

## EARLY WRITINGS OF JOHN COURTNEY MURRAY

### The Theological Basis for the Church's Social Mission

Murray studied in Rome from 1935 to 1937 and defended his dissertation on April 6, 1937.<sup>1</sup> He began to teach at Woodstock in 1937. [More to be done here]

Little information is available about Murray's activities and studies during his years in Rome. Apart from a course on the history of Bolshevism, his courses at the Gregorian were pretty much run-of-the-mill.<sup>2</sup> His dissertation, focused on a precise topic, ranges widely among contemporary theologians who had written on faith, and it often and approvingly cites several works of M.-D. Chenu and Pierre Rousselot.

One would like to know more about Murray's activities during those years so turbulent for the history of Europe and exciting for the history of the Church and of theology. Absent other information, one must simply rely on information supplied in his early writings to assess his debts to European thought. Some of these are particularly interesting because of the distinctly theological foundations they lay for Catholic involvement in the temporal order. They run parallel to and sometimes seem dependent on a number of remarkable efforts being made by European Catholic thinkers to address the critical challenges posed by economic and political developments in the 1930's. After the First World War had shattered the liberal vision of inevitable progress, the Great Depression appeared to be demonstrating the failure of capitalism; and the totalitarian ideologies of fascism and communism were attracting large numbers of people as alternatives. Pope Pius XI proposed for his motto--"The Peace of Christ in the Reign of Christ"--a variant on Pius X's call "To Restore All Things in Christ." To implement his grand vision of a Catholic "third way"--a reconstituted Christian culture--he proposed an active involvement of the laity through the various associations and activities of "Catholic Action." Murray himself was very interested in Catholic Action and tried to bring its spirit and method to the U.S.

In the midst of this crisis and to realize this vision, several Catholic thinkers elaborated philosophical and theological foundations for an active and redemptive Catholic presence and activity in the world.<sup>3</sup> Jacques Maritain argued for the necessity of an integral humanism within a "new Christendom" formed on the basis of a concrete historical ideal appropriate to modern pluralistic and democratic society. Christopher Dawson was publishing his great works on the relations between religion and culture and on the Christian basis of European culture. Henri de Lubac developed the social aspects of dogma in order to present a vision of Catholicism that overcame the alienated individualism of much theology. Marie-Dominique Chenu argued for the need of a new incarnation of the Church into the culture of the working classes and for a theology that considered the engagement of the Church in a changing world as a theological source. Yves Congar explored

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<sup>1</sup>It has been published as *Matthias Scheeben on Faith: The Doctoral Dissertation of John Courtney Murray*, ed. D. Thomas Hughson (Toronto Studies in Theology, 29; Lewiston: Edwin Mellen Press, 1987).

<sup>2</sup> See *Matthias Scheeben*, 42-43.

<sup>3</sup> See Joseph A. Komonchak, "Returning from Exile: Catholic Theology in the 1930s," in *The Twentieth Century: A Theological Overview*, ed. Gregory Baum (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1999) 35-48.

the social and cultural presuppositions of faith and began to outline Catholic principles of ecumenism and a richer vision of the Church. Pierre Teilhard de Chardin continued to work on a grand vision of Christianity for the world as described by modern science. Bernard Lonergan, who was studying in Rome at the same time as Murray, wrote some youthful essays towards a theology of history.

Although it is not now possible to document how aware Murray was of all these enterprises, it is clear from his earliest writings after he returned to the U.S. that he shared the concern that was common to them all: that the world was in a state of fundamental crisis, that the roots of this crisis were religious and spiritual, that the Church, therefore, had to play a major role in addressing it, and that theology had to serve that role.

### Reconceiving Theology for Lay People

Shortly after Murray returned from Europe, he was asked by his Jesuit Provincial to organize a project designed to reconceive and restructure the teaching of College Religion. He wrote “A Statement of Objectives” for the course which was inaugurated at Georgetown University and at Loyola College, Baltimore, in 1940. Murray wrote the first textbook for the Freshman year and assisted in the preparation of other volumes. The basic structure of the course governed religious instruction at Georgetown into the early 1960's.<sup>4</sup>

In 1939, while engaged in this project, Murray took part in a symposium sponsored by the National Catholic Alumni Federation under the general topic, “Man and Modern Secularism--The Conflict of the Two Cultures Considered Especially in Relation to Education.” A portion of the program was devoted to theology in Catholic colleges and universities, and Murray gave a brief response to the two major talks on the question.<sup>5</sup> He accepted Gerald B. Phelan’s argument that “theology as a science should be introduced into higher Catholic education” and Francis J. Connell’s point “that such a course in theology must be the necessary inspiration and support of an effective

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<sup>4</sup> Some information about Murray’s involvement can be found in two papers by one of the young Jesuits he enlisted for the project, Eugene B. Gallagher, “College Religion is Different,” *Georgetown University Alumni Magazine*, 4/1 (1948) 3-4; idem, “A College Religion Course: Problems,” *JEQ*, (October 1949) 94-98. To locate Murray’s course in the history of religious education at Georgetown, see William C. McFadden, “Catechism at 4 for all the Schools’: Religious Instruction at Georgetown,” in *Georgetown at Two Hundred: Faculty Reflections on the University’s Future*, ed. William C. McFadden (Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 1990) 143-168. For treatment of the discussions Murray’s essays prompted, see Gerald Van Ackeran, “Basic Functions of College Theology” *Jesuit Educational Quarterly*, 17/3 (January 1955) 132-146, and Richard J. Cronin, “The New College Theology,” *Philippine Studies*, 4, no. 1 (1956): 57-73.

<sup>5</sup> John Courtney Murray, “Necessary Adjustments to Overcome Practical Difficulties,” in *Man and Modern Secularism: Essays on the Conflict of the Two Cultures* (New York: National Catholic Alumni Federation, 1940) 152-57. The essays to which he was responding were Gerald B. Phelan, “Theology in the Curriculum of Catholic Colleges and Universities,” and Francis J. Connell, “Theology in Catholic Colleges as an Aid to the Lay Apostolate,” 128-42, 143-51, respectively. For the context, see Philip Gleason, *Contending with Modernity: Catholic Higher Education in the Twentieth Century* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995) 163-66.

program of Catholic action.” Murray maintained, however, that “Catholic theology as it is taught in our seminaries...does not adapt itself to becoming the basis of an effective program of Catholic action.” Catholic action, he wrote, was not “any mere polemic against contemporary error”; it was “action that is co-extensive with the spirit of Christ in the world, action, therefore, that is wholly positive, that has as its supreme purpose *aedificatio Corporis Christi*, the building up of the Body of Christ; therefore in Catholic action that is what we are trying to inspire, vigorous social action, action that is characteristically social.”

The first reason why the seminary course was not adaptable, he went on, is its individualism, its neglect of the collective life of the Church within which a person is justified. The second reason was the different finalities of the two types of courses. In seminaries, “the formal object of theology as a science is the demonstrability of truth from the revealed Word of God, as kept and guarded by the Church.” On the other hand, Murray argued, “the formal object in colleges and universities is the livability of the Word of God as kept and given us by the Church; in other words, ...our courses of theology must be wholly oriented towards life.” Courses for lay people must emphasize “the value of the truth in life:”

That is the finality that they have, and I would suggest the values of Catholic truth that they must emphasize are these: that the Catholic religion is an objective thing, or rather, that the Catholic religion is essentially a theology; in other words, it is a vision of God. It is not an instrument of humanitarianism; it is not even primarily an instrument for the constitution of a social order; it is first and foremost a vision of God, and a vision of God that comes to us in a very definite way, namely, through and in the concrete facts of a history; a history, namely, of a human life, the life of Christ; hence we have in basic Catholicism, two values: first, its objectivity; secondly, that it is historical; and of the ensemble of those two values results a third, that Catholicism is essentially a social thing.<sup>6</sup>

This third value results directly from the Christian doctrine of God: “We see three persons, three distinct individuals, each of which preserves perfectly His own individuality, and yet whose life is One, and that is by definition, a community; and it is precisely from that vision of God as a community that there directly derives the essentially social character of Catholicism, because what God is determines His action in the world.” And the purpose of that action “is not merely the salvation of souls; it is the organisation of society, the formation of a community which is the image upon earth of the divine community in heaven.”

