

Vatican Condemnation of Nazi War Crimes: Pope Pius XII's Denunciation of Wartime Atrocities

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I. INTRODUCTION

Since World War II, the development of international and regional organizations provide forums for condemnation of atrocities committed during periods of international conflicts and national programs of persecution and genocide of targeted populations. However, during World War II, the lack of such international forums meant that leaders of neutral countries and individuals of prominence, including major religious leaders, were looked to for statements criticizing unjust war activities and persecution of vulnerable populations. One such person to whom the world looked for condemnation of the war time abuses and atrocities committed by National Socialist Germany (Nazi Germany) was the Pontiff of the Roman Catholic Church, Pope Pius XII.

Pope Pius XII, the subject of this Article, has become a controversial historical figure as some urge his canonization for saintly piety, while others condemn him as a moral coward; or even worse, as a condoner of the persecution of Jews in Nazi Germany. Criticism of Pope Pius XII in relation to the Holocaust has emphasized an apparent lack of public protest by the Pope against the atrocities committed by the German National Socialist Government against the Jews and others. There seems to be ample proof of appeals from clergy in Germany and occupied countries, as well as requests from international diplomats to Vatican authorities, for the Pope to make a public statement condemning the killings and persecutions of Jews and others by the Nazi's.¹ It is generally accepted that if one limits consideration to "the area of public pronouncements," the charge of silence against the Pope "may be arguable."² However, alternative reading of public statements by Pius XII suggests that the Pope indeed condemned Nazi atrocities, but did so in an opaque manner reflecting traditional Vatican style of rhetoric and institutional reticence which reflected a desire to stand aloof from the ongoing international conflict.³

The debate on the silence of Pope Pius XII has been rekindled by recent close examination of the Pope's 1942 Christmas Message denouncing totalitarianism and the killing of persons "only because of their nationality and race," along with a particular condemnation of Marxist Socialism and a call for national and international relations to be based on natural law

1. CARLO FALCONI, *THE SILENCE OF PIUS XII* 66-77 (Bernard Wall trans., Little Brown & Co. 1970).

2. John Pawlikowski, *The Legacy of Pius XII*, CATH. INT'L. 459 (Oct. 1998).

3. See MICHAEL PHAYER, *PIUS XII, THE HOLOCAUST AND THE COLD WAR* 42 (2008) ("Although the word genocide would not be coined until 1944, Pius XII denounced what we now commonly understand as genocide in his Christmas message of 1942.").

principles guaranteeing justice, order, and peace.⁴ In particular, Michael Phayer, a historian writing on the Vatican's relation to the Holocaust, suggested a need for renewed attention to the 1942 Christmas Message.⁵ According to Phayer:

Historians . . . have been rather too dismissive of his 1942 Christmas address. Since Pius never spoke out again in a comparable way, the Christmas address has been judged by the Pope's critics as falling short of the mark, given the enormity of the Holocaust. This judgment rests on hindsight. Most of those who heard or read the Christmas message viewed the statement in a different light, precisely because it was the Pope's initial comment about wartime atrocities.⁶

Considering views such as Phayer's, this Article will assess the 1942 Christmas Message to determine whether it in fact provided a response to the Holocaust, thus defeating the charge of "silence" which has been directed against Pius XII by revisionist historians and critics.

II. CHARGE OF SILENCE

In his biography of Pope Pius XII, *Soldier of Christ*, Robert Ventresca contrasts two images of the Pope: one reflected in a monumental heroic bronze sculpture of the pope by the sculptor Francesco Messina, which was installed in St. Peter's Basilica shortly after the pope's death and the other as seen in the character of an aloof and canny pope presented in Rolf Hochhuth's play *The Deputy*.⁷ The sculpture is said to represent "Eugenio Pacelli, soldier of Christ—a spiritual warrior stirring to resist the gathering forces of the enemies of Christ, which threatened from all sides."⁸ By contrast to the view of Pius XII as a valiant spiritual leader in time of war, Ventresca maintained that "Hochhuth's pope wears the moral responsibilities of an institution that failed to defend the weak and powerless in the face of a ruthless and incorrigible enemy."⁹ It is clear the view today of the public image of Pius has been significantly affected by his depiction in *The Deputy* as an aloof intellectual who refused to protest the exterminations

4. Pope Pius XII, Christmas Message, The Internal Order of States and People (1942), <https://www.ewtn.com/library/PAPALDOC/P12CH42.htm> [hereinafter 1942 Christmas Message] [<https://perma.cc/XA8P-AFEM>].

5. Michael Phayer, "Helping the Jews is not an easy thing to do." *Vatican Holocaust Policy: Continuity or Change?*, 21 HOLOCAUST & GENOCIDE STUD. 421, 422 (2007).

6. *Id.*

7. ROBERT VENTRESCA, *SOLDIER OF CHRIST: THE LIFE OF POPE PIUS XII* 2–4 (2013).

8. *Id.* at 2.

9. *Id.* at 3.

occurring in the Nazi concentration camps. Interestingly, the New York Times published an editorial at the time of *The Deputy*'s opening in New York suggesting that the subject of the play was not the pope but "silence" itself.¹⁰ According to the editorial:

In the Deputy, the playwright contends that Pope Pius XII, then the Sovereign Pontiff of the Roman Catholic Church, might have prevented deportations and mass murder by speaking out against Nazi concentration camps. The facts may be in dispute; the history imperfect; the indictment too severe. But the philosophical issue is ever alive. In a word, it is "silence."¹¹

In the film *Judgment at Nuremberg*, such silence is attributed to all the ally leaders including Churchill and Roosevelt.¹²

To a degree, criticism of the alleged silence of Pius XII is a complaint about the general or somewhat abstract quality of the Pope's statement. The 1942 Christmas Message was criticized because of its lack of effectiveness due to a failure of specification and particular verbalization, for example, failing to name the Nazis and the places and dates of mass killings of Jews and others.¹³ John Roth observed in *High Ideals and Innocuous Reaction* that Pius XII always had a strong presence and a keen knowledge of European affairs, including the activities of the Nazis.¹⁴ Moreover, Pius XII was implored repeatedly to speak out against the persecution and killing of Jews by the Nazis.¹⁵ According to Roth:

[H]is pronouncements along these lines were as rare and convoluted as his policies were neutral and his tone measured . . . Pius said very little, particularly in that problematic Christmas Eve homily that he broadcast to the world in 1942, [even though the] Nazis and their collaborators had murdered millions of Jews by that time.¹⁶

Nevertheless, Pius XII himself and his apologists claimed that the Pope made a significant statement on behalf of the Jews in his 1942 Christmas Message.¹⁷ Still, Roth and others argue the Pope's actual words scarcely

10. N.Y. TIMES, *Silence, in THE STORM OVER THE DEPUTY* 35–36, (Eric Bentley, Ed., Grove Press, Inc. 1964).

11. *Id.*

12. JUDGMENT AT NUREMBERG (United Artists 1961).

13. JOHN CORNWELL, HITLER'S POPE: THE SECRET HISTORY OF PIUS XII 293 (Viking Penguin 1999) (2008) ("It is not merely a paltry statement. The chasm between the enormity of the liquidation of the Jewish people and this form of evasive words is shocking.")

14. John K. Roth, *High Ideals and Innocuous Reaction: An American Protestant's Reflection on Pope Pius XII and the Holocaust*, in POPE PIUS XII AND THE HOLOCAUST 248 (Carol Ritter & John K. Roth eds., 2002).

15. *Id.*

16. *Id.*

17. *Id.*

support such a defense.¹⁸ In his recent biography of Pius XII, Robert Ventresca agreed that the Pope kept the public waiting for an explicit condemnation that never occurred.¹⁹

This Article's response to Roth and Ventresca is that these critics and others simply have not read the 1942 Christmas Message correctly, largely as a consequence of their discounting the traditional ecclesiastical style and rhetoric employed by the Pope. Moreover, critics ignore the contemporary situational and institutional constraints operating on the papacy during World War II. In *Reticence and the Holocaust: The Rhetorical Style of Pope Pius XII*, Camilla Kari correctly identified the rhetorical style of papal pronouncements reflected in the 1942 Christmas Message:

When the frame of responsibility entailed by the papal need for diplomatic reticence is superimposed upon his [style of] discourse, Pius XII's decisions provide a template of one who relied on the mechanisms of law, not oratory from the pulpit, to accomplish his goals. This task is overlooked by critics who desired the pontiff to have issued strong words and a warning. For this reason, Pius XII's Christmas Address of 1942 [mistakenly] constitutes a major source of grievance for accusations regarding his silence.²⁰

Kari suggests that a close reading of the 1942 Christmas Message, along with an effort to penetrate the conceptualizations and vocabulary employed in the Christmas Messages, establishes not only that the Message provides condemnation of Nazism and the killing of persons on the basis of race, but in fact includes a call to action against the forces attacking humanity.²¹ According to Kari:

The philosophical representations, the legalistic vocabulary, the erudite conceptualizations and the abstract tone of universality all represent a discursive rhetoric consistent with ecclesiastical pronouncements, [moreover] the lack of specificity is congruous with the Church's notion of itself as immutable and universal. However, if one penetrates the vocabulary, a rallying cry can be heard: "The call of the moment is not lamentation but [for] action . . . It is for the best and most distinguished members of the Christian family. . . to unite in the spirit of truth, justice and love to the call; God wills it, ready to serve, to sacrifice themselves, like the Crusaders of old."²²

18. *Id.*

19. VENTRESCA, *supra* note 7, at 169.

20. Camilla Kari, *Reticence and the Holocaust: The Rhetorical Style of Pope Pius XII*, *ADVANCES IN THE HIST. OF RHETORIC* 129, 138 (2006).

21. *Id.* at 141.

22. *Id.* at 141 (quoting 1942 Christmas Message, *supra* note 4, at ¶ 36).

