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“...FILL THE EARTH AND SUBDUE IT”
(DEVELOPMENT: A CHRISTIAN CONCEPT)

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To DAD
Proactive agent of all human development

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In all justice, I wish to thank with all my heart and soul,

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INTRODUCTION

a) *Present Relevance and Significance of the Subject*

Nowadays the trendy word is “development”. As my address unravels, you shall be able to understand why this is so. The fact that the word is fashionable at present must gratify us because it is our duty to contribute towards development; only we, as Christians, can and therefore, should give the term “development” its real value.

Unfortunately, while communists spread false myths to stir up people to their advantage, we do not benefit enough from the treasure of revealed truths kept in the Church that can stimulate and focus on constructive and supportive energy to reach real development.

It is not my intention to cover the whole issue; I shall merely mention a few elements common to the concept of development, which apply to the term in the pedagogical sense and in the economic sense. I shall omit all reference to the latter because it has been dealt with splendidly by the R. P. Laurent, S.J. and by the Engineer Remando Campos Menéndez. I shall try not to “moralize” (by this I mean: “setting the law down”) about development- even though it is necessary nowadays – but with the help of God, I will point out the human-divine dimension of the term, “placing” the material activity of man within The Plan of God with a divine “super-destiny”; within such Plan all human work shall develop into plenitude.

Marxists accuse us of being so busy with heavenly matters that we do not belong totally to this world and thus we are unable of feeling, for instance, all the tragedy of the misery of the working class; we are missing- because of our faith- a huge deal of the power of action, of true, concrete realization which they can use in favor of those who have no other horizons.

As we go along, we shall become aware of just the opposite: that the Christian vision of the world provides Christians with great stimuli to act with energy upon the world.

The world is not a place of exile or an object to be admired as a proof of God’s omnipresence; the world is the place where man construes his own destiny. We must focus on the world so that History, which “builds up” day by day, resembles as much as possible the Plan that God in His wisdom and love has prepared for men and the world.

We should take, for instance, the case of a “human principle” such as justice. It is not enough to expect that with the arrival of the day of the Final Judgment, “justice shall be granted” (undoubtedly it shall) and to also expect that already there is a contribution to History, although it is imperfect- and this our responsibility, the responsibility of man who, consciously or unconsciously and although may seem limited, contributes towards its making.

The importance of an appropriate solution to the problems of our country is another reason for reflecting upon the issue.

We should take, for instance, the problem of the lack housing. Is housing a “consumer good”–as many economy experts in good faith sustain– or is it a “capital good”? What priority should we give the issue in the development of concrete plans? It is evident that if we adopt the first classification, that of a “consumer good”, it should be given less importance, for instance, to that of the construction of roads or aerodromes, because these are without doubt a capital good. But...Is it a “consumer good”? Obviously the answer to this question does not depend solely on technical and financial factors but also on the value given healthy

families from a physical and moral point of view and on the value given to the number of houses needed; in other words, to the *scale of values* adopted by developers.

I would like to call your attention upon the following: in our circle –coming from the lips of men who call themselves, in public, Catholics – I have heard misleading concepts. I shall quote two, one which mitigates the problem; the other which exaggerates it to excess.

I remember with sadness somebody saying, when we were returning from a rural area where the crop had been lost, that it had been almost a blessing because otherwise the people there would have had a lot of money and would not have known what to do with the money and would have spent it recklessly.

What misapprehension! Although in its magnitude it is different, it is similar in its orientation to that of someone who does not feel sorry for a child who suffers from infantile paralysis. What is normal with Divine Providence is that a human being uses legs that God gives him, likewise with the crops. If God allows such things to happen it must be for a number of reasons and for very good ones indeed, and it is not for us to at “prima facie” be happy or take measures to avoid what it wrong or causes wrong.

The other case is that of the person who criticized the enormous amount of energy dedicated to encouraging religious vocations, saying that instead, Roman Catholics should focus seriously on economic development because when people achieve their goals, they are more generous with their contribution to the Church and priests may have a better standard of living and this could result in more religious vocations.

These are two examples of two opposite extremes: one who does not give the proper credit to economic development and the other, who believes that the economic credit alone can produce non economic values such as the supernatural values of the spiritual vocation.

b) *Can a Christian Dedicate Himself Sincerely to Development?*

Is it possible to devote oneself deeply to “earthly” work if one is convinced that the only things that really matter are “heavenly” things and therefore all that is visible is no less than something transient, secondary? At first sight, the Gospel seem to be nearer to Mahatma Gandhi than to Charles Marx: they teach us, in the well known Parable of the lilies in the field, not to worry about the morrow and in general there is an emphasis on detachment of the world so that the soul is free in its path unto God, without praising the energy or the intelligence in the search of temporal goods.

And many of trivial interpreters believe that we must be careful if we dedicate a considerable amount of our time to the earthly world and we shall be deprived of the contemplation of the beauty of the heavens.

But if we reflect about the teachings of Our Lord we shall become aware that it is a mistake to think that His ideals are a purely spiritual activity. The "...was hungry and you fed Me, was thirsty and you gave Me to drink" (Matthew 25:35) likewise, the Parable of the Talents (Matthew 25:14-30) are eloquent enough.

There has always been a certain “tension” between those who prefer to influence directly upon the world and those who foster a retirement out of the world, but lately Marxism, *heresy*, like all other, *in a certain way providential*, has allowed for a more deeper analysis of this issue, a renewal of search within the chore of the revealed truth, the authentic Christian attitude towards the whole issue.

After the Great War (1914-1918) –the war that was going to end with all wars–, the Eastern world was overcome by a great euphoria. It was a common belief that all problems had been resolved and an era of indefinite progress had begun. But as it occurs fatally when God is left aside, there overcame a crisis, unemployment, dictatorships in many countries, and the dawning of a new war soon was to be perceived.

In the middle of the confusion and pessimism Pope Pius XI encouraged all kind “healthy progress, for the perfection and development of human mankind” and in his Encyclicals, he reminded us and clarified the necessary basis to obtain them. Some time later, around 1937, the first written works (that I know of) dedicated exclusively to the Christian point of view of the material reality.

Then the Second World War arrived and after the defeat of France, in this country –most probable the authors were very impressed by the destruction caused by the harmful use of the technological advance- a book was published supporting that given the consequences the original sin has on man, the more man develops, the more power he has over material things, more harmful shall be the effects caused by the original sin..

The booklet called the attention because of the pessimism and contributed just to the opposite, to a deepening in the true virtue of hope.

Finally peace arrived and with peace the word of Cardinal Suhard with his magnificent pastoral work "The Church: Growth or Decline?" in which he calls for all Catholic Christians to participate actively in the Reconstruction of the Church.

Peace also brought pilgrimages to Rome, giving place to numerous addresses of Pius XII to representatives of all kind of activities, not only those that seem to be less important or at least vain in an impoverished world, such as the union of silk, to the most humble, represented by the tramway guards union. The Pope encouraged all of them to commit themselves to their professional and human duties and He even suggested the manner in which to do so. I believe that I shall never forget what he said to the tramway guards. His pieces of advice were about how they had to have the necessary change counted beforehand and the necessary attitude even with the passengers who make a mistake while paying their ticket fare; contributing to make life more pleasant for those who have to use this means of transport.

And also Pius XII in his doctrinarian addresses, he stated with precision:

“Those who judge our words against last century’s materialism, believing them to be a sentence against technological progress would be reaching to the wrong conclusion.”

“No. We do not condemn what is a gift of the Lord ... hidden when the world was created, in the center of the Earth, treasures, ... which should be excavated by man for his needs..., for his progress.”

“Christianity does not seek pure spiritualism, it would be inhuman.”

”Perfect Christianity is also perfect man, since nobody was perfectly man than the Man-God Jesus Christ”.

And in the last Christmas Address the Pope gave in 1957, he stated:

“The intervention in the world is a right and a *duty* pertaining inherently to the responsibility of a Christian”.

In the same address Pius XII pointed out that the authentic objectives of progress is “to collaborate with God, for God, and with his own creative activity in the construction of the complete *harmony* of the world... considering all things within the *order* showed by God”.

Take, for instance, a flood which destroys everything (this is my own example); this is not something which is harmonious and therefore we must do our best to prevent it from occurring.

And the last of the pontifical quotations include, His Holiness John XXIII who leaves no doubt whatsoever as to economic development. In “*Mater et Magistra*”, the Pope states: “It is a duty to favor economic development and social progress”.

c) *Civilization and Religion*

Once having pointed out the *duty* of working towards a better world, and before going into a deeper analysis of the subject, I think it is best to determine *if civilization as such* (no matter the good or bad use made of it) *contributes or not to the growth of the supernatural world*.