The following year Murray directed an effort to implement this vision at Georgetown University and at Loyola College of Baltimore. Short of finding material at these two institutions on the experiment, we may consult a description of it which Murray composed in 1949.<sup>7</sup> Of particular

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<sup>6</sup> This last claim reminds one of the subtitle of Henri de Lubac’s *Catholicisme: les aspects sociaux du dogme* which had been published in 1938.

<sup>7</sup> John Courtney Murray, “On the Idea of a College Religion Course,” *Jesuit Educational Quarterly*, 12 (October 1949) 79-86. This was one of several papers given at the annual meeting of the Jesuit Educational Association, Philadelphia, April 18, 1949. Another essay is mentioned, “A Statement of Objectives,” (mimeographed, written about 1942), by Gerald Van Ackeran, “Basic Functions of College Theology” *Jesuit Educational Quarterly*, 17/3 (January 1955) 132-146.

importance is his summary of the aim of the course: “education unto religious adulthood, in intelligence, character, and sentiment,” which he then explained:

Adulthood in religious intelligence involves (1) a movement from the surface (Catholic practices, devotions, etc.) to the center, which is Christ, viewed in his full living reality; (2) an insight into Catholicism, in its doctrines, laws, liturgy, etc., as an organic whole, whose principle of unity is again Christ; (3) a personal possession of the whole truth of Christ, through a personal “discovery” of it; (4) a grasp of the relationship of Catholic truth to all other truth, and to the whole of life and all its problems; (5) the development of the faculty of Christian judgment on all that is secular.

Adulthood in religious character implies that insights have become fixed convictions, principles of action, sources of felt responsibility. It implies too the acquisition of a certain “conquering quality of soul,” as against so much Catholic defensiveness; an adult knows his powers as well as his responsibilities.

Adulthood in religious sentiment means all that is meant by “the Catholic sense,” a habit of action and reaction that is instinctively Catholic. It means all that St. Ignatius meant by “framing one’s affections to the true doctrine of Christ” (Three Modes), that is the secret of all high resolve and full spiritual energy.

He then gave a more specific description of the course’s goal:

(1) The theological and religious formation (2) of the Catholic high school graduate, (3) that will leave him conscious of, and equipped for, his Christian responsibilities as a layman, and as a member of an élite among the laity, (4) in our contemporary world, in which the Church has assigned to such men a definite, imposing mission.

The third element of this description is particularly important for a grasp of Murray’s general thought on the relation between Church and world:

In general, it is the layman’s task to heal the schism that has been created between the Church and human society, between the spiritual and temporal orders, between the idea of “man” and the idea of “Christian.” The Church today wants to create a new *populus christianus* in the old sense of that splendid term, as implying a special historic mission and vocation, but with a newly concrete meaning in the face of today’s task, which is the creation from the bottom up (so to speak) of a new order of human life and institutions that will operate towards human ends because they are animated by the Christian spirit mediated to them by the Christian people.<sup>8</sup>

Murray was very involved in discussions among Jesuits about the purpose and nature of courses of religion at their institutions that took place in the early 1940’s.

Because of other obligations Murray was obliged around 1945 to withdraw from active direction in the implementation of his ideas about the finality and structure of such a course. A report

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<sup>8</sup> Murray set out his argument on an educational program to equip lay people for such tasks in “Towards a Theology for the Layman: The Problem of its Finality,” *Theological Studies*, 5 (March 1944) 43-75, and “Towards a Theology for the Layman: The Pedagogical Problem,” *Ibid.*, 5 (September 1944) 340-76. We will return to these articles later. For treatment of the discussions Murray’s essays prompted, see van Ackeran, art.cit., and Richard J. Cronin, “The New College Theology,” *Philippine Studies*, 4, no. 1 (1956): 57-73.

on the first eight years of this “experiment” noted that Murray had not offered “a highly articulated syllabus,” but simply “a method, and a general statement of objectives.” It also raised the question whether “Father Murray's "Statement of Objectives" is to be regarded as an unalterable plan, not subject to changes that experience shows to be desirable? Or is it to be regarded for what we think it really is: merely a general guide, as its title and contents imply?”

Georgetown course

Father Murray, we regret, never had the opportunity to give us a highly articulated syllabus, to begin with. His work amounted to giving us a method, and a general statement of objectives. The course was so incomplete both in its textbooks and its planning when he left it, that it could not, in justice, be called a completely developed plan. In our judgment, therefore, it was not to be conceived as something static but as something open to further development and experimentation, while remaining true to Father Murray's original suggestions. The comparatively slight changes we have introduced at Georgetown were suggested by the experience of department members.

But there is the problem: Is Father Murray's "Statement of Objectives" to be regarded as an unalterable plan, not subject to changes that experience shows to be desirable? Or is it to be regarded for what we think it really is: merely a general guide, as its title and contents imply?<sup>9</sup>

(Murray himself was of the latter view.)

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<sup>9</sup> Eugene B. Gallagher, “A College Religion Course: Problems,” *JEQ*, (October 1949) 94-98.

### "The Construction of a Christian Culture"

It may be that it was in preparation for beginning such a program at Loyola College in Baltimore that Murray gave a set of three lectures there on February 11, 18, 25, 1940, entitled "The Construction of a Christian Culture," which provides a very important statement of the dogmatic and theological grounds for the Church's and the Christian's engagement with the contemporary world. A typed version of these talks can be found in the Murray Papers, Woodstock College Archives, Georgetown University.<sup>10</sup> The typescript gives evidence of some revisions and additions made by Murray either in handwritten marginal comments or in the typed text itself. Whether these were done before the talks were delivered at Loyola or at some other time is not clear.<sup>11</sup> As often elsewhere, Murray was sparing in his indication of sources on which he was drawing, but some help is supplied, first, by a set of handwritten notes included in the same file as the Loyola lectures. These refer to arguments found in Max Weber's *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*; to three essays collected in *Essays in Order*: Jacques Maritain's "Religion and Culture," Peter Wust's "Crisis in the West," and Christopher Dawson's "Christianity and the New Age;" and to Jacques Chevalier, *La vie morale et l'au-delà*. All of these works, except for Wust's essay, are referred to in Murray's typescript. In addition, there are more or less full and more or less direct references to other books or essays by the following: Bertrand Russell, Christopher Dawson, Alfred Harnack, Will Durant, Matthew Arnold, Paul Elmer Moore, John Middleton Murry, Teilhard de Chardin, Paul van Schilfgaarde, Clarence Streit, H.G. Wells, H. Crichton-Miller, Maurice Blondel, Karl Marx, Lenin, Ralph Fox, Aurel Kolnai, an editorialist at *Fortune*, and Bernard Iddings Bell. Several arguments and citations make one suspect also that Murray had read Henri de Lubac's book, *Catholicisme: Les aspects sociaux du dogme*<sup>12</sup> and, perhaps also, Maritain's *Humanisme intégral*.

