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CONFRONTING THE NEW REALTIES OF THE NUCLEAR-SPACE AGE

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The following paper is made up of excerpts from an address delivered before the Sister Formation Conference Workshop held at Marquette University, Milwaukee, Wisc., August 14-15, 1963.

It is impossible to understand what is happening at the Ecumenical Council or what is happening in Ecumenism and the inter-religious world at large, unless we make an effort to comprehend the contradictory situation with which we of the Western world, and we of the Western Religions, in particular, are confronted today.

I can best perhaps illustrate the point I am about to make by asking you to engage in an act of imagination. Imagine if we could compress the world's population of more than three billion people into one town of a thousand persons in the exact proportions in which the world's population is actually divided. In such a town of one thousand there would be only 60 Americans; only about 330 of the remaining 940 townspeople would be classified as Christians or Jews. At least 80 townspeople would be practicing Communists, and 370 others would be under Communist domination. Almost half would be related to Communism in some way. Half the inhabitants of our one-town world would be ignorant of the names of Moses and Jesus, but more than half would have heard and would continue to hear of Karl Marx, Lenin, Stalin and Khrushchev.

In macrocosmic terms out of the three billions of people inhabiting the world today less than a billion are Christians or Jews. Every year 22,000,000 people are born into the world who are non-Christian; only 8,000,000 are born who are Christians and Jews. The population growth rate in Asia is 2.6 percent; in Latin America, 2.7 percent; in Northern and Western Europe, 0.7 percent. In the present world situation the Roman Catholic community represents 18 percent of the total world population. By the year 2,000 with the present population growth progression it will represent 11 to 12 percent of the total world community. Thus, for the first time since the emergence of Christianity, as an established religious community in the Western world, the Catholic community finds itself in the ambiguous situation of becoming a minority community in relation to the rest of the world.

Since the end of World War II, fourteen formerly Christian and predominantly Catholic countries have become Communist satellites. Some 100,000,000 Christians now live under Communist rule. The largest Communist parties that exist in the world today outside of the Iron Curtain countries exist in predominantly Catholic countries — Italy and France. We all know what happened to Cuba, and we know something from Monsignor Illich and Father Houtart of the Communist inroads in Latin

America and the threat they represent. None of the dominant nations in the world today are Catholic as contrasted with pre-World War II when Catholicism was the major political force in France, Italy, the Balkans, in Europe generally — when Europe was the major force of the world at that time. It is no longer so today. (The struggle with Premier de Gaulle is precisely this: to reassert this position against the arrangements that are being made by the Soviet Union and the United States, leaving out Western Europe as a central factor, except for NATO, which again is charged as being American-dominated.)

Now there has been a recognition of these new realities in Rome by your late great leader Pope John XXIII of blessed memory and now by Pope Paul VI. The genius of Pope John was that he refused to ignore these realities. He sought not only to react to them, to relate to them, but to take them in hand. And it is increasingly clear that Pope Paul is possessed of the same profound understanding. Thus, we find, for example, in the composition of the Council Fathers who constitute the leadership of the present Ecumenical Council a very interesting insight into the Pope's response to these new realities. When we contrast this present leadership with that of the Council Fathers of the First Vatican Council in 1869 and 1870, we find that in Vatican Council I, as you know, the Council Fathers who came from Europe numbered 60 percent of the total Council leadership. The Council leadership in Vatican Council II are 38 percent European even though 47 percent of the Roman Catholic population of the world resides in Europe. Among the 2,300 or so bishops of the Second Vatican Council, there are 977 bishops from Northern, Southern, and Latin America, 360 from Asia, 296 from Africa. The United States is represented by 240 bishops, including the five Cardinals, which represent nearly 10 percent of the leadership of the Council. Sixty-three of the American bishops served in important capacities in working on the agenda of the Council as contrasted with Vatican Council I where only 47 came from America, numbering 6 percent of the total number of Council Fathers, who were 744 at that time. Only one American Bishop was involved in the formulation of the agenda of Vatican I. The recognition of the role of the American Church in the Universal Church's affairs is obviously of much significance, and I will comment on this later.

