

DIFFERENT POLITICAL ATTITUDES OF CHRISTIANS IN THE WORLD
TODAY AND SINCE THE CHURCH WAS FOUNDED
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My first words are of congratulation on being here again, at a Pax Romana meeting, so close to my heart, after a material absence. And I say material absence because spiritually I always live in the midst of Pax Romana, since I follow carefully its conclusions and statements and try to act accordingly, and I can assure you, that I daily pray for the Movement, through the intercession of St. Paul, pillar of the Church and Apostle of the gentiles, as this I consider Pax Romana's mission to be: pillar of the founded Church and Apostle of the gentiles, who represent the Church to be developed. How could my attitude towards Pax Romana be otherwise? One of the greatest honours of my life was being named International President of IMCS, which office I held for two years, and though I repeat it was a great honour for me, more than that it was a great responsibility, which I believe did not end when I handed over this heavy burden to my successor in Mexico, Mr. Cornelio Pompe, but has made me continue to collaborate with the Institution insofar as I am able and expected to do by the present leaders.

For this reason, when I was asked to participate with a lecture in the Training Course, I accepted with great pleasure, and though circumstances beyond my control force me to be absent, I send you this study as a sign of my warm feeling toward Pax Romana.

The subject **Fundação Cuidar o Futuro** I have asked to develop is Different Political Attitudes of Christians in the World Today and Since the Church was Founded.

I

It is obvious that I must begin by defining the concept I am going to analyze and develop. As the title of the theme is "Civic Responsibility" and specifically "political attitudes", I deem it necessary to discuss the difference which to my belief, exists between civism and politics, or in other words separate the civic field from the political field.

Society, to obtain its goals, which are the betterment of the human being, the common good and the glory of God, needs: a) an order which, on one hand promotes the attainment of these ends and on the other smooths out the obstacles - strewn on the way, through ignorance, stupidity and evil, and b) a person who is to supervise this order by preventing or punishing all trespassers. This order is made by the laws, by the rights of man. And the person, who is the authority, is represented by the Government.

This order must respect God's will toward society and therefore respect the human rights, whose author is God Himself. Therefore, the participation (active or passive) of the members of society in the maintenance of this order, adjusted to the human rights or their restoration if they have been disturbed, makes up civic life.

On the other hand, the form of organizing the authority and the manner in which the latter must act in order to establish and keep the afore-mentioned



order, is through politics. Therefore, the participation - active or passive - of the members of society in this business; the person who must exercise authority, the form in which it is to be organized, conduct to be observed to obtain the goal of society, all this activity constitutes "THE POLITICAL LIFE.

The political life must respect human rights; but as God has not seen fit to reveal anything on this matter, man is free to establish whatever he believes to be better and healthier, just so long as he respects the human rights and the order derived therefrom.

God did reveal what was necessary or convenient for our salvation. And as to the rest, "He abandoned the world to the disputes of man". Therefore, insofar as the government of society is concerned, he has delegated the authority to mankind - which only He possesses over all creation, mankind included, inasmuch as He only is the Creator and the Supreme Legislator - but he allows us to act freely.

M In short, civic activity is the actual use of a human right, whilst political activity is the use of the rights allowed all citizens by the law. *mas não se faz*
7 seja exacto
nto

As I am convinced that the civic field differs from the political field, and inasmuch as I am not able to refer to both in this study, in the belief that the title of the subject should prevail, I shall direct my efforts to the study of politics. The French text of the same can be translated, in my opinion, as: "Different Political Attitudes of Christians in the World Today and Since the Church was Founded".

II

Naturally, the political attitude of Christians must vary according to the political policy of the State of which he is a part.

The Catholic Church originated on the day of Pentecost, in Palestine, which was at the time a province of the Roman Empire. The Roman concept of empire was that of universal monarchy. In other words, the Roman empire was an agglomerate of provinces conquered by force and subjugated to the authority of Rome, who though tolerant and diplomatic towards religion, private rights, culture and customs, was demanding insofar as absolute dependency of the conquered nations upon the Roman conquerer; obedience to the authority of Rome was unconditional and payment of tributes and military service was inexorable.