The conviction that inspired the lectures, Murray explained at the beginning of the third one, was "that as Christian truth is the guardian of human life, so a return to the full Christian truth is the only remedy for the inhumanities of the present world. A Christian culture can only be erected on the basis of Christian theology." To biblical grounds for this conviction, he added a second, historical reason:

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<sup>10</sup> WCA, Murray Papers, Box 6, File 422. A much edited and abbreviated version has been published in *Bridging the Sacred and the Secular: Selected Writings of John Courtney Murray*, ed. J. Leon Hooper (Washington: Georgetown University Press, 1994) 101-123.

<sup>11</sup> Hooper, *Bridging the Sacred and the Secular*, 101, says that Murray gave these lectures in February 1940 at St. Joseph's College; it is not clear whether this is a mistake for Loyola College or whether Murray gave them more than once.

<sup>12</sup> Henri de Lubac, *Catholicisme: Les aspects sociaux du dogme* (Paris: du Cerf, 1938). An English translation of the fourth edition (1947), with greatly reduced notes, was published as *Catholicism: A Study of Dogma in Relation to the Corporate Destiny of Mankind* (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1958); the same translation but with the notes restored in full was published as *Catholicism: Christ and the Common Destiny of Man* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1988). Future references will be to this last edition.

For three centuries men have chipped away at Christian truth, doubting, denying, destroying, rebelling. But the hoped-for result has not come about: the liberation of man, his achievement of full humanity. Every thoughtful writer today is agreed that the age of "humanism" has dehumanized man, the age of individualism has depersonalized him, the age of liberalism has enslaved him.

Hence my first premise is that we have definitely reached a time to stop denying and affirm, to stop destroying and construct, to stop murdering ourselves and others, and begin to live.

The three lectures have the same structure. Each outlines a dimension of the cultural crisis, particularly as visible in the U.S. This is followed by a presentation of a central Christian dogma from which cultural consequences follow that can offset and overcome the problems initially described. The method would appear to be a specific application of the sub-title of de Lubac's *Catholicisme: Les aspects sociaux du dogme*.

### *Lecture I: "Portrait of a Christian"*

Murray began by explaining why he had changed the title of the lecture-series from "The Concept of a Christian Culture" to "The Construction of a Christian Culture." He wanted to urge not merely a "thesis" but a "task," not only to communicate "the idea of a Christian culture" but to move his hearers to give shape to that idea "in the world of human life." There was a common perception that "our greatest need today is the need for cultural leadership." Echoing de Lubac's reference to the ancient axiom, "*Paucis humanum vivit genus*," Murray urged his hearers to be among the "few" in whom "Humanity lives:"<sup>13</sup> "You are the few, the élite, who must make your Christian thoughts effective in molding the mind of America, and in creating among us such patterns of life as may merit the name of Christian." If they do not undertake it, the task will fall into the diverse group of people who "have this at least in common, that they are of today, wholly of today, with no roots in humanity's Christian past and no sense of continuity with it; nor gratitude for its cultural heritage."

The task was an essentially a spiritual one, a nation's culture being what the soul is in a body.

Its proper role is to bring order into human life, the order proper to a human life, a spiritual order, that alone makes a life authentically human. For a human life, like a body is humanized in that it is brought under the direction of an intelligence that is conscious of itself and of its spiritual destiny, and in that it is brought under the domination of a will disciplined enough to maintain order among its subservient instincts, and actually to impart to the whole of life a spiritual purpose.

Culture, then, means man's effort to be fully human, and hence his effort to bring spiritual order and spiritual purpose into his life.

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<sup>13</sup> Murray was to retain this emphasis upon the chosen few: "Society is rescued from chaos only by a few men, not by the many. *Paucis humanum vivit genus*. It is only the few who understand the disciplines of civility and are able to sustain them in being and thus hold in check the forces of barbarism that are always threatening to force the gates of the City;" *We Hold These Truths: Catholic Reflections on the American Proposition* (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1960) 13. The Latin tag appears, in a different context, in de Lubac's *Catholicism*, 243, accompanied by a comment similar to Murray's in the lecture: "the old axiom is profoundly true." In both places Murray cites the tag incorrectly (Lucan's line should read: "*Humanum paucis vivit genus*"), but the mistake was de Lubac's before him.

This spiritual order is not something which we have to create; it already exists and our role is to discover it and to submit to it. “Consequently, all man's cultural effort is at bottom an effort at submission to the truth and the beauty and the good that is outside him, existing in an ordered harmony, whose pattern he must produce within his soul by conformity with it.”

In the American context, this work of construction will be an effort to “bring to perfection that which is imperfect,” “the formula of an intelligent love, that seeks the right in the wrong, the true in the false, the beautiful in the ugly, intent to save them and to complete them, and to free them from that which deforms them.” The difficulty with this task of discerning “what is right and true and beautiful in our contemporary American culture, that we may build on it,” is that “our American culture, as it exists, is actually the quintessence of all that is decadent in the culture of the Western Christian world. It would seem to be erected on the triple denial that has corrupted Western culture at its roots, the denial of metaphysical reality [over that of sense], of the primacy of the spiritual over the material, of the social over the individual.” These strong words are urged immediately after: “American culture does present itself as something of a monster, the like of which has surely never been seen on this planet.”

“Its most striking characteristic,” he went on, “is its profound materialism.” Its dominating ideal is “the conquest of the material world;” its one great promise is a more comfortable life; its technique of social progress is its exploitation of natural and human resources; its supreme law is supply and demand; its standard of value is quantitative: bigger is better; its sole order is economic and praises only wealth and finds only poverty evil; its sole crusade is the abolition of physical pain; its one product is “the ‘*homo oeconomicus*,’ the business man, in a business suit, with an eye and a nose for business, whose dreams of paradise are of a land in which there is no red ink. It has given its citizens everything to live for, and nothing to die for. And its achievement may be summed up thus: it has gained a continent, and lost its own soul,”<sup>14</sup> that is, “the profound religious truth that is at the basis of democratic theory and practice, namely, the intrinsic dignity of human nature, the spiritual freedom of the human soul, its equality, as a soul, with others of its kind, and its superiority to all that does not share its spirituality.”

Murray then embarked upon a brief history of how American culture lost its soul, a description largely borrowed, it seems, from Christopher Dawson.<sup>15</sup>

Briefly, the process was this: the ideals of humanist democracy, received very largely from France in the revolutionary period, had been divorced from their proper religious setting in the Christian revelation, but still had the form of a philosophy. Later they were stripped of their intellectual content by the Calvinist spirit of the Northern States, and made over<sup>16</sup> into a postulate, that animated a program of economic individualism. And finally, when Calvinistic moral earnestness had died out, they survived as a humanitarian emotion, three degrees removed from their original source of inspiration.

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<sup>14</sup> See Maritain, “Religion and Culture,” in *Essays in Order* (New York: Macmillan, 1931) , 25: “A *homo oeconomicus* will be invented whose sole function is to accumulate material goods.”

<sup>15</sup> See Christopher Dawson, “Christianity and the New Age,” in *Essays in Order*, 166-68.

<sup>16</sup>Murray crossed out: “moralised”.

Thus from a philosophic doctrine, the idea of individual dignity and liberty became a moral postulate, and from a moral postulate it has become a mere emotion. And it is upon that idea, emotionalised into a caricature of itself, that we are trying to live today, very dangerously.

Murray concentrated on the second of these moments, “the Calvinistic Puritanism of the Northern States,” which was “responsible, indirectly, and perhaps inculpably, for the orientation of American culture toward material values and an excessive individualism.” He developed this charge in three respects. First, Calvinism was marked by “its abhorrence of what we term humanism.” “Puritanism, as a religion, was exclusively a culture of the will, imposing an inhumanly rigid ethical discipline, professedly anti-intellectual, and on principle contemptuous of all aesthetic and sensuous culture. Democracy as a basis for a genuinely humanist way of life had no meaning for it.”