Let us return to the example of the flood, if we try to avoid it, building a dam...will there be more grace, more supernatural life, in the area? Does the dam, in itself, contribute to supernatural life?

I totally reject both the absurd and heretic opinion that nature may produce grace and also the two extreme and opposite opinions that although they are not as forceful as I present them in my writing, I feel they are, consciously or not, a source of inspiration for great many authors.

One of the two is the pessimistic view: nature, “the world shall pass”, it is useless to hope that the world shall help for something everlasting. I shall leave this view aside because if things were like that and we had little or no influence in the world to come, the Church would not strive as she has always done, to promote the well being of mankind and Saint Thomas Aquinas would not have expressed that in order to practice virtue it is necessary to experience a certain amount of well being.

I also reject the exaggeratedly optimistic view -more trendy nowadays than the one I mentioned in the previous paragraph-, supporting that civilization with time is going to develop to such an extent and to such perfection that after Parousia it will become the Kingdom of God. If such were the case, then the development of civilization would hasten the second coming of Christ. I believe this current of thought does not give enough credit to the sad concept of sin or to St Peter’s 2 Epistle in which he states that it is *charity* which accelerates the coming of Christ.

But it is obvious that *there is a certain bond* between civilization and religion, between nature and grace, although it is difficult to determine it clearly.

Within the most pure orthodoxies there are eight or nine slightly different opinions, supported by at least the same number of renowned theologians. Out of these opinions the one which satisfies me most is the one that holds that civilization *conditions* (the concise expression is “conditions extrinsically”), disposes for supernatural life: it does not produce it but it conditions it in favor or against it.

For example, the technological means to bring people closer –telephones, planes, etc–, are a *condition* which facilitates the union of the spirits, but *not the principal agent* of such a union, it is very easy to phone from Moscow to Rome...and yet....

With the knowledge we possess today, “a posteriori”, analyzing the events after they took place, we realize that History before the coming of Christ, including Greek philosophy and Roman order, was a providential preparation for His coming. When the Caesar decided the census, Saint Joseph and the Blessed Virgin Mary were forced to move and thus the prophecy about the Birth of the Messiah in the Holy Bible came true. But this does not imply that the census was the *cause* that *necessarily* led to Incarnation; what can be deduced is that History in fact contributed extrinsically to the coming of Christ.

To sum up, *it is impossible to know for certain which is the exact relationship* between civilization and religion because God, who has decided to condition His action to that of men, has never declared a parallelism between divine and human action. But whatever way we chose to express the positive relationship existing between the historical action of man and the realization of the heavenly kingdom, one thing we know for sure: the ties, the relationship exists.

God has decided, out of charity and with complete and utter independence, without having to, *to condition His action to ours*, preparing the richness of His grace all along a slow process of maturity whose visible elements are human work and civilizations.

This was specially made known during the years in which Jesus lived among us, giving proof that God, to reveal Himself to redeem man, chose to depend on human nature.

Pius XII, in his Address to the Minister of Liberia, on February 28th, 1951, clearly pointed out the existence of the relationship: “The manifestation of the Christian Truth and the fidelity to the fundamental principles of the Catholic faith, are indissolubly united with the sincere and constant affirmation of the most authentic and sublime values in human nature.

”True religion and a deep interest for all that is human are not rivals. They are brothers. They have nothing to fear from one another but quite the opposite, all to gain.

”If each force remains loyal to the law of its own being, and respects the vital needs and the varied external manifestations of the other, the resulting harmony of both forces shall render to the peoples the most valuable stimuli for true prosperity and solid progress”

PART ONE
THE WORLD HAS MEANING

a) *The Meaning of Creation*

Does humanity have a vocation? If the answer is “yes”...which? The biologist who said that humanity is a blind and stupid adventure of the protoplasm doomed from the beginning to failure and to the infinite darkness?

Faith opens for the believer passionate perspectives related to human destiny. The Christian vision of the world is purely optimistic: a Christian is man who *believes in love*. God is neither an Oriental god, totally indifferent to what happens around him nor is he a Greek god who plays at the expense of man: *God is love*.

To believe in the Christian doctrine of creation is to believe in love. It is to place love as the origin of the being, accounting for the existence of the world by means of the immense fondness and affection that God has for us. It is to conceive the world as a gift and to understand that the universe is *oriented*, by an act of generosity. It is to become aware that man has been created for love, to make the particular image of God live first on the earth and then in heaven.

In other words, for Christians the world is a mystery and the key is Love. It belongs *to* Someone; it exists *because* the love of Someone goes *towards* Someone. There is a plan that goes ahead in progressive stages, *developing* in stages, each time more perfect and complete. It is not a blind, “dialectic” development like the Marxists affirm; instead it must be completed by man.

God is more than the artist expressing His love for beauty creating a beautiful work of art; God gives life to His work of art. Creation is both the expression of the divine omnipotence and of the Love of God *associating man to his perfection*.

And on the Seventh Day of Creation, the Day of rest for God, the day that has not yet concluded in History, in which we still are living, God has created man to His image and to his likeness, free and gifted with intelligence and power, and that man, to that man –spirit and matter, microcosm resuming all creation because the body is the same place in which the spiritual and the inanimate, either animal, vegetal or mineral– God orders “Grow, multiply and fill the Earth and subdue it”. That is to say, God gives man the dominium of all things created, granting man the precious gift of fertility and he invites man to participate in *the completion* the whole of creation through the development of culture, projection of personality towards plenitude, multiplication of the species, power over the forces of matter and to sum up, the development of the human community.

The Seventh Day shows both the day of rest of the work of God and a clear call to man foreseen by God for him to continue the job, to take it to perfection, to mould the clay of the earth of this world in development so that God’s features are printed more faithfully in it.

And when man, subduing nature, “gives value” to all the resources of creation and he transforms them in economic or cultural goods, elaborate and useful, the activity of man penetrates into the initial perspective of God.

Another fact mentioned in the Holy Bible which is very significant is that Adam “gave names” to the animals. To give a name is very significant; it is equivalent to defining the

being of something, “give sense”, give order to things. With this figure the Bible expresses not only the union of man with nature but also his superiority over nature, and, that *the mission of man, center of the cosmos, is to lead nature towards God.*

But sin appears. Sin is disobedience towards God but also it is to turn against oneself: selfishness. After having committed sin, man not only does not thank God for the goods God has created but also man believes he is the owner and, instead of seeking his progress by following the free designs of God, man tries to reduce God’s Plan to adapt to his own plan, he wants god to do as he wishes.

Before guilt, nature stimulated all man’s faculties towards God. Everything was sacred then because everything was pregnant with God and all lead towards God.

Sin broke this sublime harmony and installed the tyranny of the senses; it has upset the earthly world, setting obstacles in the natural mission of the visible and sensitive objects which leads us to the invisible and divine things.

Another consequence is that it diminished the intensity of life, when freewill was weakened and intelligence, bewildered and, therefore freedom was reduced.

Besides work, which in The garden of Eden had been *a joyful job of development*, became sad, because the first man, intimately united to matter through his own body, dragged it down in his disorder, and since then, as in the Epistle to the Romans (8:20) “was subject to vanity”.

b) *The Consequences of Incarnation*

The Incarnation is no a kind of meteor “falling from heaven” without a relation whatsoever with the process of History. On the contrary, it is the decisive moment in a whole process which began before it and still continues after it.

From this viewpoint, this mystery – the union of human nature to the Second Person of the Holy Trinity – implies that the matter has been promoted, assumed, by the Divinity.

Since then all creature is in a way elevated, transfigured and, consecrated. Not only man but also things, because Incarnation is the communication of God not only to men but also to all the creatures since, in a certain way, human nature has all the things and it is a recapitulation of all of them.

That is to say that divinization is not only the ultimate perfection of man, but, *by means of* man, that is the ultimate reason and the end around which the whole creation evolves (including matter; see Rom. 8:21-22). The stones, the plants, the animals, since they cannot think or love and therefore they cannot communicate with Their Creator, they need man to unite them and order them and with his guidance to be led to Christ. Only “in Christ” men and things reach plenitude, acquire significance and an end to justify their being.

And thus the divine plan of reordering all things in Christ will come to be: “restoring *everything* unto Christ”.

We realized then that the most insignificant material aspects of human existence are instruments of the Plan of God; they are vehicles of Divine Mercy. And it is in a certain way that the material universe, after the Incarnation, is our brother.

