**JULES MEINVIELLE**

**CORRESPONDENCE WITH R.P. GARRIGOU-LAGRANGE**

**ABOUT LAMENNAIS AND MARITAIN**

The present volume[[1]](#footnote-2) contains five letters of Father Garrigou-Lagrange, in the original French text, and four letters and two articles of Father Jules Meinvielle, translated into French from the original Spanish text. We are publishing these letters to satisfy the desire expressed by Father Garrigou-Lagrange in his letter of December 26, 1946, when he wrote about his first letter:

"This letter was not intended for publicity and as the comments with which you accompanied it accentuated what dis tutes my position from that of Mr. Maritain, I beg you to insert the present note in your Review".

As the review which was to appear in April has not yet been published, and, consequently, the letter of Father Garrigou-Lagrange would risk being delayed, we thought it appropriate to publish all this correspondence in one volume.

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**Note on this edition**

"... Then I understood clearly that the "***new Christianity***" which appeared as "the common work", the "fraternal community of believers and non-believers" in which "each one commits himself and must commit himself entirely and give his maximum", was "only a miserable tributary of the **GREAT MOVEMENT OF APOSTASY ORGANIZED IN ALL COUNTRIES FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A UNIVERSAL CHURCH** which would have neither dogmas nor hierarchy, neither rule for the spirit, nor brake for the passions ; and which, under the pretext of **freedom and human dignity**, would bring back into the world, if it could triumph, the legal reign of cunning and force, the oppression of the weak, of those who suffer and work" (p. 5).

"...there is no other Christianity than Catholicism. Outside the Church there can be sects, called Christian for simple historical reasons, but there can be no Christianity" (p. 17).

"This city of Maritain is more antichristian than the one imagined by Lamennais. Maritain, by claiming a *universal common faith*, must forge **a society of anti-Catholic nature, that is, founded on a common anti-Catholic base, or in principles in which the anti-Catholics commune**" (p. 47).

"**MARITAINISM IS NOT AN OPINION, MORE OR LESS ACCEPTABLE; IT IS A MISTAKE FULLY CONDEMNED IN *MIRARI VOS, QUANTA CURA* AND IN *THE CHARTER OF THE SILLON*** (p. 55).

The Church can neither deceive herself nor us. Maritanism, a *false doctrine, proposing another gospel* (p. 53*), a new Christianity* (p. 54), triumphed at Vatican II[[2]](#footnote-3) , making it impossible for this council to be Catholic. The Church was eclipsed. But an eclipse, even a total one, has an end. And then.

Let us follow the example of Father Meinvielle who applies the teaching of Our Lord: *let your yes be yes...* He gar da la Foi. As a true Thomist, Father Meinvielle does not hesitate to write: ***Maritain and his followers have falsified, in the name of St. Thomas, the firmest and most indisputable principles of philosophy***. Preface of *Critique of the conception of Maritain on the human person.* Published in French and available at DPF, BP 1, 86 Chiré. Essential.

Garrigou-Lagrange should have fought Maritain (with the bishops) from 1947. He did not do so. The Dominican, preferring a comfortable reputation, defended the truth, but did not fight the enemy. His behavior is exemplary. It is the eternal conduct of the liberals who deal with error, not attacking its band[[3]](#footnote-4) . God's sanction was terrible: *He vomited the lukewarm*, they lost the Faith, apostasized and Father Garrigou died losing his head.

Louis-Hubert REMY, August 25, 2001

**PREFACE**

In November 1945 my book *De Lamennais à Maritain was* published, in which, in the light of Catholic doctrine, the main social-political theses of the Christian philosopher Jacques Maritain are examined.

We could summarize the conclusion of my study as follows: that the doctrines expounded by Maritain in an increasingly explicit form in a series of books that have followed one another since "*Religion and Culture*" (1930) renew the errors of Lamennais in *L'Avenir* and of Marc Sangnier in *Le Sillon*.

It is to be presumed that I would not have allowed myself to formulate such a serious statement publicly without a thorough study of Maritain's work and its comparison with that of Lamennais in *L'Avenir* and of Marc Sangnier in *Le Sillon*. I also had to examine the attitude of the Holy Church towards the revolutionary materialism of the modern world that filled the XVIII, XIX, and XXè centuries and **particularly the attitude of the same Church towards those Catholics who sought conciliation with the modern world**. The **conclusion of** my study, although **very serious,** was the result of a firm conviction.

Nothing would be further from the truth than to believe that other, less noble motives could have had the slightest influence on my conclusion. I had no such motive. Because, in fact, I can affirm that since my years as a philosophy student at the Seminary, I have been an assiduous and enthusiastic reader, not only of *"Bergsonnian Philosophy",* but also of his "*Antimodern*" and "*Three Reformers*". And I continued to read and study him, especially during his ardent campaign against the political naturalism of "*L'Action Française*".

I can even confess that his book "*Religion and Culture*", where I now find explicit the positions that I denounced and fought so firmly, pleased me then a lot.

Books like "*On Temporal Regime and Liberty*" and "*Integral Humanism*" seemed equivocal to me, so I suspended my opinion on them. Although I had friends who expressed concern and surprise about these books, I can confess that I did not share their concerns.

But I cannot understand the Maritain who led the intellectual Catholics of Paris and the world, precisely those who took a stand against the glorious Spanish movement that delivered Spain from the red barbarism.

"Is it not obvious - as Cardinal Verdier wrote to Cardinal Gomà y Tomàs on September 7, 1937 - that the titanic struggle that today bloodies the soil of Catholic Spain is truly the struggle between Christian civilization and the so-called civilization of Soviet atheism?"

How, then, could a Catholic philosopher of such a lucid mentality be with the defenders of this atheism?

But here a question arose: Was the position adopted by Maritain in the Spanish case a purely practical error, far removed from his intellectual positions, or was it derived from them?

At that time I did not see this problem clearly, inclining me rather to consider it as a purely practical error. Since then, events followed one another in the world, each time more convulsed. The "political" or "politician" Maritain became the universal "leader" of left-wing Catholics, to the point of forming sectarian groups in almost all South American countries. I knew well the sectarianism of the group in Argentina, and through credible references, I knew that the groups in Chile, Peru, Uruguay, Brazil and Costa Rica had the same characteristics. When challenged in the vital problems of the world, these groups had to bow unerringly to the communist side. **It was visible then that, in the struggle between Christian civilization and communism, Maritain was, in spite of himself, at the service of the latter.**

So I went back to studying all of Maritain's works; I read and reread them several times. Some of them were very difficult for me to understand, especially his "*Integral Humanism*". But finally I found the key to Maritain's thought.

I understood, in fact, that the "*New Christianity*", which he proposed as a myth of orientation of the ideas and activities of his prœclari cives, "Christians and non-Christians", not only had nothing to do with the secular Christian civilization of the Pontifical Documents, but that on the contrary it was **in the opposite camp**. I understood then that the word "Christian", which in the usual vocabulary of the Catholic can only mean the integral acceptance of the dogmas of the Holy Church, whatever one's position in the face of social-political problems, only applies in the Marian vocabulary to the one who adopts a determined left-wing position in the face of social-political problems, whatever one's religious or irreligious profession of faith.

There is more. I found the text where explicitly Maritain confesses that there is an "earthly, profane, temporal Christianity, which can take heretical forms or even forms of revolt",

the CHRISTIANISM "of the rationalists who proclaimed in France the rights of man and citizen",

the CHRISTIANISM of the "Puritans who dealt the final blow to slavery in America",

the CHRISTIANISM of the "atheist communists who abolished in Russia the absolutism of the private profit". (*Christianity and Democracy*, 43 and 44).

Then I understood clearly that the "*new Christianity*" which appeared as "the common work", the "fraternal community of believers and non-believers" in which "each one commits himself and must commit himself entirely and give his best" (*Integral Humanism*, pp. 217 and 220), was "only a miserable tributary of the **GREAT MOVEMENT OF APOSTASY ORGANIZED IN ALL COUNTRIES FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A UNIVERSAL CHURCH** that would have neither dogmas nor hierarchy, neither rules for the mind nor brakes for the passions ; and which, under the pretext of **freedom and human dignity**, would bring back into the world, if it could triumph, the legal reign of cunning and force, the oppression of the weak, of those who suffer and who work" (*Letter of Pius X, condemnation of the Sillon*).

From that moment I imposed to me the task to denounce "opportune and unwelcome" the grave danger of the Maritainism.

Although a year and a half has passed since the appearance of my book, in which I publicly denounced Maritain's doc trines, neither he nor his many eminent followers have attempted a **refutation**.

Only Father Réginald Garrigou-Lagrange, one of the most illustrious theologians of the Holy Church, while recognizing the weakness and the danger of Maritain's positions, believed that my attack was exaggerated. He made this known to me in a letter which he was kind enough to send me on the occasion of the reception of my book. I then took the liberty of examining the opinion of Father Garrigou-Lagrange, in two articles published in the *Balcón*, of which I sent him a copy in French.

This led to an exchange of letters with this illustrious theologian, which I now make available to the many readers who are following this case with great interest.

If anything emerges clearly from this correspondence, it is that in spite of the laudable desire of Father Gar- rigou-Lagrange to remove the gravity of Maritain's errors and especially to demonstrate that they do not renew the errors of Lamennais, he has not been successful.

And here is the best demonstration of the vulnerable positions of M. Maritain.

If an illustrious theologian, in spite of his affection for him and his efforts to defend him, hardly succeeds, it is because the cause is not defensible. Let the reader judge for himself.

Jules Meinvielle

**FIRST LETTER OF R.P. GARRIGOU-LAGRANGE, O. P.**

The letter that we publish below clearly corroborates the position that the present collaborators of the *Balcony* (and principally the Abbot Jules Meinvielle in his book *From Lamennais to Maritain*) have maintained regarding the deviations of J. Maritain. Coming from Father Garrigou-Lagrange, who is one of the greatest masters of contemporary Catholic thought (and this illustrious theologian having been closely linked to Maritain's intellectual life), the text that we transcribe below has, as will not escape the reader, an exceptional significance.

The affirmative reference to Donoso Cortés and the recognition that Meinvielle coincides with the Spanish thinker in the appreciation of the present moment of the world, are things that, said by Father Garrigou-Lagrange, acquire the sense of a masterly corroboration.

As for the opinion of Father Garrigou-Lagrange, on the different proportion of the deviation of Maritain with that of Lamennais, in spite of the identical path that both have undertaken, Father Jules Meinvielle, has manifested to us that on this point he will make a special study in the columns of the *Balcony*.

Don Julio Meinvielle.

Father,

Your recent book was given to me by the Secretary of His Eminence Cardinal Caggiano. I then received another copy, as did Father Suàrez, Rector of the Angelico. Like him I thank you for it. I have read it and will read it more carefully.

I think that J. Maritain did not see how far some of his concessions could logically lead, and that many current events should show him the danger of these concessions and will show him more and more.

I will tell you what you already know: that I have suffered since 1936 from the difference I find between the first of his books (from the time when we collaborated in perfect harmony) and the last ones published since the revolution that bloodied Spain. There is something painful here, I said it and wrote it to J. Maritain, I also said it to the excellent M. To-màs Casares when I went to Argentina in 1938 and I have not changed my way of seeing since then.

But the sensational title of your book seems to me excessive, because the deviation of which you speak is far from having the propor tion of that of Lamennais, who was more and more mistaken about the very end of the life of the Church, as if it had to work, above all, not to lead men to eternal life, but for the temporal well-being of the peoples who should be liberated from all servitude.

The article "Lamennais" in the Dictionnaire de Théologie Catholique (D.T.C.) shows that this was his main error, and J. Maritain clearly disapproves of this error and does not forget that he wrote "*Primacy of the Spiritual*".

What you quote from me in your last book I still hold firmly; I could even confirm it by what I have read, these last years, in the admirable works of Donoso Cortés, whose spirit is very different from that of the last books of J. Maritain.

Donoso Cortés, in his letter of 30 pages to Cardinal Fornari, written in 1850, to be presented to Pius IX, rightly says that when the peoples have separated from Christian and Catholic principles and have accepted atheistic legislation on school, secondary and higher education, on the family, divorce, etc., for some time liberalism has been in vogue. But as it does not conclude anything, which is not enough to act, if one does not want to return to Christian and Catholic principles, one descends to *radicalism* in negation, and by an acceleration similar to that of the fall of the bodies, to *socialism*, and then finally to materialistic and atheistic *communism.*

He even predicted in 1850, that there will be in Russia a "colossal materialistic and communist Empire, at the head of which will be a plebeian of satanic grandeur, the man of sin". He even added in another speech on the general situation of Europe at that time (around 1850), that in order to resist effectively there is only one capable force: that of the deep Catholic faith, which is why, he said, Germany dominated by Protestant Prussia will not be able to react.