Secondly, following Max Weber, Murray described the Puritan’s association of “business activity for profit” with “a divine call, towards which he had an ethical obligation; his success in it was the evidence of his ‘election,’ the source of his ‘certitude of salvation,’ the single goal of his religious striving.” Murray found this attitude in a “typical American incarnation of the Calvinist spirit” in citations from Benjamin Franklin almost certainly borrowed from Weber who had made Franklin an ideal-type of “the spirit of Protestantism.”

Finally, he pointed to “the unprecedented inner loneliness of the Calvinist soul, bred into it by its dogma of predestination, the belief that man follows his path alone to a destiny decreed for him from eternity, alone, isolated, beyond the help of anyone or anything. This inner loneliness, accentuating the all-importance of the individual, was moreover still further emphasized by persecution, that roused in the Calvinist breast an angry spirit of protest against external authority.”

These three factors helped explain “the transformation of early American ideals of democracy. They were dehumanized, de-intellectualized, moralised, clothed with fierce emotion, and made the justification for the unregulated activity of the individual in the field that absorbed him, business, economic life. That was an essential transformation of the ideals of democracy, the dignity of the individual and his personal freedom.”

But later, the moral earnestness of Calvinism weakened, the “divine Call” ceded to individual selfishness, “the Calvinist soul...died, and American civilization became as a body without a soul.” American culture became material both “in its body, its economic order,” and “in its soul, emotional individualism.”

In this context, Murray set the task for his hearers:

At the basis of our culture is a spiritual idea, a religious truth that has been impoverished and deformed. The truth, I mean, that man is a person, sacred, inviolable, gifted with the divine prerogative of freedom, and charged with all the responsibilities of that gift, that reach horizontally out to the farthest confines of human life, and vertically up into the heart of eternity.

This truth originated with Christianity, because in Christ is revealed “the altogether unsuspected depth and inexhaustibility of human personality, and of this personality’s analogue in God.”<sup>17</sup> Only

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<sup>17</sup> This is a quotation from von Hügel, *The Mystical Element in Religion*, perhaps derived from the citation of it in de Lubac, *Catholicism*, 439.

“this vision of the Christian soul” can “fill up the spiritual void that exists at the center of our culture, and that explains its materialism and profaneness; it alone will be the interior vital principle that will give to our democracy and its economic achievements a spiritual purpose and hence a permanent vitality. Here, then, is the solution for our cultural problem that I wish to propose.”

The Christology to which Murray turned was not any one of several modern restatements but “the full, metaphysical theology of the Incarnation” which “regards Christ, not as the incarnation of the ethical ideals of humanity, but as the Incarnation of the Son of God, His subsistent Word and Image.” After citing key biblical texts and the formula of faith of the Council of Chalcedon, Murray concluded: “And the primary cultural significance of this theology is that in its light man, as St. Thomas said, now dares to think worthily of himself.” The Incarnation reveals the full dignity of man; “his nature is a nature that God has hallowed by substantial contact, making it his own, inseparable from himself.” It also reveals what man can become, the freedom he can possess on earth, the immortality he can possess in heaven. In Christ he is freed from “the iron law of fate,” made capable of spiritual freedom, and freed from the fear of death.

Citations from Athanasius and Leo I and from Aquinas fill out this “portrait of a Christian, the man who believes in God made man,” next to which the modern liberal humanitarian’s claims sound “cheap and vacuous.” It has been the spring of the long tradition of Christian humanism: “its pride in being human, and its joy in human life, and its dreams of ever fuller humanity.” But this pride is saved from “excess and consequent self-destruction” by its recognition that it owes all this, not to its own efforts, but to humanity’s having been raised beyond itself into union with God. “Consequently, the dignity of the Christian is the most noble of all human dignities, being the dignity of a profound humility.”

Murray concluded by returning to the decline of the original Christian idea of human dignity and by urging the consequences of his argument:

We must, I say, rescue that idea, spiritualize it, by bringing it once more into contact with its sources in Christian history and Christian truth. Only he who believes in the fact of God made Man will have a true spiritual idea of man's essential dignity and freedom. Only he will be effective in redeeming our culture from its soulless mechanism, and transforming it into a way of life authentically human. Only he will be able to eradicate from the face of American culture the ugly features of the economic man, and to imprint upon it the gentle, noble, divinely-human features of the Man, Christ Jesus.

## *Lecture II: “Personality and the Community”*

Under this title Murray addressed what he called “the most acute of all contemporary problems.” “In its more superficial, political form, it is termed the conflict between Democracy and Statism, between the theory that asserts the right of the individual to rule his own life, and the opposing theory that asserts the right of the State to rule it for him.” If Americans had opted for the first, contemporary events revealed that two great examples of European Statism, Nazism and Fascism, had been “conceived in the womb of decadent democracies, and born in the travail of social

chaos.” “It is but one step from a regime of liberty that recognizes no law that is not its own creation, to a regime of law that recognizes no liberty that is not its own concession. Contemporary totalitarianism is the logical outcome of individualism as the modern man has understood it.” For Americans to dedicate themselves to “the ideals of individualism, as conceived in a system of naturalistic and materialistic philosophy” would be to face the same tragic fate.

The issue was all the more important because, Murray argued, “we stand at a turning point in history,” a remark for which he invoked both Dawson and Teilhard de Chardin and which he himself specified: “the age of individualism has ended, and the age of collectivism has begun.”<sup>18</sup> He then explained:

When I say that the age of individualism has ended, I mean that age which was dominated by a false theory of personality, whose essential tenets have been these. It makes the sovereign liberty of the individual the source from which all things flow: truth, religion, morality, the family, society. It reduces to a vanishing point all dependence of the individual upon those who share his human nature, and upon God who is the author of human nature. It teaches that the development of personality requires that the individual free himself from all constraints upon his liberty, that he refuse to recognize any law that he does not impose upon himself. Its ideal of personality is the completely self-made, self-sufficient individual, seated in splendid isolation, "high on throne of royal state", the creator and judge of all values.

Its concept of society and of humanity has been of a mass of individuals, mathematically equal in their rights, whose mutual relations are established simply in terms of contracts, entered into with sovereign freedom, and to be dissolved with sovereign freedom, whenever they become distasteful, or cease to serve self-interest.

Hence its essential denial has been that humanity is one, one in nature, antecedent to any contractual unities: one in its common origin, one in its common destiny, one in the obedience it owes to a common truth and law of life, one in its responsibility to a common Master, God.

He then exclaimed the rise of the age of collectivism:

For the 20th century has made one cataclysmic discovery: that mankind is one, and that the individual man lives in the collective life of humanity, he is what he is in dependence upon the totality of man, he is not an isolated phenomenon, but a social being, the termination of a human genealogy, the product of a family, a race, a soil, whose life is maintained by exchanges with his fellows, and whose mind and character are formed by tradition and environment; the individual is what he is, in what is most essential to him, only by being the very same that his fellows are: a man among men.

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<sup>18</sup> See Christopher Dawson, *The Modern Dilemma: The Problem of European Unity* (Essays in Order, No. 8; London and New York: Sheed & Ward, 1933) 100. In the margin of his lecture Murray added the following citation from Teilhard: "Il faut maintenant nous rendre à l'évidence que l'humanité vient d'entrer dans ce qui est probablement la plus grande période de transformation qu'elle ait jamais connue.... Quelque chose se passe dans la structure générale de la conscience humaine. C'est une autre espèce de vie qui commence." The words are taken from the first page of an article by Teilhard de Chardin, "La crise présente: Réflexions d'un naturaliste," *Etudes* 222 (October 20, 1937) 145-65. Another passage in this article is cited in de Lubac, *Catholicism*, 437-38.