That is how the songs of Saint Francis of Assisi are fully understood and the numerous anecdotes illustrating his marked fraternal feeling towards animals and objects, although he had no attachment to material objects, (The truth is that his love for poverty, his detachment

to the material, made him value adequately the universe; gave him freedom; and the necessary perspective to sympathize with all things without being subdued by them).

Therefore the world not only should compel us to praise God in His power and His perfection but also it invites us, the baptized, the continuity of Incarnation to develop the world through our work and complete it in our communion with the Lord.

It is necessary to make a point: the message of the New Testament is fertile in ideas about development, marking the possibility of wonderful transformations; that man can rise above levels never before imagined for a non Christian. (The most cultured of the Greek or the Romans never dared to imagine a situation in which man should participate in the life of God, to be God's son by adoption). But the Christian idea is not one of an *indefinite* advance; instead it is, like in the parable of the talents, of the mustard grains, etc. the idea of growth towards *plenitude*, idea entailing that of maturity, harmony, perfection and fulfillment.

c) *The "New Heaven" and the "New Earth"*

But the Christian doctrine is even more plentiful. To fully understand where we are standing and which are the ultimate meanings of Creation and Incarnation it is necessary to know where the world is heading for.

The universe is not destined to be destroyed (a current thought, proof of this is how the term "apocalyptic" is used frequently to denote the destruction of an atom bomb or the aspect of a volcano in flames) but to be *transformed, glorified* in its own way just like the human body shall be transformed.

The culmination of Redemption shall be general Resurrection, the complete power of Christ over bodies and souls.

One day everything shall be transformed, matter itself shall partake of the new life of the spirit. All that is just, all that is true, all that is good shall reach its consummation in the "new heaven and the new earth", predicted by Isaiah (65:17), also by Saint Peter (2 Peter 3:13) and also present in the Apocalypse (21:1).

Is it possible that the only work of man that shall not perish is charity, the intention which preside his realization?

Is it possible to imagine a general resurrection of the bodies only? But... what is a painter without his paintings, a musician without his symphonies, and an inventor without the products of his genius?

When the Church contemplates the saints in the other world, before resurrection, it does not present them as established in their glory and inactive: they continue "in heaven" doing the same function they were carrying out upon the earth. Therefore, if they had been the guardians of a city or of the poor, the Church considers them as their celestial guardians; if they had salved the country, as their patrons; if they had been learned men, as teachers; if founders of religious orders, as guardians of those movements and recreating them at all times. The same applies for a mother who has died leaving her children; she is considered as a guardian continuing her protectorate, creating favorable conditions for her children.

Therefore we should admit that the privileges of the other world take to their total plenitude, to its most powerful potency, what is already latent in each of us.

Our constituent character, at the same time essence of our nature and doing of our freedom of choice shall vibrate again in the same frequency of longitude, but this time in a stable environment and without the ambiguity and discouragement of temporal circumstances.

Eternal man or the one we shall be one day already present in us shall not abolish temporal man: on the contrary, *it will put it into action, removing all limits.*

It is reasonable to believe therefore that when God disposes the resurrection of the bodies, it shall do so with all its human values, the poet with his poetry, the father with the love for his children, the physician or educator with the concern for the people in charge, the ruler for his dedication to the common welfare.

Moreover it is through the resurrection of the bodies that the material world shall participate of the triumph of the children of God. It will depend on man, liberated through resurrection of the torments of the flesh humiliated by guilt that *all universe created shall be restored with such a splendor that shall eclipse its natural beauty.*

The completion of the Creation with all development man has impressed along History shall be reorganized, restored, recapitulated by Christ and in Him, it shall return to the Father, richer, more united and more saintly.

The more human values, such as the managing instinct, creative expressions, matter and being able to exercise solidarity, there are to be oriented to Jesus Christ, more brilliant the success in the world in God.. As in Saint Paul (1 Corinthians 3:23): “All the things are yours, you are of Christ, Christ is of God”.

It is not difficult then for us to understand one of the last expressions of the Apocalypse (21:24-26): “And the nations which are saved shall walk in the light of it... And they shall bring their honor and glory of their nations into it”. God wants the nations rich and full of glory for them to be then offered to Him.

d) Structure or Building?

From what we have been saying, we deduce that temporal values possess certain weight of their own, real: it must be respected if its Creator is to be respected. The realities of this world have their own autonomous consistency in their own order, even though they are not definite or supreme.

It is *good* that a violinist, after many years of hard work manages to play with his instrument melodies so moving that reach the hearts. It is also good that human creativity has been able to use laws of nature in such a way that we now have at our disposal jet planes, television, among other inventions.

It is obvious that they can be *used* well or not, that planes instead of beings used to bring people together can be used for their destruction and that a TV set can be employed in such a way that a family instead of watching it for fun, is partaking to the contribution of the destruction of the moral values of the family. But the development of the world in itself, although morally ambivalent, should not leave us indifferent; it is not only a good but an imperative of Creation.

Probably some shall think: “that is so, the world, therefore its development, is not bad, but not because of this reason it is less *precarious*; it is not worthwhile our spending time on it”.

Although it is true that our life does not exist if not in terms of our supernatural life, we should not despise something because it is provisory.

Let us use a comparison: the structure used in the construction of a building is obviously something provisory. But is it less solid and comfortable to work on? Should not we take pains to build it properly, thus avoiding accidents, diminishing fatigue of workers and earning time in the construction of the building?

We should respect the laws for construction, the techniques for construction of structures. But a good architect, while building the structure, has in mind the final work.

The same occurs in the spiritual sphere but with an important difference. Going back to our previous comparison, the structure, –that is to say, the world– once the work has been concluded, it becomes part, it is “assumed” and transfigured by the final building built with his help, the Realm of God.

Thus it is not a “structure” or a “building”, but one *plus* the other, building solid structures, although it is known that they are not central, but because we know that in this way we are contributing to the firmness of the final building.

PART TWO
CHRISTIANS AND DEVELOPMENT

a) *The Teachings of History*

Some people say -and it is fair enough to admit that it is partially true- that the magnificent Christian doctrine is not evident from the behavior of Christians; that we forget about the earth because we are thinking of heaven.

There is a popular story in Spain about the construction of an aqueduct to supply drinking water to a small town at the end of last century.

When the population learnt that the engineers working in the aqueduct were Protestants, they asked them to abandon the works because they preferred not to have water than getting it from an aqueduct built by heretics.

However, although there are cases like this, History demonstrates that whenever the Church was allowed to act freely, civilization improved.

Hope and charity have given glorious monuments to Christianity by helping man to overcome obstacles and reminding us that loving God means loving everything that He has given us to love, and taking to action everything that God has given us for the service of love.

This is the logical consequence of what faith establishes about human beings, the respect that all beings deserve because they are the creation of a God of Love and redeemed by Jesus Christ.

Traditionally the Church has defended man, free will, the capacity of the intellect to acquire knowledge, the dignity of the matter, the value of the body. Today the human body is exalted, held in excessively high esteem. And this is evident, for example, in the undeserved and massive advertising of beauty contests; but, only a few remember the spiritual struggles of the Church, and even the physical struggles against heretics who denied the value of the body -remember the Albigenses-.

But why would not they be concerned about and respectful of matter, too, if Jesus Christ Himself asked to put away the excess of bread after the multiplication?

The very idea of progress comes from Christianity. Neither the Greeks nor the Romans knew or even figured it. Their philosophy and vision of the universe was merely static. Furthermore, the world has developed more in the past nineteen hundred years than in all the centuries before the advent of Christ, even in the material aspect. And it was Western countries and their lay culture impregnated with Christianity that worked for development, not Eastern countries.

Lately Marxist attacks have brought these issues back to life and, although largely healthy and positive, some reactions were clearly well-intended but out of focus, even among Catholics. Many people have implemented arduous actions *exclusively* in the economic and social arenas – the mistake is precisely there– motivated by the conviction that, in modern times, the battlefield where the Church is attacked and defends itself is precisely where Religion should be made "acceptable". This motivation is legitimate but partial, insufficient and somewhat distorted, not completely Christian.

It is somewhat the case of those “priests-workers” who got so involved with temporal concerns that they did not “have enough time” for the breviary.

b) *The Christian Motivations of Temporal Actions*

We should analyze which should be our true motivations. Why are laymen committed – and I am not saying summoned but committed- to contribute to material development according to our respective talents and opportunities?

