

PAX ROMANA

10

GENERAL SECRETARIAT
FRIBOURG (Switzerland)

29th January, 1957.

14, Rue St. Michel

Special circular. January 1957.

To the federations affiliated to Pax Romana ICNICA,

To the federations affiliated to Pax Romana IMCS.



Dear Friends,

In the past year we have sent you several circular letters and communications on the situation in Hungary. Today the General Secretaries of both Movements would like to draw your attention to another matter - namely the celebration of PAX ROMANA DAYS.

The Feast of St. Thomas Aquinas

In the southern hemisphere, early March is the end of summer and the beginning of a new academic year with all its concomitant spirit and good resolutions; in the northern regions, it is a first taste of Spring with its burgeoning of new life and re-animation of things long buried. In the tropics, there is only one season; but for the universal Church, March 7 is the feast of St. Thomas Aquinas, patron of Pax Romana.

For all our federations, this feast which we celebrate throughout the world as PAX ROMANA DAY is an opportunity to take stock of our activities and renew our dedication to the apostolate of the mind. Both student and graduate federations have participated in this celebration for many years, and we would like to draw your attention once more to the wealth of spiritual and material blessings which we can gain from it.

Patron of the Life of the Mind

"His was the vocation of the intellectual apostolate, one calling for qualities which Thomas possessed, or was to acquire, in a supreme degree; pure knowledge of truths to be expounded and defended, acquaintance with the problems of his time and the errors to be refuted, a capacity for discerning the vein of truth which gives to error its vitality, a readiness to adapt oneself to new ideas and new methods of inquiry without compromising established principles or established certainties." (Fr. V. Ryan, OP, in PAX ROMANA JOURNAL, No. 1, 1953, English edition).

Isn't this also our vocation as university students and graduates? His Holiness, Pope Pius XII, told Pax Romana assembled in its World Congress of 1950: "The pressing human problems with which the present generation is faced are an appeal to all sincere and upright minds to join in a common effort of mutual understanding. Students of different countries, Catholic intellectuals of all professions, increase among yourselves and with those around you these fruitful interchanges of ideas and these contacts which contribute to the cause of peace. Catholics who win respect as experts in their work and for their uprightness of character render real service to

the Church by action and testimony of this kind.

"But you will complete this service even more thoroughly in your professional domain if, in the working out of a Christian view-point, you provide the necessary help which can come from your own research and your own culture.

"At the present day, Catholic theologians must be able to rely on those of Our sons who, as scholars or technicians, philosophers or men of law, historians, sociologists or doctors, can provide for their theological studies the data of competent and reliable technical knowledge. AS CHILDREN OF THE CHURCH AND IN YOUR CAPACITY OF INTELLECTUALS, HERE IS THE MISSION ESPECIALLY ENTRUSTED TO YOU."

The Heart of Pax Romana Day

We know, therefore, that the meaning of the Feast of St. Thomas Aquinas for Pax Romana is twofold: a re-dedication and deepening of the use of our intellect in the service of the Church, and a consciousness of our membership in an international organisation with a farflung membership.

As St. Thomas synthesised Christian philosophy of his time with the pre-Christian thought of the ancient Greek philosophers, so one of our tasks as intellectuals is to show that the Church lives within a culture, but no particular culture; she transcends all cultures, but imparts to each her special gifts.

But how can we bring home these rather intangible goals? Many programmes have been used in the past which may be of interest to your federation and your local groups.

The ^{directin} leaders of Pax Romana ICNICA and Pax Romana IACS have decided to ask all our federations to celebrate Pax Romana Day 1957 in the light of the expansion and task of Pax Romana in Africa, always remembering that your own adaptation and originality will make Pax Romana Day more efficacious for your members.

Suggested Programmes

1. Mass on March 7, Feast of St. Thomas Aquinas, or a convenient and close date, for all the members of Pax Romana. If mass is impossible, perhaps a Holy Hour or special evening service in honour of our Patron.

2. A Pilgrimage to a favourite local shrine can be the commencement of a special programme, both spiritual and intellectual. The sermon given at any religious service is of special importance to your celebration, and it can well deal with the primary intention of your Pax Romana Day meetings.

3. Collection of Funds, if possible, can be your entraide, on a material level; your mutual aid towards a member of Pax Romana, especially the African federations who will be organising their first All-African Seminar this year. To better explain your participation, a brochure - YOU AND THE AFRICAN SEMINAR - and a poster are enclosed with this letter. More copies may be obtained from the General Secretariat. Nor at this time, should we forget the numbers of Hungarian refugee students crowding into European and American universities to complete their studies. They have left their country with nothing, and need assurance of a full scholarship for the university career. Pax Romana has 4 special projects of its own in this field, which can be described to you on request.

4. Conference on Africa, Asia, or some country where a Pax Romana affiliate is beset with problems - minority Catholic population, an unsympathetic government, newly independent status, dependent status, tendencies to materialism, etc. Foreign students or lecturers can speak for your group or make up a round-table discussion. If time permits, the conference can be followed by a



5. Study Week or Study Circle which can be a prolonged and deep consideration of one area or country. Materials and display posters, booklets, etc. can be secured from Legations of the countries you wish to study. Such an intense course means a great deal of preparation, but is most rewarding in your new awareness of what other members of Pax Romana are facing. Your prayers, intellectual appreciation, and even letters can be sent to fellow members in the area which you study.

6. Foreign Student Reception is another aspect of our mutual responsibility to each other. If you can invite foreign students of all religions (this may be their only opportunity of ever meeting a Catholic!) to be your guests, and you approach them in sincere friendship, you will not only be helping them to make new friends within your community, but can learn much of their way of life and the problems which their countries are facing.

7. Similarly, concerts, native dinners, dances, etc. can be a bridge between two groups with diverse backgrounds.

8. Press coverage in your Catholic or secular newspapers can explain your Federation's thinking on burning issues before your country. This presupposes that your group, or certain members of it, have studied the basic questions involved. Or, you can begin this study (Civic Responsibility, Social Action, Communist Infiltration, Technological Developments, Foreign Policy, for example) with a Conference and Study Circle inaugurated on Pax Romana Day.

Description of your Celebration. We would appreciate hearing from you as to which means you have chosen to celebrate Pax Romana Day. Next year, we hope to expand this short memorandum into a booklet which you can send to your constituent groups.

Collaboration. ICMICA -- IMCS.

Finally we would like to point out that the celebration of Pax Romana Days is a unique occasion for improving collaboration between the different federations of the ICMICA and the IMCS. We therefore hope that in every country the Executives will get together and see in what way they can cooperate to make Pax Romana Day an occasion for underlining the unity of the Catholic University milieu.

With our best wishes for the success of our Pax Romana Day celebrations,

Yours sincerely,

Thom Kerstiëns,
General Secretary, Pax Romana,
IMCS.

Ramon Sugranyes de Franch,
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