Donoso Cortés said that an atheistic legislation leads a people to death like a cancer that ravages the organism; this is not seen in the 1è and 2è generation, it is seen in the 5è by the number of unbelievers, atheists, divorces.

What Donoso Cortés said in 1850, you say again today, Father, and unfortunately events prove you only too right. I regret that J. Maritain does not see it better and I sincerely hope that current events will enlighten him; he has ventured on a path where Lamennais went much further than he did; what is happening now will enlighten him, I hope, if it has not already.

One must pray to be faithful to the Lord, if one is to suffer for the faith.

I beg you, Father, to convey my very religious remembrance to Mr. Tomàs Casares (of whom I have just received good news from Monsignor Barrère) and to his friends, as well as to Monsignor Franceschi, and to Father Derisi.

Please accept, Father, with my thanks, the expression of my very religious devotion.

en. R. Garrigou-Lagrange, O. P.

**REPLY FROM JULES MEINVIELLE TO THE FIRST LETTER**

Buenos Aires, September 16, 1946.

Very Rev. Réginald Garrigou-Lagrange, O. P.

Father,

I received your letter in response to the mailing of my book *De Lamennais à Maritain*. I would like to thank you very much for it, and I must confess that we found it so interesting and useful to read that we published it in the magazine *Balcón*, a weekly magazine written by several former friends of the "*Cursos de Cultura Catolica*".

Your letter appeared in French and Spanish in the issue of Friday, July 26. I later published two articles in the same journal in which I examine V. R.'s opinion on the non-coincidence of Maritain's errors with those of Lamennais. I am now sending these articles to V. R. and I would be most interested in having your point of view on them, after a careful examination.

I would like to tell you that it was Father J. V. Ducattillon O. P. who first taught, in a public conference, that "the general lines (in Maritain's work) come from *L'Avenir* and have a Thomistic root, and we see in it a renewed attempt at a philosophical and Christian interpretation of the modern world, whose breadth equals, in terms of doctrinaire actuality, that of *L'Avenir* (in his book "*Dios y Libertad*", p. 219 ff., edited *by Orden Cristiano*, Buenos Aires, 1945).

It is useful to note that these words are said as a praise, by a friend of Maritain, whom we can presume to be in good terms with him, therefore the title of my book should not surprise you.

I have the honor, and the great pleasure, to present to V. R. the most sincere expression of my feelings *in Xto. Dno*.

Jules Meinvielle

**FROM LAMENNAIS TO MARITAIN**

Article published in the August 9, 1946 issue of the weekly magazine *Balcón* in which Father Jules Meinvielle exa mine the opinion of Father Garrigou-Lagrange on the non-coincidence of Maritain with Lamennais.

Garrigou-Lagrange, one of the greatest theologians of our time, was kind enough to send me a letter after receiving my last book *De Lamennais a Maritain*.

This famous religious who, according to Maritain, is "the most admired among contemporary theologians and the one who is considered the most reliable" (*Ciencia y Sabiduria*, ed. Desclée, B. Aires, p. 136) clearly expresses

"that I suffer, he said since 1936, from the difference I find between the last books (from the time when we collaborated in perfect understanding) and the last ones published since the revolution that bloodied Spain";

He approves, moreover, the perspective under which I present the current events, which places me in perfect rap port with Donoso Cortés whose works of a century older are - according to the R.P. Garrigou-Lagrange - "admirable and of a spirit quite different from the one that animates the last books of Maritain"; he says finally that this one "ventured by a way where Lamennais had arrived much further".

This letter faithfully reflects his great cordiality towards Maritain as well as his deep sorrow about the philosopher's current distancing and his confidence that "present events will end up enlightening him, if they have not already done so".

We trust and deeply desire that this be so. But we do not share the indulgence shown by the illustrious theologian, an indulgence which leads him to diminish the seriousness of the deviation in Maritain, who, according to him, is very far from having the scope of Lamennais' errors.

Let us reproduce verbatim the passage of the letter that we must examine:

"But the sensational title of your book seems to me to be excessive, for the deviation of which you speak is far from having the propor tion of that of Lamennais, who was more and more mistaken about the very end of the life of the Church, as if it were to work above all, not to lead men to eternal life, but for the temporal well-being of the peoples who should be liberated from all servitude.

"The *Lamennais* article in the D.T.C. clearly shows that this was his main error and J. Maritain obviously reproves this error and does not forget that he wrote "*Primacy of the Spiritual*".

**The article "Lamennais" in the Dictionary of Catholic Theology.**

In order to place the point in question, I think it is important to point out that the *Lamennais* study of the D.T.C. to which Fr. Garrigou-Lagrange alludes was already well known and much appreciated by me as an excellent work on which I was in complete agreement.

So is it correct to say that Lamennais' main mistake was to err on the very purpose of the Church "as if it were not to work above all to lead men to eternal life, but to concern itself with the temporal welfare of the people, whom it is necessary to free from all servitude?" Let us make a distinction.

If one wants to point out his central error, the mother of all other false positions, even in what they have of changeable, it is exact provided that one notices that this error lies in all his most diverse attitudes, although Lamennais never explicitly formulated it.

On the contrary, it is not true if one wants to say that this was the main error of Catholic Liberalism, first formulated by Lamennais and his companions of *L'Avenir* and later condemned by *Mirari Vos*.

In other words: the typical error of Lamennais for which he was condemned is the error of Catholic liberalism, the error of false liberties.

However, he supported it for only one year and one month of his thirty-eight years of public activity, having defended before and after other doctrinal positions irreconcilable with it or much more extreme.

This mistake is not the main mistake of his life, although it was the main mistake in his conviction in *Mirari Vos*.

In exchange, and as an attempt to explain his most variable attitudes, it is licit to point out the continuity of this erroneous conception on the very purpose of the Church, even though he never explicitly formulated it.

To better understand this, it is necessary to observe the article in question of the D.T.C.

When he studies the complete life of Lamennais, he divides it into three main periods:

1è : the period of its formation, 1782-1816 ;

2è : the Catholic period, 1816-1834 ;

3è : the non catholic period, 1834-1854.

It is obvious that the characteristic positions of his last two periods have no resemblance, in spite of a certain constant psychological attitude that one can discover there.

However, as my book on Maritain is not a psychological but a doctrinal study, it goes without saying that the parallel between him and Lamennais that I present in it must be limited exclusively to the period of his life that the Dictionary calls his Catholic period.

But, in this same period Lamennais assumed three different doctrinal positions that the said Dictionary in turn corresponds with three sub-periods:

* that of the apologist, when he wrote his "*Essay on indifference in matters of religion*" the book which according to Lacordaire made him reach in one day the power of Bossuet;
* as an anti-democratic politician and
* that of a democratic politician.

The most remarkable thing about this last period was his campaign in *L'Avenir,* which lasted from October 16, 1830 to November 15, 1831, which is exactly one year and one month, with the consequent episodes that led to the condemnation of his liberal errors in *Mirari Vos* (August 15, 1832), where he was not yet named, and later to his personal condemnation in *Singulari Nos* of July 7, 1834.

Our parallel with Maritain embraces only this period of Lamennais' life. It therefore takes exclusively this year and one month of his campaign in *L'Avenir*.

However, we maintain that Maritain reiterates today the principal errors which were exposed there.

But before entering into this last question, another one seems to impose itself: is it licit to cut off a year and a month from the existence of a man, who lived three quarters of a century, to characterize him and compare him with another philosopher who lives a hundred years later?

***The typical Lamennais is the Lamennais of L'Avenir***

The divisions and sub-divisions introduced by the D.T.C. into Lamennais' life make it clear enough that it was very complex and disrupted.

It is enough to note that it ranges from an ultramontane Catholicism - the throne and the altar - undemocratic, authoritarian, clerical, infected with errors such as fideism and traditionalism, to a revolutionary and demagogic socialism. But in the midst of such diverse attitudes and so full of false positions, what is the typical error capable of characterizing Lamennais in the history of the Church?

The D.T.C. highlights this when, after an exposition of his life, his works and his doctrine, in 25 pages of a very dense text, it ends with a passage entitled: "Conclusion. Judgment on the doctrine of Lamennais" and which says:

"We do not have to assess here the importance of Lamennais' role in the history of the Church or in the history of France. It is indisputable that the founder of *L'Avenir* was the father of Catholic liberalism.

When the author of the article says: "we should not appreciate here the importance of Lamennais' role in the history of the Church", it is because he clearly wants to indicate that this theme is treated at length elsewhere, in another place of the same dictionary, precisely in the article "*Catholic Liberalism*" where 20 large pages are dedicated to Lamennais. This is the typical Lamennais, the one where one can recognize his right of authorship.

And when did he exercise this paternity? It is precisely in *L'Avenir* during this year and a month of which we spoke. For before he was ultramontane and antidemocratic - coming very close to Bonald -; for afterwards he was demagogue and socialist, recalling then Saint-Simon and Fourier.

Catholic liberalism is therefore typical of Lamennais, what distinguishes him, what sets him apart in the history of ecclesiastical errors. This, as well as the circumstance of having been condemned only for this error, is clearly demonstrated by the following fact: when the Archbishop of Toulouse, Monsignor d'Astros, asked the Holy Father, before and after *Mirari Vos*, to ratify the condemnation of 55 propositions taken from Lamennais' works, especially from his "*Essay*", the Pope formally opposed it.

Finally, although the error assigned by Father Garrigou is not typical of Lamennais in the history of the Church, it is nevertheless the predominant error of his life, as is proven by the author of the said article mentioning this error in connection with the publication of the first volume of his "*Essays*" in 1817, fifteen years before the condemnation of *L'Avenir*, at the time of his anti-democratic ultramontanism:

"Let us insist on this point, for it is essential to understand the evolution of Lamennais, to grasp his true role. Lamennais is above all a politician, a sociologist, whose concerns are directed towards questions of social or political organization; he does not dream so much of the eternal salvation of souls as of the temporal salvation of societies, of France in particular.

"Now the great social benefit of Christianity has been the liberation of the human race; the great benefit he expects from the restoration of the Christian social order of the Middle Ages is a new liberation of human societies, which today are based only on force. Freedom, the independence of man from man: such is henceforth, and this time definitively, the guiding idea, the fundamental aspiration of the whole life of Lamennais. It is thus explained that the day when "the Christian democrat" believes "to see that the Holy See is making a pact with "despotic" power, and consequently makes Christianity fail in its liberal mission, its true raison d'être in his eyes", he will lose his faith in the hierarchy, in the "constituted" Church, in order to be attached only to the great unity of the Society of spirits among themselves and with God, only to humanity?

This political conception of the Church's mission nourished and sustained Lamennais' anti-democratic ultramontanism, as it would later nourish and sustain his liberalism of *L'Avenir* and, after being completely secularized, his utopian revolutionary socialism of 1848 when he was deputy for the department of the Seine. But this conception was never formulated in explicit error; nor was it condemned.

***Maritain coincides point on point with the Lamennais of L'Avenir***

In my book *De Lamennais à Maritain* I demonstrated the almost literal coincidence between the Maritain of the "*New Christianity*" and the Lamennais of *L'Avenir*. This is not the time to repeat it. I beg the reader to look into it. But I would be very happy if a theologian such as Father Garrigou-Lagrange would point out to me the errors - if there are any - that could have crept in.

It is enough to note that on pages 13, 15, 18, 20, 25, 26, 27, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 43, 58, 151, 318 and 319 of my book I quote precisely the same article "*L'Avenir de la société*", of June 28, 1831, where, according to the D.T.C., the thesis that Lamennais wants to make triumph "is clearly formulated and systematically demonstrated".

I want to prove that my comparison is based on the "clearly formulated and systematically demonstrated thesis" of Lamennais' thought, which we can condense into the following five points where one can, moreover, easily discover that there is also, clearly and explicitly enclosed, the doctrine of Maritain:

1° Historical development is necessarily progressive.

2° Consequently, the liberal regime that the French Revolution inaugurated implies a progress in comparison with the regime of the Middle Ages.

3° That consequently the Church must ally itself with liberalism.

4° The regime of modern liberties and especially that of publicly professing any religion is necessary and completely in accord with the spirit of the Gospel.

5° The type of Christian public-social order that Catholics should consider as their goal is a city where Catholics, as well as Protestants, agnostics and atheists, can live together in a fraternal way, without the city, as such, having to profess to be Catholic.

These five points can be condensed into one, where the typical error of Catholic liberalism is to be found, the same one of which Father Garrigou-Lagrange speaks in his treatise "*De Revelatione*" 2è ed., p. 597.