1.- THANKSGIVING

Christianity knows -yet while St Augustine praises charity to the hungry- that the ideal would be the absence of hunger. Besides this “horizontal” motivation, for the sake of giving it a name, Christianity also has a deeper “vertical” motivation more centered in God to pursue development in all fields, even material development.

We have seen that all things were created by God and for God. However, perfect glory can only be attained through man, the center of creation and its rational compendium, capable of merging with things and offering them with freedom and knowingly to God while he is sanctified and glorified by this very same action.

In order to hear the creation chanting God’s praises with Jesus Christ for the sacerdotal offering of Christians, Christians should take possession of creation. The *amount* of things offered is not the point; the point is the *magnitude* of the human dominion of the world, the magnitude of true human values.

We have a hint there of the Universal Regal Dignity of Christ over history where we play the role of dedicated craftsmen.

If my aunt gives me a pen, I would certainly be expressing my gratitude if I say “thank you very much” but she would be much more pleased if I write her a letter with the pen.

Likewise, the best way to *thank God* for the material *gifts* that He has given us is using them according to his plan, in other words, as *instruments* to approach Him –and take others with us–.

This is the primary meaning of the expression “Consecration of the World”.

And the more perfect and developed our offering to God, the better.

The Eucharist –a word that as we all know means “thanksgiving” – is, precisely, the icon of transformation. Eucharistic transformation is the “type” of every possible progress. It is the best of transformations, a never ending invitation to true progress, the symbol of the transformation of man from sinner to Saint. Secondarily, it is the symbol of the transformation that adds value to matter, in the technical, intellectual, artistic and social sphere. Meanwhile, profane change, on the contrary, is the humble image of Eucharistic transformation.

However, it is worth noting that the celebration of the Eucharist takes bread and wine, not wheat and grapes; it takes the fruits of nature processed by man and it is the will of God that man contribute through work.

2.- BE OF SERVICE TO THE BODY OF YOUR BROTHERS

However, apart from expressing gratitude, there is another motivation for Christian temporal actions that gives man value in God’s Kingdom: *serve others, our brothers*.

The temporal sphere should allow for the “realization” of man, for the fulfillment of his nature; it should let him become a total human being.

The Church is always striving to provide a firm basis, proper atmosphere, and vital conditions for grace –which should be built upon nature-.

A true follower of the Gospel should be concerned about rulers, social strata, dwelling, food, freedom, and other primary human conditions of life

We know perfectly well that these *conditions* merely *favor* a Christian life in line with the sublime vocation of man as son of God. However, we should work for a just and charitable economic and social order that best favors *the communion of all human beings* so that they meet their earthly and eternal destiny.

Although the Love of God has priority over love to man, the first sign of the love of God is fraternal love. “Leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled to your brother” (Matthew 5:24).

The distinctive feature of Christians has always been their attitude towards man.

Our Lord praised poverty and suffering but he also gave bread to the hungry and cured the ill.

However, we should realize that charity does not replace the intelligent efforts of man just like faith does not replace medicine.

Man needs other things apart from charity to live together in charity,

Praying God for justice and peace between nations or between employers and employees does not suffice. Talking about the spirit of the Gospel in abstract and saying that the world would be better if we could all be better Christians does not suffice, either. Several technical issues should be solved with good will and mutual respect.

For example, a lot of technical, legal and economic research was necessary to adjust the local scenario to implement family wages. Only a few were against the idea but nobody was ready to take the trouble to conduct the tedious and patient research necessary to implement this principle.

There are many other examples of increasing social tension as a result of well-intentioned but poorly drafted laws which have even reached the point of being vague.

In another field, the introduction of electric machinery to replace women and children in coal pit work has helped to improve the situation of coal miners’ families and it has also helped to disseminate the principles of a fatherly God and fraternal feeling among fellow men.

By virtue of respect to divine work Christian doctors must cure patients disregarding whether they are true believers or not. This particular skill drives man to God and its objective value is independent from the application given to it by the patient when cured, and, therefore, it deserves the doctor's effort.

There is a twofold reflection on the matter. Charity cannot replace a technique but it can penetrate it and give life to it by helping those who implement it. Moreover, we, Christians who pursue the victory of charity, should assume our own responsibilities intelligently and resolutely in all the fields where charity should be incarnated.

3.- BE OF SERVICE TO THE SOUL OF YOUR BROTHERS

We have already discussed the importance of developing all the aspects of temporal life affecting human conditions but, apart from the impact mentioned above, they also have a moral and religious impact because they facilitate or hinder Christian devotion.

Ordinary people need a minimum standard of living –a “standard” between poverty and luxury– to lead a virtuous life. Involuntary poverty is a serious obstacle to a satisfactory Christian family life, particularly if it is the result of real or alleged injustice produced by the economic order and, above all, if it can be remedied. Christians must work devotedly to remedy such injustice and pave the way of those persons to Heaven without being heroically virtuous.

A second element should be taken into consideration. Grace is not a magic substance that permeates through the human body like spiritual penicillin. Grace is unity; unity within ourselves; unity with God.

The natural world should be a stepping stone to the supernatural world. Natural values are necessary to religious life and vitiated natural activities cannot be converted to Christianity by a religious symbol.

I still remember the expression on the face of some friends of mine when in Spain they found crucifixes on the beds of women of easy virtue. God only knows the value of the crucifix to these women but, evidently, it was not the symbol of the conversion of their activity, as my friends concluded –who failed in Catholic practice but were naturally Christian in their understanding of life–.

God does not want subhuman, underdeveloped beings crowding his Kingdom. Italians have a proverb to describe substandard things: “This wheat is not suitable to make Hosts”. Taking this reasoning to the extreme, it is obvious that *you cannot baptize a corpse*. On the contrary, the more cultivated man is, the more he masters his life and the more personal his faith is.

Loving equally –if quantifying a moral reality is possible– a cultivated Christian is more valuable to God than an uncultivated Christian: he “gives more”.

The development of civilization puts man more or less directly in a position to approach God with everything that God has given man.

The third motivation for temporal actions is apostolic: *to pave the way to the Gospel by giving testimony of charity.*

Giving testimony with your life of the great contribution that Christian devotion makes to temporal activities *reveals the active presence of God* in man and the contribution he makes to the realization of the evangelic dogma “they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven”. (Matthew 5:16)

When ordinary people see a nun taking care of lepers or people with other diseases for no personal benefit, on the contrary, as a personal sacrifice, they cannot help but admit that this love to mankind can only be held by ardent love for God. And thus, without saying a word, the nun is paving the way to the Gospel as we can see it everyday.

c) *Christians are Proactive Agents of True Development*

There is a famous axiom that goes “grace does not destroy nature, it perfects it”. Yet it rather calls for, “creates” a suitable material environment suitable in conformity with its

spiritual existence. We should contribute and strive to shape the temporal world in the image of what is going to be someday, we should order the universe in the image of heaven.

The world is not a place of complete rest, a “nirvana”, like Eastern religions believe, but a place of buzzing activity, plenitude, unity and total exchange of love.

Therefore, we promote development to attain legitimate *dominion over the material world, the personality; we promote world unity and interpersonal relations and facilitate the exercise of charity*, the only virtue that will survive.

We should analyze now these elements and their impact on everyday life, at least briefly.

With reference to our actions in relation to ourselves Christ expects us to *enhance* our natural gifts. Furthermore, He tells us that if we want to be trusted with *true* good, that inner good that will be truly *ours* and nobody will be able to take it away from us, the good that is worth more than anything else, we should take His gifts seriously and we should administer natural resources seriously.

The parable of the Talents is very clear on this matter: we cannot be good Christians if we are not good citizens or good workers, employers, engineers, whatever role in life we have. Thanks God, this idea is being understood by growing numbers of believers in our country and the number of pious persons is decreasing (and I mean “pious” in the negative sense of the word- who receive the sacraments regularly but live exclusively for themselves, to "save their souls" paying no attention to what happens around them except to criticize).

As to neighbors, the ideal of Christians, merely because they are Christians, should be the communion of men between themselves because the communion of each individual *with* God implies the communion of all human beings *in* God. This communion should start now. Anything triggering hate or disagreement, any division against mutual understanding and love should be defeated.

Now, in relation to our action on things and, in general, on temporal values, what I have said before clearly explains that these are more than a mere occasion to exercise charity and that all, in the words of Pius XII “should personally and actively contribute, even if painful and slow, to the delivery of a new life, of humanity that evolves in order and harmony and contributes to world beauty and happiness.”

God has given us temporal progress so we can approach Him fully and harmoniously.