The point I am making here is that on the highest levels of the Catholic Church, from His Holiness, Pope John XXIII and now of Pope Paul VI, who is known to share this view of *aperturismo* ("openness" to the new world situation), there is a recognition of these radical changes in the world's situation. There is a profound awareness in the Church

of these challenges of the population explosion, the demographic changes, the spread of Communism, a recognition of what is happening in Asia, Africa and Latin America and the related economic, social, and political revolutions in these areas.

Let me address myself to another aspect of this changing situation in terms of the question of religious liberty, of pluralism, and of the problems of intergroup relations. As all of us know, the revolution in our own lifetime in Asia, in Africa, and in Latin America, has been based in large measure on a rejection of the colonialism and imperialism of the white man which has so long dominated these parts of the world. Not that these relationships have been altogether without benefit, but in terms of the mind of the black African and the colored Asian their human dignity has demanded that colonialism be taken off their backs. There are 242,000,000 Africans; of these 160,000,000 are classified as animists, 89,000,000 are Moslems, 35,000,000 are Christians. Of these 35,000,000, 23,000,000 are Roman Catholics, 7,000,000 are Protestants and 5,000,000 are Eastern Orthodox. Jews are involved in many ways in Asia and Africa through the activity of the State of Israel, which has been carrying on a significant program in technical assistance. Even though in terms of numbers Christians and other Westerners do not today represent a threat to the continued independence of these countries — apart from Portugal which is passing through its last stage of colonialism — nevertheless, the mentality of the African nationalist today is to get the white man out of Black Africa. In that process of disassociation from the Western "imperialist" world, they have looked upon Christianity and, to some extent the Israelis, as being handmaidens of the "Western-imperialist-colonialist" world. Christianity has been seen, as many of you know far better than I, as the white man's religion. We have seen what this has meant in terms of the depth of feeling of Africans and Asians; in the Congo there took place brutal savage massacres of white people who came to help. You know what is going on in Sudan, Haiti, and other countries.

Respecting Human Dignity

In addition to rising nationalism, the great challenge that confronts all of us together is the fact that the white man has got to find new ways to see these people as they wish to be seen, in terms of their human dignity. There has been, and again many of you know better than I, a tremendous challenge to the missionary enterprise of your Churches, both Catholic and Protestant, and Eastern Orthodox. There is a renaissance of the Oriental religions which two decades ago we dismissed as being moribund. In Africa and in Asia today Islam numbers 430,000,000 adherents. There are 153,000,000 Buddhists, 330,000,000 Hindus, 300,000,000 Confucianists. Islam alone has the most aggressive missionary enterprise in Black Africa. Every Egyptian embassy in Africa, in addition to an economic attaché, a cultural attaché, has an attaché for Islamic affairs, and his responsibility is to proselytize. Whether the motive is nationalistic, political, or genuinely religious, the

fact remains that Islam is converting three black Africans for every one convert that is made to Catholicism or Protestantism today. I am not saying that the situation is not going to change. These are the realities today. Again, it was the genius of the Church under the leadership of Pope John in particular, much of it prefigured by his predecessor, that led to the creating in Africa of a native clergy with a black Cardinal, with an extensive number of native Bishops, and 2,000 colored priests. This is part of the recognition of the new realities which is taking place on the highest levels of the Church.