III. COMMUNICATIONS TO THE VATICAN ABOUT NAZI ATROCITIES AND DEMANDS FOR A STATEMENT OF CONDEMNATION

Phayer in his 2008 monograph, *Pius XII, the Holocaust and the Cold War*, maintains the Nazi killing of Catholics and Jews in Poland was the motivating force for the Vatican to speak out about Nazi atrocities.²³ It is these Nazi atrocities that lie behind the 1942 Christmas Message:

Because Pope Pius spoke out meaningfully about genocide in Poland at the end of 1942, we can assume that he took seriously the reports, or at least some reports, that had come to the Vatican earlier that year . . . [T]here had to have been a turning point that caused the Holy Father to address genocide in the Christmas address. This does not mean that at the end of 1942, Pius XII knew, or was convinced of the fact that the Final Solution was in the process of being carried out.”²⁴

Walter Laquer in his book, *The Terrible Secret: Suppression of the Truth and Hitler’s Final Solution*, maintains that the Vatican was among the first institutions to learn about the fate of deported Jews:

There was a great deal of coming and going throughout the war between the Vatican and the outside world. It was kept informed by the Jewish representatives in Geneva who handed long memoranda to the nuncio in Switzerland, Bernardini (17 March 1942), as well as to Angelo Roncalli, the future Pope John XXIII, at the time papal nuncio in Turkey; it was bombarded with notes by Myron Taylor and Harold Tittmann, U.S. Envoys at the Vatican, Sir Ronald Campbell, the British Ambassador, the Brazilian Envoy and countless others. All the notes contained information about the mass murders committed by the Nazis.²⁵

In addition, there were Catholic priests and laymen in Poland and Slovakia who informed the Vatican of the Nazi atrocities.²⁶ The Vatican itself had a diplomatic presence or channels of communication with every country, except the USSR, all of which provided information about the ongoing Nazi activities.²⁷

The call for Pope Pius XII to publicly condemn the Nazi atrocities is documented in a series of communications between the U.S. envoy to the

23. PHAYER, *supra* note 3, at 43–44.

24. *Id.*

25. WALTER LAQUEUR, *THE TERRIBLE SECRET: SUPPRESSION OF THE TRUTH ABOUT HITLER’S FINAL SOLUTION* 55 (1998).

26. *Id.*

27. FALCONI, *supra* note 1, at 50–51 (“As regards the Holy See itself, it was always able to communicate with the various countries of the world through its own normal diplomatic channels even when the difficulties arising from the war made relations harder And in any case the diplomatic network of the Vatican could always rely on a considerable number of nunciatures and Apostolic Delegations.”).

Vatican and Cardinal Luigi Maglione, the Vatican Secretary of State.²⁸ On September 26, 1942, Myron C. Taylor, a U.S. envoy to the Vatican delivered a note to the Vatican Secretary of State with explicit information about the Final Solution received from the Geneva Office of the Jewish Agency for Palestine in a report from two reliable eyewitnesses in April 1942:

- 1) Liquidation of the Warsaw Ghetto is taking place. Without any distinction all Jews, irrespective of age or sex, are being removed from the Ghetto in groups and shot. Their corpses are utilized for making fats and their bones for the manufacture of fertilizer. Corpses are even being exhumed for these purposes.
- 2) These mass executions take place, not in Warsaw, but in specially prepared camps, one of which is stated to be in Belzek. About 50,000 Jews have been executed in Lomberg itself on the spot during the past month. According to another report, 100,000 have been massacred in Warsaw. There is not one Jew left in the entire district east of Poland, including occupied Russia. It is also reported, in this connection, that the entire non-Jewish population of Sebastopol was murdered. So as not to attract attention of foreign countries, the butchering of Jewish populations in Poland, was not done at a single time.
- 3) Jews deported from Germany, Belgium, Holland, France and Slovakia are sent to be butchered, while Aryans deported to the East from Holland and France are generally used for work²⁹

Harold Tittmann, the U.S. Charge d'Affaires at the United States Mission to the Vatican reported to the U.S. State Department on October 6, 1942, that despite receiving reports about Nazi atrocities, the Pope was hesitant to make a public statement because of possible retaliation by Nazi leaders.³⁰ There was also apparent sensitivity to the German citizens' resentment for what was considered the Vatican's partiality against Germany during World War I.³¹ These feelings were based on reports to the Vatican that Germans

28. SAUL FRIEDLANDER, PIUS XII AND THE THIRD REICH: A DOCUMENTATION 120–21 (1966).

29. *Id.* at 121.

30. *Id.* at 123.

31. *See id.*

resented statements by Benedict XV that were critical of Germany during WWI.³² The telegram from Tittmann to the U.S. State Department stated:

The Holy See is still apparently convinced that a forthright denunciation by the Pope of Nazi atrocities, at least in so far Poland is concerned, would only result in the violent deaths of many more people. Msgr. Montini [later Pope Paul VI], however stated to me that the time may come, when in spite of such grievous prospect, the Holy Father will feel himself obliged to speak out Another motive, possibly the controlling one, behind the Pope's disinclination to denounce the Nazi atrocities is his fear that if he does so now, the German people in the bitterness of defeat, will reproach him later on for having contributed, if only indirectly, to this defeat. It has been pointed out to me that just such an accusation was directed against the Holy See by the Germans after the last war, because of certain phrases spoken . . . by Benedict XV while hostilities were in progress. When it is borne in mind that Pius XII had many years of conditioning in Germany, it will not seem unnatural that he should be particularly sensitive to this particular argument.³³

Despite the Pope's reluctance to speak publicly about the German activities, the Vatican continued to receive requests for statements from bishops in the Nazi occupied countries, particularly Poland.³⁴ At the same time, the international community and the Allies mounted significant efforts to influence the Vatican to make a public statement condemning the Nazi killing of Jews.³⁵ One of efforts was a Joint Declaration of the United Nations, a new twenty-six nation alliance established against the Axis powers, which condemned the Nazi exterminations.³⁶ While the Vatican remained reluctant to specifically condemn the German state, the Pope finally acquiesced to the urging of these individuals and institutions in his 1942 Christmas Message.³⁷ However, evident in the text of the telegram from Harold

32. *See id.*

33. *Id.*

34. CORNWELL, *supra* note 13, at 281 (“[A] flow of dispatches came into the Vatican from various sources in Eastern Europe describing the fate of some ninety thousand Jews. Among whom there were significant numbers ‘baptized’ who had been sent to camps in Poland. The nuncio in Bratislava commented that the deportation was the equivalent of sending a large number to certain death.”).

35. *See e.g.*, Letter from Mr. Harold H. Tittmann, Assistant to the President's Personal Representative to Pope Pius XII, to the Secretary of the State (Oct. 6 1942), in 3 FOREIGN RELATIONS OF THE UNITED STATES: DIPLOMATIC PAPERS, 1942, EUROPE 776–77 (1961) (“I understand that the Pope is giving careful consideration to the matter and the general impression is that he will say something at an opportune moment.”).

36. Declaration of United Nations, Jan. 1, 1942, 55 Stat. 1600, E.A.S. No. 236, <https://www.loc.gov/law/help/us-treaties/bevans/m-ust000003-0697.pdf> [<https://perma.cc/A3NP-F77X>] (declaring access to country resources, military or economic against those the Tripartite Pact are at war with in the quest for victory over Hitlerism).

37. *See e.g.*, Letter, *supra* note 35 (“The Holy See is still apparently convinced that a forthright denunciation by the Pope of Nazi atrocities . . . would only result in the violent deaths of many more people.”) Tittman further speculated “another motive, possibly the controlling one, behind the Pope's disinclination to denounce Nazi atrocities is his fear

Tittmann to the U.S. Secretary of State sent on the eve of the broadcast of the 1942 Christmas Message, the U.S. envoy anticipated any statement from the Pope would fall short of the Allies' desired direct condemnation of the Nazi extermination of Jews:

In a recent conversation with the Cardinal Secretary of State, I referred to the Joint Declaration of the United Nations on the mass extermination of Jews in German occupied countries and asked him whether this was not something Holy See could along similar lines. He replied as before to the effect that Holy See was unable to denounce publicly particular atrocities but that it had frequently condemned atrocities in general. He added that everything possible was being done privately to relieve the distress of Jews. Although deploring cruelties that have come to his attention he said that Holy See was unable to verify Allied reports as to the number of Jews exterminated, et cetera. There are rumors to the effect that the Pope in his Christmas message will take a strong stand on this subject, but I am afraid that any deviation from the generalities of his previous messages is unlikely.³⁸

Although the Vatican initially held back on issuing a public statement condemning the Nazi atrocities, the evidence nevertheless reveals that early on, bishops and clergy were encouraged by the Vatican to alleviate the plight of Jewish victims.³⁹ Throughout 1942, the Vatican Secretary of State maintained in discussions with various diplomats that the Vatican was doing everything it could to alleviate the suffering of the Jews.⁴⁰ At the same time, the Vatican continued to maintain that it was unable to officially confirm reports of specific atrocities.⁴¹ However, the end of 1942, it appears that the Vatican was presented with specific information about the mass killing of Jews.⁴² Significantly, representatives of several South American

that if he does so now, the German people, in the bitterness of their defeat, will reproach him later on for having contributed, if only indirectly, to this defeat." *Id.*

38. FRIEDLANDER, *supra* note 28, at 124–25.

39. VENTRESCA, *supra* note 7, at 179. Ventresca explains that “[w]hile studiously avoiding the explicit public condemnation being asked of him, Pius authorized papal representatives around the world to mobilize whatever resources they could muster to help those facing persecution and certain death because of race or creed.” *Id.*

40. FALCONI, *supra* note 1, at 67–69. Pope Pius XII reported to have responded to material needs of victims of Nazi aggression while remaining silent in regard to formal and effective denunciation.

41. PHAYER, *supra* note 3, at 44. Phayer notes what while “Vatican spokespersons said that they believed the accuracy of atrocities perpetrated on Catholics but doubted the stories of greater atrocities on Jews.” *Id.*

42. *See e.g.* Letter from The President’s Personal Representative to Pope Pius XII (Taylor) to the Cardinal Secretary of State (Maglione) (Sept. 26 1942), in 3 FOREIGN RELATIONS OF THE UNITED STATES: DIPLOMATIC PAPERS, 1942, EUROPE 775–67 (1961) (providing information from two eye-witnesses relating to massacres occurring throughout

and European Catholic countries directly demanded a papal condemnation of the Nazi atrocities, warning that a failure to make such a statement would weaken the moral authority of the Church.⁴³ These diplomats warned: “A policy of silence in regard to such offenses [in Poland] against the conscience of the world must necessarily involve a renunciation of moral leadership and a consequent atrophy of the influence and authority of the Vatican.”⁴⁴ The 1942 Christmas Message of Pope Pius XII was a response to this challenge.

