a larger number of competent persons and associations that may be especially interested in the development of a given sector and capable of working closely with public authorities for the realization of the common good. In fact, it belongs to the State to encourage in its citizens a sense of the common good. This requires a complete education, it is true, but normally it develops best in concrete action.

8.—Make known to the citizens and to the intermediate bodies as clearly as possible the true dimensions of the problems to be solved, and the precise import and expediency of the measures to be taken. It is important that all who will be affected by new laws know the meaning and the spirit of them, as well as their implications and specific requirements. Then they can discuss them with calm and profit and freely give their accord to them. «The dignity of the human person also requires that every man enjoy the right to act freely and responsibly. For this reason, in social relations especially, man should exercise his rights, fulfil his obligations and, in the countless forms of collaboration with others, act chiefly on his own responsibility and initiative. This is to be done in such a way that each one acts on his own decision, of purpose, and from a consciousness of his obligation, without being moved by force or pressure brought to bear on him externally. For any human society that is established on the sole basis of force must be regarded as simply inhuman, inasmuch as the freedom of its members is repressed, when in fact they should be provided with appropriate incentives and means for developing and perfecting themselves». (Pacem in Terris, 34.) Here, then, are made explicit some of the reciprocal duties which we believe devolve upon intermediate bodies and public authorities. On our respect for them depends, in large measure, the constant progress and equilibrium of our Canadian society. «Not revolution but harmonious evolution», declared Pius XII, «will bring about salvation and justice». (Pius XII, Pentecost, June 13, 1943.)

TWO CONTRIBUTING FACTORS

In a period of rapid change and manifold reform such as ours, two general supplementary conditions can contribute to a free exchange among all parties and to a better

realization of the common good: maintaining a certain calmness in discussion and evolving progressively.

Calmness in Discussion

At this point in Canadian history there are multiple occasions for differences of opinion on initiatives to be taken and steps to be followed. It could hardly be otherwise in a society that wisely acknowledges the right of each one to choose freely and express himself openly. Nevertheless, it is important that we avoid unnecessary tensions and conflicts. It is good to distinguish between fruitful discussion and partisan debate. As Pius XII declared: «When people call for «democracy and better democracy», such a demand cannot have any other meaning than to place the citizen evermore in the position to hold his own personal opinion, to express it and to make it prevail in a fashion conducive to the common good». (Radio Message, December 24, 1944.)

Therefore, we would encourage all citizens, all directors of intermediate bodies, and all political leaders, to maintain a most fitting calm in their discussions and in their daily relations. Moreover, personal contacts and discreet negotiations are preferable to public statements that too often provoke people and upset them. Together we can work for that order envisioned by Pope John: «An order that is genuinely human, whose foundation is truth, whose measure and objective is justice, whose driving force is love, and whose method of attainment is freedom». (Pacem in Terris, 149.)

A progressive evolution

In closing, let us recall that the sincere desire to make rapid progress and to accomplish worthwhile goals, and even to make up for lost time, should not lead to the error of skipping necessary steps.

Too much haste in economic and social progress can stir up resistance that could be avoided. Too easily it brings on debate and conflict that throw individuals and groups into discord. Then, sooner or later, having learned by failure on the hard road of experience, it is found necessary to retrace one's steps and go forward again, this time avoiding the short cuts.

As Pope John suggests: «There are some souls, particularly endowed with generosity, who, on finding situations where the requirements of justice are not satisfied or not satisfied in full, feel enkindled with the desire to change the state of things, as if they wished to have recourse to something like a revolution.

«It must be borne in mind that to proceed gradually is the law of life in all its expressions. Therefore, in human institutions, too, it is not possible to renovate for the better except by working from within them, gradually.» (Pacem in Terris, 161-162.)

The present message in no way wishes to disparage what has been done so far; it speaks to all as it specifies the obligations of each one. May it contribute to the fruitful and harmonious development of our country.