With the transit from Republic to Empire, everything changed in Rome. At the beginning of the Roman Empire the citizen had five rights: the ius conubii, the ius commercii, the ius proprietatis, the ius honoris and the ius suffragii, and the two latter, ius suffragii - the right to elect - and ius honoris - the right to be elected, were the characteristics of citizenship. At first, this was an exclusive right of the "quires" and their descendants, but soon they were forced to give the plebeians access to citizenship, and later, to the inhabitants of several Italian cities. On the other hand, the use of the citizens' public rights, the ius suffragii and the ius honoris, degenerated due to the political, social and economical problems which arose in Rome after the second Punic War, which meant the Roman domination of the Mediterranean world.



A great number of citizens were stripped of all their material possessions, but remained with their ius suffragii, which became to them their "modus vivendi", that is to say, they would sell their vote to the highest bidder.

The venality of the voters, plus the caducity of the old Roman political system - excellent for a city, but inadequate for an empire, forced the great Roman statesmen to ponder on the necessity of reuniting the magistracy by returning to the monarchy. The consecutive efforts on this respect, on behalf of Sila, Pompey, and Julius Caesar, though apparently failures, afforded the necessary experience that the man of genius, Augustus, made use of in the creation of the empire with a republican front at the start, thus assuming de facto, under the pretense of election, the different Roman magistracies. We must remember that Augustus died in the year 14 A.D. The fact that the Emperor had all the magistracies, upon its renewal, it became a political system sanctioned by the prevailing customs and later by the law itself. Therefore when the Church was founded in the year 33, and started to expand throughout the various provinces of the Empire, the Roman citizens no longer used their ius suffragii or their ius honoris. Roman citizenship was reduced to a number of immunities and prerogatives which allowed their possessors to get along better than those who did not have them. Thus, Saint Paul, who was a Roman citizen, was able to prevent his being flogged, as had been ordered by the Roman Tribune in Jerusalem, where the Jews would have certainly killed him, once again alleging his Roman citizenship and appealing to Caesar, thus obliging the Proctor to send him to Caesar. For the same reason that he was a Roman citizen, Saint Paul was not crucified as was Saint Peter, but died under the sword. Therefore, in the Roman Empire, the Emperor assumed all the magistracies, and his word became law, whence stemmed the phrase, "quod placint principi" - "what pleases the prince". The Roman officials acted only on behalf of the Emperor; thus there was no place for elections, and, consequently the ius suffragii and the ius honoris became extinct and the Roman citizenship was reduced, as I said before, to a number of prerogatives and immunities. This is the reason why the political attitude of the early Christians had to be restricted to the obedience to Caesar in all that was not contrary to the law of God.

Christ, who preached to the Jewish people, already subject to the Roman rule, left the matter clearly settled. When to tempt him, He was asked whether it were lawful to give tribute to Caesar or not, he asked for a coin of the tribute, asked whose image and superscription was on it, and having received for an answer that it was Caesar's, Christ said to them: "Render therefore to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's".

This was also taught in greater detail by the Apostles. Saint Paul in the XIII Chapter of his Epistle to the Romans, clearly points out that one must submit to superior: "not only for wrath, but also for conscience' sake"

Likewise, he says in Chapter II of his Epistle to Titus: "Admonish them to be subject to princes and powers"; and in Chapter II of his first Epistle to Timothy, he recommends him "that supplications, prayers, intercessions and thanksgiving be made for all men, for kings and for all that are in high station..."

Saint Peter, in his first Epistle, says essentially the same: "Be ye subject therefore to every human creature for God's sake; whether it be to the king as excellency; or to the governors sent by him for the punishment of evil-doers, and for the praise of the good;.....fear God. Honour the king".

The only condition imposed by the Apostles as to the obedience to superiors, was the same as imposed by Christ: that their orders were not to be opposed to the law of God. This was solemnly affirmed by Peter and the Apostles when the High Priest reproached them for having continued to preach about Christ in spite of the prohibition to that effect. "You must obey God before all men", they declared.

Thus, absolute obedience to the laws and the Roman superiors was the political attitude of the early Christians, unless the laws or superiors ordered something contrary to the mandates of God, in which case they preferred death, though they should die in a terrible manner, thus giving testimony of Christ.

For this reason the Church suffered ten general persecutions and many thousands of its children died as martyrs.

When the Church obtained its freedom, by virtue of the Edict of Milan, issued by Constantine in the year 313, the political attitude of the Christians was in no way modified because the political organization of the Empire was not modified.