"*Prout distinguitur ab indifferentismo supra exposito, liberalismus, quem admiserunt catholici liberales, discipuli F. de Lamennais defendit civilem cujusque cultus libertatem, tamquam societatis conditionem non in se deordinatam, sed rationi ac spiritui evangeli co conformem ac maxime utilem. Licet enim catholici libérales fateantur, Ecclesiam catholicam divinitus institutam fuisse, docent quidem plenam libertatem ei concedendam esse, sed nihil amplius ei deberi : Vera enim religio, ut aiunt, sola persuasione propa gabitur ac florebit; eam multi amplectentur et quidem eo majori libertate, ideoque maiori fiducia et amore, quo minor erit coactio, cum veritas semper errori preevaleat*."

That this was the error condemned by *Mirari Vos,* and that it was not another, was undoubtedly stated by Cardinal Pacca in his letter to Lamennais, which he enclosed with the encyclical:

"The Holy Father also disapproves and even disapproves of the doctrines relating to civil and political liberty, which, against your intentions, undoubtedly tend of their nature to excite and propagate everywhere the spirit of sedition and revolt on the part of subjects against their sovereigns.

"The doctrines of *L'Avenir* on the freedom of worship and the freedom of the press, which have been treated with so much exaggeration and pushed so far by M. M. the editors, are also very reprehensible, and in opposition to the teaching, maxims and practice of the Church... "

***Maritain coincides with Lamennais in Catholic liberalism***

Finally: I affirm clearly in my thesis that Maritain coincides with Lamennais on the essential points of liberalism, the typical error of the latter where he read simultaneously the author and the unsurpassed expositor.

It is not a question now of examining whether the error of Catholic liberalism (Lamennais' doctrinal position in a single year and month of his troubled life) is not in turn the effect of a superiorly political conception of the Holy Church. I believe that it is so. However, even if it were not so, that is, even if Lamennais had not implicitly supported this inaccurate conception of the very purpose of the Church, his typical error, that of false liberties, would remain the same and would have been equally condemned.

My book is entitled *From Lamennais to Maritain*, not *Lamennais and Maritain,* because I do not want to compare two men but to point out the identity of one and the other in the same error which has been reprobated during the last century.

Having clarified the above, let us now ask this other question:

Is it true that the Maritain of the last social-political books does not fall, implicitly at least, into a political and earthly conception of Christianity? Can we share this opinion of Father Garrigou-Lagrange?

This will be the topic of a future article.

Jules Meinvielle

**AN EARTHLY CATHOLICISM**

This second article appeared on August 30, 1946 in *Balcón* and in it Father Jules Meinvielle studies how far Maritain coincides with Lamennais in the error of an earthly Catholicism.

We closed our previous article with this question: Is it certain, as Father Garrigou-Lagrange supposes, that the Maritain of the last books does not fall, implicitly at least, into a political and earthly conception of Christianity?

We will examine it here, recalling first of all in passing the concrete formulas under which this error presents itself in modern times.

Let us begin by making it clear that in Catholic theology there is, and can be, no other Christianity than the Catholicism of the Holy Church. For the Church is a totality living in Christ and in God. And God and His Christ live only in the Church.

The impiety of modern times has created this monstrous philosophical-Christian nomenclature which, according to Balmes, "never forgets to mix Christianity with philosophical sects" and which claims to give us as Christianity what can only be its sad mask.

In a study like the present one, where the positions of a Catholic philosopher are examined, it is implied that there is **no other Christianity than Catholicism** (see the book *From Lamennais to Maritain*, p. 313). **Outside the Church there may be sects, called Christian for simple historical reasons, but there can be no Christianity.** Besides, for almost two thousand years of presence in the life of the Western peoples, the Church can be denied, despised, but never ignored.

However, and this is the question, since the Church is a supernatural reality, how can it be known by those who do not have faith, by those who lack the unique eyes capable of making us know the supernatural?

These unbelievers cannot know the Church in its proper and true reality; with their carnal eyes they can only see it in its visible apparatus, in its hierarchical degrees - the Pope, the bishops, the priests, the laity, the religious orders - in its doctrines, its sacraments, its institutions, its works, in its history.

A vision of the Church, embracing only its external activity as it appears to carnal eyes, will admit as many interpretations as there are human minds.

We can classify them here in two main streams;

one, of social conservation, with the esteem of tradition, authority, hierarchy and all the other values inherited from Greece, Rome, and the Middle Ages;

the other, of social dissolution, claiming to build on the ruins of these values, a totally new civilization, where the man or the human person is completely emancipated.

The first conception can be called *right-wing*; the second, *left-wing*.

***The right-wing earthly conception of Christianity***

Between the unbelievers who have forged a right-wing conception of the mission of the Holy Church stand out Comte and Maurras. From the second author, very famous for *the Action Française*, one can quote pages and pages full of admi ration for the Church where it is recognized as "the best friend of every man, the common benefactress of the human race"; the Action Française has taken from it its favorite ideas of "order, tradition, discipline, hierarchy, authority, continuity, unity, and work, family, cooperation, decentralization, autonomy, workers' organization".

Let us limit ourselves to reproducing a very typical passage:

"One can extract from my books of the past words expressing thoughts or feelings unacceptable to the Church and which are even in horror to her. When I re-edited several of these writings I cut out what could be understood or interpreted as an expression of an intentional and voluntary act of offending this Church which I had hailed as the most ancient, the most venerable and the most fruitful of visible things and as the noblest and the most holy idea of the universe: thus was shown the feeling which the Church of the Order inspires in me".

"But no mark of a respect that grows with my reflections and the number of my years can equal the marks of orthodoxy or the symbols of the faith; and I see with unmistakable clarity how some of my pages, of those that remain, can and must shock faithful souls." (Quoted in "*Why Rome Spoke*", p. 107).

In this **error** also fell, of eminent catholics, such as De Bonald and the Lamennais previous to the Lamennais of *L'Avenir*, especially in his "*Essay on the indifference in the matter of religion*".

***A left-wing earthly conception of Christianity***

Among those who have argued in favor of a left-wing earthly conception of Catholicism we can recall first of all the impious who, from Rousseau to Marx and Feuerbach full of resentment towards the Church, wanted to realize directly on the earthly plane its supernatural truths. But we will limit ourselves here to speaking of the unbelievers who admire the Church, and of the Catholics.

Among the first, the most typical case is that of the socialist Saint Simon who in his "*New Christianity*" directs to the Pope a very singular exhortation:

"Your predecessors have sufficiently perfected the theory of Christianity, they have sufficiently propagated it; now you must concern yourselves with its application. True Christianity must not only make men happy in heaven but also on earth. Your task, therefore, is to organize the human race according to the fundamental principle of divine morality. It is not fitting that you should confine yourselves to preaching to the faithful that the poor are the beloved children of God; you must employ all the powers and means of the Church militant to bring about a rapid improvement in the physical and moral condition of the most numerous class. ("*Le Nouveau Christianisme*" quoted in *De Lamennais à Maritain*, p. 12).

This passage of Saint-Simon, is extremely suggestive because he invites the Church to collaborate in the realization of the "Theory of Christianity".

And what is this Christianity that we are trying to bring to the real life of men?

This is the **very program of the Revolution**, synthesized in the famous trilogy: "Liberty, Equality, Fraternity" - that Rousseau had made famous - and manifested in what Buchez wrote in 1836:

"The French Revolution is the last and most advanced consequence of modern civilization, and modern civilization has come entirely from the Gospel. This is an irrefutable fact when one studies history, particularly that of our country, and when one analyzes its events and their driving ideas. All the principles inscribed by the Revolution on its flags and in its codes, as well as the words of equality and fraternity placed at the head of all its acts and with which it justified all its works, become an incontrovertible fact if we examine them and compare them with the doctrine of Jesus Christ."

Among Catholics, the primitive and typical case is that of Lamennais who, without abandoning the belief in the dogma of the supernatural mission of the Church - if he had abandoned it he would no longer have been a Catholic - elaborated a program of left-wing earthly realization of Christianity. Such was his Christianity of the *Future*. The reader will find the textual passages in my book *De Lamennais a Maritain*.

Let us return to Maritain and begin by warning that we are judging here neither his person nor his intentions, but his theory of the "*New Christianity*", as it emerges from his writings scattered in more than fifteen volumes; we have not judged either the person or the intentions of Lamennais, but only his program of *L'Avenir*.

* *The two Christianities.*

Maritain, as a Catholic who professes his faith, admits the supernatural of the Holy Church. But Maritain, the builder of the "*New Christianity*", speaks to us of an earthly, temporal and political Christianity. It would seem that there are two Christianities. Indeed, Maritain affirms this in an important passage of his "*Christianity and Democracy*" (p. 43) which deserves to be reproduced in full. He writes:

"But what is important for the political life of the world and for the solution of the crisis of civilization is not to claim that Christianity is linked to democracy, and that the Christian faith obliges each faithful to be a democrat; it is to note that democracy is linked to Christianity and that the democratic thrust has arisen in human history as a temporal manifestation of evangelical inspiration. The question here is not about Christianity as a religious creed and a way to eternal life, but about Christianity as the leaven of the social and political life of peoples and as the bearer of the temporal hope of men; it is not about Christianity as a treasure of divine truth maintained and propagated by the Church, but about Christianity as a historical energy at work in the world. It is not in the heights of theology, it is in the depths of profane consciousness and profane existence that Christianity acts in this way, and sometimes taking heretical forms or even forms of revolt in which it seems to deny itself, as if the broken pieces of the key to paradise, falling into our life of misery and joining with the metals of the earth, were more successful than the pure essence of the heavenly metal in activating the history of this world. It was not given to believers completely faithful to the Catholic dogma, it was given to rationalists to proclaim in France the rights of man and citizen, to puritans to strike in America the last blow to slavery, to atheistic communists to abolish in Russia the absolutism of private profit".

Maritain speaks here of two perfectly separable Christianities since, according to him, the earthly, political or temporal "can sometimes take heretical forms, or even of revolt" which can never be admitted in Christianity as "a religious creed and a way to eternal life". Maritain admits, besides the supernatural Holy Church, an earthly and political Christianity.

* *The new Christianity, an earthly and political Christianity.*

This earthly and political Christianity is in Maritain his "*New Christianity*" in the same way that it was the Christianity of *L'Avenir* in Lamennais. (See *From Lamennais to Maritain* p. 11-51) ;

* a Christianity essentially different from the Christianity of the Middle Ages (see ibid. from 53 to 117),
* essentially naturalistic (see ibid. 117-166);
* a Christianity with which can agree "men who possess very different religious or metaphysical points of view, even opposed: materialists, idealists, agnostics, Christians, Jews, Muslims, Buddhists" (Maritain, *El Pueblo*, Buenos Aires, May 13, 1945. See "*From Lamennais to Maritain*" page 166 to 216);
* a Christianity that coincides point by point with the famous "Democracy of the Furrow" condemned by St. Pius X. (See ibid. 217-304);
* a Christianity that realizes under a Catholic veneer the very program of the Revolution (See ibid. 305-350).

In the course of the 395 pages that make up my book *From Lamennais to Maritain* I examine precisely the different aspects of this earthly and political Christianity up to the point of demonstrating in the "Conclusion" that closes the six previous studies, that the ideas of Liberty, equality, fraternity and progress directly brought to the political level, as attempted by Lamennais in *L'Avenir* and Maritain in his "*Nouvelle Chrétienté*", imply **making carnal what is supernatural, thus falling precisely into antichristianity.**

We cannot transcribe here the entire documentation that fills the whole book. But what we have already said sufficiently explains why we do not understand on what basis Fr. Garrigou-Lagrange maintains that this error, the principal one in Lamennais, is not also to be found in Maritain, because, following the remark we make on page 25 of our book :

"This dichotomy, operated in the unity of the human being, openly explicit in Maritain and only implicit in Lamennais, leads both to the acceptance of a progress in history - that of the Revolution, operating in margin of the Church - and, for the same reason, to the establishment of two Christianities".

In his profession of an earthly and political Christianity, the Maritain of the "*New Christianity"* is more explicit than the Lamennais of *L'Avenir*. Our whole book is there to prove it. If he does not succeed in doing so, we would gladly accept to be shown why, but without telling us that Maritain does not profess this error because

"that he does not forget that he wrote his "*Primacy of the Spiritual*". Maritain may not have forgotten it, but his "*New Christianity*", proposed to Catholics today as an objective that is entirely and fully desired and capable of effectively involving human energies" (Maritain, "*Du Régime*", p. 131)

it is in exchange, full of this oblivion.

Let us repeat here what we said in our previous article. We would sincerely and earnestly desire that an authorized theologian, thoroughly acquainted with the latest Maritan literature, would point out the vulnerable points of our criticism. When we undertook, for the first time in the world, this serious study of Maritain's "*New Christianity*" we were fully aware of the difficulties and risks, not only because of the indisputable competence of its author, but also because of the support that his opinions usually deserve among Thomists, as well as because of the complacency that this type of thought usually arouses in the contemporary mentality, so sick and confused.