IV. POPE PIUS XII’S 1942 CHRISTMAS MESSAGE

Pope Pius XII’s 1942 Christmas Message was an address delivered by the Pope over Vatican radio on Christmas Day, 1942.⁴⁵ The text of the address was twenty-six typed pages and was over 5000 words long; the speech took over fifty-five minutes to deliver over the radio. The Message calls for a return to natural law principles to serve as the basis for individual and social action in face of the current international conflict, citing the primary concerns of order and peace. Recognition is given to traditional Catholic Social Teaching especially its teaching on the dignity of the worker and laborer as a prototype for national order and international peace. Marxist Socialism is cited for special condemnation as an erroneous and godless approach to issues of social justice. Principles of human dignity are identified as providing the basis for restoring the world to justice. The final section dealing with postwar society identifies areas of injustice which need to be rectified. Overall, the Message specifically mentioned matters that could cause a person hearing the Message to draw inferences about the Nazis’ behavior, including failure to adhere to agreements to make war less inhumane and forcing people into the status of exiles from their native land. Moreover, the most significant passage in the Message condemned those with responsibility for “hundreds of thousands of persons who without fault on their part, sometimes only because of their nationality or race have been consigned to death or to a slow decline.”⁴⁶

The Message consists of an introduction followed by five parts. The Pope began the Message by acknowledging the sorrowful state of the contemporary world, and recognized the anguished cries of those in war torn Europe

Europe). For further examples, please see FRIEDLANDER, *supra* note 28, at 103–10. Friedlander argued given written communications collected after 1942, it appears the pope may have been aware of killings in early 1942. *Id.* at 104.

43. PHAYER, *supra* note 3, at 48–49.

44. *Id.* at 48–49.

45. 1942 Christmas Message, *supra* note 4. For the text of the Christmas Message, see *infra* Appendix.

46. *Id.*

who were anxious and suffering. However, the Pope insisted that since the world was at war, the Church had to remain neutral among the states at war: “She [the Church] does not intend to take sides for any of the particular forms in which the several peoples and states strive to solve the gigantic problems of domestic order or international collaboration, as long as those forms conform to the law of God.”⁴⁷ Essentially, the Pope reiterated that the Vatican maintained a neutral stance with regard to the warring ideologies of fascism and democracy, as magisterial teaching had never endorsed either form of state government. Rather, the Pope saw the role of the Church as proclaiming the natural and eternal law that should govern all human affairs. Though only stated later in the Message, this obligation of the Church to declaim the natural law goes hand in hand with the Pope’s condemnation of state positive law, which relies solely on compulsion or force for its legitimacy. This form of the discussion supports the earlier quoted assertion of Camille Kari that the Message is more legalistic than oratorical, and the Message is rooted more in the traditional concerns of the Church with maintenance of natural law underpinning recognition of human dignity as the obligation of the state, rather than with contemporary political conflict.⁴⁸

The first three sections of the Christmas Message deal with the need to establish an international order governing the countries of the world, reflecting the internal order of states, which must conform to the fundamental laws of the natural order. A peaceful international order depends on the existence of well-ordered states because “[i]nternational relations and internal order [of states] are intimately related.”⁴⁹ The next two sections of the message discuss the primary elements of natural law that regulate social life, which include “living together in order, and . . . living together in tranquility.”⁵⁰

Those states that are based on a godless social philosophy which views humankind, independent of the divine, as the supreme good, are led to the chaos that the Pope maintains is pervasive in contemporary society:

A social teaching on a social reconstruction program which denies or prescinds this internal essential relation to God of everything that regards men, is on a false course, and while it builds up with one hand, it prepares with the other the materials which sooner or later will undermine and destroy the whole fabric.⁵¹

47. *Id.*

48. *See* Kari, *supra* note 20, at 38.

49. *Id.*

50. *Id.*

51. *Id.*

Upon hearing or reading these remarks, one might well understand this criticism as referring both to the Fascist or National Socialist philosophy of Germany, as well as to the Marxist Socialist creed of the U.S.S.R.

Throughout the text of the Message there are statements that have significance in regard to the persecution of Jews. For example, the Pope states, "If social life implies intrinsic unity, it does not, at the same time, exclude differences which are founded in fact and nature."⁵² Religion, economics, and cultural activity are important in social life; however, the Pope returns his focus to the importance of a just legal structure.

That social life, such as God willed it, may attain its scope, it needs a juridical order to support it from without, to defend and protect it. The function of this juridical order is not to dominate but to serve, to help the development and increase of society's vitality in the rich multiplicity of its ends, leading all the individual energies to their perfection⁵³

The essence of the Pope's emphasis on a legitimate legal structure, which serves the individual, provides a strong argument against a totalitarian or collective state. Both Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union were recognized by the contemporary audience as totalitarian and collective states;⁵⁴ thus, the critical remarks communicated to those hearing or reading the Pope's Christmas Message would have been understood as condemnations.

The Pope made an effort to establish how Catholic Social teaching should serve as a model for overcoming conflict. This model is offered as a basis for overcoming the conflict of war by the establishment of a just international order. It is here that the Pope directly condemns Marxist Socialism because of its godlessness.

The fourth section of the Christmas Message identifies five points for ordering society, each of which essentially involves recognition of basic human rights. These include, (1) *Dignity of the Human Person* (which opposes "the excessive herding of men, as if they were a mass without a soul" and involves respect for and the practical realization of fundamental personal rights);⁵⁵ (2) *Defense of Social Unity* (which rejects "every form of materialism which sees in the people a herd of individuals who, divided and without any internal cohesion, are considered as a mass to be forded over and treated arbitrarily.");⁵⁶ (3) *Dignity of Labor* ("[B]esides a just wage which covers the needs of the worker and his family, the conservation and

52. *Id.*

53. *Id.*

54. See generally Les K. Adler & Thomas G. Paterson, *The Merger of Nazi Germany and Soviet Russia in the American Image of Totalitarianism, 1930's - 1950's*, 75 AM. HIST. REV. 1046 (1970).

55. 1942 Christmas Message, *supra* note 4.

56. *Id.*

perfection of a social order which will make possible an assured, even if modest, private property for all classes of society.”⁵⁷ (4) *The Rehabilitation of Juridical Order* (which “supposes (a) [a] tribunal and a judge who take their directions from a clearly formulated and defined right. (b) Clear judicial norms which may not be overturned by unwarranted appeals to a supposed popular sentiment or by merely utilitarian considerations. (c) The recognition of the principle that even the State and the functionaries and organizations [who] depend on it are obliged to repair and to withdraw measures which are harmful to the liberty, property, honor, progress of health of individuals.”)⁵⁸ and (5) *Christian Conception for the State* (“[H]elp to restore the State and its power to the service of human society, to the full recognition of the respect due to the human person and his efforts to attain his eternal destiny.”)⁵⁹ These five points of ordering human society could be heard as fundamental criticisms of National Socialist Germany, which was broadly known throughout the world as a totalitarian state.⁶⁰ However, without explicit mention of the internal operation of the German state or examples of how the laws of Germany violated the principles set out by the Pope, it is understandable how someone unfamiliar with the actual operation of fascism in Germany could fail to recognize these statements served as a critique of Nazi practices.

Nevertheless, the final section of the Christmas Message reads even more clearly as a judiciously coded diplomatic critique of the leaders of Nazi Germany. The Pope talks of those with an “unbridled lust for gain and power.”⁶¹ Those listening to the Pope would have been well aware of Germany’s invasions of various conquered territories. The Pope cites the violation of “[i]nternational agreements to make war less inhuman by confining it to combatants [and] to regulate the procedure of occupation and imprisonment of the conquered.”⁶² Anyone listening to the Pope’s address, and who read news accounts available at the time, would have drawn a connection of this section of the Christmas Message to the acts of invading German forces, which produced civilian casualties and violence against conquered civilian populations. Specifically, the Pope cites to the “progressive demoralization of the people.”⁶³ Any person hearing or reading the Pope’s message could

57. *Id.*

58. *Id.*

59. *Id.*

60. *See generally* Adler & Paterson, *supra* note 54.

61. 1942 Christmas Message, *supra* note 4.

62. *Id.*

63. *Id.*

certainly draw the connection to the people subject to German occupation, including any Jews living in conquered lands.

Further, the Pope's concern for "those numerous exiles whom the hurricane of war has torn from their native land and scattered in the land of the stranger" would surely associate this statement with those individuals reported in the international press as having been removed from their native lands and shipped to Germany or moved to other work locations.⁶⁴ Finally, individuals aware of the Nazi program of killing Jews, and the significant news reportings of these deaths, would have by December 1942 been cognizant of the subjects of the Pope's reference when he stated, "Mankind owes that vow [to restore a just society] to the hundreds of thousands of persons who, without any fault on their part, sometimes only *because of their nationality or race*, have been *consigned to death or slow decline*."⁶⁵

To gauge the response of the contemporary reader or listener to the 1942 Christmas message, one needs to understand the near total domination of Europe by the armed forces of Nazi Germany by the end of 1942. The Soviet Union was under attack by Germany following Hitler's termination of an alliance with Stalin and the USSR. Poland had been subject to Nazi brutalization for over three years. By the middle of 1942, it was widely reported that Germany had begun a systematic program to eliminate Jews. Accordingly, anyone hearing or reading Pope Pius XII's 1942 Christmas Message would have interpreted it against this factual background.