“Technical developments should not be considered an evil for which we seek a remedy but something good with some obstacles in the way that we should overcome. However, it is undeniable that technical developments come from God and for this reason they can and should take to God” (Pius XII).

Technological and scientific discoveries can and should be used for the glory of God because quoting Pius XII “they continue the work started by the Creator”.

Using the potential of man and the potential of the world *is materially and spiritually beneficial*. For example when a person uses fuel rationally to manufacture useful products or deliver useful services, he is “elevating” fuel by allowing it to fulfill the purpose for which God created it: to be “subdued”, serve man better, and help man serve God better.

After asserting one more time that the Church “supports and promotes continuous technical developments” His Holiness John XXIII points out that the Church also “shows the way through which material and spiritual benefits can be obtained from every invention to promote culture and general welfare”.

A mediocre service does not suffice to serve God. Poor seeding, incorrect insecticide, a poorly managed factory does not contribute to divine order.

Misery, in particular, is a major fault because it is an obstacle to the salvation of the soul.

Man has not been created for the world. He must detach himself from riches but his fraternal charity should make him work to put wealth to the service of man. The father must count on Providence but he must also give bread and fish to his family (Matthew 7:9) He may also have reserves as long as he is ready to help his neighbor with them. (Luke 11: 5).

We know that we cannot serve two masters: Christ and riches. However, wealth can and should serve Christ. In fact, wealth is not only riches but technical and cultural wealth, the wealth of knowing how to appreciate beauty. We need wealthy people with the spirit of poor people because they will enter the Kingdom of Heaven and also because it takes wealth to multiply wealth. Riches will contribute to development only if managed by wealthy people with the spirit of poor people.

Christians should not content themselves with being mere spectators of the wonders of God while Jesus Christ is shapeless to the eyes of millions of human beings. Their charity should drive them to serve it and build together a more humane world.

The Church admits that “the Creator of all things Himself gave man the irresistible aspiration to be conveniently happy in this life” and so he asks us to work realistically in order to enhance this transient world and put all the resources of man and universe to the service of charity.

Gentlemen,

There is no need to say that we should not feel any inferiority complex in the field of achievements or ideas when we compare ourselves with Marxists either.

The reflections above confirm that far from influencing Christians to look away from this world and prevent them from valuing the universe, true hope is strongly and urgently requested from Christians.

St. John Chrysostom says: “God has not taught us to ask “Thy will be done on me or on us but on earth”. Consequently, we should... teach the truth... exercise virtue... so *the earth flowers to resemble heaven*”.

We, Christians want development as much as Marxists do but we differ in two major aspects. First, we are the *advocates of the promotion of man* because man is of God

The second difference is inferred from the following classification of attitudes in reference to the world which can also be considered a summary of what has already been said:

- a) People who *condemn* the world: rigorists
- b) People who want to *possess* the world: Marxists
- c) Christians also want to possess the world but in order to *offer it*

We want to dominate everything: the *matter*, without which there would be no bread, no wine, no Host, no Mass; and the *spirit* which is a requirement for faith and love.

We all want to conquer, we all want to increase wealth; however, not to dominate but to have more to offer God.

This assertion may seem an interesting and nice literary expression with no material consequences but it has a lot of material consequences.

For example, these principles applied to adolescent education help young people to develop integrally and, thus, we would not need to regret that “protecting” them like we did in the past is impossible. But we should *also teach them to “give” themselves*, to “offer their own beings” and emphasize that the purpose of development is the benefit of others, not our own benefit. In other words, if we encourage a young man to climb mountains, we should explain to him that mountain climbing is not an instrument to impress girls with stories of bravery –even if harmless– but to be healthier and master the body to defend the weak, if necessary.

Thus we would be teaching this young man that health can be the instrument of a good Christian, and the healthier, the more effective he is in temporal spheres and, the more apt to give more for the benefit of his brothers and to the glory of God.

PART THREE

NECESSARY CONDITIONS FOR HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

Although in previous chapters the idea that not any development is beneficial is implicit, it is essential to briefly mention some necessary conditions for human development because the ordinary idea of development –which differs from the Christian concept much more than expected- is polluted and almost inhuman.

a) *The Purpose and Limits of Development*

The first condition is to fully realize that *development is not an end in itself*. The purpose of development is *the service of man, the integral promotion of man*, of each and every person and their families.

Man is the king of our world which was created by love to fulfill a plan of love. This is not so because man is the most capable but because man is the *only being capable of loving*, capable of responding to divine love out of love.

God has created all things to serve this privileged being and, hence, *to serve love*.

Therefore, the *purpose* of development must embrace human needs which are expressed in the four-fold vocation of man: cosmic (or material), spiritual, divine and social.

Man is substance. Man is matter. And in such condition man is bonded to the material universe. He needs material goods such as food, dwelling, etc. ... A true development should not only guarantee a minimum standard of living to all human beings but a fair distribution of production not only within the borders of a specific country but also between countries and from one generation to the next.

However, man goes beyond substance, man goes beyond matter; man is also spirit. Man needs human goods, which are part of his rational and free nature, and development should *expand the scope of freedom* for such purpose because having more choices man reveals his human dignity better and assumes his personal responsibility more comprehensively. Additionally, man should also favor cultural progress because “man does not live on bread alone” but on intellectual, moral, technical and aesthetic values, as well.

Thirdly, man walks to his ultimate end which is God and; consequently, man also needs supernatural goods to obtain supreme perfection. Development should not hinder but *contribute to the relationship of man with God*.

The three aspects already analyzed shape the personal vocation of man. But man is a social being that tends to live in society. Development should contribute to the social vocation of man and promote the common good in society.

Yet while this analysis of human nature may seem to divert us from the subject, it is just the opposite. *Ideas* set the world in motion and if premises are false or partially mistaken, even in good faith, final *consequences* will be very far from the correct solution.

For example our Christian idea of integral development should not be misunderstood with mere material progress which is only a necessary part of development, not the whole, and it usually results in a specific “type” of human development which involves knowledge rather than culture and the consequences of it are well known. If this were the only possible development, Plato, Aristotle, Caesar, Augustus and St. Augustine should be considered

“underdeveloped” people, not to mention St. Peter, the fisherman, or St. Paul, the weaver. However, their ideas still prevail although they were not able to type or operate a TV set.

Another interesting case that deserves a long, detailed analysis is the case bravely reported by the American Army to the general public about the American, English and Turkish soldiers who were made prisoners by communists in Korea. Turkish prisoners resisted "brain washing" better and maintained their spirit of solidarity alive in their captivity. The Americans were the most vulnerable prisoners and Englishmen ranked in between. The report finished with an open question about the education and "development" of the average American soldier, the high living standards in America and their weakening effect on the physical and moral endurance of soldiers.

Something similar happened to me in my days as an officer in the Navy. Recruits from large cities could understand manuals, dismantle a machine gun, and perform activities that called for a certain level of education better than soldiers from small towns in the interior of the country. However, the former skipped responsibilities, told the truth only partially and did almost anything to avoid hard or dangerous assignments. And I used to wonder “Who would I pick if I have to gather a team of 10 sailors for a real war mission full of intense and sudden physical and psychological tension?”

Development is not the execution of “internationally reputed” public works, either, such as the projected highway to Mar del Plata that would benefit primarily a small population for 24 or 28 days annually while other road construction projects which may prove more useful for the production or distribution of commodities from our continental south to the north and would result in the common good are abandoned

When progress is only centered on material comfort or prestige, it is not a human development. Like the remarkable case of Emperor Caligula’s horse which grazed in a golden crib ...while slaves had no food or shelter!

It is worth mentioning the case when Chile wisely decided to prohibit direct or indirect foreign investment in TV ventures until the consequences of the devastating earthquake in southern Chile were not completely remedied and preferred to give priority to *legitimate needs* over the belief that “international public opinion” would consider Chile an underdeveloped country if they did not have TV.

I hope that these good examples have been descriptive enough of the importance of clear development *goals* because these will help to set *priorities* (Would you rather invest or use concrete to build houses and schools or Olympic stadiums and large public offices “that match the category of the city”?) and *methods* (Would you respect freedom or would you rather subordinate absolutely everything to a single order which is allegedly more effective?). Marxists, for example, eliminate every obstacle, even theoretical obstacles, for the sake of development to the point of leaving freedom and, therefore, the dignity of man, behind and they only make exceptions to this rule in special circumstances such as in Russian collective farms).