But what interests us now, what we would like to see, is that the inaccuracy of our criticism is shown to us.

In the meantime, it will not be idle to notice that it is only a small favor done to the indisputable philosophical value of Maritain to pretend to reduce his error to a simple practical fault.

Maritain is too much of a philosopher to take vital attitudes and can there be anything more vital than his poli tical attitude in front of contemporary facts? which can be separated from his condition of philosopher.

Willing to excuse him, we would put forward this other argument: Maritain's initial aim, which was of a very apostolic character, nobly rooted in him and tending to bring modern man closer to the Church, an objective that was very risky in itself, was lowered by the ardor of the present confused struggles, degenerating into more and more compromising formulas which, although condemnable under a rigorous theological analysis, could be benignly interpreted. We confess that this hypothesis pleases us. But it escapes our purpose; in fact, we have not tried to explain the personal case of Maritain but to examine under the light of the Catholic doctrine his famous theory of the "*New Christianity*" which also goes into the world producing confusion and ruin.

Jules Meinvielle

**SECOND LETTER OF R.P. GARRIGOU-LAGRANGE, O. P**.

When Father Garrigou-Lagrange, upon receiving my previous letter, attached to the preceding articles, knew that his first letter had been published, he hastened to send a second one, dated September 28, 1946, in which he tried to soften some of the expressions of the previous one, and principally, he wished to show that Maritain's path, followed to the end, was going to conclude not precisely with Lamennais of *L'Avenir*, if not with Montalembert, in his 1863 speech, in Malines. Here is the text of this letter:

Rome Angelico, Salita del Grillo, September 28, 1946.

Mr. Abbot.

Reading what you wrote to me on September 16, I am surprised to see that you published the letter by which I acknowledged receipt of your work. It was not intended for publication. But at least it showed that I do not believe that M. Maritain has fallen into the serious error which is at the bottom of Lamennais' thought and which was manifested more and more until his death. Since you have published my letter, I will add the following clarifications.

I lack the time to read in full or to reread the last books of M. Maritain published since 1936, and to examine closely all that you say about them in your work. I have already told you that since 1936 I have not been able to follow M. Maritain on the path he has taken. This path seems to me to lead, if one were to follow it to the end, not precisely to the position taken by Lamennais at the time of his campaign in *L'Avenir* in 1831, but rather to the position taken later by Montalembert in his *Discourse of Malines* in 1863, with the difference that since then the general mentality has declined a great deal and the best people are feeling the effects.

In 1831 Lamennais in fact already had in him, as you recognize, the germ of a very serious error[[4]](#footnote-5) which led him to err on the very end of the Church and to substitute little by little for eternal life the temporal happiness of peoples freed from all oppression. Montalembert never had in him the germ of such an error. Cardinal Gibbons wrote of him: "To the Church he gave the best of his strength. The statue of St. Peter which dominates his study indicates well what is the idea which directs his studies. He wants the Church to be strong, free, and respected. He may have made mistakes in the choice of means; there can be no doubt about the purity of his intentions. (Letter to Fr. Lecanuet, October 18, 1902, *Correspondent*, November 10, 1902, p. 415).

Montalembert submitted very sincerely to the condemnation of 1832 *(Mirari Vos*), following an admirable letter from Fr. Lacordaire, who said in October 1833:

"Conscience, which is everything in the ordinary course of life, is nothing when it is in opposition to authority. The greatest crimes have been committed with a distorted conscience. When yours would be without stain, in this matter, you should not listen to it, but rather to the voice of the Church, which has already risen, and which will rise later, with an empire that will bring down all pride".

Montalembert really submitted, but the *Malines Discourses of* 1863 show that in correcting his first way of seeing, he retained something of it. On this subject, it is necessary to reread the Encyclical *Quanta Cura* of Pius IX published on December 8, 1864. I maintain absolutely everything I wrote on this point in *De Revelatione*, vol. II, p. 422. This text remains the same in the 4è edition of 1945. It is necessary to read also in the D.T.C. the conclusion of the article "Liberalism" written by M. C. Cons tantin, and to reread especially the Encyclicals not only of Pius IX, but of Leo XIII, Pius X, Pius XI, Pius XII, who have grace of state to give light.

You quote them extensively, but I agree that *since Montalembert the descent has been accentuated and Maritain could thus have been dragged* without taking care to become the echo of criticizable ideas and methods that you quote in your book, p. 180-182, and that are very far from his first books, especially in the article that I was unaware of that appeared in the Buenos Ayres newspaper "*El Pueblo*", in 1945, May 13; but the previous works require that these criticizable passages be interpreted with care.

These problems are very difficult. Some are concerned above all with the demands of charity; others with those of truth. True charity demands that one be very attentive to both; they are related. The two ten dances have their dangers if they are separated. We must not forget what Ollé-Laprune wrote on this subject in *La Vitalité Chrétienne* 1901, p. 41-45:

"Some know how to limit themselves to the possible in the given state of things, others have as their motto: "all or nothing"... However, what is called "Liberalism" has in itself a venom that corrupts it... To make a doctrine out of the liberal attitude, out of the liberal system, is very difficult. Why? Because one risks transforming into absolute rules the necessities of the moment..*. The temptation here is delicate for the beautiful souls*! It is not to be feared that they will ever become indifferent themselves to the true and the false, but they risk *not knowing enough, not daring to arm themselves enough with precautions against error..*. Then, through their imprudence, this idea will be established in people's minds, that in a society error as such has rights, that *freedom as such is always inviolable*. From there to *make of a disturbed and transitory social state the ideal of any society...* it is not far. From there the *disposition to judge that all can be supported*, and that the one who says: I do not believe, I cannot believe, is more than half excused". (We have reported this text in full, in the *De Revelatione*, vol. II, p. 452).

It is the "*libertas perditionis*" of which the Encyclical *Quanta Cura* speaks.

Only the saints know how to respond fully to the demands of truth and charity, by the firmness and elevation of their faith and by the ardor of their charity, which is at the same time a zeal for the glory of God and the salvation of souls.

Donoso Cortés, who was a friend of both Louis Veuillot and Montalembert, tended to this. It would be appropriate, I think, to republish his admirable report entitled "*On the generating principle of the most serious errors of our days*" (letter of 30 pages addressed in 1852 to Cardinal Fornari to be presented to Pius IX) and to follow it with extracts from his *Discourse on the general state of Europe in 1850*.

A historical note on the author would show that he admirably foresaw what has happened in the last century, when he said knows:

**"When people have abandoned Christian and Catholic principles in their legislation, they descend to liberalism, which does not conclude anything, which is not enough to act; then when it is necessary to act, if they do not want to go back to Christian principles, they descend to radicalism in negation, then to socialism, then to materialistic and atheistic communism".**

He foresaw that the latter would develop tremendously in Russia, and that to resist it there is only one force, that of the Catholic faith. Spain in 1936 stopped the descent. It will be answered: "it is not enough to describe the descent, it is necessary to go up again", but it is also necessary to stop or to apply the brake while there is still time, otherwise, with the divorce and the atheist school, what will become of the following generations?

All these pages are to be meditated. Thirty years ago we didn't dare to quote them for fear of being called a **prophet of doom**, now we see that they have been realized. There is an acceleration of the descent like that of the fall of the bodies; it began with Protestantism. The enemies of the Church know this well.

As Le Play said, "**material progress, which facilitates pleasure and the spread of error, is accompanied by a great moral and religious decline.** Sunday ceases to be the Lord's day to become a day of unhealthy entertainment for some, and of deadly boredom for others".

It is understandable that Leo XIII wrote: "**the true rights of man arise precisely from his duties towards God**" and Benedict XV said that "the French Revolution was working towards the de-Christianization of society", texts quoted in *De Revelatione*, II, 424-429.

The union between Catholics will not be achieved by the erasure of ideas, but, as Ollé-Laprune said, by going to the top of our thoughts, to the connection of the demands of truth and those of charity.

That, dear Father, is what I wanted to add. Let us pray in this sense. Believe me to be your most religious devotee. My best wishes to the friends of the Cursos.

en. R. Garrigou-Lagrange

**THIRD LETTER OF R.P. GARRIGOU-LAGRANGE, O. P.**

The second letter could not be published in *Balcón* as Father Garrigou-Lagrange wished, because its reception coincided with the closing of that weekly. I did not answer either, as I should have done, because I did not have time for a thorough reply. Later on I completely forgot about it.

Somehow, both before and now, my opinion was that discussion of the point made in this letter by Father Garrigou-Lagrange would have led us to a new and difficult question, one that was quite removed from the subject. Why, in fact, introduce Montalembert into the scene, if we had rich elements for a direct study of Maritain with Lamennais?

For this reason, only when Father Garrigou-Lagrange, in a third letter, fought against my thesis of the coincidence of Maritain with Lamennais, did the moment appear to me to renew the demonstration of this coincidence, which I had first formulated in my book.

Here is the text of this Third Letter, according to the new copy that Father Garrigou-Lagrange was kind enough to send, because the original being in my possession was lost.

December 26, 1946. Angelico Roma.

(Here is a copy of the December 26 letter that got lost).

Mr. Abbot.

Since you sent me the typewritten sheets which reproduce your last articles on M. J. Maritain, I have examined the five points on which, according to you, his doctrine coincides with that of Lamennais.

However, there are serious differences in these five points.

1° The thesis that M. J. Maritain maintains is that history goes by two simultaneous contrary movements, one of ascent, the other of fall, towards the increase of good and *towards that of evil*. I can't find the precise reference to his books on this point, but I remember reading that.

2° Therefore a similar duality is found for M. Maritain in the developments which took place "under the liberal regime which the French Revolution inaugurated". This period brought to light great errors noted in "*Three Reformers"* (chapter on Rousseau) and in more recent books.

3° Consequently, M. Maritain does not admit that the Church must ally itself with this liberalism where the progress of error is as well as that of truth!

4° I don't see that we can find this proposal in his books either:

"The regime of modern liberties and especially that of publicly professing any religion is *necessary* and completely in *accord* with the spirit of the Gospel.

He starts from *the fact of* the diversity of beliefs within the same temporal city and does not speak of the *necessity of law.* He places himself from the point of view of the contingent and conditioned way in which principles are applied which he holds to be immutable in themselves; and he speaks of the present conditions of the present time.

5° M. Maritain does not admit either the 5è point:

"The type of Christian public-social order that Catholics should consider *as their goal* etc."...

On the contrary, placing himself in a historical situation of fact, it is in relation to it that he tries to identify the type of society that can be effectively proposed today to those who admit this situation, in order to tend towards a *temporal* common good that is actually attainable. (cf. *The Rights of Man and the Natural Law*, pp. 36, 40). This is neither the type of good, nor an *ideal in itself*, but something which it is advisable to be satisfied with *hic et nunc in* order to avoid a greater evil.

There are certainly nuances in the way this last conception is proposed, but it differs from Lamennais' position.

What you say next, Mr. Abbot, in the typewritten sheets, p. 10-12, about the earthly Christianity of Mr. Maritain does not reproduce his thought. He says that

"men belonging to the most different philosophical or religious families can *collaborate* in the common task and for the good of the *earthly community*, provided that they equally accept *the charter or the fundamental data of a society of free men*".

It does not say that they can collaborate with the earthly Christianity of which you speak, or even with Christianity.

Personally, I do not have the same position as Mr. Maritain, but it must be recognized that his position is very different from that of Lamennais and the 5 points which, according to you, characterize it. It is important to say this in order to be fair and equitable.

Donoso Cortés did not have Montalembert's position, but he did expose it; it is my duty to do as he did in order to determine the exact meaning of the letter that I wrote to you to acknowledge receipt of your work. This letter was not intended for publicity, and as the comments with which you accompanied it accentuated what distinguishes my position from that of M. Maritain, I beg you to insert the present note in your Revue.

I have no illusions about the earthly Christianity of the Revolution and of Masonry, but this is a much worse position than the radical error of Lamennais, which, you admit, is not in M. Maritain's.

Please accept, Mr. Abbot, my greetings with the strong desire to find in these difficult times the means to reconcile the demands of truth with those of charity.

en. Reg Garrigou-Lagrange O. P.

**REPLY OF MR. MEINVIELLE TO THE THIRD LETTER**

On January 31 I sent by airmail the answer to the third letter of Father Garrigou-Lagrange, in the following terms

Buenos Aires, January 31, 1947.

To the Very Reverend Father Garrigou-Lagrange, O. P.

Very Reverend Father,

I received your letter of December 26. First of all I must tell you that, to my great regret, your letter was lost. I had put it on my work table while I was preparing the reply; it will have fallen, no doubt, and the maid, who has only been here a few days, will have put it in the fire. As you expressed a desire to have it published, I beg you to send me another copy. In any case, it will only be in April that it will be able to find a place in a new magazine that we will launch to the public. *Balcón,* where your first letter appeared, has not existed since October, for reasons of economy.