V. INTENTION AND RECEPTION OF THE 1942 CHRISTMAS MESSAGE

Pope Pius XII himself felt that he had been clear in his intention to communicate a condemnation of Nazi atrocities. Harold Tittmann, the U.S. envoy, reported to the U.S. State Department on December 30, 1942, about a discussion he had with the Pope about the Pope's purpose and own assessment of his Christmas Message as a public rebuke of Nazi atrocities, stating:

With regard to his Christmas Message the Pope gave me the impression that he was sincere in believing that he had spoken therein clearly enough to satisfy all those who had been insisting in the past that he utter some word of condemnation of the Nazi atrocities, and he seemed surprised when I told him that I thought there were some who did not share his belief. He said that he thought that it was plain to everyone that he was referring to the Poles, Jews and wartime hostages when he declared that hundreds of thousands of persons had been killed or tortured through no fault of their own, sometimes only because of their race or nationality. He explained that when talking of atrocities he could not name the Nazi's without at the same time mentioning the Bolsheviks and this he thought that this might

64. *Id.*

65. *Id.* (emphasis added).

not be wholly pleasing to the Allies. He stated that he 'feared' there was foundation for the atrocity reports of the allies, but led me to believe that he felt there had been some exaggeration for purposes of propaganda. Taken as a whole he thought his message should be welcomed by the American people and I agreed with him.⁶⁶

Tittmann, as a representative of the U.S. Diplomatic Corps, can be viewed as reflecting the general positive response of the Allies regarding the 1942 Christmas Message as a public condemnation of Nazi atrocities. Tittmann told the U.S. State Department that: "[T]aken as a whole, the message may be regarded as an arraignment of totalitarianism. Furthermore, the reference to the persecution of the Jews, and mass deportations is unmistakable."⁶⁷

The British historian, Anthony Rhodes, quotes extensively in his book *The Vatican in the Age of the Dictators, 1922-1945* from captured wartime documents that included a statement of Reinhard Heydrich, head of the German Security Department, commenting on the Gestapo's view of the Pope's 1942 Christmas Message:

In a manner never known before . . . the Pope has repudiated the National [S]ocialist New European Order. It is true, the Pope does not refer to the National Socialists in Germany by name, but his speech is one long attack on everything we stand for . . . God, he says, regards all peoples and races as worthy of the same consideration. Here he is clearly speaking on behalf of the Jews . . . that his speech is directed exclusively against the New Order in Europe as seen in National socialism is clear in that the Papal statement that mankind owes a debt to all who during the war have lost their Fatherland and who, although personally blameless have, simply on account of their nationality and origin, been killed or reduced to utter destitution. Here he is virtually accusing the German people of injustice towards the Jews, and makes himself the mouthpiece of the Jewish war criminals.⁶⁸

There was extensive reporting on the content of the Christmas Message worldwide. *The New York Times* reported about the Pope's Christmas Message in a front-page article on December 25, 1942, titled *Pope Assails Peril of Godless State*, which included the full text of the Pope's Christmas Message.⁶⁹ The article reported:

66. HAROLD TITTMANN, JR., *INSIDE THE VATICAN OF PIUS XII: THE MEMOIR OF AN AMERICAN DIPLOMAT DURING WORLD WAR II* 123–24 (2004).

67. PHAYER, *supra* note 3, at 57 (quoting Tittmann to Department of State, Secretary of State Cordell Hull, Entry 1071, Box 29, RG 59, Location 250/48/29, Jan. 7, 1943).

68. ANTHONY RHODES, *THE VATICAN IN THE AGE OF DICTATORS 1922-1945* 272–73 (1974).

69. *Pope Assails Peril of "Godless State,"* N.Y. TIMES, Dec. 25, 1942.

Pius XII reaffirmed the church's denunciation of Marxist Socialism. He also castigated the authoritarian form of government that disposed of individuals like a 'herd of lifeless things' and he called upon all those who recognized Christ to join the crusade for a new social order based on the Christian precept that to serve is better than to dominate.⁷⁰

The *Times* article draws no explicit connection between the Pope's remarks and Nazi Germany; however, the article does mention the pivotal phrase from the speech, "the thousands of men who through no fault of their own but for reasons of nationality or race had been doomed to death or decay," without linking it to any specific group such as the Jews. Significantly, the article notes the Pope's claim to neutrality, reporting that the Pope said: "[The Church] refused to take sides from one or the other of the human ideologies."⁷¹ It should be noted that the Church was not above ideology when the Pope condemned "Marxist Socialism," but the Pope seemed to say the Church was above ideologies when it came to fascism or National Socialism versus Democracy. This paper later discusses the difference in treatment of ideologies.

The *Chicago Daily Tribune* reported on the Pope's Christmas Message on page seven of its December 25, 1942, issue in an article titled *Pope Condemns, "Herding of Men By Government."* The article noted:

[While the Pope] mentioned no individuals or nations by name . . . he condemned the conception of the state as an "absolute and supreme entity," the "urge for power and predominance," the "herding of men as if they were a mass without a soul," the breaking of international agreements designed to humanize war, and noted with sorrow that many people have been consigned to death or a slow decline solely because of their nationality or race.⁷²

The *Tribune* article also included a reference to the papal claim of neutrality:

The Church, the Pope said, 'does not intend to take sides for either of the particular forms in which the several peoples and states strive to solve the gigantic problems of domestic order or international collaboration, as long as these forms conform to the law of God.'⁷³

Michal Phayer reports that both members of the hierarchy in Germany and individuals subject to persecution in Poland were critical of the lack of specificity in the Pope's address: "Bishop Preysing in Berlin thought the Pope's words referred to Jews, but were not specific enough. Poles thought the Pope had referred to them, but that he should have identified the Germans

70. *Id.*

71. *Id.*

72. *Pope Condemns, "Herding of Men By Government,"* CHI. DAILY TRIB., Dec. 25, 1942.

73. *Id.*

as perpetrators.”⁷⁴ However, the response in other occupied countries such as France and the Netherlands were more positive.

The harshest criticism of the 1942 Christmas Message came from revisionist historians such as John Cornwell who in his controversial book *Hitler's Pope: The Secret History of Pius XII* denounces the address. Cornwell argued:

It is not merely a paltry statement. The chasm between the enormity of the liquidation of the Jewish people and this form of evasive words is shocking. He might have been referring to many categories of victims of the many belligerents in the conflict. Clearly the exhibition of ambiguous language was intended to placate those who urged him to protest, while avoiding offense to the Nazi regime. But these considerations are overshadowed by the implicit denial and trivialization. He had scaled down the doomed millions to “hundreds of thousands” and expunged the word Jews, making the pointed qualification “sometimes only” [referring to “nationality or race” being sometimes used to consign people to death]. Nowhere was the term Nazi or Nazi Germany mentioned. Hitler himself could not have wished for a more convoluted and innocuous reaction from the Vicar of Christ to the greatest crime in human history.⁷⁵

This is made all the worse according to Cromwell because “[i]t was to remain the fullest extent of his [the Pope's] protest and denunciation for the rest of the war.”⁷⁶

Robert Ventresca in *Soldier of Christ* takes a more nuanced position basing his criticism on evidence that contemporaries of Pius XII, including Allied authorities such as U.S. Office of Strategic Services (“OSS”), took the view “that such papal circumlocution in wartime was less constructive than more direct language would have been.”⁷⁷ Ventresca's criticism is essentially that “Pius XII really could [have said] things more bluntly.”⁷⁸ Ventresca concludes:

The Pope's refusal to call by name the Nazi war against the Jews fed the growing perception that Pius XII was not doing everything in his power to condemn Nazi atrocities . . . It is commonly asserted that the accusation of papal silence during the Holocaust was an invention of the postwar era first in Soviet propaganda, then in the contrived historical fiction of Hochhuth's play *The Deputy*. In fact, the

74. PHAYER, *supra* note 3, at 58–59.

75. JOHN CORNWELL, *HITLER'S POPE: THE SECRET HISTORY OF PIUS XII* 293 (Viking Penguin 1999) (2008).

76. *Id.* at 292.

77. VENTRESCA, *supra* note 7, at 185–86.

78. *Id.* at 186.

criticism of Pius XII's reluctance to speak out against the Fascist's stretches back to the early weeks of his pontificate.⁷⁹

Ventresca's criticism of the "papal circumlocution" is directed at the indirect character of the Pope's language in the 1942 Christmas Message. Such criticism is based on a standard which values bold and direct statements, especially on such significant matters of life and death as were being addressed in the 1942 Christmas Message. This view, however, ignores a long tradition of papal rhetoric to which Pius XII was steeped in and felt compelled to use in his formal statements.

VI. PAPAL CONSTRAINTS AND COMMITMENTS: RHETORIC AND ANATHEMAS

Two related aspects of the 1942 Christmas Message deserve further consideration: (1) the indirect language and the rhetorical style, which precludes the direct denunciation of Nazi Germany and the killing of Jews, and (2) the specifically named condemnation of Marxist Socialism while failing to directly denounce Fascism or National Socialism. Camilla Kari in her article *Reticence and the Holocaust: the Rhetorical Style of Pope Pius XII*, addresses the criticism directed at Pius XII for the lack of specificity in the public discourse embodied in the 1942 Christmas Message.⁸⁰ Kari identifies the basic premises underlying the pontifical rhetorical styles: (1) the Church is a transcendent institution, aloof from contemporary social issues, while at the same time serving as teacher providing guidance for present concerns with reference to universal principles, and (2) a generalized and abstract rhetorical style which serves to preserve the functions of a global faith followed by a diversity of cultures.⁸¹ Kari provided an analysis of the 1942 Christmas Message based on this established style of papal rhetoric:

[T]he resulting oratory was brief, bland, and a deep disappointment to those who had advocated his verbal intervention. This reaction puzzled Pius, who believed his message had been clear. The difference in expectations can be explained by the depth of familiarity listeners had with the coded style of papal discourse. The dimensions of interpretation and context also account for the paradox of a pontiff known for his personal sanctity, whose apparent weak response to those in distress has puzzled his contemporaries and historians alike. One explanation for this contradiction can be found by examining the discourse of the popes who preceded him; leaders of a vulnerable city-state, whose flexibility in addressing on-going events was compromised by the need to placate multiple factions and remain above particular controversies. Establishing the rhetorical parameters of a reigning pontiff provides a basis for comparison with Pius XII's discourse. They reveal that Pius XII's "silence" conformed

79. *Id.*

80. Kari, *supra* note 20, at 131.

81. *Id.*

to the stylistic formulas of his predecessors and provide a dispassionate basis for his reticence.⁸²

. . .