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Under Emperor Theodosius, at the end of the IV century, the concept of empire, under christianization, begins to change. Leon Homo describes with ill-disguised spite the change as follows: "The imperial absolutism, complete in all fields, is detained at the frontiers of conscience and faith. Theodosius himself - and this makes the fact seem even more symptomatic - experiences it in himself. In the year 390, a mutiny breaks out in Thessalonica, and the commander of the garrison together with a certain number of imperial officers were killed. Theodosius replies with a horrible massacre where seven thousand people were massacred. Saint Ambrose, Bishop of Milan, intervenes/ he excommunicates the Emperor, deprives him of the Holy Sacraments and even ejects him from the Church, until the day when he has done penance and this penance be considered sufficient. Theodosius was obliged to submit and consent to this penance, which, though brief, was nevertheless public. The Christian empire of the IV century ended up by being a victory, not of the Emperor, but of the Church. "The emperor is in the Church, not over the Church, writes Saint Ambrose impressively. This heralds the approach of the Middle Ages."

Definitely split in two the Roman Empire and after the fall of the Western Empire in 476, the structure of the barbaric kingdoms settled in the ancient provinces of the Empire, begins to undergo a change, though not a substantial one at first. Several of the barbarian monarchies were elective at first, but the voters were not citizens, but only a handful of nobles. At the



time one did not talk about citizens, but if we consider as such the free man, we see that they live under a situation similar to that of the Roman Empire, they had no ius suffragii, no ius honoris, but only immunities and prerogatives in the social and economic orders.

Several centuries must pass before the Church is able to influence the political and social institutions, through its doctrines, and is able to obtain through the union in each city of the rights: the roman and the respective barbarian, that they receive the influence of Canon Law. Thus in Spain was issued the "Fuero Juzgo", that is to say only one code for the conquerors and the conquered, : the visigoths and Spanish-Romans.

Feudalism was the characteristic political-social organization of the Middle Ages, a system which confused the ius proprietatis con the ius imperii, and a complete political-social hierarchy was created, that was crowned by the king. This system envelopped everyone, even the Church, because as the Church owned lands, its Bishops and abbots who exercised the right of ownership over the lands belonging to the episcopates and abbeys, became, under the complicated feudal hierarchy, lords on one hand and vassal on the other. This gave rise to the abusive practice of "investitures", practice which was firmly fought against by Pope Gregory VII, and which was brought later to an end in a legal and peaceful manner by the Covenant of Worms in 1122.

Aside from the corruption of the civil authorities, thanks to the influence of the Church the following was reached in the political field: a) Christianization of royalty, made manifest not only by observance of religious rites, but in the concept itself, since the doctrine considered the king as a representative of God to govern and give peace and prosperity to the people, and the positive right sanctioned this concept when it defined the afore-mentioned "Fuero Juzgo": King you will be if you do right, but if you do not right, you will not be king"; b) limiting greatly the legislative power of the king, by preventing him both to rule against human rights and against the statute laws; and, c) the creation of parliament, composed of representatives of the Church, the nobility and of free men, who were empowered to issue laws on questions of taxes and enlisting of troops.

Thus christianized the monarchies, his subjects swore their oaths of loyalty to him on the day of his election and piously kept their oath, but if the king, instead of governing justly, did so iniquitously, the Church could, and on several occasions did so, absolve his subjects from their oath of loyalty, thus causing not so much the substitution of the king, but his mending of his way.

Therefore, during this long age, one cannot rightly speak of the political attitude of the Catholics, but of the political attitude of the Church and of its Hierarchy, which we may summarize as follows: a) ^{respect to the} with regard to the manner of ruling of the different monarchies, but demanding the kings to rule in a Christian manner, giving their people peace and prosperity, and b) in defense of the liberties of the Church.

There is a special case that deserves a separate paragraph : the free cities. Near the middle of the Middle Ages there were cities, that maintained, conquered by force of arms or bought their freedom. These cities, called "communas", governed themselves autonomously by means of a mayor or council under the title indiscriminately of municipality or "cabildo". Both the mayor and the members of the municipality were elected by the people.

But voting was not carried out by the entire population, but organically through the all important bodies of the Middle Ages, also a characteristic organization of this era.

Under this common régime, and as we have seen, democratic, where the civic rights of the human being are renewed, really appears for the first time, and in all propriety, the political attitude of the Christian: elect the most able man to rule and always respect superiors.

Nevertheless, this was a natural attitude, because at that time, both the laws and the customs were of a Christian nature, and consequently, as I mentioned before, the conduct observed was Christian.