I must let you know that if I could have imagined that the publication of your first letter would be unpleasant for you, I would not have done it without consulting you first. As you expressed your opinion on a book that had already been published, I thought that its publication could not cause any difficulties.

Your letter of September 28 arrived just as *Balcón* ceased to exist. I didn't answer it because I was very busy at the time, and then I forgot about it completely.

On the other hand, if the case of Maritain resembles that of Lamennais or that of Montalembert, it is, it seems to me, only a very secondary question. It is clear that, *prima facie,* both the condition of philosopher and Maritain's intention to find a formula for conciliation between the Church and the modern world bring him closer to Lamennais than to Montalembert, but in any case I believe that the coincidence or non-coincidence of Maritain with Lamennais of *L'Avenir* must be studied and resolved according to the writings of the one and of the other.

This is what I did in my book, and I regret that you could not read it, because you would have found there the proofs of the coincidence between the five points that I only indicated in the typed articles that I sent you. You would have found there, on page 23, for example, Maritain's coincidence with Lamennais in relation to the necessarily progressive development of history, as well as what relates to the "ambivalence of the history of Mari tain" to which you allude.

I will take the liberty of answering your letter of December 26 in particular, although I regret having to do so from memory since, as I told you, this letter has been lost.

In an article in *Balcón* of August 9, I reduced to five the coincidences between Lamennais and Maritain.

1° The necessarily progressive historical development.

2° That consequently the regime of the Liberalism that the French Revolution inaugurated comprises a progress by rap port to the regime of the Middle Ages.

3° That, consequently, the Church must ally itself with Liberalism.

4° That the regime of modern liberties and in particular the freedom to publicly profess any religion is necessary and in accordance with the spirit of the Gospel.

5° That the type of Christian public-social order that Catholics should propose is a city where Catholics, Protestants, agnostics and atheists can live fraternally, without this city, as such, having to declare itself Catholic.

To all this you say that there are serious differences between Lamennais and Maritain with regard to these five points and, beginning with the first, you say you remember that Maritain does not admit the necessarily progressive character of modern society, except that he speaks of a simultaneous double progress, one in the good or of ascent, the other in the bad, or of fall.

1er Point. *Necessarily progressive character of the modern society.*

In relation to this I say:

1. That Maritain's thought coincides almost to the letter with that of Lamennais.
2. that the duality of history taught by Maritain, far from contradicting the necessarily progressive character of modern societies, was invented to justify it.
3. Coincidence between Maritain and Lamennais.

In his article of June 28, 1831, entitled "*On the Future of Society,*" Lamennais says that :

"This movement itself, in which all the peoples of Christendom participate more or less... it comes from above, it starts from God, who willed that Society should advance perpetually towards a term which it cannot reach on earth, but which it must always approach; and the doctrines of error which have in some degree distorted its direction, have rather dragged it along than helped it, and even they would have stopped it completely, if it were possible that nothing could ever stop it." Consequently Lamennais admits, based on providential action, the necessarily progressive character of modern societies, in spite of the deviations and misguidance that accompany it.

Maritain in "*The Rights of Man*" p. 48, writes:

"We can still notice with the same scholar that whatever their religious belief or unbelief, the men who admit and those who deny the *forward march of Humanity*, of which we have just spoken, thus take position on what is practically decisive from the point of view of the life of human societies. With regard to the kingdom of God and eternal life, it is the acceptance or rejection of religious dogma that makes the essential difference between minds. With regard to temporal life and the earthly city, it is the acceptance or rejection of the historical vocation of Humanity."

And on page 46 he had written:

"Such is the idea of progress which must in my opinion replace both the illusory notion of necessary progress conceived in the manner of Condorcet, and that negation or aversion to progress which prevails today among those who despair of man and freedom, and which is itself a principle of historical suicide."

In "*Christianity and Democracy"*, p. 53 he says:

that "human history does not turn in a circle, but is oriented towards a term and progresses in a direction. Progress is not automatic and necessary, it is threatened and thwarted... it tends to move the structures of consciousness and the structures of human life to better states, and this throughout history until the advent of the kingdom of God and the land of the resurrected which is beyond history."

"Whether you believe in this advent or not, it is to him that you turn if you believe in the forward march of humanity.

"And what is acquired in any case for the profane conscience if it does not turn to barbarism, is the faith in the forward march of humanity".

So that in the Maritainian thought the human history progresses in a direction and if its progress is not automatic nor necessary since it can be thwarted momentarily, it is necessary to believe if one does not want to turn towards the barbarism, in the **forward march of the humanity**, because not to believe in it involves a historical suicide.

For his part, Lamennais spoke of the incalculable evils that result from the struggle, with a vain and fatal obstinacy, against the invincible power that pushes forward the human race (From "*The Future of Society*").

1. The duality of progress.

You notice, Reverend Father, that Maritain speaks of a duality of progress which would be simultaneously of as cension in the line of good and of fall in that of evil. I would not dare to affirm that this is a faithful statement of Maritain's thought expressed in *Religion and Culture,* p. 31 and following, *On the Temporal Regime*, p. 98 and following, *Integral Humanism*, p. 118, but it is certain that Maritain under the name of "ambivalence of history" speaks of a duality of historical progress.

In "*On the Temporal Regime*", p. 98, he writes:

"To denounce a fundamental spiritual deviation in a period of culture is not to condemn that historical period. One does not condemn history. It would be as unwise for a Christian to condemn modern times as it would be for rationalists (who are not above doing so) to condemn the Middle Ages. An erroneous spiritual principle bears unavoidable fruits: it is necessary to detect this principle, to admit these losses. At the same time there is a human development, a growth of history, there are, joined to certain evils, human acquisitions which have a value as sacred since they occur in dependence of the providential government, it is necessary to recognize these gains".

Maritain uses this duality of history precisely to establish the necessarily progressive character of human society. Because for a true Christian there is only one true progress, *simpliciter* we would say, when human things conform to the Holy Church and, as it is quite clear that with the Reformation, the French Revolution and Communism, modern societies are moving away from the Church, the Christian should affirm the **regressive** character of these societies.

To avoid such a categorical affirmation, Maritain invokes the law of "ambivalence of the history" and he maintains that the modern civi lization develops according to the providential designs of the Master of the history, and although

"Satan may at times hold the pen, so it is cowardice not to see and call by name the evil that is done forever; but it is foolishness not to understand also that among all the deformations, the line of being continues, the divine text is still readable to the angels, some great or small good has been won (however small it may be what does it matter, God has willed it)." (*Religion and Culture* p. 33).

Consequently, to affirm the necessarily progressive character of the modern societies in spite of their distance from God and the Church, Maritain has recourse to the providential designs of God who makes the people prosper in spite of the ma lice of the man.

Thus, the duality of history far from contradicting, justifies the progressivism that I attributed to Maritain and in which Maritain agrees with Lamennais who affirms this same duality of history according to the providential designs of God, in his article of *L'Avenir* of October 16, 1830 and in particular in that of June 20, 1831*, De l'Avenir de la Société* where he writes (p. 463):

"And let no one object to the anti-Christian character which modern revolutions have manifested in several countries. The proof that this character is foreign to what they have of fundamental and lasting value is that, wherever they retain it, they fail after a few moments of despotism and anarchy. They are only strengthened where Catholics take hold of them and bring out true freedom.

And at the beginning of the article he has recourse to the infinite Wisdom of Providence which,

"without altering the nature of free people, has its laws which lead the moral world also, according to a harmonious and regular order of development, to its particular ends and to the general end of Creation.

2è point. *That, consequently, the regime of Liberalism which inaugurated the French Revolution comprises a progress compared to the regime of the Middle Ages*.

This point is only the clear consequence of the previous one, because under the providential designs of the *Master of history*, the modern societies include an advance on the society of the Middle Ages, in spite of their misguidance or their antichristian character.

But at the same time, the progressive character of human society is the foundation, both in Lamennais and in Mari tain of all his construction of the new Christian social order or the new Christianity. Because this is Lamennais' preoccupation, to find the formula of conciliation between the immutable Church and modern societies. That is why he wrote in his article of June 30, 1831, entitled: *Ce que sera le Catholicisme dans la société nouvelle* :

"The character of the true as well as the just is to be essentially invariable: religion, the perfect law of justice and truth, is therefore *immutable* by its essence. It cannot change any more than the nature of the beings whose relations it expresses. But, while remaining always immutably the same, it is also of its essence to take on successively, either in the intelligence of man, or in the external society, various forms, as both develop under its influence...

"Thus the Church, without the principle and the substance of its institutions really varying, was produced, in its relations with public society, in the time of Charlemagne and his successors, in forms different from those appropriate to its beginnings and to the centuries of persecution. In a word, the human spirit, as it develops, penetrates more and more into the infinite depths of divine truths, which do not change; and human society, by a similar progress, tends to become more and more spiritualized, or to draw closer and closer to the Church, which itself modifies its external forms, its modes of relation with society according to this progress." As we can see, Lamennais, teaches here that: if it is true that the Church is *immutable*, as society is *mutable* and *progressive*, the relationship between the Church and Public Society must also be mutable and progressive.

We see here that this thesis of the progressive movement of human society was elaborated to serve as a foundation for the thesis of "*a new Christianity*". Lamennais expresses this point very clearly and peremptorily in an article of June 20, 1831, "*L'Avenir de la Société*", where, based on the immense development in spirit and freedom of modern peoples, he rejects the relationship of Church and State, based on the real paternity or concord, of the priesthood and empire of the Middle Ages, and replaces it with "a new social order, founded on an immense development of freedom". It is quite clear that this provision required by the maturity of the modern peoples is superior to that other one which was adapted to the childhood of the peoples.

Maritain presents the problem and the solution in the same way.

"Must *a new Christianity,"* he asks, "in the conditions of the historical age we are entering, while in carning the same (analogical) principles, be conceived according to a type essentially, (specifically) distinct from that of the medieval world? We answer this question in the affirmative. We believe that a new world age will allow the principles of any vitally Christian civilization to be realized in a new concrete *analogy.* (*Integral Humanism*, p. 151).

Maritain rejects as outdated the medieval regime of Church-State relations, calling it "the *myth of force in the service of God*", and argues that it must be replaced by another essentially different one adapted to the maturity of the age and the progress of modern peoples, which he calls "the myth of the realization of liberty" (see: *On the Regime,* p. 123 and *Integral Humanism*, p. 156 ff.)

The fundamental problem of the relationship of the unchanging Church with the changing and progressive Society, Lamennais and Ma ritain solve it on the basis *that the ecclesiastical public law* which maintains that in the Christian society the Church alone deserves protection and that the other cults can, at most, be tolerated to avoid greater evils without being able to invoke any right, is a purely historical truth which was good for the Middle Ages, when the peoples were still in their infancy, but that, in the end, the Church was the only one to be protected, can be tolerated in order to avoid greater evils without being able to invoke any rights, is a purely historical truth that was good for the Middle Ages, when the peoples were still in their infancy, but that, in no way, can be maintained now that the peoples have acquired new rights through awareness and have progressed in freedom. (*Integral Humanism* p. 287, 22, 166, 189, 245, 256 and *The Rights of Man* p. 114).

It is therefore an error, and let me make this clear to you, Reverend Father, to interpret the thought of Lamennais or Maritain as if they were accepting a lesser condition of the Church in society "as something to be content with today in order to avoid a greater evil. No, my Reverend Father, Maritain and Lamennais see themselves forced to admit this condition as a better state since it responds to a better and more progressive condition of human society.

It is true that Maritain invokes as a starting point for this construction of the new Christianity, the present division of religious beliefs (*Du régime* p. 75; *Humanisme intégral* p. 179) but Lamennais does the same thing (ar ticles of October 18 and 30, 1830); it is also certain that Maritain insinuates that the unity of beliefs will be realized later (Humanisme intégral p. 259-260). (*Humanisme intégral* p. 259-260) Lamennais also assured it (October 13 and November 9, 1830); but both of them consider definitively completed and well completed the Christian State as taught by Catholic theology in the treatise "*De Ecclesia*" and as required by the Bull "*Unam Sanctam*" of Boniface VIII and "*Immortale Dei"* of Leo XIII.

The vitally Christian society that both advocate (Maritain: *Integral Humanism,* p. 179 and 181; Lamennais, June 30, 1831) is not the Christian society of the papal documents and that St. Thomas expounds in chapters xiv and xv of "*De Regimine Principum*", because this one has as its fundamental law the public recognition of the rights of God and the Church, and the other, on the contrary, is "a Christian city within which the unbelievers live like the faithful and participate in a common temporal good" (Integral Humanism, p. 179). (*Integral Humanism*, p. 179); a city, "assuring on the basis of equal rights, the proper liberties of the various religious families institutionally recognized"; (*The Rights of Man*, p. 42), a city, in which the Catholic cult would not find itself in "a privileged juridical situation, but in an equal Christian right, in an equal right inspired by its own spirit and in an equal Christian fairness that it would find a particularly appropriate assistance to its work." (*The Rights of Man*, p. 43).