Evidently, development also has *limits*. Human progress, even moral progress, is not the most important issue: health, education, self-control, knowledge to use materials intensely and, consequently, perform major works, have a *real but secondary* value.

Fundamentally, the desire to live with the spirit of sons of our Heavenly Father is what makes the difference. Today as usual, every proactive and rich adult among who we count the

inventor of the turbine, the TV and the atomic bomb, are reminded to have the soul of a child. The Sacred Book says that there is no difference to the eyes of God between an intelligent, willful, educated human being who *is proud and shuts up his soul to grace* and a physically and materially poor savage *whose soul is open and craving for salvation*.

Do you remember the doctors who experimented with human beings in concentration camps? They had received their university degrees in one of the most cultivated European countries, they could probably speak several languages and loved classical music and artistic expressions, but they lacked human values! They were truly cultivated but that is neither human progress nor real development!

b) *The Incorrect Use of Material Goods*

We have already discussed the great value of created goods, that human values will never be destroyed but “assumed” in “new heavens and new earth”, namely, their value is eternal, and, furthermore, that matter -which is now the vehicle of grace in the Sacraments- will be put in such a state someday that it will be the expression of the human and divine spirit and, for this reason, matter will reach its utmost dignity and beauty.

Material goods, our life support, are also *an instrument to express love* and they must be *instruments of unity*. They should not only unite us to God through thanksgiving, and, above all, through the offering in Mass, as we have seen, but they should unite us to each other in fraternal community.

Therefore, matter –after Incarnation- has become friendly because it is the instrument of a beatific supernatural future and the land where the love of God draws near us.

We should remember that sacraments –how seldom received!- are the vehicle through which matter is transformed into something that irradiates the presence of God. For example, a car blessing has natural effects -I am not referring to the image of St Christopher that we have inside cars, which is completely another story- such as, for example, I am attentive so I avoid a car crash, and it also has supernatural effects, such as, for example, I may use the car to the glory of God.

“Created goods are the smile of God” says St. Irenaeus. We should not keep the smile of God for ourselves but *multiply* it, as much as we can.

However, we should remember that the value of created things lies in having received them from God and that the world is *not* the greatest gift that God gives us. Therefore, we should not be wrongly attached to material things and devote ourselves to take pleasure in them. It is clear that when the Bible speaks of: “...dominate the universe” is to be understood as the dominion inherent of man, a dominion that demands spiritual self-improvement.

Be careful. Creation is so beautiful that it provides for two ways to face it, only: *either we idolize it or we offer it to God*.

c) *The True Significance of Work*

Work is not only the most influential factor to development but almost all the above mentioned is reflected and applicable in it.

For *Paganism* work was despicable, inherent of servants, “servile work”. For *Marxism* man is essentially a worker only devoted to perfecting the cosmos. Meanwhile, *Christianity* refers to the eminent dignity of work in relation to the divine vocation of humanity: work is

not an end in itself but a means to contribute to the *development of man, the world, and God's kingdom*.

Therefore, Christianity believes that work:

- *...contributes to man's self-improvement*. In body and soul, developing his character and controlling his intellectual and moral faculties. It is obvious that lazy people are not “developed people”.
- *...renders a service to humanity*. Not only because through work man contributes to the common good but also because man is a factor of unity among each other and work is an occasion to build relationships and human solidarity.
- *...subdues matter contributing to God*. Through work man subdues matter and makes the earth “human” continuing, to some extent, with creation, transforming and making created goods useful to man. The wheat correctly sown is more “human” than a field full of weeds because by sowing the field man is rendering a service to mankind.
- *...is to the service of God and contributes to His redeeming work*. If man renders a service with righteous intention and in the grace of God, his toil and suffering make him be part of the mystery of redeeming suffering multiplying the fruits of Redemption and impregnating civilization with evangelic ferment.

d) *The Need and Limits of the “Technical Mind”*

This issue deserves to be dealt with individually because there are two extreme tendencies which are both injurious. According to one of these tendencies any problem can be solved by the necessary number of people gifted with intelligence and “technical minds” and the other tendency, partially disregards the importance of “technical minds”, and believes that “good will” is enough to solve problems.

It is clear enough that technical minds are certainly necessary. Development calls for correct actions, namely, actions that *abide by moral standards and technical rules*.

If, even in a state of grace, an expert in moral issues but ignorant about medicine should perform an appendicitis surgery, probably the operation will not turn out as satisfactorily as if a skillful pagan surgeon would have operated because an expert in moral issues does not possess technical knowledge. (However, if the surgeon would *also* pray humbly to God for His help and to conduct his hand, the possibility of a successful surgery would be even greater).

It is clear enough that technical minds are certainly necessary to strive and grasp reality as it really is, to attain an objective and impartial criteria, to act vigorously and effectively.

But there are limits to it, also. As a consequence of sin man tends to misuse even good things. In this case, human beings may even idolize their own efforts. Scientific objectivity may turn into an idea of man as a mere impersonal member of society –a number, an element for the statistics– and while striving to be effective, the meaning of work can be distorted and the nature of man affected.

Premeditation and cold thinking is necessary to wisely pick the best road to success, but if everything is subject to “calculation”, man will lose his human quality. Generosity is also necessary, acting gratuitous without hoping “outcomes” such as success and recognition.

The bad swimmer who plunges into the water to save a strong man who is committing suicide is contributing to the moral values and development of society although it is “logical” to expect that he will not be able to save him.

Briefly, “technical minds” are good but dangerous. In 1956 Pius XII devoted almost all his Christmas Address to this subject. “Technical knowledge does not call for the denial of religious values but helps to discover them; however, technical minds put man in unfavorable conditions to see, accept and seek supernatural goods”.

e) *Solidarity*

The biblical mandate “be fruitful, and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it”, which [in Spanish] is in plural, means that human beings should act collectively, *in unity*, to subdue the creation. Riches will never be enough, no matter how much we multiply them, unless we, human beings, act with solidarity.

I will give two examples, now. Extraordinary amounts of natural gas -several times the total consumption of Argentina and Brazil together- are wasted in the Middle East because nobody consumes or processes it. If we build a gas pipe to Great Britain passing through Turkey, Bulgaria, and other countries, which is rather easy to do from a technical and financial point of view, several social, economic and even health problems produced by the residential use of coal in foggy weather could be solved in Western Europe. The fact is that due to the current political situation –or rather because men do not trust each other- nobody dares to make the necessary investment and everybody, even gas producing countries, are empty handed.

The second example is closer to us. Several technical reasons explain why the rain in southern Chile is 6 or 7 times more than on our side of the Andes. Consequently, hydroelectrical power is more easily produced and cheaper in Chile than in Argentina. However, on the basis of the existing prejudice in *both* countries -that, apparently, may slowly be overcome-, we are far from importing power from our Chilean brothers –I wish I were wrong, for the love of our good Lord!- in exchange for gas from Salta for the provinces in northern Chile which are rich in minerals but do not have fuel.

f) *The Observance of Sundays*

Another limiting factor for development is the sanctification of Sundays. Even for us, apart from not working and attending Mass, do we make a clear difference between Sundays and other days?

And, however, this is one of the most important commandments, before the fifth and sixth, and it is directly related to development.

I am not referring to the negative side which was clearly pointed out by the Blessed Virgin Mary in her apparition at La Salette where she said that crop was lost because Sunday rest was no longer observed.

As the name indicates, we all know that “Domingo” comes from the word “Dómine”, which means Lord-. Sunday is the “day of the Lord” and has several rich meanings.

More than a memory, it is a memorial of the *past* Resurrection, the feast of the Lord resurrected and present among his people in Mass, and, finally, it is also the “eighth day” of the Lord, the anticipation of the *future*.

The first two meanings are quite popular and since they are not directed related to this subject, I would rather refer to the third meaning. Just like we live today in the Seventh Day of creation, the day when God rested and the day when man rests from work, Sunday is the “eighth day”, an anticipation of the day when man will also rest. As we have already seen, work makes us resemble God, our participation in the sacred rest of the Lord make us all resemble Him even more.

The person who, in the *adoration* during the Sunday Mass before the “*Ite Missa est*”, looks for the gravity center of his work and finds a balance, will redeem it when he deliberately gathers it to the paschal mystery and, in addition, he will work cheerfully because Sunday rest is restoring and liberates creative joy by making man participate freely in the sovereign domain of God.

As long as Sunday rest is observed, work will not divide human beings. It will always be a punishment because of the original sin but, collectively born, work will unite man who will joyfully participate in a common assignment moved by the same driving love.

g) *Avoid the Two Major Temptations of our Age*

The *worst temptation* of Christians deeply involved in transforming the world is being drawn by a "temporal Messianism" and *leave God behind*, : that is called “naturalism”.