The philosophical representations, the legalistic vocabulary, the erudite conceptualizations and the abstract tone of universality, all represent a discursive rhetoric consistent with ecclesiastical pronouncements. The lack of specificity is congruous with the Church's notion of itself as immutable and universal.⁸³

An understanding of the rhetorical style of Pius XII should be coupled with his use of the scholastic method of reasoning associated with St. Thomas Aquinas. In *Soldier of Christ*, Robert Ventresca provided an account of a special report prepared by the U.S. Office of Strategic Services in January 1943, which provides an analysis of Pope Pius XII's Christmas Message.⁸⁴ The report suggests that the key to understanding the Pope's statement is the use of the "syllogism" as used by Aquinas, which is a "form of reasoning that presumed the listener or reader could deduce the logical conclusion of an argument from a statement of basic propositions."⁸⁵ Evaluating the Christmas Message according to this method, the OSS Report reasoned:

Pius XII's approach was to begin with the statement of general principles regarding, for instance, totalitarianism, and assume the 'his listeners or readers' would apply it to the type of totalitarian regime under which they were concerned. Thus, anyone who paid attention to the Pope's Christmas address would find "the ideological guidance they need." They would infer logically that when he referred to the thousands of innocents who were facing death or decline because of religion or race, he meant the persecuted Jews of Europe.⁸⁶

When one considers the avoidance of specificity which prevented Pius XII from directly identifying Germany with the atrocities to which he referred, it seems perfectly understandable why the Pope would not mention the USSR. However, the Pope directly mentioned "Marxist Socialism" (which could be associated with the USSR) and not Fascism or National Socialism (which was the Nazi ideology prevalent in Germany). Michael Phayer, in *Pius XII, The Holocaust and the Cold War*, provides an explanation, which boils down to the fact that "communism was atheistic, there could be no compromise with it" while "fascist governments . . . were not viewed

82. *Id.* at 133–34.

83. *Id.* at 141.

84. VENTRESCA, *supra* note 7, at 185.

85. *Id.*

86. *Id.* at 185–86.

as godless.”⁸⁷ Pius XII’s direct condemnation of “Marxist Socialism” reflected an established tradition that declared the communist ideology anathema. Phayer reports that: “Pope Leo XIII first condemned communism as a social and economic system in 1878 in an encyclical *Quo Apostolici Muneris*. Pope Leo repeated the condemnation numerous times, notably in *Rerum Novarum* (1891). Each subsequent Pope reaffirmed Leo XIII’s condemnation. When communism took on the form of Russian Bolshevism, Pope Pius XI railed against it.”⁸⁸ Phayer concludes that “Pius XII inherited this tradition of fierce rejection of communism” and this perhaps explains the specificity of his condemnation of Marxist Socialism in his 1942 Christmas Message.⁸⁹

VII. OTHER CONTEXTUAL CONSIDERATIONS RELEVANT TO AN APPRAISAL OF POPE PIUS XII’S 1942 CHRISTMAS MESSAGE

There are several other contextual considerations relevant to an appraisal of Pope Pius XII’s 1942 Christmas Message whose full consideration is beyond the scope of this brief paper. It may be useful, nevertheless, to identify some of the concerns that influenced Pope Pius XII in making public statements, including the 1942 Christmas Message.

Pius XII was a career diplomat who had served as papal nuncio to Bavaria and then as Vatican Secretary of State.⁹⁰ The role of the Vatican in facilitating diplomacy to the end of creating a peaceful and orderly world was of primary significance to Pius XII. Through the practice of diplomacy, Pius XII envisioned a role for the Vatican in the post-World War II world as a peacemaker and reconciler. Thus, it was important for the Vatican to maintain a relationship with all the warring powers of World War II. The relationships would provide the basis of confidence in the Vatican as a Peace Broker who could mediate and produce a peace agreement between the warring powers that would avoid the failure of World War I’s Versailles Treaty.

An important consideration for Pope Pius XII in making any public statement was the maintenance of neutrality. During World War I, Pope Benedict XV was perceived by the Germans to be hostile to their nation’s cause.⁹¹ Pius XII believed this had hampered Benedict XV from playing

87. PHAYER, *supra* note 3, at 54–55.

88. *Id.* at 54.

89. *Id.* at 55.

90. FRIEDLANDER, *supra* note 28, at 3. “On March 2, 1939, Cardinal Eugenio Pacelli, Secretary of the State to Pius XI, was elected Pope and took the name Pius XII.” Prior, Pope Pius XII was Nuncio in Munich in 1917, Nuncio in Berlin from 1920 to 1929, and the Cardinal Secretary of State from 1930 to 1939. *Id.*

91. PHAYER, *supra* note 3, at 55.

a significant role in the peace negotiations following World War I.⁹² By maintaining strict neutrality, Pius XII believed he enhanced the likelihood that the Vatican could effectively play the role of Peace Broker after the cessation of hostilities of World War II.⁹³

A growing concern for Pope Pius XII, as World War II dragged on, was the safety of Rome, Vatican City, and the Church in occupied countries.⁹⁴ While contemporary critics transform these concerns into selfish preoccupations of the Pope, it is simply the fact that Pope Pius XII properly regarded himself as responsible for the safety of Rome and the preservation of the patrimony of the Church. Such concerns were probably not limited to the protection of clergy and believers, but also for the preservation of the physical presence of the Church in Rome, which has enormous religious symbolic significance for Catholics, as well as for many other Christian believers.

It was the preservation of the Church that caused Pope Pius XII to view the defeat of the Soviet Union, by Germany, as a desired outcome of World War II. This hope reflected the Vatican's unalterable opposition to communism, as Michael Phayer described this view of "the second World War as a showdown between the 'Christian West' and the 'Bolshevist East.'"⁹⁵ This, of course, put the Pope in opposition to the position of the United States and Great Britain which viewed the Soviet Union as an ally. Phayer correctly states: Pope Pius XII's view of the Second World War was different from that of the Allies. For the Allies, the war was an uncompromising struggle to the end with the destruction of Nazi Germany; Communist Russia had become an ally after Germany's invasion, code-named Barbarossa. The Pope hoped that the war would end with the limiting of the Soviet Union's boundaries and its exclusion from Europe, if not with the total destruction of the Communist regime.⁹⁶ Pope Pius XII's vision of the post-World War

92. VENTRESCA, *supra* note 7, at 44–49. Pope Benedict XV made a futile effort as peace negotiator urging German concessions, his seven point peace proposal was rejected as a proposed peace settlement. German resentment can be traced to the fact that: "Benedict XV suggested that for the sake of peace, Germany might have to renounce some of its original objectives in prosecuting the war." *Id.* at 48.

93. CORNWELL, *supra* note 13, at 284 (quoting a letter from Osborn, the British minister to the Holy See, to friend Mrs. Bridget McEwen, dated July 31, 1942: "[His Holiness] hopes to play a great role as peace-maker and that is partly at least for this reason that he tries to present a position of neutrality as between belligerents.").

94. VENTRESCA, *supra* note 7, at 189 ("The Fate of Rome was especially close to the Pope's heart.").

95. Phayer, *supra* note 5, at 427.

96. *Id.*

II world was a world in which the Vatican would serve as Peace Broker, producing a lasting and just peace, in a world without the Soviet Union and without communism, and a Germany in which the people quickly would replace the Nazi regime with a government committed to justice and order.⁹⁷

A final contextual consideration is suggested in the summer 1942 report of the U.S. envoy to the Vatican, in which Harold Tittmann stated that the Pope was not certain that the allies could win the war.⁹⁸ It seemed clear to Tittmann that the Pope foresaw a victory of the allies as the best outcome from the Church's point of view. However, there were differing views of the Pope's estimation of the likely victor of the war. Tittmann wrote of these views in his memoir: "One was that the chief reason for the silence of the Pope was his conviction even at this late date [in 1942] that the Axis [Germany, Italy and Japan] was bound to win the war and that he did not wish, therefore, to jeopardize the future of the Holy See by speaking out now against the future victors."⁹⁹ While one cannot know for sure what belief was held by the Pope on the likely victor in World War II, it is clear that in December 1942, the outcome of the war was not certain. Thus, that uncertainty was likely a significant constraint on the content of the Pope's 1942 Christmas Message.

VIII. CONCLUSION

Pope Pius XII's Christmas Message is a matter of significant dispute among contemporary commentators on the Vatican's reaction to the Holocaust. It is clear that the address was made in the face of demands made to the Pope to speak out against German atrocities, particularly the killing of Jews. The response of those who heard or read the address at the time it was made was, for the most part, favorable as they heard it as a diplomatically coded condemnation of Germany's National Socialist

97. VENTRESCA, *supra* note 7, at 221. Just as the defeat of the Germans in World War I, the defeat of the Germans in World War II was viewed by Pope Pius XII and provided the occasion for the establishment of world communism which provided the ultimate threat to Christianity. "Pius XII never wavered in the conviction that, together with the pagan nationalism and racialism of the Nazis, the atheistic materialism of Soviet Communism constituted one of the greatest heresies of the modern age. Worse still, Communism's growing appeal in places like Italy and France constituted an immediate strategic threat in the very heart of Christian Europe." *Id.* See also PHAYER, *supra* note 3, at 55 for further support. "[I]t seemed possible, and from the pope's perspective, hopeful that with the German army deep in Soviet territory the war might finally come to an end with the boundaries of the Soviet Union far removed from Western Europe and, possible, that Communist leadership would founder as a result thereof." *Id.*

98. *Id.* (citing Tittmann to Department of State, Entry 21131, Box 29, RG 84, Dec. 10, 1942, as paraphrased by Lelane Harrison).