In addition to the challenge of Communism, the rising nationalism, the renaissance of the religions of Africa and Asia, there is the challenge of Church and State. By and large, the Western religious communities in Africa and Asia are benighted, tolerated, second-class communities. Thus, for example, we find that the state religion of Islam in Malaysia has banned non-Islamic religious teaching and the use of radio for evangelical purposes. In Nepal Methodist missionaries were allowed to open a hospital on the promise that they would not evangelize and that the government could take over the equipment in five years if it so desired. In Thailand, 30,000 Protestants in a 23,000,000 population do not increase very much. It is said that the first full-blooded Thai was baptized after 31 years of Protestant work. Much of the rest of the missionary enterprise there was regarded as rice Christianity; when the rice ceased to come from Christian hands natives ceased to be Christians. In Burma, Buddhism is a state religion, and ex-President U Nu has said that Christians have failed to establish peace and harmony; therefore, Buddhism is the only hope of salvation and peace. Moslems and Christians have protested the law establishing Buddhism there as the state religion. In Kerala, India, which is predominantly Catholic, schools for a period of time were placed under the state by the Communists when they took over the government in 1957, and to my knowledge the law has not been repealed. In Ceylon I just saw a report that came this past week, that the Catholic nursing nuns have been moved out of a hospital there in accordance with a government order terminating the service of the Sisters in the state-operated institutions on this predominantly Buddhist island. The 2,500 Catholic and Protestant schools which serve a population of 140,000 have been taken over by the Ceylonese government. In Indonesia all the Dutch teachers and priests have been forced out by the government, and the extremists have been prevented by Sukarno from making Islam the state religion thus far. The ancient churches in the Middle East are by and large moribund; they are second-class citizens, of second-class status. Churches are not permitted in most of the Arab countries, in particular in Iraq and Egypt, to keep their schools open unless they allow the Koran to be taught in the schools by a Moslem teacher. What is happening in South Vietnam, which is so terribly complicated, is an indication of what is before us in terms of the interrelationships between the fate of religious groups in Asia and Africa and our part of the world. I was

asked recently by a well-meaning minister to join in signing a letter for the *New York Times*, "protesting Roman Catholic oppression of the Buddhists" in South Vietnam. I refused. I said to my friend, "I don't think we know what really is going on in that country, in that complicated situation. You take as the official voice of the Church the statement of the Premier who happens to be a Catholic. The Premier apparently feels that to be a Catholic he must be a medievalist. I think the authentic voice of the Church is that reflected in the statement of the Archbishop of Saigon, who said that in the spirit of *Pacem in Terris* to which he referred, we must recognize the freedom of conscience of all men of good will and of operative honesty. There is this tendency to react to these situations impulsively and to allow latent prejudices to prevent us from seeing the situation, and understanding it as it exists.

Latin America is another case in point. By and large, the average American thinks that Latin America is Roman Catholic. Its people are religious, pious, and therefore, it is popularly held, in the long run "safe for democracy." Then Cuba breaks out and Americans go through a trauma. They simply have not been prepared to know the facts of life in these countries, as Monsignor Illich and Father Houtart have so ably demonstrated in their lectures.

These problems of Latin America are being confronted in your Church today with increasing clarity, and hopefully not too late. A statement on "the Pope's plan for Latin America" which appeared in the *Catholic World*, a report by CELAM, the Episcopal Conference of Latin America, discusses frankly the situation of 190,000,000 souls there. This report says that it is not unusual to find cases where 60 or 70 percent of the couples are without religious marriages. Some who are said to be Catholics have not even been baptized. There is one priest for every five thousand compared to one for every seven or eight hundred in the United States. In a recent survey in Chile, 60 percent of the men favored abortion. The Latin American population is increasing faster than that of any other continent in the world.

