



- A RESOURCE FOR ONGOING FORMATION -

Part 5: Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation

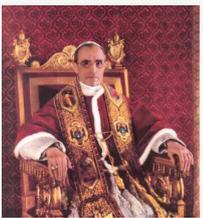
7. Public Life

Secular Franciscans, together with all people of good will, are called to build a more fraternal and evangelical world so that the kingdom of God may be brought about more effectively. Mindful that anyone who 'follows Christ, the perfect man, becomes more a man himself', let them exercise their responsibilities completely in the Christian spirit of service. Rule 14

Let them individually and collectively be in the forefront in promoting justice by the testimony of their human lives and their courageous initiatives. Especially in the field of public life they should make definite choices in harmony with their faith. Rule 15



Pius XI said: Now, in effecting this reform, charity, [love/ἀγάπη]...must always play a leading part. How completely deceived are those rash reformers who, zealous only for commutative justice, proudly disdain the help of charity! Certainly charity cannot take the place of justice unfairly withheld...For justice alone, however faithfully observed,...can never bring about a union of hearts and minds. Yet this union, binding men together, is the main principle of stability in all institutions,...which aim at establishing social peace and promoting mutual aid. [*Quadragesimo Anno* 137]

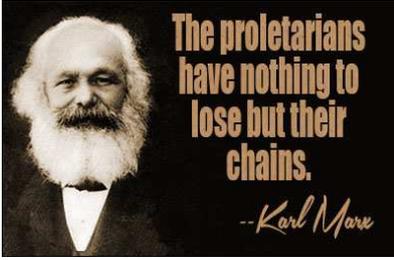


Pius XII said: The faithful, and more precisely the laity, are stationed in the front ranks of the Church, and through them the Church is the living principle of human society. Consequently, they especially must have an ever increasing consciousness, not only of belonging to the Church, but of being the Church.

WE MUST TRY TO PRODUCE A MORALLY BETTER SOCIETY AND WE MUST TRY TO PRODUCE A SOCIETY WHOSE INSTITUTIONS ARE BETTER

1. What are the 'institutions' of society?
2. Why is Christianisation of individuals not enough?
3. What may be the 'Catholic's' greatest social need?
 4. What is person's first obligation?
5. What is the husband's or wife's first obligation?
6. Have you skipped voting for no good reason?

The Second Vatican Council's words are particularly significant: 'The Church regards as worthy of praise and consideration the work of those who, as a service to others, dedicate themselves to the public good of the state and undertake the burdens of this task.' [GS 75] Public life on behalf of the person and society finds its basic standard in the pursuit of the common good, as the good of everyone and as the good of each person taken as a whole, which is guaranteed and offered in a fitting manner to people,...for their free and responsible acceptance...Public on behalf of the person and society finds its continuous line of action in the defence and promotion of justice, understood to be a 'virtue', an undertaking that requires education, as well as a moral 'force' that sustains the obligation to foster the rights and duties of each and everyone, based on the personal dignity of each human being. The spirit of service is a fundamental element in the exercise of political power...The lay faithful given a charge in public life certainly ought to respect the autonomy of earthly realities...At the same time...the lay faithful must bear witness to those human and gospel values that are intimately connected with political activity itself, such as liberty and justice, solidarity,...dedication for the good of all, a simple life-style, and a preferential love for the poor and the least. This demands that the lay faithful always be more animated by a real participation in the life of the Church and enlightened by her social doctrine. [John Paul II *Christifideles Laici* 42]



Scripture—

Mk 5. 1-20

They came to the other side of the lake, to the country of the Gerasenes. And when he had stepped out of the boat, immediately a man out of the tombs with an unclean spirit met him. He lived among the tombs; and no one could restrain him any more, even with a chain; for he had often been restrained with shackles and chains, but the chains he wrenched apart, and the shackles he broke in pieces; and no one had the strength to subdue him. Night and day among the tombs and on the mountains he was always howling and bruising himself with stones. When he saw Jesus from a distance, he ran and bowed down before him; and he shouted at the top of his voice, 'What have you to do with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High? I adjure you by God, do not torment me.' For he had said to him, 'Come out of the man, you unclean spirit.' Then Jesus asked him, 'What is your name?' He replied, 'My name is Legion; for we are many.' He begged him earnestly not to send them out of the country. Now there on the hillside a great herd of swine were feeding; and the unclean spirits begged him, 'Send us into the swine; let us enter them.' So he gave them permission. And the unclean spirits came out and entered the swine; and the herd, numbering about two thousand, rushed down the steep bank into the lake, and were drowned in the lake.

The swineherds ran off and told it in the city and in the country. Then the people came to see what it was that had happened. They came to Jesus and saw the demoniac sitting there, clothed and in his right mind, the very man who had had the legion; and they were afraid. Those who had seen what had happened to the demoniac and to the swine reported it. Then they began to beg Jesus to leave their neighbourhood. As he was getting into the boat, the man who had been possessed by the demons begged that he might be with him. But Jesus refused, and said to him, 'Go home to your friends, and tell how much the Lord has done for you and what mercy he has shown you.' And he went away and began to proclaim in the Decapolis how much Jesus had done for him; and everyone was amazed.