Some people who believe that a *rational* organization of the universe would solve all problems. (Another stem of the same branch would be that if the world is in the hands of capable, good-willed men, it would be enough). But it would not. Human efforts need redemption and redemption does not come from man himself. Human beings are not endlessly perfectible. The dogma of the original sin and the daily experience of sin, from within and from outside ourselves, are enough proof of it.

The “incarnation” of Christians in the world will not be realistic unless it understands that it is committed to serve and redeem both, the greatness and misery of man, at all times. There was only one Incarnation and it was a redeeming experience. The sacrifice of Christ, the Cross, is right in the center of all earthly perspectives. Any solution that leaves the cross aside is frail and subject to be unbalanced on the basis of our disorderly inner tendencies.

The second temptation is to *intend to put God to the service of man*. Even Catholics frequently give in to this temptation. Since Chateaubriand wrote his great work at the beginning of last century, in an effort to defend the Church we assert that it fosters civilization and that if all human beings were good Christians there would be less infantile crime and such other social plagues.

It is all true. And any help or instrument given to religious schools or Christian moral teachers is fully justified for the service it renders to society.

However, yet while it is true that Jesus Christ has sent us to redeem the world and improve the living conditions of man, if we leave it there, we are being deceitful and we are forgetting the core of the question. We must see it clearly and bravely say that the ultimate purpose of our actions *is not to give God to man for the happiness of man* but *to give man to God for Him to be loved more*. We do not love God because we love man; we love man because we love God.

h) *The Clear Identification of Risks*

Development is inherently good, it is an imperative, and it should be energetically sought. However, we should first identify possible risks just like we do before taking any ordinary action because prudence does not prevent action but helps to choose the best road to meet objectives.

As we have already discussed, technical progress brings along values that affect people and society because it increases the *instruments* to the service of mankind. For example, if a person wants to communicate his ideas at a distance, he can shout them out and be heard from one or two hundred meters, at the most, but if he uses the radiotelephone he can communicate with Europe, namely, *his personality can be projected* to greater distances.

But the *increasing number of instruments* means more *options*. A person by car can go on holidays to far more distant places than a person whose only choice is the bus and he can choose from a larger number of places if he goes by car. In other words, the car means *more freedom* for a person, and we know that more freedom is desirable but it brings along *greater responsibilities*.

Maybe he can make 150 or 160 kilometers per hour by car but “should” he do it? Would not it be dangerous to him and others? The *material* possibility should be tuned with *moral* responsibility.

And *there is sin, also*. Neither the world, nor human beings are bad but man is inclined to evil. We should not be too optimistic about it, this will be a fallen world, subject to individual and collective selfishness until the end of days. St. Paul says “For the good which I will, I do not; but the evil which I will not, that I do” (Romans 7:19).

Since sin has destroyed harmony, careful forethought should be given to the legitimate use of things because they can be easily misused. Anything can be misused, in fact, even frequent confession, because it may turn into a routine or the promotion of excessive scruples.

From the moment that sin has incited us to believe that we are the ultimate end, our relationships with other creatures easily turn into a tempting occasion to enjoy them for our own good, disregarding the rights of others and the exclusive love of God.

Consequently, material progress in this world corrupted by sin tends to unfold into materialism, comfort into selfishness and wealth leads the poor into oblivion.

God, who also talks to us through nature, calls our attention on the danger of excess. Modern medicine confirms that a medication is good if administered to the person who needs it but if administered to a person who does not need it, it has bad effects and that the excess and lack of vitamins can be both dangerous or, rather, produce similar effects.

Western civilization is growingly more centered in money, in *profit*. It prefers Mammon than God. Communist civilization, on the other hand, is so centered in *dominating that it is necessarily* inhuman.

Economic development provides material welfare. Welfare easily becomes habitual and the root of never ending new desires in our suffocated souls. If we have a radio, we want a TV set; if we have a TV set, we want a car and, then, we only feel happy if we change it for a better car and there we go, indefinitely, while a growing number of superfluities become “necessary”.

When development is merely economic and becomes an end in itself, sooner or later, it faces the consequences of an unbalanced relation with man and necessarily takes to a

disordered life and tyranny. For this reason Marxist regimes are *necessarily tyrannical* because they only seek to solve economic problems.

Earthly success does not promote sanctity except when man responds to grace. Otherwise, the fall is even worse. The deeper the abyss, the vaster the distance to the ground, the graver the injuries... Yet the Romans had a saying about this: "Corruptio optimi pessima".

Yet while progress opens new, greater possibilities to human freedom and allows man to choose God more consciously and maturely, it poses more obstacles in the way to charity. It is difficult for a wealthy man not to be selfish, the Gospel says, and daily life confirms it.

Heights are risky and among those risks is height anxiety. It is easier for humanity to give in to temptation now that human beings have made so many achievements that were impossible only recently. It is easier for humanity to listen to the whispering voices heard by Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden and give in to arrogance and pride: "you will be like gods..." In other words, the proverb goes "Temptation comes with the gift". A man who is apt to rule is more tempted to exercise power than he who lacks this condition.

Additionally, taking the world ever more "seriously" -and we should do so-, can be dangerous because we are more prone to be fascinated by it. We may take such pleasure in the arrangement of the worldly city that we may forget that it should only be a reproduction and an instrument to take us to the Kingdom of God.

Any work or dominion that is not in due order, that is not observing the appropriate hierarchy of values, that is not respecting the essential supremacy of human beings, represents a step back to servitude, dehumanization. It is the confirmation of the old truth that humanity without divinity reduces man to a beast.

In the light of these principles we should analyze if the Russian rocket that made Gagarin famous was a step towards legitimate development.

Is it an expression of the dominion of man over nature? Yes, it certainly is. The rocket has defeated gravity laws. Does it represent man's progress in terms of self-control? The answer is "yes", again, because the astronaut has followed strict medical indications and has demonstrated self-control. Has this victory of man been placed to the service of other human beings, his brothers? No, it has not. The data obtained was not communicated to others and the prestige was immediately used like threatening destruction weapons against those countries that do not share the ideas of the Russian government. In other words, this voyage was used to "dominate", to exploit man.

Yet it was also used, or it was intended to be used, directly against God. The rocket was launched on the day of the Ascension so that communist media could make a point of the fact that from that day on that feast would be the celebration of a legitimate ascension, of the ascension of man taken by man, and not the ascension of the Son of Man taken by God.

Briefly, I believe from the analysis of news on the press that the answer to the question is "no".

The elements mentioned above clearly indicate that charity is the virtue that roots and unroots development. It *roots* development because it summons man to place his talents to the service of others but it also *unroots* it because it limits wild, cruel development.

How many people have died unnecessarily in very useful public works that were carried out disregarding basic safety measures for workers? How many people died of malaria in the construction of the Panama Canal until somebody came over and gave man the importance

that should have been given to man from the very start and thus he did not “delay” works but safeguarded success!

Mater et Magistra says:

“The Church has always taught and will continue teaching that scientific and technical developments and its resulting material welfare are legitimate goods and; consequently, they are important steps in human civilization.

“But developments should be valued for their true nature, in other words, as material instruments or means to effectively achieve the superior end of man which is to foster and promote the spiritual perfection of human beings in the natural and supernatural order.

“Like a perennial warning, the Words of the Divine Master go: “And what is the use for man to win the whole world if he loses his soul?””

CONCLUSION

a) *The Need for God's grace*

We should “participate” but we should not be prisoners of temporal problems. The great task today is to *animate the spiritual plane of temporal order*, to integrate again all profane values in a comprehensive conception of life and of the world according to Christ.

The universe is redeemed only if put to the service of charity. However, we have discussed already that the action of development will not be sanctified, in the case of education, for example, just because it is in the hands of good Christians as long as they are not fully capable of performing appropriately. And medicine will not be sanctified, either, if very good Christians are incompetent doctors because they would only lose their reputation and the reputation of their ideas.

However, it is also true that *legitimate human values cannot be fully attained in the absence of grace* because grace not only helps to deliver man from evil and temptations that lead him astray from his true end but –to put it into words– it makes the *total yield* of nature possible.

We act according to what we are. If we are in state of grace, we are a harmonious element and we will reflect on the world a portion of the image of God in us, even without knowing it.