These are painful facts, and perhaps they are difficult to assimilate because they come from a Jew and from a Rabbi. But let me tell you, my friends, unless the American people are somehow brought to recognize these new realities and the fact that the fate of the Western world as a free, democratic community is at stake, and that decisive and prompt social reform of massive character is required, we will have before us a multiplicity of Cubas throughout Latin America. And that, my friends, is no choice. It is no choice for me as a Jew and as a Rabbi. That is why I as a Jew took upon myself to join an inter-faith committee known as the "Inter-American Literacy Foundation" created a number of years ago to support the work of Monsignor Salcedo in Colombia. The Monsignor saw the problem years ago, and he set about with tremendous consecration to buy cheap inexpensive transistor radios, which he and his as-

sistants took up into the foothills of Colombia to the *campesinos* to teach them how to read and write. Above all, he sought to change the attitudes of the peasants from this regressive, passive, submissive orientation to their poverty and distress — which made them natural targets for Communist blandishments — to an active preparation for the new world that is breaking out upon them. Why are Protestants and Jews cooperating with Monsignor Salcedo, and with other efforts similar to his? Because we are trying to save human lives. We are trying to honor the dignity of people, people created in the image of God, whose dignity will be destroyed under non-democratic systems.

This recognition of these hard facts of our new world is taking place, as I have said, on the top levels of the Church. It is not taking place, thus far, in my judgment, with any degree of significant penetration in the life of the Church at the parish level. Many Catholics whom I know affirm that while there has been an enormous change in attitude in terms of living together with other people, in terms of coming out of parish ghettos, in terms of expressing openly and freely the basic virtues of love and charity to their fellowmen, still they are more nativist than they are Catholic. Many Catholics — like many of their fellow Americans of Protestant and Jewish faiths — are insular, provincial, parochial; they are open to demagogic interpretations of the United Nations and East-West relations. Far too many still think that the Foreign Aid bill is a pork barrel. They will not go up to the Capitol and buttonhole their Congressman and say that this is something that I want as an American and as a Christian. They will not support the kind of legislation which makes it possible for America to have a flexible policy of accommodation to new realities. One could get an impression that to be a Catholic, means solely to be devotional, pious, and to be concerned about one's own soul; the affairs of the social order somehow will be provided for. . . .

At the time that we find ourselves in relationship to the rest of the world living as a minority community, we are at the same time experiencing an unprecedented growth and strength as a majority religious tradition in this country. The American Churches and Synagogues today, as you know, have had the highest rate of growth, the highest levels of per capita contributions, the most extensive building programs, the most carefully developed social welfare programs. This growth has taken place in a free, voluntary, pluralistic society, and not in a confessional state-church arrangement. But this very growth and this very strength have given many Catholics — as other Americans — a "buffered" vision of the world at large.

In many ways America is seen as a "fortress" isolated from the rest of the "alien" world. I dare say that to many, God is thought of as being first and foremost one of the Founding Fathers.

We live in an interdependent world. This is what Pope John has said to us in *Mater et Magistra* and in *Pacem in Terris*. We live increasingly in a world which is closer to the vision of the Bible and the Prophets than we ever dared believe was possible. The notion of one common human family, one mankind, one community of brothers and sisters, is closer to realization than ever before by virtue of communications, transportation, mobility and a number of other factors. In the logic of this situation we are confronted with an inescapable conclusion—the world will no longer tolerate double standards in human relations. The rights we demand for our group when it is a minority obligate us to assure those same rights to another group when we are in a majority: that is to say, quite expressly and frankly, that the world community will no longer tolerate Jews in Israel behaving toward Christian missionaries in an intolerant way, nor Catholics behaving oppressively towards Protestants and Jews in Spain, nor Protestants behaving persecutingly towards Catholics in Sweden and in Switzerland (where they just repealed a law on the books for hundreds of years not allowing a Jesuit to enter the country). Our actions and our attitudes have repercussions and resonance everywhere today. If there is an affront to the human conscience and to human dignity anywhere in the world, we are all responsible. When the twenty-three Evangelical Christians, whose attitude toward the Jews is not the most enlightened, were harassed by the Russians in Moscow, the American Jewish Committee sent a cable to the American State Department protesting this, because the religious persecution of the Evangelicals is of a piece with the persecution of ten million Catholics and of three million Jews in the Soviet Union. To the degree that we recognize that we have common interests to preserve faith, though not to obliterate the differences of faith, to that degree will we be translating into reality all of the principles and instructions which animate *Pacem in Terris* and *Mater et Magistra*: the strength of human dignity, the freedom of the human conscience, and the interdependence of the human family.