The power and the social influence of the Church reach the summit under Innocence the III, they begin to wane under the outbreak of agnani, is emphasized by the captivity of Avignon and the Great Schism and broke down completely and definitely when Protestantism made its appearance in 1521.

Protestantism, which rebelled against the authority of the Church became a slave of the State. The principle "cuius regio eius religio" spread through the other orders of life and upon its appearance the idea of citizenship was again lost to the protestant States and the countries vitiated with protestantism, such as France.

The protestant despotism wiped out the citizen in the protestant world and in its field of influence. Nevertheless, this blow made Catholic Spain for instance, study the matter very deeply, and thus, in view of the despotic thesis of James I of England, appeared Suarez' Catholic doctrine, the real predecessor of our modern system of democracy.

Unfortunately, the ideological permeation of protestantism still invades and spreads through those countries such as Spain where the Catholic ideology was conserved the longest.

The abusive deeds of the kings with regard to their subjects caused the French Revolution, which though mainly consisting of false principles y mostly abominable because of its methods, reminded man, as all reactions do, of a forgotten value: the citizen aspect of mankind.

The principles of the French Revolution spread rapidly throughout the world substituting monarchies for democratic republics that claim elective, temporal and representative governments, be it only theoretically and allow the citizens their ius suffragii and the ius honoris of the ancient and noble Roman republic which the Church had restored in the Middle Ages and which the protestant belief rendered into oblivion.

In the presence of this new legal situation the political attitude of



the Catholics, enlightened by the doctrine of the Church, consists of the use of both rights for the good of religion, of the Church and their respective States.

Most probably the most complete papal document on this respect, is the Encyclical "Immortale Dei", in which Leon XIII pointed out the following:

It is also of public interest to collaborate, prudently, in the field of public administration, trying to provide for the religious and moral education of youth, according to the concepts of Christianity, because on this depends greatly the welfare of society.

"Likewise, speaking in general, it is good and convenient for the actions of all Catholics to step out of this narrow circle to a greater and vaster field, and even arrive at the supreme powers of the State. We say in general, because these our teachings extend to the peoples of all kinds; but, on the other hand, it may happen that, for very serious and rightful causes, it is not convenient to interfere in the government of a State nor hold high offices; but, in general, as I have mentioned before, we should always be willing to serve for the common good, inasmuch as that Catholics, taught by the same doctrine they profess, are forced to administer matters with honesty and loyalty. On the other hand if they remain quiet and idle, public administration may easily fall into the hands of persons whose ways of thought are not conducive to a wise government.

There would also exist the great danger to the Christian religion, because this would make the enemies of the Church very powerful and its friends very weak. Moreover, when Catholics feel that they are justified in taking part of public life, they do not, and must never do so to approve of the wrongs existing in the actual constitutions of the different States, but make use of these systems, within their possibilities, to further the real and genuine welfare of the people, and with the intention of imbuing the arteries of the State, as a vital juice and life-giving blood, with the spirit and profitable influence of the Catholic religion".

The ulterior teachings of the Popes are nothing but the development of this doctrine.

Pope Pius XII, in his Speech on the Problems of Democracy, points out the fundamental rights of the citizen in a democratic régime: make manifest his own opinion on the duties and sacrifices imposed upon him; and the fundamental right, likewise, of all States: rule with real and efficient authority, and shows how the democratic State must firmly combat the political corruption of the despotic State.

Nowadays, in the democratic area, which extends from the Iron Curtain towards the West, we Catholics are able to make use of the *ius suffragii* and the *ius honoris*, in a greater or lesser degree, and, therefore, are obliged to do so, enlightening our conscience with the Catholic doctrine on the matter and enlightening, through word of mouth and in writing, the conscience of our fellow countrymen; by creating adequate political parties wherever possible or advising the existing political parties at least through our principles; by

cooperating efficiently, whether we are holding a high office or a private one, to the common good; expressing our opinions with civil courage on the policy to be observed by our respective Governments; making use of the ius suffragii in favour of the best candidates launched by good parties and by accepting the candidacy which we are proposed or requested to hold public offices, inspired at all times and in all things by the triple end of society: common welfare, the betterment of mankind and the glory of God.

But it is the use of the political attitude where we must always bear in mind the advice of Pope Pius XI: "The evil spirits of the modern world are only conquered by prayer and fasting".

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