99. TITTMAN, *supra* note 66, at 116.

policy of deporting and killing Jews and other captured peoples. Some critics at the time of the address, and more today, maintain that the Christmas Message lacked specificity, particularly in condemning Nazi killing of Jews, which the situation demanded. The traditional pontifical rhetoric and the argumentative style of the message may largely explain the nature of expression employed by the Pope in his Christmas Message. Consideration of the discursive style, as well as institutional and contextual constraints, may explain the apparent limitation on the condemnation of German atrocities committed against the Jews and others apparent on the face of the address. One may judge Pope Pius XII's Christmas Message as a muted legalistic and theological response to what we now call the Holocaust. However, this was not the "silence" attributed to the Pope by his harshest critics. Nevertheless, in the face of the enormity of the Nazi's killing of Jews and others, this coded condemnation fell far short of the prophetic expression of condemnation that one might expect and demand from the Church and its Pontiff in the face of the moral outrage that seems demanded by the atrocities against Jews and others perpetrated by Nazi Germany.

IX. APPENDIX
THE INTERNAL ORDER OF STATES AND PEOPLE
POPE PIUS XII

*Christmas Message of 1942.*¹⁰⁰

My Dear Children of the Whole World:

As the Holy Christmas Season comes round each year, the message of Jesus, Who is light in the midst of darkness, echoes once more from the Crib of Bethlehem in the ears of Christians and re-echoes in their hearts with an ever new freshness of joy and piety. It is a message which lights up with heavenly truth a world that is plunged in darkness by fatal errors. It infuses exuberant and trustful joy into mankind, torn by the anxiety of deep, bitter sorrow. It proclaims liberty to the sons of Adam, shackled with the chains of sin and guilt. It promises mercy, love, peace to the countless hosts of those in suffering and tribulation who see their happiness Shattered and their efforts broken in the tempestuous strife and hate of our stormy days.

The church bells, which announce this message in every continent, not only recall the gift which God made to mankind at the dawn of the Christian Era; they also announce and proclaim a consoling reality of the present, a reality which is eternally young, living and life-giving; it is the reality of the "True Light which enlighteneth every man that cometh into this World," and which knows no setting. The Eternal Word, Who is the Way, the Truth and the Life, began His mission of saving and redeeming the human race by being born in the squalor of a stable and by thus ennobling and hallowing poverty.

He thus proclaimed and consecrated a message which is still, today, the Word of Eternal Life. That message can solve the most tortuous questions, unsolved and insoluble for those who bring to their investigations a mentality and an apparatus which are ephemeral and merely human; and those questions stand up, bleeding, imperiously demanding an answer, before the thought and the feeling of embittered and exasperated mankind.

The watchword "I have compassion on the multitude" is for Us a sacred trust which may not be abused; it remains strong, and impelling in all times and in all human situations, as it was the distinguishing mark of Jesus.

The Church would be untrue to herself, ceasing to be a mother, if she turned a deaf ear to her children's anguished cries, which reach her from every class of the human family. She does not intend to take sides for any

100. 1942 Christmas Message, *supra* note 4.

of the particular forms in which the several peoples and States strive to solve the gigantic problems of domestic order or international collaboration, as long as these forms conform to the law of God. But on the other hand, as the “Pillar and Ground of Truth” and guardian, by the will of God and the mandate of Christ, of the natural and supernatural order, the Church cannot renounce her right to proclaim to her sons and to the whole world the unchanging basic laws, saving them from every perversion, frustration, corruption, false interpretation and error.

This is all the more necessary for the fact that from the exact maintenance of these laws, and not merely by the effort of noble and courageous wills, depends in the last analysis the solidity of any national and international order, so fervently desired by all peoples. We know the qualities of courage and sacrifice of those peoples, and We also know their straitened conditions and their sorrow; and in this hour of unspeakable trial and strife We feel Ourselves bound to each and every one of them without exception, by a deep, all-embracing, unmovable affection, and by an immense desire to bring them every solace and help which is in any way at Our command.

Primary Elements of Social Life

In our last Christmas Message, We expounded the principles-which Christian thought suggests, for the establishment of an international order of friendly relations and collaboration such as to conform to the demands of God’s Law. Today We shall, with the consent, We feel, and the interested attention of all upright men, pause to consider very carefully and with equal impartiality, the fundamental laws of the internal order of the States and peoples.

International relations and internal order are intimately related. International equilibrium and harmony depend on the internal equilibrium and development of the individual States in the material, social and intellectual spheres. A firm steady peace policy towards other nations is, in fact, impossible without a spirit of peace within the nation which inspires trust. It is only, then, by striving for an integral peace, a peace in both fields, that people will be freed from the cruel nightmare of war, and the material and psychological causes of further discord and disorder will be diminished in a desire for peace, and hence aims at attaining peace, that “tranquil living together in order” in which St. Thomas finds the essence of peace. Two primary elements, then, regulate social life, a living together in order, and a living together in [tranquility].

Order

Order, which is fundamental in an association of men (of beings, that is, who strive to attain an end appropriate to their nature) is not merely external linking up of parts which are numerically distinct. It is rather, and must be, a tendency and an ever more perfect approach to an internal union; and this does not exclude differences founded in fact and sanctioned by the will of God or by supernatural standard.

A clear understanding of the genuine fundamentals of all social life has a capital importance today as never before, when mankind, impregnated by the poison of error and social aberrations, tormented by the fever of discordant desires, doctrines, and aims, is excitedly tossing about in the disorder which it has itself created, and is experiencing the destructive force of false ideas that disregard the Law of God or are opposed to it. And since disorder can only be overcome by an order which is not merely superimposed and fictitious (just as darkness with its fearful and depressing effects can only be driven away by light and not by will o' the wisps); so security, reorganizations, progressive improvement cannot be expected and cannot be brought about unless by a return of large and influential sections to correct notions about security.

It is a return which calls for the Grace of God in large measure, and for a resolute will, ready and prepared for sacrifice on the part of good farseeing men. From these influential circles who are more capable of penetrating and appreciating the beauty of just social norms, there will pass on and infiltrate into the masses the clear knowledge of the true, divine, spiritual origin of social life. Thus the way will be cleared for the reawakening, the growth and fixing of those moral principles without which even the proudest achievements create but a Babel in which the citizens, though they live inside the same walls, speak different and incoherent languages.

From individual and social life we should rise to God, the First Cause and Ultimate Foundation, as He is the Creator of the first conjugal society, from which we have the society which is the family, and the society of peoples and of nations. As an image, albeit imperfect, of its Exemplar, the One and Triune God, Who through the Mystery of the Incarnation, redeemed and raised human nature, life in society, in its ideals and in its end, possesses by the light of reason and of revelation a moral authority and an absoluteness which transcend every temporal change. It has a power of attraction that, far from being weakened or lessened by delusions, errors, failures, draws irresistibly the noblest and most faithful souls to the Lord, to take up with renewed energy, with added knowledge, with new studies, methods and means, the enterprises which in other times and circumstances were tried in vain.

The origin and the primary scope of social life is the conservation, development and perfection of the human person, helping him to realize accurately the demands and values of religion and culture set by the Creator for every man and for all mankind, both as a whole and in its natural ramifications.

A social teaching or a social reconstruction program which denies or prescind from this internal essential relation to God of everything that regards men, is on a false course; and while it builds up with one hand, it prepares with the other the materials which sooner or later will undermine and destroy the whole fabric. And when it disregards the respect due to the human person and to the life which is proper to that person, and gives no thought to it in its organization, in legislative and executive activity, then instead of serving society, it harms it; instead of encouraging and stimulating social thought, instead of realizing its hopes and expectations, it strips it of all real value and reduces it to a utilitarian formula which is openly rejected by constantly increasing groups.

If social life implies intrinsic unity, it does not, at the same time, exclude differences which are founded in fact and nature. When we hold fast to God, the Supreme Controller of all that relates to man, then the similarities no less than the differences of men find their allotted place in the fixed order of being, of values, and hence also of morality. When, however, this foundation is removed, there is a dangerous lack of cohesion in the various spheres of culture; the frontier of true value becomes uncertain and shifting, even to the point where mere external factors, and often blind instincts, come to determine, according to the prevalent fashion of the day, who is to have control of this or that direction.

After the fateful economy of the past decades, during which the lives of all citizens were subordinated to the stimulus of gain, there now succeeds another and no less fateful policy which, while it considers everybody with reference to the State, excludes all thought of ethics or religion. This is a fatal travesty, a fatal error. It is calculated to bring about far-reaching consequences for social life, which is never nearer to losing its noblest prerogatives than when it thinks it can deny or forget with impunity the external source of its own dignity: God.

Reason, enlightened by faith, assigns to individuals and to particular societies in the social organization a definite and exalted place. It knows, to mention only the most important, that the whole political and economic activity of the State is directed to the permanent realization of the common good.

In a conception of society which is pervaded and sanctioned by religious thought, the influence of economics and of every other sphere of cultural activity represents a universal and most exalted center of activity, very rich in its variety and coherent in its harmony, in which men's intellectual equality and diversity of occupation come into their own and secure adequate expression. When this is not so, work is depreciated and the worker is belittled.

That social life, such as God willed it, may attain its scope, it needs a juridical order to support it from without, to defend and protect it. The function of this juridical order is not to dominate but to serve, to help the development and increase of society's vitality in the rich multiplicity of its ends, leading all the individual energies to their perfection in peaceful completion, and defending them with appropriate and honest means against all that may militate against those who only by this means can be held within the noble discipline of social life. But in the just fulfillment of this right, an authority which is truly worthy of the name will always be painfully conscious of its responsibility in the sight of the Eternal Judge, before Whose Tribunal every wrong judgment, and especially every revolt against the order established by God, will receive without fail its sanction and its condemnation.

The precise, bedrock, basic rules that govern society cannot be prejudiced by the intervention of human agency. They can be denied, overlooked, despised, transgressed, but they can never be overthrown with legal validity. It is true indeed that, as time goes on, conditions of life change. But there is never a complete break or a complete discontinuity between the law of yesterday and that of today, between the disappearance of old powers and constitutions and the appearance of a new order. In any case, whatever be the change or transformation, the scope of every social life remains identical, sacred, obligatory; it is the development of the personal values of man as the image of God; and the obligation remains with every member of the human family to realize his unchangeable destiny, whosoever be the legislator and the authority whom he obeys.

In consequence, there always remains, too, his inalienable right, which no opposition can nullify—a right which must be respected by friend and foe—to a legal order and practice which appreciate and understand that it is their essential duty to serve the common good.