What does all of the foregoing mean in terms of the Sister Formation Conference and your responsibility? It is not my role to presume to tell you whether this means special courses in intergroup relations, or teacher training seminars or preparing supplementary materials, such as "A Manual on Interreligious Relations"—although I think meeting this situation would probably take in all these things. I think what is crucial is the need to confront the fact that we all have a problem of attitudes, viewpoints and orientations toward one another. Let me offer additional illustrations: (I hope to get into this more specifically and with more detail in my second paper, "An Ecumenical Re-examination of Christian-Jewish Relations.")

I think there is confusion in the Catholic community, particularly among young people today, in terms of how to live together with non-Catholics in a pluralist society. There is a confusion growing out of

a seeming contradiction between being a member of the Catholic Church and somehow trying to reconcile this with living together with people who are not part of the Church. I think there is a responsibility to examine this problem. In my view there exists today a theology of pluralism, a theology of intergroup relations, and I submit to you that that theology is stated in *Pacem in Terris*. I think if there were study courses based on *Pacem in Terris* in terms of these precise problems, a great service would be performed in preparing young people for this new world. It is important to have them understand the need to approach other people not in terms of abstractions, of their vague human dignity, but to prepare them to be able to accept in love the concrete reality, the concrete particularity of another person, as he or she is. Most people are in favor of civil rights, of giving Negroes their natural rights, but the mess that we are going through so painfully reveals how great is the gap between our professions of love and charity and our practice of these virtues in real life situations.

All of you, I trust, know something about the historic National Conference on Religion and Race held last January in Chicago. This Conference, which I was privileged to serve as Program Chairman, holds out many lessons. First, it indicates what impact for good an effective lay apostolate can make for all men, since the Conference began as the idea of a Catholic layman, able Mathew Ahmann, executive director of the National Catholic Conference for Interracial Justice. Second, it demonstrated what great energies for social justice can be released when men of good will—Catholic, Protestant, and Jewish—join hands in a common cause. (No delegate to that conference will ever forget the address of His Eminence, Albert Cardinal Meyer, who declared before a plenary session of one thousand religious leaders, that the race problem required maximum interreligious cooperation. "We can only do this together," Cardinal Meyer said. "None of us can deal with this problem alone." Third, the Conference revealed how profoundly the white Christian and Jew have failed to understand the psyche and the existential plight of the Negro.

I dwell for a moment on this last matter, because it illuminates sharply the larger question of interpersonal attitudes which we have been talking about. A major factor in the civil rights crisis today is that the average American fails to understand his feelings about the Negro. There is a fantasy quality about our Negro-White relations, and the reason is that we have a lack of capacity to enter spiritually, empathetically into the life of another person. Instead of bringing in real-life contact and compassion, we confront each other as mythical entities. There are all kinds of myths about the Negro that we must examine and overcome. The Negro needs to be helped to move forward, but he is illiterate—so goes one myth. But we never examine the fact of why he is illiterate. He is illiterate because white men—white Christians and Jews—in the 1800's

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In the same volume direct treatment of liturgical formation appears in "The Liturgical Formation of Candidates for the Priesthood" by Rev. William O'Shea, S.S. Many of these suggestions will be helpful for the formation of Sisters, too. The book is related to the Council's decisions for liturgical reform, and in this perspective offers many insights into the integration which liturgy is expected to contribute to formation programs.

In "Scriptural-Liturgical Depth in Christian Living" by Father Carroll Stuhlmüller, C.P., it is recommended that young people learn about the various vocations in the Church 'with stress upon the ancient and modern liturgical service for the priesthood, religious vows, and marriage,' so that "each will be seen to share one spirit in Christ." Some texts for Bible Vigils on this theme are also suggested.