We see here very clearly that **the new Christianity, essentially new** and, consequently, as demanded by a society that has reached the maturity of Maritain and Lamennais, is **linked to the necessary progress of modern societies**. This is why Maritain maintains that

"to immobilize in a univocal form the ideal of a culture worthy of determining our actions would be to go against God himself, and to fight against the supreme government of history." (*Problemas espirituales y temporales de una nueva Cristiandad*, p. 114).

Maritain claims to impose an essentially new way of conceiving Catholic public life because the Reformation, the French Revolution, Liberalism and Communism have already occurred.

So theologians who accept the traditional plan of ecclesiastical public law are going "against God himself and fighting against the supreme government of history". Those who support the actuality of *Unam Sanctam*, *Immortale Dei* and *Quas Primas* would also be against God.

What must be pointed out against Maritain and Lamennais is that, even if it were true, this thesis that modern misguidance contains benefits and acquisitions in the providential plan and that tomorrow we will have a more beautiful Christianity than the medieval one, we will have it if the ecclesiastical public law is put into force and in any case, if it is renounced in order to form a society of juridical equality for all beliefs.

What is wrong with Maritain and Lamennais is the conclusion they claim to draw, that an essentially different mode of Church-State relations must be imposed, a mode they call the "Myth of the Realization of Freedom".

In relation to this, we should not forget the categorical expressions of Pius X in his letter of condemnation of the *Sillon* when he wrote:

"Christian civilization does not have to be invented, it has existed and it exists, it is only a question of establishing and restoring it on its natural and divine foundations against the unceasingly renewed attacks of this unhealthy utopia of revolt and impiety; it is not necessary to get rid of the past but rather to revive the organisms broken by the Revolution and to adapt them, with the same spirit of which they were animated, to the new environment created by the material evolution of the contemporary society.

3è point. *The Church must ally itself with Liberalism.*

This is the 3è point of the coincidences pointed out by me between Lamennais and Maritain. To this you reply, Reverend Father, that for Maritain the alliance must be with the "progress in the good" of liberalism and not with error.

Lamennais did not teach otherwise, which is why in more than one circumstance he distinguishes between the

"persecuting liberalism dominated by the prejudices of the Philosophy of the XVIIIè century" or "the old liberalism animated by the ideas of tyranny" and the true liberalism, enlightened, generous, which rejects all oppression and which strongly wants the real freedom, an equal freedom for all, complete for all. Catholics, united to this loyal liberalism, would be invincible". (*Letter to Father Ventura*, February 12, 1831).

And here he reproaches Father Ventura for

"Expect everything from kings, while we," he says, "expect much from the peoples who, in spite of what they still lack and in spite of the one and fixed direction of which they are deprived, and which, soon perhaps, they will receive from Rome, when liberty will have prevailed, seem to us to be the instruments chosen by God to re-establish His reign on earth.

And in his article in *The Future of Society* he distinguishes "true liberty" from the "doctrines of error" which have, in some degree, distorted its direction.

4è point. *That the regime of modern liberties, especially the public freedom of worship, is necessary and in conformity with the spirit of the Gospel.*

You say, Reverend Father, that you do not find this proposal in Maritain. I can answer you that you will not find it in Lamennais either, but it is **required by the logic** of the thought of both, who sees the type of society in which public power grants equal public liberty to all cults and beliefs as more in conformity with human progress, natural law and the Gospel than the type of society in which public power exercises protection for a cult, even if it were true. You must not forget that for Maritain, the progress of human societies, progress in the good and consequently desirable, is carried out by an emancipation of the human person in front of the civil power, from the civil, economic and intellectual point of view. (*The. rights of the man*, p. 44-46).

There is a "dynamic tension between person and society" (ibid. p. 45) in such a way that the affirmation of *rights* in the human person requires a reduction of the demands of society with respect to the human person. Human societies prosper because the human person acquires the awareness of these natural rights, among which is the public freedom to exercise any religion. In fact, on page 103 of "*The Rights of Man*". Maritain writes:

"The awareness of human rights has, in fact, its origin in the conception of man and of natural law established by centuries of Christian philosophy. The first of these rights is that of the human person to walk towards his eternal destiny in the way that his conscience has recognized as the way traced by God. *In relation to God and to truth,* the human person does not have the right to choose just any path, but must choose the true one, as far as it is in his power to know it. But in relation to *the State*, the *temporal community* and *the temporal power*, she is free to choose her religious path, at her own risk; her freedom of conscience is an inviolable natural right."

This inviolable natural right in front of the State, to profess any worship is in agreement with Lamennais who does not admit either what he calls the dogmatic tolerance, although he accepted the civil tolerance.

"And in what way would this freedom hurt, he says, either conscience or honor? On the contrary, it alone assures their rights. For, on the one hand, it allows each person to believe whatever seems true to him and to act according to his beliefs in what does not disturb public order; and consequently, on the other hand, by establishing the most perfect civil tolerance, it does not enclose to any degree dogmatic tolerance, which is only the absence of any belief and even of any opinion. Thus the Catholic does not renounce any point of his doctrine; he preaches it, defends it, and propagates it by reasoning and persuasion, recognizing the same right for the Protestant, the Jew, and any other sect subject to the laws of the country. (*Necessity to unite*, Oct. 30, 1830).

Let us note that in "*On the Regime*" Maritain, like Lamennais, also uses in the same sense the expressions, "Dogmatic tolerance and civil tolerance"; and as Lamennais did not put any other limit to the respect of cons ciences, except that one does not disturb public order, so Maritain, in a note to this natural right of the conscience in front of the State, writes :

"Assuming that this religious way is so aberrant that it leads to acts contrary to natural law and to the security of the state, the state has the right to bring prohibitions and sanctions against these acts, it does not have authority for this on the domain of conscience." (*The Rights*, in note, p. 103).

Therefore, if the human persons have the natural inviolable right in front of the State to profess any cult, it follows that the State does not have the right to prevent the public cult of the false religions; it follows also that it must abstain from making public profession of the Catholic faith because it would suppose in some way a pressure on the natural, inviolable right of the consciences.

Here is, my Reverend Father, **the most authentic liberalism that serves as a basis for the new Christianity of Mari tain**: here is the reason for the hatred of the Maritainism to Spain that makes public profession of the Catholic faith, and here is also why, the Maritainism, inspirer of the *Popular Republican Movement of France,* has pleaded for the introduction of the **secularism** in the new French Constitution.

It is here that we must look for the meaning of this "equal Christian right" of "*Les Droits*", p. 43, in which he wants to see all religions placed on the same level of civil society.

For Maritain, it is the Gospel that is the motor of modern ideas, as he explains at length in the chapter entitled "*l'inspiration évangélique et la conscience profane*" of his book "*Christianisme et Démocratie*", p. 49-64; it is also the Gospel that has awakened that awareness which grants him, among many others, the natural inviolable right vis-à-vis the State, to profess any religion of which he speaks in "*Les Droits*" (p. 103).

5è point. *That the type of Christian social public order that Catholics must propose to themselves is a city where Catholics, Protestants, agnostics, and atheists can live fraternally without the city, as such, having to declare itself Catholic.*

This fifth point is nothing other than the consequence of the previous points taught by Maritain and Lamennais. And this, not only as a **necessity of fact** as you affirm, but as a **necessity of law as well**. Although Maritain, like Lamennais, deplores the present division of beliefs and considers it an evil, **he nevertheless maintains that a society which respects the rights of conscience is better and more Christian than one which respects the rights of truth**; the reason for this is that such a society entails a greater progress required by the inspiration of the Gospel. Therefore, in law, a society like the modern one, although the religious division is to be deplored, is preferable to a society without religious division, although it has less freedom because of the intervention of the public power which restricts freedom, as was the medieval society. The United States and France are preferable in law and in fact to Spain, which declares itself openly Catholic.

**The typical error of Maritain, my Reverend Father, as was that of Lamennais and of Catholic liberalism, is not to estimate at its true value the need for the State to place itself at the service of the Church and for the ends of the Church. I accept that this must be done with care, taking into account the malice of the times, but to delude oneself with a society that walks in the path of virtue, subordinated to the supernatural good, without the State providing this good, terrible illusion!**

Not only because without public power this good cannot be achieved, but because public power can never be neutral. **If, by its legislation, it does not provide a Catholic way of life, it will provide another anti-Catholic one**.

This is what I wanted to tell you, Reverend Father. The Lamennais of *L'Avenir* does not teach anything essentially different from what Maritain teaches in a series of books in which these errors are explained more and more, since 1930. I must tell you that, despite all the trouble you have taken, you have failed to point out this essential difference. I understand that my thesis may cause surprise, but as long as this essential difference is not pointed out, this thesis remains standing.

My book, Reverend Father, is a **challenge to** Maritain and his friends to show this essential difference.

Up to now, when one has claimed to point out some difference, one has had to exaggerate Lamennais' errors in order to diminish those of Maritain; but if one reads, with a clear head, all of Lamennais' *L'Avenir* and all of Maritain's refuted works, one will be astonished at the coincidences. Let us also read the speeches and writings of Marc Sangnier and we will see that he has said nothing more serious than what M. Maritain has said. And yet the letter of condemnation of the *Sillon* is there.

I understand that the consequence of this is decisive: **if Lamennais and Marc Sangnier, who taught nothing more serious than what Maritain teaches, were condemned, the doctrines of the latter must also be condemned by every faithful Christian.**

My Reverend Father, let me ask you to examine this question as a theologian concerned with Catholic truth, who leaves aside all considerations of affection for persons. Because here is at stake the doctrine of public ecclesiastical law which you defend so firmly in "*De revelatione*" when you affirm the obligation of the State to publicly profess the Catholic truth,

Receive, my Reverend Father, the expression of my affectionate devotion in Christ.

Jules Meinvielle

**FOURTH LETTER OF R.P. GARRIGOU-LAGRANGE, O. P.**

In response to my letter, Father Garrigou-Lagrange very kindly sent the copy of the letter that had been lost and added the following:

February 15, 1947,

I have read carefully, Mr. Abbot, what you have written to me again. I maintain all that I wrote against Liberalism in the *De Revelatione* that I have just republished: "On the duty of civil authority to receive divine Revelation sufficiently proposed, and how it should fulfill this duty". The reading of the admirable Report of Donoso Cortés on "the generating principle of the errors of our days", has only confirmed my way of seeing.

The position taken by Montalembert in his 1863 *Malines Discourses cannot be* accepted. The Encyclical *Quanta Cura* of December 8, 1864, makes this clear. In the *Dictionary of Catholic Theology*, the article "*Liberalism*", especially col. 585-591, makes this clear. On this point we agree, as on the condemnation of the *Sillon*.

But there is a difference, however, between the position taken by Montalembert in 1863 and that of Lamennais in 1831. In the latter, naturalism was beginning to permeate the entire thought of the man who was to write *Words of a Believer.* Montalembert submitted to the condemnation of 1832 and he maintained his submission in 1863, without seeing, however, all that the doctrine of the Church demanded, which was affirmed again in the encyclical *Quanta Cura* in 1864.

**REPLY OF MR. MEINVIELLE TO THE FOURTH LETTER**

In Buenos Ayres, March 1, 1947.

To Father Réginald Garrigou-Lagrange.

I received your letter of 15 February last, in which you transcribed a copy of your letter of 26 December. I have read both carefully and I have nothing more to add to my reply of January 31, except the examination of a wise step of your letter of December 26, which I had neglected and which says:

"What you say next, Mr. Abbot, in the typewritten sheets, pp. 10-12, about the 'earthly Christianity' of Mr. Maritain, does not reproduce his thought. He says that

"men belonging to the most different philosophical or religious families can collaborate in the common task and for the good of the earthly community, provided that they equally accept the charter or the fundamental data of a society of free men".

It does not say that they can collaborate with the earthly Christianity you speak of, or even with Christianity."

You will allow me to answer you with the following points:

1° Maritain's intention, to which you refer, involves a "universal common faith" on the "fundamental data" of society that will produce a society more anti-Christian than that imagined by Lamennais.

2° This city, in Maritain's exposition, is also identified with his "earthly Christianity".

3° It is also identified with the "*New Christianity*" that he proposes in his "*Integral Humanism*". With as much accuracy as is permitted within the limits of a letter, I will demonstrate each of these three points.

1° *The intention of Maritain to which you refer involves a "universal common faith" on the fundamental data of society which will produce a society more anti-Christian than that imagined by Lamennais.*

We must, first of all, recognize that Maritain's intention is directed to solve a very real problem that modern societies present. These societies, deeply divided by different religious and philosophical beliefs, claim some "*political unity*".