In a word, we are witnessing today a resurgence of human nature, and of the individual's consciousness of his dependence on his species, and his vital need for unity with his fellows. And the vital problem of the day is not merely that of individual rights, but of human unity.<sup>19</sup>

Among the causes of "this new sense of human unity" Murray listed the economic unity of the world, the annihilation by technology of barriers of space and time, the growth of worldwide means of communication. These have helped shift concerns from single individuals to the collective fate of all of humanity, to a new spirit of human solidarity. If it has been most obvious in "bizarre, outrageous, extreme, even inhuman" manifestations such as Bolshevism, Nazism, Fascism, and various nationalisms, even they are "signs of the times that betray the powerful leaven at work in the soul of humanity; they are all forms of social organization, of social regeneration; they are all attempts at a new order, based on humanity's new experience: that it is one, that the individual was not made for isolation, but for community, that it is not good for man to be alone, for alone he perishes, and if he would live, he must insert himself into the life of his fellow man. Only in union with humanity can he save himself."

These descriptions yield "the cultural problem that confronts us, and that demands a solution. It is the problem of reconciling the new collectivism with the old individualism, in such a way that we shall lose none of the genuine human values in each." Christians cannot stop the movement of humanity away from "the outworn creed of liberalistic individualism" but neither can they "surrender to the collectivist tendency in its extreme political and social expressions, Communism or Nazism." The only solution can be found in "Christian personalism," "by regarding man as he has been made in the image of God, a personality, living in community." And this creative principle is to be found in "the traditional theology of the Trinity."

This is how Murray approached the question of "the cultural significance of the Christian vision of God":

When the Christian raises his eyes to God, he sees not a solitary, separated individual, but a Community. He sees a triplicity of distinct persons, each with his own distinctive and characteristic personality, yet whose life is utterly and ineffably one: for these three, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, have but one nature, one mind, one will. Such is by definition a community, a unity of life amid a diversity of personalities.

The nature of God is infinitely One; yet at the very interior of his unity, as at once its fruit and its consecration, arises a mysterious plurality, three distinct Personalities, perfect as personalities, and perfect, too, in their community. Such is the mystery of God's infinitely perfect spirituality.

As beyond our comprehension as this doctrine is, we at least can approach "the profound truth that is verified also in human life, and that constitutes the basic paradox: personality is achieved in community, it is in union with others that one finds oneself."

Within the Trinity the distinct personality of each Person is constituted by its relation to the other Persons. "It is the paradox of personality and the community realized in the plane of infinity:

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<sup>19</sup> Murray referred here to Paul van Schilfgaarde, "The Pathway to World Unity," *Hibbert Journal* 38 (1939/40) 174-86.

each of the divine persons is himself by being wholly 'for' the others, and each of the divine persons is one 'with' the others because wholly 'for' the others." The consequence is that "the perfection of personality and the perfection of community are achieved by one and the same movement, an active self-giving of each to the other. This active self-giving has the name of love; and hence the mystery of God, as St. John saw, is a mystery of love: perfect personalities in perfect community."

The cultural relevance lies in the perception that both liberal individualism and totalitarianism are blasphemous "sins against the Christian God, as revealed to us in Christ. Liberal individualism sins against his Unity, and totalitarianism against his Trinity. For individualism would shatter the community in the name of the individual, and totalitarianism would suppress the individual in the name of the community." The same must be true of human beings: "For a full human life is made in the image of God's life: a life of full selfhood, that is found in community with others."

This doctrine also yields "the difference between individualism and personalism." Individualism is closed, like a circle, but personality is open, like the angle of a triangle, a traditional image of the Trinity. Man is an individual in virtue of his body; he is a person in virtue of his spiritual soul, his intelligence and will, by which he can both possess himself and give himself away. The person finds himself by giving himself away in love. "Personality is all openness. What counts for the person is not its 'self,' but the 'other,' for it is in the other that it finds itself." It was sin that shattered the unity of the human race at its creation, and it was to restore the shattered human community that Christ came and gave himself.

Through the Passion, Death and Resurrection of Christ, the Spirit of Love and Unity, and the Spirit too of Personality has been given back to the world, to dwell in man, and through is alliance with man to renew the face of the earth. It is the Spirit of Christ, indwelling in man, that gives meaning and direction to the whole historical process, making it the progressive realization of the prayer of Christ, made on the eve of his death: "that they, the men for whom I am about to die, may all be one, as thou, Father, in me and I in thee, that they may be one in us" (Jn 17:21).

The spiritual unity of all men with each, with the Father, through the Son, in the Holy Spirit: that is the goal of history. In the collective destiny of humanity, each human person has a share, and toward it each individual, and each nation has a responsibility. The realization of that universal human unity is the proper role of personality.

This grounds the challenge Murray placed before his audience:

But we as a nation, and each one of us a human person, will miss our rendezvous with destiny, if we do not strive to complete our work by consecrating ourselves to the spiritual unification of mankind. For economics will never unite men permanently nor solidly. Their principle of unity must be spiritual; it must be the attachment of all men and nations to a common source of life, that may express itself uniquely in each. And that source of life is Christ; he alone is the life of the world. And only by his Spirit, the Spirit of Love, dwelling in them and leading them, shall men be both united into one, and personalised.

### *Lecture III: The Humanism of the Cross*

The third lecture addresses “the crucial cultural problem,” the problem of the cross. “We must make the momentous decision as to whether or not we shall admit as a creative principle of our culture the Christian dogma that historically man has been redeemed by the Passion, Death and Resurrection of our Blessed Lord, and that apart from sharing in that redeeming death there is for him no redemption.” There is a “humanism of the Cross.” “It proposes the development of man by self-denial, the expansion of his energies by self-discipline, the satisfaction of his vital need for happiness by self-oblivious service of others. And all this because a Christian culture would humanize man in this world by teaching him resolutely to look beyond its horizons into the perspectives of eternal life in the next world.”

The problem is that, as in the past, this humanism is despised and opposed. “The Christian otherworldly creed and its acceptance of discipline by authority,” critics say, “must necessarily diminish man, ruin his freedom, inevitably restrict his energies, narrow his life, inculcate in him a distrust and a contempt for this splendid world of ours.” For that reason they focus their lives on this world and its material joys and choose technique rather than self-renouncement as the means for achieving a full human life. Murray spelled out these modern choices and the consequences to which they had led: “a century and a half of prodigious effort to free the world from suffering and hasten the advent of earthly happiness, should have culminated in the most colossal debacle of human misery that the world had ever seen.” The Great War was the great example of sufferings and death that brought no redemption, fulfilling Nietzsche’s intuition: “a genuine deity wants man to be sacrificed to it.” “...if man chose to be his own deity, he would have to pay himself in his own blood for that high privilege; he would have to sacrifice himself to himself, and adore himself by dying.”

The two “earthly idealisms” challenging Christian humanism, Nazism and Marxism, had it in common that they rejected all suffering and proposed “queer programs for the redemption of man,” “*Blutreinigung* and *Blitzkrieg*, Comintern and OGPU” [blood-purifying, lightning military strikes, the Communist International, and the Soviet Union’s Joint State Political Directorate]. Europe was illustrating “the ultimate, inhuman consequences of banishing the idea of Heaven in our efforts to set the world right.” But the same error was present on this side of the Atlantic. This worldly materialism and the refusal of self-renouncement also characterized American culture. Murray here quoted Christopher Dawson: “The Communists may have deified mechanism in theory, but it is the Americans who have realized it in practice.”<sup>20</sup> He went on to quote from several American writers who bemoaned the loss of spiritual values in the U.S. America had produced “immense material comfort,” but was also “a land of immense suffering,” all the more soul-destroying because here “money is the passport to happiness.” If “the standard of living” had reached previously unknown heights, “the quality of life” fell far short of that standard. The nation was in danger of losing its “faith and purpose and soul.”