The juridical order has, besides, the high and difficult scope of insuring harmonious relations both between individuals and between societies, and within these. This scope will be reached if legislators will abstain from following those perilous theories and practices, so harmful to communities to their spirit of union, which derive their origin and promulgation from false postulates. Among such postulates We must count the juridical positivism

which attributes a deceptive majesty to the setting up of purely human laws, and which leaves the way open for a fatal divorce of law from morality.

There is, besides, the conception which claims for particular nations, or classes, the juridical instinct as the final imperative and the norm from which there is no appeal; finally, there are those various theories which, differing among themselves, and deriving from opposite ideologies, agree in considering the State, or a group which represents it, as an absolute and supreme entity, exempt from control and from criticism even when its theoretical and practical postulates result in and offend by, their open denial of essential tenets of the human Christian conscience.

Anyone who considers with an open and penetrating mind the vital connection between social order and a genuine juridical order, and who is conscious of the fact that internal order in all its complexity depends on the predominance of spiritual forces, on the respect of human dignity in oneself and in others, on the love of society and of its God-given ends, cannot wonder at the sad effects of juridical conceptions which, far from the royal road of truth, proceed on the insecure ground of materialistic postulates. But he will realize at once the urgent need of a return to a conception of law which is spiritual and ethical, serious and profound, vivified by the warmth of true humanity and illumined by the splendor of the Christian Faith, which bids us seek in the juridical order an outward refraction of the social order willed by God, a luminous product of the spirit of man which is in turn the image of the Spirit of God.

On this organic conception which alone is living, in which the noblest humanity and the most genuine Christian spirit flourish in harmony, there is marked the Scripture thought, expounded by the great Aquinas: <Opus Justitiae Pax>—The work of justice shall be peace—a thought which is applicable to the internal as to the external aspect of social life. It admits of neither contrast nor alternative such as expressed in the disjunction, love or right, but of the fruitful synthesis, love and right. In the one as in the other, since both radiate from the same Spirit of God, We read the program and the seal of the human spirit; they complement one another, give each other life and support, walk hand in hand along the road of concord and pacification, while right clears the way for love and love makes right less stern, and gives it a higher meaning. Both elevate human life to that social atmosphere where, even amid the failings, the obstacles and the difficulties of this earth a fraternal community of life is made possible.

But once let the baneful spirit of materialist ideas predominate; let the urge for power and for predominance take in its rough hands the direction of affairs; you shall then find its disruptive effects appearing daily in greater measure; you shall see love and justice disappear; all this as the sad foretaste of the catastrophes that menace society when it abandons God.

[Tranquility]

The second fundamental element of peace, towards which every human society tends almost instinctively, is [tranquility].

O blessed [tranquility], thou has nothing in common with the spirit of holding fixedly and obstinately, unrelenting and with childish stubbornness, to things as they are; nor yet with the reluctance—child of cowardice and selfishness—to put one's mind to the solution of problems and questions which the passage of time and the succession of generations, with their different needs and progress, make actual, and bring up a burning question of the day. But for a Christian who is conscious of his responsibilities even towards the least of his brethren, there is no such thing as slothful [tranquility]; nor is there question of flight, but of struggle, of action against every inaction and desertion in the great spiritual combat where the stakes are the construction, nay the very soul, of the society of tomorrow.

In the mind of Aquinas, [tranquility] and feverish activity are not opposed, but rather form a well-balanced pair for him who is inspired by the beauty and the urgency of the spiritual foundations of society, and of the nobility of its ideals. To you, young people, who are wont to turn your back on the past, and to rely on the future for your aspirations and your hopes, We address Ourselves with ardent love and fatherly anxiety; enthusiasm and courage do not of themselves suffice, if they be not, as they should be, placed in the service of good and of a spotless cause. It is vain to agitate, to weary yourselves, to bustle about without ever resting. You must be inspired with the conviction that you are fighting for truth, that you are sacrificing in the cause of truth your own tastes and energies wishes, and sacrifices; that you are fighting for the eternal laws of God, for the dignity of the human person, and for the attainment of its destiny.

When mature men and young men, while remaining always at anchor, in the sea of the eternally active [tranquility] of God, coordinate their differences of temperament and activity in a genuine Christian spirit, then if the propelling element is joined to the refraining element, the natural differences between the generations will never become dangerous, and will even conduce vigorously to the enforcement of the eternal laws of God in the changing course of times and of conditions of life.

In one field of social life, where for a whole century there was agitation and bitter conflict, there is today a calm, at least on the surface. We speak

of the vast and ever growing world of labor, of the immense army of workers, of breadwinners and dependents. If we consider the present with its wartime exigencies, as an admitted fact, then this calm may be called a necessary and reasonable demand; but if we look at the present situation in the light of justice, and with reference to a legitimately regulated labor movement, then the [tranquility] will remain only apparent, until the scope of such a movement be attained.

Always moved by religious motives, the Church has condemned the various forms of Marxist Socialism; and she condemns them today, because it is her permanent right and duty to safeguard men from currents as thought and influences that jeopardize their external salvation. But the Church cannot ignore or overlook the fact that the worker in his efforts to better his lot, is opposed by a machinery which is not only not in accordance with nature, but is at variance with God's plan and with the purpose He had in creating the goods of earth.

In spite of the fact that the ways they followed were and are false and to be condemned, what man, and especially what priest or Christian, could remain deaf to the cries that rise from the depths and call for justice and a spirit of brotherly collaboration in a world ruled by a just God? Such silence would be culpable and unjustifiable before God, and contrary to the inspired teaching of the Apostle, who, while he inculcates the need of resolution in the fight against error, also knows that we must be full of sympathy for those who err, and open-minded in our understanding of their aspirations, hopes and motives.

When He blessed our first parents, God said: "Increase and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it." And to the first father of a family, He said later: "In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread." The dignity of the human person, then, requires normally as a natural foundation of life the right to the use of the goods of the earth. To this right corresponds the fundamental obligation to grant private ownership of property, if possible, to all. Positive legislation regulating private ownership may change and more or less restrict its use. But if legislation is to play its part in the pacification of the community, it must prevent the worker, who is or will be a father of a family, from being condemned to an economic dependence and slavery which is irreconcilable with his rights as a person. Whether this slavery arises from the exploitation of private capital or from the power of the state, the result is the same. Indeed, under the pressure of a State which dominates all and controls the whole field of public and private life, even going into the realm of ideas and beliefs and of conscience, this

lack of liberty can have the more serious consequences, as experience shows and proves.

Five Points for Ordering Society

Anyone who considers in the light of reason and of faith the foundations and the aims of social life, which we have traced in broad outline, and contemplates them in their purity and moral sublimity, and in their benefits in every sphere of life, cannot but be convinced of the powerful contribution to order and pacification which efforts directed towards great ideals and resolved to face difficulties, could present, or better, could restore to a world which is internally unhinged, when once they had thrown down the intellectual and juridical barriers, created by prejudice, errors, indifferences, and by a long tradition of secularization of thought, feeling, action which succeeded in detaching and subtracting the early city from the light and force of the City of God. Today, as never before, the hour has come for reparation, for rousing the conscience of the world from the heavy torpor into which the drugs of false ideas, widely diffused, have sunk it. This is all the more so because in this hour of material and moral disintegration the appreciation of the emptiness and inconsistency of every purely human order is beginning to disillusion even those who, in days of apparent happiness, were not conscious of the need of contact with the eternal in themselves or in society, and did not look upon its absence as an essential defect in their constitutions. What was clear to the Christian, who in his deeply founded faith was pained by the ignorance of others, is now presented to us in dazzling clearness by the din of appalling catastrophe which the present upheaval brings to man and which portrays all the terrifying lineaments of a general judgment even for the tepid, the indifferent, the frivolous. It is indeed, an old truth which comes out in ever new forms and thunders through the ages and through the nations from the mouth of the Prophet: "All that forsake thee shall be confounded; they who depart from thee, shall be written in the earth; because they have forsaken the Lord, the Vein of Living Waters."

The call of the moment is not lamentation but action; not lamentation over what has been, but reconstruction of what is to arise and must arise for the good of society. It is for the best and most distinguished members of the Christian family, filled with the enthusiasm of Crusaders, to unite in the spirit of truth, justice and love to the call; God wills it, ready to serve, to sacrifice themselves, like the Crusaders of old.

If the issue was then the liberation of the land hallowed by the life of the Incarnate Word of God, the call today is, if We may so express Ourselves, to traverse the sea of errors of our day and to march on to free the holy land of the spirit, which is destined to sustain in its foundations the unchangeable norms and laws on which will rise a social construction

of solid internal consistency. With this lofty purpose before Us, We turn from the crib of the Prince of Peace, confident that His grace is diffused in all hearts, to you, beloved children, who recognized and adore in Christ your Savior; We turn to all those who are united with Us at least by the bond of faith in God; We turn, finally to all those who would be free of doubt and error, and who desire light and guidance; and We exhort you with suppliant paternal insistence not only to realize fully the dreadful gravity of this hour, but also to meditate upon the vistas of good and supernatural benefit which it opens up, and to unite and collaborate towards the renewal of society in spirit and truth.

The essential aim of this necessary and holy crusade is that the Star of Peace, the Star of Bethlehem, may shine out again over the whole mankind in all its brilliant splendor and reassuring consolation as a pledge and augury of a future better, more fruitful and happier. It is true that the road from night to full day will be long; but of decisive importance are the first steps on the path, the first five mile-stones of which bear chiseled on them the following maxims:

1. Dignity of the Human Person. He who would have the Star of Peace shine out and stand over society should cooperate, for his part, in giving back to the human person the dignity given to it by God from the very beginning; should oppose the excessive herding of men, as if they were a mass without a soul; their economic, social, political, intellectual and moral inconsistency; their dearth of solid principles and strong convictions, their surfeit of instinctive sensible excitement and their fickleness.