Sister Jeanne d'Arc, O.P., "Fonction de la vie religieuse dans l'Eglise et dans le monde," Supplement, *La Vie Spirituelle*, No. 66 (Sept., 1963), pp. 353-382.

This is an orderly presentation of some thoughts on religious life, set down with an awareness that the future of the congregations is "a burning question." Part one situates religious life in the order of holiness and of consecration, under the headings of (1) the eschatological function; (2) the service role; and the function of witness. The writer promises a follow-up article relating these roles to some means of formation. The article is provocative in the section which touches on questions of how the service required of religious can also have a witness function. Some problems needing further discussion are raised.

"This requires . . . that the professional conscience in relation to every task be perfectly integrated to the religious formation, that the spiritual qualities be perfectly incarnated into conscientious service and magnificent work, and that the human activity, in itself, with all its laws be properly respected," the writer says.

"Our brief words, if carefully considered, are able to throw light on the internal dynamism of the preaching of the Gospel; or, to use the language of today, of pastoral and missionary engagement. By its very nature the preaching of the Gospel is part of the life of the Church. In fact, it is not a matter of some occasional activity but of a principal duty of the Church, and it is required that we apply our whole strength to the accomplishment of this duty.

"This subject is particularly worthy of holding our attention on this day set aside for helping the missions of the Church."

Pope Paul VI, Allocution at the Consecration of Forty New Bishops, Oct. 20, 1963, in *La Documentation Catholique*, LX (Nov. 17, 1963), col. 476.

CONFRONTING THE NEW REALITIES

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passed laws which prevented the Negro from learning to read and write. The plantation barons argued that if they became literate, they would cease to be slaves. Myth number two: We want to help improve Negro family life, because the Negroes have no family structure. They break up so easily; there is so much immorality. But the Negro family life is weak, and there is immorality in the Negro community because of the plantation system created by the White society. For hundreds of years the plantation barons took the Negro mother away from her family and her children and used the mother for breeding purposes. The Negro person as a slave was worth fourteen hundred dollars and more on the slave markets of New Orleans, and buying and selling Negro families was big business. Myth number three: The Negro is indolent. As a slave the Negro was an indentured laborer, and he was often treated as sub-human. Why should he have initiative and energy?

Heinrich Heine said something about the situation of the Jew in the Western world which is applicable to the plight of the Negro: "First, you cripple the Jew and then you blame him for limping." First we have crippled the Negro and then we blame him for limping. . . . What contribution do we as committed Christians and Jews have to make to improve this situation? We can enter with information and understanding into the other person's situation and act upon that understanding. In love we can help him to fulfill himself as a person, to realize his creative capacities as a child of God. This is what the Prophets have enjoined us to do. The Prophets did not talk only about great causes. They talked about relieving the widow and the orphan. They talked about the homeless and the hungry. This is what Amos, Isaiah and Jeremiah are all about.

Thus, my friends, I believe that if we have said anything here at all, it is to proclaim the need to come to grips, no matter how painful the process is, with the knowledge that the facts of the world today are not the facts of the world one hundred years ago, nor even twenty-five years ago, nor perhaps even a decade ago. The world today is not yesterday's. We cannot see the present through the past tense. And we've got to look at these facts and new realities and respond to them openly and with vision. And secondly, if I've said anything at all, it is that the test of all of our professions of human brotherhood, of human fraternity and charity are at stake in terms of not just what we do in relationship to Latin America, Angola, and the Congo, but what we do in our hometown streets in Milwaukee, in relationship to the Negro next door, the Protestant next door, the Catholic next door, and the Jew next door. In the spirit of Pope John's encyclical, our challenge — which I, as a Jew and a Rabbi, accept and am prepared to respond to together with my community which joins hands with yours in this decisive hour of history — is: "Each should tend not towards what can divide the minds but what can unite them in mutual understanding and reciprocal esteem."