The only salvation was in the Christian doctrine of redemption through Christ’s Passion, Death and Resurrection, which “must be made the third, and greatest creative principle of our Christian culture.” Murray offered “several aspects of the mystery, that have a cultural significance

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<sup>20</sup> Dawson, “Christianity and the New Age,” *Essays in Order*, I, 167.

of the first order.” The first was “the mystery of resurrection, the definitive revelation to humanity that death is not an end, but a beginning; that the soul of man is immortal, and that no man has the power to slay it.” This mystery “carries the condemnation of all that I have called earthly idealism, the theory that a man can be a man, even though he does not live now in the light of the life to come.” The second aspect was the “mystery of crucifixion and death.” Christ’s passage “from death to life, from total self-renouncement to total self-achievement, from self-loss to self-finding,” “defined forever the law of man’s redemption, the price he must pay for entrance into full humanity, the achievement of personal freedom and of union with his fellowman.” Individually and as a group, man “must make the passage from the exterior to the interior, from the material things of sense to the spiritual things of the soul.” And this movement must be accompanied by another: “from egoism and self-preoccupation to universal charity.”

Murray then urged upon his hearers “a plea for the interior life, for the primacy of reflective thought over the practical manipulation of matter that is so characteristic of America’s use of human intelligence.” “If the American spirit had spent one tenth of the time and energy and intelligence in mastering the mystery of itself that it has spent in mastering the mysteries of nature and physical science, what progress it would have made, and how different its life would be!”

Our first duty, then, as Christians is to pour ourselves back into ourselves, rescue ourselves from immersion in sense and matter and the banalities of everyday life, and seek our true selves in ourselves. That is the way to true freedom of spirit and genuine personal life; and the failure to find it is perhaps the reason why in a land where there is so much emphasis on freedom and individuality, there is really so little interior peace and true personality.

This “effort at interiorisation” requires “a program of asceticism” because it runs so contrary “to the whole spirit of our contemporary culture.” “Yet this pouring of ourselves back into ourselves is the very first condition of our redemption, our freedom.” Nor does it mean fleeing the world:

And the final paradox is that when our hearts are lifted up to God in the desire of his pure light, then only are we truly in contact with the earth, and able to exert upon the earth a redemptive action. Only the heart that is lifted from the earth can give to life on earth a meaning and a value, and rescue it from the tragedy of so many lives, futility. Only when our dwelling is in the heavens, can we hope to fulfill our vocation on earth. Only when in the presence of God we possess ourselves, can we give ourselves away to others.

The angel’s words at the mountain of the Ascension demand that we not simply keep looking up to heaven:

Into your hearts the word of Christ has been put, not just for your own consolation, but that you may use it as the instrument for the redemption of the world. In your hearts Christ has come to dwell, not just to assure you of a place in heaven, all to yourself; but that in the power of his Spirit you may set your hand to the mighty work of making the world a place where man may live a human life. You have been redeemed--then redeem the world!

## Christian Humanism

Six months later Murray took part in another symposium on Catholic education and made a shorter statement of a similar argument, an outline of a “Christian Humanism” to serve a theology of education.<sup>21</sup> If every educator should consider himself as a servant or instrument of humanity’s birth and growth, the Christian educator knows himself also to be, “primarily, the instrument of a higher energy, a force of the specifically divine order, that is at work in the world. He conceives all his activity in essentially theological terms, as a co-operation with the grace of Christ, as a mingling of his own energies with *energeia hagiastike* of the Greek Fathers, the sanctifying energy that is the Holy Spirit of God operative on the life of humanity.” He must accept “the paradox that expresses the very idea of Christianity, namely, that the Spirit of Christ is the agent properly creative of humanity in the full sense, since he is the agent of its divinization, its regeneration to a new life, higher than human, its reformation into the image of Christ.” Its central assertion is “that to be a whole man, one must be a Christian, baptized into Christ, fashioned in His image, made a member of the Body of which He is Head, brought into the human community that is animated interiorly by His Spirit and organized visibly under the hierarchs to whom His prophetic, priestly, and kingly mission has been historically communicated.” As much as this notion may be opposed today, it is “a simple logical necessity to anyone who accepts the fact of the Incarnation; the Christology of Chalcedon is its sole and sufficient justification.”

A consideration of “the implications of Chalcedon” discusses first how “the fact of Christ affirms the validity of all things human, for Christ was *perfectus homo*, perfectly human.... Integral humanism is henceforth a primal Christian law.” This includes respect also for the bodily and the material. “We are not enemies of material progress as such, for we know that it can be integrated into the total purpose of the Incarnation, and we are conscious that since matter touched divinity in the Person of Christ it is itself hallowed, and can sanctify.”

Integral humanism, then, is our ideal. We reaffirm with a new note of joy the whole program of the Greeks. Far more than they, we are captured by the splendor of humanity, for we see far more deeply than they into its dignity. We elevate our veneration for man to the status of a religious cult, for in every man we reverence the nature God has taken as His own. And we feel that the first step in our religious effort to become like unto God is to become men, for the Son of God was and is Himself a man.”

But, secondly, the Incarnation reveals that “the merely human is not enough.” It is to desire to little: “not to dream of being more than man is to refuse to be totally human, for it is to refuse humanity’s predestined ennoblement, divinization by the face of Christ.”

The problem is not: How to be human? But: How to be human divinely? Man’s aspirations after self-completion must carry him to acceptance of the divinizing grace of Christ, or they are doomed to sterility. Historically man’s nature has been opened to a share in divinity; it cannot close itself, and it attempts to do so on peril of self-destruction. The naturalist idea, the idea of human

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<sup>21</sup> John Courtney Murray, “Towards a Christian Humanism: Aspects of the Theology of Education,” in *A Philosophical Symposium on American Catholic Education*, ed. Hunter Guthrie and Gerald C. Walsh (Proceedings of the Seventeenth Annual Convention of the Jesuit Philosophical Association of the Eastern States, Fordham University, September 4,5,6 1940; New York: Fordham University Press, 1941) 106-15. The text has been reprinted in *Bridging the Sacred and the Secular*, 124-32.

nature as an entity self-sufficient and all-sufficient, is not only a profanation of the love of God for man, it is an unreality, a contradiction, that nullifies its own affirmation of nature by its denial of anything more than nature. All its achievements, in spite of their multitude and magnificence, have brought it no nearer to its own ideal of humanism; they are but the Augustinian *splendida vitia*, and their net result has been to make of human life the shell of emptiness that we hear rattling all around us. It is certainly no accident that the century and a half which has witnessed its domination should have culminated in military barbarism, that makes humanity its victim.

If Christ is “the Way to perfect humanity,” then, “all our hopes of that grand achievement are “conditioned by our willingness to abdicate our own proud self-sufficiency, and to recognize that He is our fulfilment.”

Thus Christology dictates that the first step in our program of humanism must be the great act of self-abnegation which the naturalist refuses to make: we must lose ourselves to find ourselves; we must go out of humanity in order to possess it; to be human we must consent to be made divine. Integral humanism is not solely a personal achievement; it is initially a gift of God, the gift of His own Spirit who sets upon us the seal, the character, of Christ. When Christ is formed in us, then we shall be men.