But, what political unity can we give them? What community of life?

In order to better see the solution proposed by Maritain, let us first see the data and the solution of Lamennais. Lamennais explores this problem in acute depth in the October 30, 1830 article in *L'Avenir*, in which he writes, among other things:

"Imagine a house inhabited, on its different floors, by a Jew, a Moslem, a Protestant, a Catholic; certainly their beliefs and the duties which result from them are too opposed for there to be a real society between them. But whether they fear that madmen will come and set fire to this house whose roof covers them all, or, at each triumph of a different party, slit their throats successively, or persecute them, as Jews, as Catholics, the common danger will unite them, and, if they are not themselves blinded by a ferocious fanaticism, they will not hesitate to associate for their mutual defense, an association which will create between them relations of benevolence, which will make purely doctrinal discussions on the points which divide them easier, calmer, and more effective. In any case, they will have lived, and lived in peace.

The real problem proposed by the political convivence of men who belong to different philosophical or religious families, is solved by Lamennais with a "covenant" which, "does not constitute a true society" (ibid), but which leaves to each and everyone, "real liberty, an equal liberty for all, entire for all".

Speaking rigorously, there would not be a common human good to unite men who differ so radically on the end and conception of human life.

How can those who differ intellectually and effectively on the common human end conspire toward a common human end?

Lamennais' confession that there is no "real society", "real society" but a "al liance", let's say a simple coexistence, or mechanical juxtaposition, is, by this, very profound.

We are well aware that the Holy Church does not accept, however, as a matter of right, this solution proposed by Lamennais, and she demands that, even in this case of such opposed philosophical and religious beliefs, political society, as such, has the obligation to profess itself as Catholic, even though it "accepts, in practice, the existence of false cults in the State. (*Immortale Dei*).

Let us see now, what is the solution proposed by Maritain. Starting from the fact :

"that the political society has differentiated more perfectly its own sphere and its temporal object and gathers, in fact, in its temporal common good men belonging to different religious families" (*The rights*, p. 41), he looks for "an inspiration and a common basic faith", a "philosophy", a "universal common faith", in which, "men belonging to the most different philosophical or religious beliefs, will be able and will have to cooperate in the common task, for the joint welfare of the community, founding its agreement on the basic principles of a society of free men". (*El Pueblo*, Sunday, May 13, 1945).

Faced with this solution, the reader has the right to ask: what are the basic principles that make the agreement of materialists, idealists, agnostics, Christians and Jews, Muslims and Buddhists?

Maritain replies:

"Thus it happens that men who possess very different and even opposite religious or metaphysical views - materialists, idealists, agnostics, Christians and Jews, Muslims and Buddhists - can agree, not by virtue of an identity of doctrine, but by the analogous similarity of practical principles, bearing on the same practical conclusions, and can compare the same practical democratic philosophy, if they feel a similar reverence, for truth and intelligence, human dignity, freedom, brotherly love and the absolute value of the absolute good".

Who would be excluded from this society of free men?

Maritain replies:

"If we want to consider the question in depth, and we do not fear at the words, we should point out here that, where there is faith (human or divine faith), there are also heretics who threaten the unity of the community, be it religious or civil. In a sacred society, the heretic would break the Christian-religious unity. In a secular society of free men, the heretic is the one who corrupts "common democratic beliefs and practices, and the totalitarian is the one who denies liberty - the liberty of one's neighbor - and the dignity of the human person, and the moral power of the law."

"But the democratic community should defend itself from him, whether he is a materialist, an idealist, an agnostic, a Christian or a Jew, a Muslim or a Buddhist, keeping him away from the leadership, by means of the power of a strong and well-informed public opinion, and even bringing him to justice when his activity may endanger the security of the state. But, above all, democracy should defend itself by strengthening everywhere a philosophy of life, intellectual convictions and constructive work; all this would make impossible the influence of such heretics".

But, here, we ask ourselves, what "universal common faith" of cooperation can be established between men, some of whom admit God supernatural, as the end of all human activity, and others, admit no other reality than matter? How can they cooperate in the construction of the same political society (a moral reality whose edification depends on the ends of human life and also and above all on the last end) those who have such different and opposed ends?

Starting from the fact of *the identity* of the human nature, Maritain maintains that, although there is no identity of doctrine, there can be, between the principles and the *different* doctrines, a community

"of proportion, a community of analogy, with respect to the practical end in question, which in itself, while being referred to a superior end, is of a natural order, and which itself, without doubt, is conceived by each one, according to the proper perspectives of each one, but which, in its existential reality, will be extraposed to the conceptions of each one; and which, considered thus, in real existence, will disappoint to a certain extent, while realizing them, the particular conceptions of each one. (*Principles of a Humanist Politics*, p. 159).

"Not only, therefore, which goes without saying, can men of different religious convictions cooperate in establishing a technique, in putting out a fire, in helping a starving or sick person, in preventing an aggression. But still, and this is what interests us here, it is possible, if the community of analogy of which I have just spoken between their principles of action exists, that they cooperate, at least and above all, with regard to the primary goods of existence here on earth, in a constructive action concerning the right life of the temporal city and of earthly civilization and the moral values invested in it". (ibid, p. 159).

This community of analogy, "does not concern itself only with a minimum number of points of doctrine, but extends into the whole series of practical notions and principles of action of each. It is not in equivocation that they come together to cooperate for the good of the human city. It is in the community of analogy between principles, movements and practical paths implied by the common recognition of the law of love, and corresponding to the primary inclinations of human nature". (ibid, p. 167).

Such is Maritain's thought, expressed in his own words and in the text. I do not think it necessary, Father, to demonstrate to you that the temporal city which results from this common and fundamental cooperation of materialists, idealists, agnostics, Christians and Jews, Moslems and Buddhists, is by its nature **destructive of Christian civilization.** You know well that, according to *Immortale Dei*, *Il Fermo proposito*, the *Charter of the Furrow*, Christian civilization arises through the conformation of the public life of the States to the Holy Church. But it is perhaps opportune to recall what I write on this subject in my book *De Lamennais a Maritain*, p. 207.

How can they coincide, I say, in the "practical end", in the "practical work" that must be realized, a Catholic and a materialist? The first will put as the first fundamental principle of the city, "the sovereign authority of God on the social life, of which he is the Creator and the only possible Regulator". (*Why Rome spoke*, p. 200); the second will put the purely material. Both will be able to speak about "freedom", but, for the one, the freedom will be the structu ration of the city according to the divine laws, natural as supernatural; for the other, it will be all that will give effusion to the material instincts of the life...; in a case and in the other, "the practical end", the practical effect, will be completely different.

A "practical end", a "common work" - I maintain with Lallement, whose passage is quoted several times by Maritain against "*L'Action Française*" - to Catholics and atheists, it is the truths of which the Catholics have the deposit which, in fact, will be sacrificed, not being proposed as it should be, that is, as a cornerstone, to spirits of which they should be the first object". (*Why Rome Spoke*, p. 203).

If the Catholic - I continue in my book (ibid. 207) - has as the "practical end" of his life, God loved above all, as the Holy Church demands, his citizen life, the city he will build with his life, will be such that in it, God will be the First Loved and the Church the First Honored;

if the materialist, has as "practical end", the material advantages, his citizen life, *the city that he will build with his life*, will be such that, in it, all the material and carnal will have the first place, and what concerns God, will be hardly *tolerated*.

Although both speak and realize as a "practical end" freedom, equality, fraternity, they will be making two realities so different as one city for the glory of God, and the other for the glory of man.

This city which arises as the effect of an action common to materialists, idealists, communists and Catholics, must be, by its nature of city, necessarily a-Catholic, or, to better say, **anti-Catholic**. Because if the cause that gives it existence is really *common* to materialists and to Catholics, it is because it is also *proper to* the *materialist*, who, for his condition, will have sealed with his materialism, the effect produced.

**This city of Maritain is more antichristian than the one imagined by Lamennais**. Because this one, recognized that the "liberal" city propitiated by him, was deprived of the *true common base*, was not in reality a "real society", a true society". Maritain, by claiming *this common base*, this "universal common faith", must forge a society of anti-Catholic nature, that is, founded on a common anti-Catholic base, or in principles in which the anti-Catholics commune.

*2° This city, in Maritain's exposition, is also identified with his "earthly Christianity".*

You say that Maritain "does not say that they can collaborate in the earthly Christianity of which you speak". Your refusal, so categorical as to be unfounded, surprises me.

Because there is: "*Christianity and Democracy*", where Maritain clearly exposes the existence of "an earthly Christianity of the left" different from the Holy Church and with which must be identified "the revived democracy, which we all desire, and to which men belonging to different religious or philosophical creeds can cooperate... "(*El Pueblo*, May 13, 1945). There he says, on p. 43:

"But what is important for the political life of the world and for the solution of the crisis of civilization is not to claim that Christianity is linked to democracy, and that the Christian faith obliges each faithful to be a democrat; it is to note that democracy is linked to Christianity, and that the democratic thrust has arisen in human history as a temporal manifestation of evangelical inspiration.

The question here is not about Christianity as a religious creed and a way to eternal life, but about Christianity as the leaven of the social and political life of peoples and as the bearer of the temporal hope of men; it is not about Christianity as a treasure of divine truth maintained and propagated by the Church, but about Christianity as a historical energy at work in the world

It is not in the heights of theology, but in the depths of profane consciousness and profane existence that Christianity acts in this way, and sometimes taking heretical forms, or even forms of revolt in which it seems to deny itself, as if the broken pieces of the key to paradise, falling into our life of misery and becoming allied to the metals of the earth, succeeded better than the pure essence of the celestial metal in activating the history of this world.

It was not given to believers who were completely faithful to the Catholic dogma, it was given to rationalists to proclaim the rights of man and citizen in France, to Puritans to strike the last blow against slavery in America, to atheist communists to abolish the absolutism of private profit in Russia".

So, with this manifest declaration of Maritain, there is a "Christianity as ferment of the social and political life, and as bearer of the temporal hope of the men", different from the Christianity as treasure of the divine truth maintained and propagated by the Church", that can take "heretical forms or even forms of revolt", wanting to signal, with this, the "Christian" character of the French Revolution, and of the Communism.

What relationship should this earthly Christianity, different from the Holy Church, have with democracy?

It must ally itself with it and identify with it, given that "the tragedy of modern democracies is that they have not yet succeeded in realizing democracy" (ibid., p. 31), precisely because they have wanted to realize, without this Christianity, "that ideal of common life which is called democracy", "which comes from the evangelical inspiration and cannot subsist without it... (ibid, 33).

Then the "revitalized" democracy that he advocates and in which enter, with a "universal common faith", the men of all the beliefs, is a democracy not only allied, but identified with the earthly Christianity of which he speaks in this book.

*3° This city is identified with the new Christianity of Maritain.*

In "*Messages*" Maritain says:

"Last week I spoke of a new Christianity. I could have spoken, in the same sense, of a new democracy. Because, to who looks at the bottom of things, it appears that in spite of parasitic ideologies and tragic misunderstandings, this name of democracy, is not other thing than the profane name of the ideal of Christianity". (p. 88)

But there is a deeper reason for this identification. In fact, in chapter V of his "*Integral Humanism*", Maritain studies the characteristics of "the historical ideal of a new Christianity", of which the fifth is "the common work" "to be accomplished by the city... for a Christian civilization, which can no longer be naive". (ibid, p. 217).

There, speaking of "the collaboration and participation of non-Christians in the life of a Christianly constituted temporal city" (ibid., p. 220), he says that one should not look for a "*common doctrinal minimum*, between some and others, which would serve as a basis for "a common action".And he adds: "each one commits himself and must commit himself entirely, and give his maximum".

That is to say, that Maritain's "*New Christianity*" arises as an effect of the common practical action of materialists, idealists, agnostics, Christians and Jews, who "have committed themselves entirely and to the utmost", the materialist with his materialism, the idealist with his idealism, the Christian with his Christianity, and the Jew with his Judaism, and the communist with his communism, to the realization of this new Christianity.

So, here, about his "New Christianity", Maritain teaches us exactly the same thing he teaches there about the collaboration of believers and non-believers in his new revitalized democracy.

This is what I wanted to add, Father, to complete my answer to your letter of December 26. The unusual seriousness of Maritain's positions appears more in relief

You, Father, who have fought so strongly against modernism in your books on "Common Sense" and "God", can do no less than use your great knowledge and your great love for the Church to defend the faithful from these **modernist teachings, which destroy the right and true Christian social order**.