We make the world to our image and if we are selfish, arrogant and greedy, it will no longer be the image of God but ours. We will consciously or unconsciously contribute to ideas, opinions and a social order marked by sin. This is the case, for example, of provocative women; other women, on the contrary, raise the level of any conversation without saying a word, only with their presence.

Social institutions will not improve unless leaders can be liberated from their sins and spiritually bear their portion of the burden of the sins of the world defeating the power of evil. Institutions were not created from nothing, they are the result of consonant minds. Even Aristotle believed that it was natural that there should be slaves just like donkeys or poultry. He did not have the Grace to perceive Revelation and his vision, no matter how intelligent he was, was limited.

Consequently, the apostolate, the evangelization, and contributions to the participation of gracious life is necessary; otherwise, man is only capable of doing limited good and contributing to a certain extent to the improvement of institutions but he cannot do all the good he can without the help of Grace. Moreover, in the absence of Grace, man cannot do real good, even in his limited sphere, because man’s nature is astray and needs continuous help.

For this reason, life of Grace is urgent because it helps natural development apart from the well-known apostolic motivation *for the correct order of the world*, we, Christians should not only act according to the Grace in us but help others to attain Grace. Putting man in communion with God is an indirect but unparalleled means to make him a *better man* and improve our earthly dwelling because the gift of divine life not only delivers us from evil but *perfects nature*.

It is only *in union with nature and Grace that human expansion and his orientation to God are possible according to His order*.

b) *The True Conception of Development*

True development should be to the SERVICE OF MAN and foster man's relationships:

- with *nature*, dominating it through TECHNOLOGY
- with *others*, contributing to anything that helps to create a true HUMAN COMMUNITY
- with *God*, favoring the journey of the creature to his Creator continuously fed and oriented by ADORATION

Technology, expansion of the human community and adoration are the three basic activities towards legitimate development. If any of the three should be missing or excessive in detriment of the rest, development would be off balance and, sooner or later, it would lose vitality on the unbalanced aspect. The contrary is also true. A life of sin and a life separated from God is also a separation from man and this goes against our true personality. In other words, SIN HINDERS DEVELOPMENT.

c) *C. A. Members and Development*

We have already discussed that *humanity has a vocation to world development and man has a vocation to divine life*. These vocations are connected to each other. Many people think that world development negatively affects the access to divine life but; on the other hand, in the absence of a faithful perspective, human beings show pride, confusion or despair about their future.

Europe, for example, is in a period of extraordinary economic and cultural development; however, European literature, films and theatre reveal anguish. This anguish is similar to the anguish of Roman times, people that were externally brilliant but decadent inside.

Consequently, to fulfill the *temporal* purpose of the world it takes capable and evangelic human beings devoted to legitimate temporal actions, very vital and based on spiritual motivations and actions because good will, justice and other longed-for virtues for the sake of welfare are not found in material goods but in the soul.

Christians should commit themselves to world development -which will be imperfect in the absence of their contribution- and apostolate work -without which the world would lack the divine light that is fundamental to order man's life-.

Dear friends, shouldn't we be leaders in *both* fields to our maximum possibilities since we, more than other laymen, should be united to Christ?

We should analyze now individual actions. Those who pursue the development of others should primarily make efforts to attain their own development and devote to the consecration of the world as true Christians which is the ultimate function of laymen.

It is not a question of mere "perfecting" ourselves, showing off, obtaining diplomas or even learning for the sake of learning, but of pursuing a development that *nurtures our capacity to give*. We should pursue development in relation to God and neighbors, to dominate ourselves and be trained to actively continue with Creation and Redemption.

I will mention three cases. The first case is about ourselves; the second case refers to the individuals that the Divine Providence has put in our way and, the last case is about the development of those people with whom we are not yet acquainted.

We would be surprised if we look for a reference to man's *taking possession of the world* in the Gospel.

The promise of taking possession of the world is not addressed to early starters, or to the elder brother of the prodigal son who took care of the family inheritance neither is it the prize for those EAGER for justice. This is not so. The Gospel says “Blessed are the meek *for* they shall inherit the Earth”. In other words, this virtue which is now contemptuously looked upon because the world is proud and pursues power, happens to be the most cherished virtue, even more than dominion, because it deserves the *possession* of the Earth.

Many people believe that being meek is a negative trait or a characteristic of passive individuals, not of virtuous heroes. They believe it is rather the behavior of a mat ready to clean your feet; in other words, they believe that it is characteristic of weak, underdeveloped individuals.

However, only meek people are effective because only those who have attained full self-control have the necessary calm to see things straight and perceive the Plan of God. And, therefore, they act gently but firmly, a necessary condition to *dominate the environment*. Only if we are meek we can fight injustice without resentment and act firmly but without violence. In other words, we can be effective.

How many times have we rejected those that the truth should have attracted due to lack of humility and meekness!

The second case is to help our neighbor *to discover all the good he can do and develop the best in him*. Don't you know a fellow worker, a friend or a relative who is not in the right position at work according to the talents that God has given him because he is shy or irresolute? We should contribute to his *promotion*. We should support him enthusiastically and pray for him to foster his development and, hence, the development of our country. Because, although it took one hundred years to admit it, even modern economy is now aware that the most important capital is working capital, the people who work intelligently and orderly.

The third case may seem superfluous but it is a clear representation of those small actions that have major effects. I mean turning the tap off. We waste so much water in Buenos Aires that installing water meters is now under analysis. If we realize that all that money could provide drinking water to those who do not have it, we *would make a better world by turning the tap off*.

Referring to collective action, there is a very inspiring passage in the Gospel “For where there are two or three gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them”. This is true not only when we gather together to pray but also in all those occasions when, leaving aside our personal preferences, we promote the divine in our environment acting together to express the love of God to the world. Our Lord is present each time that the members of a Catholic Action Center meet to analyze creating a school, providing entertainment for the children in the neighborhood or creating a promotion office for the welfare of the area.

However, it does not suffice. We should order ourselves so that Man contributes with light, power, orientation, *support*, to help every member to fulfill his duty, disregarding whether it is profane or not.

Consequently, the temporal actions of CA men will be *full of supernatural life* and an *effective contribution to legitimate development*.

If we are aware that God is no stranger, that everything deserves our attention because everything deserves the attention of God, we will be keen-sighted and proactive to find solutions to the problems of our days.

There is plenty to do. Although it may not seem so, there is a lot we can do. And we *should do it*. If we make good use of available resources, *we are stronger than we think*. Let's do it!

We should pray for inspiration and help to the Holy Spirit. "Come Holy Spirit... and You will renew the Earth". How many times have we said this prayer routinely without thinking over its real meaning!

We should also ask the help of Angels and Saints who are a major "capital" to our "disposition". And we seldom invoke them for this purpose although it is God's will that they participate in the Christian restoration of society. The Sacred Scriptures describe the existence of angels that protect countries and provinces and, it is obvious that there are angels that protect human associations.

The Scriptures also say "Saint will judge the earth". "Judge" in Hebrew means exercising authority, namely, dominate. They are already exercising authority because the final phase of Christian life started with the Incarnation. We should invoke them and ask for our actions and for the problems affecting world development, in general, and our country, in particular. We should especially ask for all the people of good faith even if they do not completely share our ideas but strive to find an appropriate solution knowing that the execution of such plan takes more than a period in office, in other words, that it will be others who will harvest the fruit.

We should invoke St. Francis of Assisi, the World Patron of the Catholic Action who in his characteristic detachment from material possessions has subdued creation more than an engineer who may have built the most incredible dam if during the execution his soul has drowned in the material world and, consequently, he has become a slave of matter...

We should remember Saint Rose of Lima, Patron of Latin America, a region yet to be developed and distorted because the principles mentioned above were not timely applied. We should invoke Saint Rose of Lima who pursued material and spiritual development directly and indirectly and was a close friend of nature, even of mosquitoes, to intercede and promote and direct the real Latin American Development.

And we should particularly invoke the Blessed Mary, Patron of Argentina in her advocacy of Our Lady of Luján, her personality in full blossom, the anticipated "masterpiece" of "the new Heaven and the new earth". Her Assumption, prelude of our own assumption, is *the anticipation of a renewed creation*, of what we will become after the consummation of the world, if this in God's plan.

In Canaan she interceded to render a temporal service –obtain wine, a good, superfluous product that is easily misused- but this action projected to the transcendent: blessed be the joy and the manifestation of the Messiah.

May Mary, the perfect "laywoman", help us *understand and love* our mission, and give us the light, strength and joy that we need to *fulfill* our mission and make Argentina develop to its maximum and improve so that we have more to offer God.

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