History makes all this more than “idle theory”:

We stand now at the end of what has been aptly termed “the era of good paganism,” whose ideal was a humanism closed in itself, and consciously divorced from all religious, much less supernatural, inspiration. Its program has been the restless pursuit of human values for their own sake, and as ends in themselves.... And we have seen the program come to its ghastly term in a paganism worse than that of Greece and Rome. For the Greek was human enough to aspire after the salvation of his humanity through a deification: *soteria* and *theiosis* were to him correlative terms. But the modern pagan has grown too petty for such a noble aspiration. And for all his bravado he feels within himself a despair that the Greek never knew. For he has sinned as the Greek never did: he has vowed himself unto himself, and the vow has recoiled as a curse upon his own head. He presumed to make himself the agent of humanity’s redemption, and he has doubly damned it. He called unto his aid all the resources and techniques of materialism, and he finds himself the prisoner of matter, the victim of the estrangement that matter tends to produce between man and himself, and between man and man.

“The Christian educator has to co-operate with the Spirit in fashioning a human personality whose life will be both divine and human and one.” He must “assist the grace of baptism, the grace of likeness to Christ, to achieve its own intrinsic finality, the union of the whole personality with God.” He must assist each student to realize its “uniquely *human* self in its full, divinely-planned beauty, that it may be a fit vessel of divinity. For it is not right to offer to the divinizing action of the Holy Spirit a humanity that is empty, impoverished, discolored.” And finally he must assist in “the joining of the two elements of its life into an organic unity, into *one* life, that is humanly divine and divinely human.

In a word, the Christian humanist, in the image of Christ, must be *one* in selfhood. Hence grace must appear in him, not as something along side of nature, but as the elevation of nature; it is not a new soul, a complete substance, that issues in an independent life, quite other than his human life. Rather, it is simply a new *quality* of soul, that shows itself in a new and essentially superior style of human life. As Christ was God and man and One, so Christianity in its inmost idea cannot

be otherwise conceived than as a way of being human, divinely. Similarly, humanism must appear in the Christian humanist, not as an isolated phase of his activity, or as an independent sphere of interest, but as the organic complement of his life of grace. It is not a thing apart from grace, an autonomous, second self; it is that which grace inspires and informs, even as the body of man is not a thing apart from the soul, but that which the soul vitalizes and makes human.

### The Catholic Theory and Program of Social Action

Two years later, in February and March 1942, Murray gave four lectures at Jewish Theological Seminary in New York. They formed part of a course entitled "Religion and Society" sponsored by the Institute for Religious Studies, which described itself as "A Graduate School conducted with the cooperation of Catholic, Jewish and Protestant Scholars." The Institute began its life in 1938 as the "Institute for Interdenominational Studies" and later changed its name to the Institute for Religious Studies and still later to the Institute for Religious and Social Studies.

The Institute was the brain-child of Dr. Louis Finkelstein (1895-1991); among other founding members were Robert J. McCracken, John LaFarge, S.J., Jessica Feingold, Clarence H. Faust, Robert M. MacIver, and Lewis L. Strauss. It aimed at promoting inter-religious relationships particularly by gathering scholars who would bring the religious insights of their traditions to bear on contemporary problems. Its primary audience were ministers of all denominations, among whom Protestants tended to predominate; lectures were also attended by theological students and religious workers.<sup>22</sup>

To participate in such an interdenominational forum, Catholics were then considered to require the approval of the local bishop. Murray applied for such permission to the New York Chancery, from which he received a tepid reply from Bishop Francis J. McIntyre, who was, to say the least, not enthusiastic about interreligious conversation: "there seems to be no objection to your participation in the program of the Institute for Religious Studies. The circumstances that we object to do not seem to be present in the outline as contained in your letter."<sup>23</sup>

The other speakers in the 1942 course on Religion and Society were Robert M. MacIver, Liston Pope, Ben Zion Bokser, and H. Richard Niebuhr. The syllabus for the course gave this description:

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<sup>22</sup> For all this information, see the "Historical Statement" provided in the finding aid for the Institute for Religious and Social Studies in The Joseph and Miriam Ratner Center for the Study of Conservative Judaism, AJTS.

<sup>23</sup> I have not found the letters of Murray and McIntyre and quote the latter's reply from a letter of Murray to LaFarge, May 24, 1941, Woodstock; WCA. Murray added the comment: "Not enthusiastic, but at any rate, there it is. I shall try now to get up to the meeting that Dr. F. is arranging, on the 28th. And some time in the farther future I shall want to have a talk with you with regard to the 'line' I should take, and the ideas to be put forth in the actual lectures. I shall be very grateful for your counsel, and in view of past kindnesses to me I feel somehow free to call on it."

In this course the first three lectures will be devoted to analysis of the role which the sociologist believes religious traditions can play in the development of a better society. The following lectures will briefly indicate how the various traditions contribute to the creation of a better society, and the picture they draw of such a society. The lecturers are quite independent of one another in their approach to the problem; each presents his views positively, and retains sole responsibility for them. However, the lecturers met at a preliminary meeting, to exchange views and to arrange an orderly procedure for the course.<sup>24</sup>

It is of some interest to review the bibliography which Murray prepared for his lectures. He divided the works into two groups, the first of which are “useful in defining Catholic theological doctrine, liturgical practices, spiritual attitudes, philosophical positions, ethical principles, etc., which are the inspiration of the Catholic social program.” These are the books Murray listed (I have filled out the bibliographical data): Emile Mersch, *The Whole Christ* (Milwaukee: Bruce, 1938) and *Morality and the Mystical Body* (New York: Kenedy, 1939); Raoul Plus, *Christ in His Brethren* (London: Burns, Oates, 1925); Karl Adam, *The Spirit of Catholicism* (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1929); Romano Guardini, *The Church and the Catholic and The Spirit of the Liturgy* (one book) (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1935); Gerald Ellard, *Christian Life and Worship* (Milwaukee: Bruce, 1940); Virgil Michel, *The Liturgy of the Church according to the Roman Rite* (New York: Macmillan, 1937); E.I. Watkin, *The Catholic Centre* (Sheed and Ward, 1939); Ross J.S. Hoffman, *The Will to Freedom* (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1935); Jacques Maritain, *Freedom in the Modern World* (New York: Scribner’s, 1936); Maritain, *Scholasticism and Politics* (New York: Macmillan, 1940); Maritain, *True Humanism* (New York: Scribners, 1938); Etienne Gilson, *Moral Values and the Moral Life: The System of St. Thomas Aquinas* (St. Louis: Herder, 1931); Yves Simon, *Nature and Functions of Authority* (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 1940); Frank Sheed, *A Map of Life* (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1933); Christopher Dawson, *Religion and the Modern State* (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1935); *Moral Principles and Practice: Papers Read at the Summer School of Catholic Studies Held at Cambridge, 1932*, ed. G.J. McGillivray (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1933 ); Pierre Rousselot and Léonce de Grandmaison, *The Life of the Church* (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1933).

The second list was of “books dealing with the details of the Catholic social program itself, in its political, economic, cultural, educational aspects, largely as they are treated in the Papal Encyclicals:” George Clune, *Christian Social Reorganization* (Dublin: Richview Press, 1940); Joseph C. Husslein, *Social Wellsprings* (Milwaukee: Bruce, 1940); Husslein, *The Christian Social Manifesto: An Interpretative Study of the Encyclicals Rerum Novarum and Quadragesimo anno of Pope Leo XIII and Pope Pius XI* (Milwaukee: Bruce, 1931); Emmanuel Mounier, *A Personalist Manifesto* (New York: Longmans, 1930); Francis J. Haas, *Man and Society: An Introduction to Sociology* (New York: Appleton, Century, 1930); John F.T. Prince, *Creative Revolution* (Milwaukee: Bruce, 1937); Edward Cahill, *The Framework of a Christian State* (Dublin: Gill, 1932); Arthur C.F. Beales, *The Catholic Church and International Order* (New York: Lane, 1941); John Fitzsimons and Paul McGuire, *Restoring All Things: A Guide to Catholic Action* (New York: Sheed and Ward,

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<sup>24</sup> WCA, Murray Papers, Box 6, File # 419. The planning meeting appears to have been held in late May 1941.