In "*Clairvoyance of Rome*", (p. 259), Maritain makes his own these magnificent words of Benedict XV:

**"In the midst of the present upheavals, it is important to tell men once again that the Church is, by virtue of her divine institu tion, the only Ark of salvation for humanity... Therefore, it is more opportune than ever to teach that the liberating truth for individuals, as well as for societies, is the supernatural truth, in all its fullness and purity, without attenuation or diminution, and without compromise, such in a word, as Our Lord Jesus Christ came to bring to the world, such as He has entrusted the custody and the teaching of it to Peter and to the Church.**

It is this, then, that can save societies, regardless of their political forms, and not this naturalistic Christianity that can take "heretical forms or even forms of revolt".

May God grant that M. Maritain returns to the profession of those great "safeguarding" truths that he professed in his "*Primacy of the Spiritual*", in his "*Antimodern*" and in "*Three Reformers*".

Receive, Father, my greetings and my affectionate consideration in Jesus Christ.

Jules Meinvielle

**FIFTH LETTER OF R.P. GARRIGOU-LAGRANGE, O.P.**

Father Garrigou-Lagrange sent a fifth letter in which he expressed the following:

Rome 21 March 1947. Angelico, 1 Salita del Grillo.

Mr. Abbot,

I have received your letter of March 1er 1947. This controversy touches on many very complex problems from the theological, juridical and historical points of view; I do not have enough time to follow it from a distance. Therefore I do not require the publication of the 3è letter that I wrote to you, the one that you had lost and of which I sent you a copy.

What I wanted to do first of all was to let you know that you should not have published, without consulting me, my first letter concerning your book, especially by accentuating my thought by the commentary with which you accompanied it. Moreover, as I have made known to you the fundamental difference which exists for me between the position of Lamennais and that of M. Maritain, I ask you not to use against him, in this polemic, what I have written to you.

Please accept, Mr. Abbot, my greetings with the strong desire to reconcile in these difficult questions the exi gences of truth and those of charity.

en. Réginald Garrigou-Lagrange.

**REPLY OF MR. MEINVIELLE TO THE FIFTH LETTER**

In a new Letter I studied the perils of Maritainism which, under the pretext of a philosophy of culture, altered in theory and in fact the substance of the word "Christian" and consequently of Christianity.

Buenos Aires, April 10, 1947.

To R.P. R. Garrigou-Lagrange, O. P

My dear Father,

I have received your letter of March 21, 1947, and I regret very much that you cannot give this problem the attention it deserves. You rightly say that "this controversy touches on many very complex problems from the theological, juridical and historical points of view". In reality, **"Maritainism" involves a profound and dangerous alteration of Catholic history, law and theology.**

Until the French Revolution, the alteration of Christianity was carried out only by a direct attack, more or less manifest, against the speculative statement of dogmatic and moral truths. Consequently, Christian life, both public and private, was also disturbed.

But with the triumph of the French Revolution, godlessness succeeded in imposing in the heart of Christian Europe an ungodly form of life that is called modern civilization, or simply civilization. Until then slavery and darkness, afterwards freedom and light on the peoples.

What will the Church do? Will she, who by her nature must make contact with the very life of the people, be able to vivify this civilization, sprung from impiety and nourished by it? If she does not, she will have to distance herself from life; and if she does, she will have to ally herself with impiety. But what is this association between light and darkness? or what agreement between Christ and Belial?

Such is the terrible problem that the Church has to face in all Christian peoples, as a consequence of the French Revolution. And it is not necessary to say that the Church cannot ally herself with modern civilization, because it would be blasphemy to affirm that Christ can make a pact with Belial.

Maritain, the former Maritain, wrote his *Antimodern* to demonstrate this and the Church closes the *Syllabus* with the condemnation of this proposition: "The Roman Pontiff can and must reconcile and compromise with progress, liberalism and modern civilization".

But there is no lack of Catholics who, with good intentions and urged on by apostolic necessity to get in touch with the real life of modern peoples, preach this alliance. Lamennais was the first to do this, and his program of *L'Avenir* is nothing but the alliance of the Church with the modern world. Lamennais was not preaching any new doctrine except that he was proposing a new line of action in the Church's relations with the public life of the States. Naturally, this alliance was to lead to an alteration in the life of the Church. For this, the Church's response to Lamennais read his condemnation in *Mirari Vos*.

Lamennais' intention was renewed several times, some in a more or less moderate form, others in an aggressive form. Montalembert was a liberal Catholic, relatively moderate. But he did not deliver himself of the *Syllabus*, nor of *Quanta Cura*. The Sillon movement, at the beginning of the century, offered a much broader program of alliance. It was also condemned by Pius X.

Today, Maritain, with his "*New Christianity*", or his "*Integral Humanism*", or the "*Revitalized Democracy*" or the "*Fraternal City*" proposes the same vast program of alliance as that of Lamennais and Marc Sangnier. The only difference introduced are the terms of the problem. Maritain, a Thomist philosopher, wishing to bring Thomism to life, to concrete existence, builds his program in terms of a "philosophy of culture".

It is here, Father, that we find the **subtle and deceptive**, the terribly subtle and deceptive of Maritainism. Because with the prestige that Thomism has acquired in ecclesiastical circles, with the novelty that the problems of culture have acquired in current intellectual circles, Maritainism presents itself as a solution to the terrible problem that the French Revolution has opened up for the Church. The Maritainism pretends to build **a culture that, without leaving to be *modern*, is at the same time catholic.**

Maritain then does not *directly* reject any dogmatic or moral truth of the Holy Church. Directly, and on a purely speculative level, he accepts them all. But he offers, in exchange, a practical line of conduct of Catholic social action that is *different*, essentially diverse, from that practiced by the Church. First of all, it offers nothing different to be believed but something different to be *practiced*. But this different thing to be practiced, must enclose a conception of the life, also diverse to be professed. Because *velis nolis* man's action depends on what he thinks. Therefore, if it is a *different thing*, if it is *something else*, it introduces a **novelty** in the Sacred Deposit of the Revelation.

Here appears the **gravity** of the attempt of Maritain. Because as theologians teach, **false doctrine** in the style of the Holy Books is to call **other doctrine**; for this reason Saint Paul writes to Timothy: "I recommended you, when leaving for Macedonia, to remain in Ephesus, and to enjoin certain people not to teach another doctrine, *ne aliter docerent* (I Tim. i, 3).

Thus, Maritain, renewing again in this the attempt of Lamennais and Marc Sangnier, introducing *another* Rule of Catholic social conduct, through the necessary connections that the practical has with the speculative and the social with the individual, must propose **another Gospel** than that of Jesus Christ. In other words, **Maritain's philosophy of culture is not Catholic**.

That is why, Father, in Maritainism there is a very serious alteration of the word "Christian". As I have amply demonstrated in my previous letter, "Christian" in his vocabulary is not the one who professes the dogmatic faith of the Church, but rather the one, believer or not, who accepts "the charter or fundamental data of a society of free men" (*El Pueblo*, May 13, 1945). This charter is widely explained in "*The Rights*" and *in "Christianity and Democracy*" and consists of "the recognition and victory of all freedoms, spiritual freedoms, political freedoms, social and labor freedoms" (*The Rights*, 134), among which it is necessary to mention as first and fundamental the civil freedom of worship (ibid. 103).

Thus, the word "Christian" acquires an ideological sense of *affective* resonances completely different from the one that it has in the Holy Church, because it can be applied to "rationalists that proclaimed in France the rights of the man... and to atheistic communists that abolished in Russia the absolutism of the private profit" (*Christianity and Democracy*, p. 44).

The Sillon movement altered in the same way the meaning of the word "Christian" when it "claimed, in fact, to realize "a new moral center" by rallying all the forces that consciously or unconsciously animate the Christian spirit". (*Le Sillon,* February 10, 1907). The Sillonists appealed to all those, they said, "who share our positive faith or not, and who are truly animated by our Christian ideal, and who are the only ones capable of bringing to Democracy a real sense of justice and fraternity". On the other hand, they rejected all those, Catholic or not, who did not understand the repercussion of the Christian ideal in the political and social field. "All other classifications, they added, are artificial and harmful to the Church" (N. Ariès, *Le Sillon*, p.159, Paris, 1910).

Here, in this **alteration of** the word "Christian" you have, Father, the profound reason why Maritainism gets along with materialists, idealists, communists and Jews, but does not get along, in exchange, with Catholics who only accept the plan of Christian civilization of the *Immortale Dei*.

This explains why Maritainism necessarily produces a sect in the Catholic field. The phenomenon is very clear

* in France, where the "suspicious" Catholicism of *Esprit*, *Témoignage chrétien*, *Temps Présent*, and Catholics who hunt for "collaborators" and who have pleaded for the inclusion of **secularism** in the current Constitution, has been created;
* in Argentina, where the Maritainist group, so tiny as to be insignificant, has made an alliance with all the elements of the left, and has caused and sharpened the campaign against respectable priests, religious and bishops, in the columns of ungodly newspapers like *Antinazi*, *Argentina Libre*, *La Vanguardia*. The significant fact that deserves to stand out is that in the recent debate of Religious Education, in the Chamber of Deputies, all the opponents resorted to the Catholic thinker Maritain;
* In Chile, Maritainism has infected the seminaries, the Catholic education circles and the Catholic Action organizations and has produced the "Catholic" party of the left, called "*Falange*", which serves only to weaken the resistance to communism because it invariably supports it before the other parties;
* In Uruguay, Maritainism also infected the Catholic circles and organizations to the point of intriguing the Government to break off relations with Spain;
* In Brazil it produced the same weakening of the catholic forces to the benefit of communism;
* In Costa Rica, a high dignitary of the Church, trained in the reading of Maritain, advances, to the great scandal of the Catholics, a Popular Front policy.
* And the same in other countries.

By this you see, Father, how Maritainism is also a **new Christianity** in its fruits.

And here arises this serious question, which you have insinuated: if Maritainism is so serious, since in terms of culture and life it produces an alteration of Christianity, what should the theologian do, since he has a very serious obligation to defend the integrity of revealed truths?

Perhaps, out of misguided charity or to save the prestige and undoubted merits of a Catholic philosopher, he will let error infest the field of the Church?

I agree with you, Father, that it is necessary to "reconcile in these difficult questions the demands of truth and those of charity".

But **is it not charity that obliges us to use all our energies in defense of the integrity of Christian truth?**

Is it not the apostle who urges us and says: "Preach the word, insisting in season and out of season... for there will come a time when sound doctrine will not be endured" (Il Tim. iv, 1)?

Is it not the same apostle who points out to us the fidelity to **maintain the traditional teachings**, *tenete tradi tiones*, (I Tes. II, 14), as a guarantee against the Antichrist, the son of perdition?

**For this reason, Father, the greatest favor that can and must be done to Mr. Maritain and to the faithful who follow him is not to give him a vain hope that his doctrine will perhaps be acceptable, but on the contrary, to show them, as the truth demands, that it SERIOUSLY ALTERS THE SUBSTANCE OF CATHOLIC LIFE. This, Father, is the only way to reconcile the demands of truth and those of charity.**

I beg you, Father, to forgive me for the ardor I am putting into this matter. But I understand that today there is no greater danger than this for the Holy Church, because - diminished as it is the truth among men - *diminutae sunt veritates a fillis hominum* - the Maritainism that offers itself as a modern expression of a Catholic culture, but which is in reality only a perversion of Christianity, eats away at the very substance of our faith within the Church.

**MARITAINISM IS NOT AN OPINION, MORE OR LESS ACCEPTABLE; IT IS AN ERROR FULLY CONDEMNED IN *MIRARI VOS, QUANTA CURA* AND IN *THE CHARTER OF THE FURROW*.**

Considering the importance of this problem, and in order to satisfy the desire you expressed in your third letter of December 26, 1946, that the letter be published, I have sent this entire exchange of letters to the printer. They will appear with the greatest fidelity and in the strict order of dates. For this reason, I ask you, if you have something to add, to let me know in time.

I have the honor and great pleasure to present to V. R. the most sincere expression of my feelings.

Jules Meinvielle

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NIHIL OBSTAT

José Maria Ponce de Leon, S. J.

Buenos Aires, 1er July 1947

IMPRIMI POTEST

Antonio Rocca Obispo titular of Augusta y Vic. Gen. Buenos Aires, 1er July 1947

1. For the present edition, we have reproduced the original edition (in French) in its bad French (literal but inelegant translation). We should have been able to consult the originals to improve it. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. Read in addition the book of Mgr Lefebvre on the *Dubias* which shows that Vatican II imposed the theses of Maritain, Lamennais, Sangnier. Read carefully the important Preface. Archbishop Lefebvre specifies the serious heresies of Vatican II. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
3. It was then few in number (p. 54) compared to the true Catholics, although it made a lot of noise. Only the weakness of the good. and the lack of Faith. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
4. "This germ was already vitiating all his thought like the germ of a cancer. Gregory XVI understood this in 1832 (*Mirari Vos*) and even more in 1834 (*Singulari Nos*). [↑](#footnote-ref-5)