He should favor, by every lawful means, in every sphere of life, social institutions in which a full personal responsibility is assured and guaranteed both in the early and the eternal order of things. He should uphold respect for and the practical realization of the following fundamental personal rights; the right to maintain and develop one's corporal, intellectual and moral life and especially the right to religious formation and education; the right to worship God in private and public and to carry on religious works of charity; the right to marry and to achieve the aim of married life; the right to conjugal and domestic society; the right to work, as the indispensable means towards the maintenance of family life; the right to free choice of state of life, and hence, too, of the priesthood or religious life; the right to the use of material goods; in keeping with his duties and social limitations

2. Defense of Social Unity. He who would have the Star of Peace shine out and stand over society should reject every form of materialism which sees in the people only a herd of individuals who, divided and without any

internal cohesion, are considered as a mass to be forded over and treated arbitrarily; he should strive to understand society as an intrinsic unity, which has grown up and matured under the guidance of Providence, a unity which within the bounds assigned to it and according to its own peculiar gifts—tends, with the collaboration of the various classes and professions, towards the eternal and ever new aims of culture and religion.

He should defend the indissolubility of matrimony; he should give to the family—that unique cell of the people—space, light and air so that it may attend to its mission of perpetuating new life, and of educating children in a spirit corresponding to its own true religious convictions, and that it may preserve, fortify and reconstitute, according to its powers, its proper economic, spiritual, moral and juridic unity. He should take care that the material and spiritual advantages of the family be shared by the domestic servants; he should strive to secure for every family a dwelling where a materially and morally healthy family life may be seen in all its vigor and worth; he should take care that the place of work be not so separated from the home as to make the head of the family and educator of the children a virtual stranger to his own household; he should take care above all that the bond of trust and mutual help should be reestablished between the family and the public school, that bond which in other times gave such happy results, but which now has been replaced by mistrust where the school, influenced and controlled by the spirit of materialism, corrupts and destroys what the parents have instilled into the minds of the children.

3. Dignity of Labor. He who would have the Star of Peace shine out and stand over society should give to work the place assigned to it by God from the beginning. As an indispensable means towards gaining over the world that mastery which God wishes, for His glory, all work has an inherent dignity and at the same time a close connection with the perfection of the person; this is the noble dignity and privilege of work which is not any way cheapened by the fatigue and the burden, which have to be borne as the effect of original sin, in obedience and submission to the will of God.

Those who are familiar with the great Encyclicals of Our predecessors and Our Own previous messages know well that the Church does not hesitate to draw the practical conclusions which are derived from the moral nobility of work, and to give them all the support of her authority. These exigencies include, besides a just wage which covers the needs of the worker and his family, the conservation and perfection of a social order which will make possible an assured, even if modest, private property for all classes of society, which will promote higher education for the children of the working class who are especially endowed with intelligence and good will, will promote the care and the practice of the social spirit in one's immediate neighborhood, in the district, the province, the people and the nation, a spirit which, by smoothing over friction arising from privileges or class interests, removes

from the workers the sense of isolation through the assuring experience of a genuinely human, and fraternally Christian, solidarity.

The progress and the extent of urgent social reforms depend on the economic possibilities of single Nations. It is only through an intelligent and generous sharing of forces between the strong and the weak that it will be possible to effect a universal pacification in such wise as not to leave behind centers of conflagration and infection from which new disasters may come. There are evident signs which go to show that, in the ferment of all the prejudices and feelings of hate, those inevitable but lamentable offspring of the war psychosis, there is still aflame in the people the consciousness of their intimate mutual dependence for good or for evil, nay, that this consciousness is more alive and active. It is not true that deep thinkers see ever more clearly in the renunciation of egoism and national isolation, the way to general salvation, ready as they are to demand of their peoples, a heavy participation in the sacrifices necessary for social well-being in other peoples?

May this Christmas Message of Ours, addressed to all those who are animated by a good and generous heart, encourage and increase the legions of these social crusades in every nation. And may God deign to give to their peaceful cause the victory of which their noble enterprise is worthy.

4. The Rehabilitation of Juridical Order. He who would have the Star of Peace shine out and stand over social life should collaborate towards a complete rehabilitation of the juridical order. The juridic sense of today is often altered and overturned by the profession and the practice of positivism and a utilitarianism which are subjected and bound to the service of determined groups, classes and movements, whose programs direct and determine the course of legislation and the practices of the courts. The cure of this situation becomes feasible when we awaken again the consciousness of a juridical order resting on the supreme dominion of God, and safeguarded from all human whims; a consciousness of an order which stretches forth its arm, in protection or punishment, over the unforgettable rights of man and protects them against the attacks of every human power.

From the juridic order, as willed by God, flows man's inalienable right to juridical security, and by this very fact to a definite sphere of rights, immune from all arbitrary attack. The relations of man to man, of the individual to society, to authority, to civil duties; the relations of society and of authority to the individual, should be placed on a firm juridic footing and be guarded, when the need arises, by the authority of the courts. This supposes:

- a) A tribunal and a judge who take their directions from a clearly formulated and defined right.
- b) Clear juridical norms which may not be overturned by unwarranted appeals to a supposed popular sentiment or by merely utilitarian considerations.
- c) The recognition of the principle that even the State and the functionaries and organizations depend on it are obliged to repair and to withdraw measures which are harmful to the liberty, property, honor, progress of health of the individuals.

5. Christian Conception of the State. He who would have the Star of Peace shine out and stand over human society should cooperate towards the setting up of a State conception and practice founded on reasonable discipline, exalted kindness and responsible Christian spirit. He should help to restore the State and its power to the service of human society, to the full recognition of the respect due to the human person and his efforts to attain his eternal destiny. He should apply and devote himself to dispelling the errors which aim at causing the State and its authority to deviate from the path of morality, at severing them from the eminently ethical bond which links them to individual and social life, and at making them deny or in practice ignore their essential dependence on the will of the Creator. He should work for the recognition and diffusion of the truth which teaches, even in matters of this world, that the deepest meaning, the ultimate moral basis and the universal validity of “reigning” lies in “serving.”

Postwar Renovation of Society

Beloved Children, may God grant that while you listen to Our voice your heart may be profoundly stirred and moved by the deeply felt seriousness, the loving solicitude, the unremitting insistence, with which We drive home these thoughts, which are meant as an appeal to the conscience of the world, and a rallying-cry to all those who are ready to ponder and weigh the grandeur of their mission and responsibility by the vastness of this universal disaster.

A great part of mankind, and, let Us not shirk from saying it, not a few who call themselves Christians, have to some extent their share in the collective responsibility for the growth of error and for the harm and the lack of moral fiber in the society of today.

What is this world war, with all its attendant circumstances, whether they be remote or proximate causes, its progress and material, legal and moral effects? What is it but the crumbling process, not expected, perhaps, by the thoughtless but seen and depreciated by those whose gaze penetrated into the realities of a social order which hid its mortal weakness and its unbridled lust for gain and power? That which in peace-time lay coiled

up, broke loose at the outbreak of war in a sad succession of acts at variance with the human and Christian sense. International agreements to make war less inhuman by confining it to the combatants to regulate the procedure of occupation and imprisonment of the conquered remained in various places a dead letter. And who can see the end of this progressive demoralization of the people, who can wish to watch helplessly this disastrous progress? Should they not rather, over the ruins of a social order which has given such tragic proof of its ineptitude as a factor for the good of the people, gather together the hearts of all those who are magnanimous and upright, in the solemn vow not to rest until in all peoples and all nations of the earth a vast legion shall be formed of those handfuls of men who, bent on bringing back society to its center of gravity, which is the law of God, aspire to the service of the human person and of his common life ennobled in God.

Mankind owes that vow to the countless dead who lie buried on the field of battle: The sacrifice of their lives in the fulfillment of their duty is a holocaust offered for a new and better social order. Mankind owes that vow to the innumerable sorrowing host of mothers, widows and orphans who have seen the light, the solace and the support of their lives wrenched from them. Mankind owes that vow to those numberless exiles whom the hurricane of war has torn from their native land and scattered in the land of the stranger; who can make their own the lament of the Prophet: "Our inheritance is turned to aliens; our house to strangers." Mankind owes that vow to the hundreds of thousands of persons who, without any fault on their part, sometimes only because of their nationality or race, have been consigned to death or to a slow decline. Mankind owes that vow to the many thousands of non-combatants, women, children, sick and aged, from whom aerial war-fare—whose horrors we have from the beginning frequently denounced—has without discrimination or through inadequate precautions, taken life, goods, health, home, charitable refuge, or house of prayer. Mankind owes that vow to the flood of tears and bitterness, to the accumulation of sorrow and suffering, emanating from the murderous ruin of the dreadful conflict and crying to Heaven to send down the Holy Spirit to liberate the world from the inundation of violence and terror.

And where could you with greater assurance and trust and with more efficacious faith place this vow for the renewal of society than at the foot of the "Desired of all Nations" Who lies before us in the crib with all the charm of His sweet humanity as a Babe, but also in the dynamic attraction of His incipient mission as Redeemer? Where could this noble and holy

crusade for the cleaning and renewal of society have a more significant consecration or find a more potent inspiration than at Bethlehem, where the new Adam appears in the adorable mystery of the Incarnation? For it is at His fountains of truth and grace that mankind should find the water of life if it is not to perish in the desert of this life; “Of His fullness we all have received.” His fullness of grace and truth flows as freely today as it has for twenty centuries on the world.

His light can overcome the darkness, the rays of His love can conquer the icy egoism which holds so many back from becoming great and conspicuous in their higher life. To you, crusader-volunteers of a distinguished new society, live up to the new call for moral and Christian rebirth, declare war on the darkness which comes from deserting God, of the coolness that comes from strife between brothers. It is a fight for the human race, which is gravely ill and must be healed in the name of conscience ennobled by Christianity.

May Our blessing and Our paternal good wishes and encouragement go with your generous enterprise, and may they remain with all those who do not shirk hard sacrifices—those weapons which are more potent than any steel to combat the evil from which society suffers. Over your crusade for a social, human and Christian ideal may there shine out as a consolation and an inspiration the star that stands over the Grotto of Bethlehem, the first and the perennial star of the Christian Era. From the sign of it every faithful heart drew, draws and ever will draw strength; “If armies in camp should stand against me, my heart shall not fear.” Where that star shines, there is Christ. “With Him for leader we shall not wander; through Him let us go to Him, that with the Child that is born today we may rejoice forever.”