1938); John LaFarge, *Interracial Justice: A Study of the Catholic Doctrine of Race Relations* (New York: America Press, 1937); Oswald von Nell-Breuning, *Reorganization of the Social Economy: The Social Encyclical Developed and Explained* (Milwaukee: Bruce, 1936); Pius XI, *Sixteen Encyclicals of His Holiness Pope Pius XI* (Washington: NCWC, n.d.); John A. Ryan [and Francis J. Boland], *Catholic Principles of Politics* (New York: Macmillan, 1940); Pius XII, *The Pope Speaks: The Words of Pius XII* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co., 1940); Goetz A. Briefs, *The Proletariat: A Challenge to Western Civilization* (New York: McGraw, Hill, 1937); Jaime Castiello, *A Humane Psychology of Education* (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1936); *A Manifesto on Rural Life*, Catholic Rural Life Conference (Milwaukee: Bruce, 1939).<sup>25</sup>

The rather detailed handwritten notes from which Murray lectured can be found in the Archives of Woodstock College.<sup>26</sup> But the archives of the Institute for Religious and Social Studies include a typescript of the lectures as actually delivered.<sup>27</sup> This typescript appears to have been made on the basis of stenographic reporting either of the actual lectures or from some sort of mechanical registration. The reporter clearly did not have the text of Murray's lectures nor even his notes, since there are many points at which he or she did not recognize a reference or understand an idea. The typescript can often be corrected by reference to the handwritten notes; while, in turn, Murray's sometimes scribbled handwriting can be more easily deciphered by reference to the typescript. From the two sources, it is possible to reconstruct with great certainty and completeness what Murray said.

#### *Lecture I, February 10, 1942*

Murray's first lecture set out certain theoretical and practical questions which his audience might be expecting him to address. Out of these many large and complex questions, he would concentrate on a few fundamental topics. He would develop, first, "the fact that the Church does conceive herself to have a mission in the socio-temporal order, in the total field of human social life as it is lived here on this earth;" secondly, "that this socio-temporal mission is intrinsically related to her supra-temporal, supra-social mission: to her conduct of souls to their eternal destiny in God;" and thirdly, "that her socio-temporal mission derives from her very essence, that it is not something added, as it were, but is something integrated with her very *raison d'être*, her whole purpose in existing."

Before embarking on the first argument, Murray believed it necessary to point out that Catholics do not pose the problem of religion in purely individualistic terms, solely in terms of

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<sup>25</sup> Given the controversy that would soon arise between the two men, it is striking that Murray does not include Paul Hanly Furfey's *Fire on the Earth* or *Three Theories of Society*, both of which had been published by this time.

<sup>26</sup> Murray Papers, Box 6, File 419.

<sup>27</sup> AJTS, Record Group 16, Box 2, Folder 1. The same box also contains transcripts of several other lectures in the series.

personal responsibility, sin, and salvation, intensely important as these are. He recognized that these were the terms in which some modern critics counterposed Christianity and modernity. Gabriel Séialles contrasted to the modern person's "resolution to force the world to yield to him every bit of good of which it is capable" the Christian as "the man who retires from the city of men preoccupied solely with his own salvation, which is an affair simply between himself and God." Ernest Renan had earlier sneered at Christianity as a religion "made for the interior consolation of a small group of the elect."<sup>28</sup> Against these distortions Murray invoked the example of the saints, the notion of baptism as involving "the assumption of social responsibilities," and a recent address of Pope Pius XII who had spoken of the Church's desire "to share in the future organization of that new order, which the world is waiting for" and of Catholics' "moral obligation to cooperate in the organization of society, and especially of economic life," something which he also called "a sacred duty for every Christian." The duty is sacred, Murray argued, "because it derives from the very fact of their Christian baptism," an essential dimension of which is what the Pope called "the sense of the collective responsibility of all for all."<sup>29</sup>

With these presuppositions stated, Murray turned to their theological basis: the Catholic conviction of "the concrete unity of the human race." This unity is twofold, both natural and supernatural, grounded in "the unity of nature and grace, the unity of the human and the divine," which although two distinct principles are concretely and existentially one. The pattern of this unity is found "in the Incarnate Word of God, Christ Jesus, in whom there was a perfect human nature and a perfect divine nature, each of them distinct from the other, and yet united in the unity of one single person." Apart from this "the Catholic Church is unintelligible," and so are "her relations to humanity and her functions in the socio-temporal order." His first lecture, then, would deal with the unity of the human race, the second with the unity of nature and grace, the third with the distinctly religious character of the Church's social mission, and the fourth with the Church's actual social program in the contemporary world.

Murray began his treatment of the unity of the human race by citing a statement of Masure already quoted by de Lubac: "there is at the bottom of the Christian Gospel a positive obsession with regard to the unity of the human community."<sup>30</sup> This, "one of the ... basically structural truths of Catholic Christianity" refers to a concrete and comprehensive unity that is ontological and not merely intentional or contractual and results in a single history of mankind, "an organically developing process which follows a pattern which has one supreme meaning, which had one starting-point, and which moves towards one goal."

Whatever may be the case with other philosophical sources for the idea, for Catholics the notion of the unity of the human race comes from revelation. Relying on de Lubac,<sup>31</sup> Murray here

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<sup>28</sup> It is likely that Murray drew both of these citations from Henri de Lubac's *Catholicism*, 14 and 305.

<sup>29</sup> Murray here is citing from Pius XII's Pentecost broadcast, June 1, 1941; see *Vital Speeches of the Day*, Vol. VII, pp. 531-535.

<sup>30</sup> See de Lubac, *Catholicism*, 15.

<sup>31</sup> See *Catholicism*, 44.

invoked the Pauline notion of “recapitulation,” the reunification of all things in Christ (see Eph 1:9). In this theological view there are four mysteries which constitute a Christian anthropology:

First, the mystery of the original unity established by God; secondly, the mystery of its shattering by sin; thirdly, the mystery of its restoration in Christ; and, fourthly, the mystery of its progressive realization in the Church of Christ--which is the *Catholic Unitas*, the Catholic unity of mankind.<sup>32</sup>

Murray then turns to the first theme and finds “Unity” to be “the etiquette” under which the Catholic tradition speaks of the original state of man. That man was created in the image of God means first that “Adam and Eve were created intelligent and free; able, therefore, to enter into conscious union with God and conscious union with all reality, able to give themselves by love to God and to others.” And this likeness to God is at the basis at once of the “natural solidarity of mankind” and of “the natural dignity of each single individual.” But there is also a supernatural sense in which mankind was made in the image of God: “God stamped upon Adam the image of His eternal Son, who is His Word, the *character tou Patros*,...the Image of the Father.” In virtue of this new image, Adam was a son of God in a more than metaphorical sense, because “to him there had been communicated a share in God’s own life.” This grace divinized Adam and gave him a “new capacity for God” beyond the natural and made him a co-heir with the eternal Word. And this consecration and ennoblement of man “created a new solidarity between men,” who all shared in the one divine life and were one as the Persons of the Trinity are one. This gift also gave “the gift of integrity” to Adam and Eve who did not suffer the “tragic inner conflict that divides us” within ourselves nor the “refractory egocentrism that with us creates division between man and man. “The social life of the first human community was perfect, marred by no rift.” Finally, a “third great unity” was between man and the material world. And all this was designed for the whole of the race, not simply for Adam as an individual. “Adam was the head of humanity, and responsible for its future.”

The second great mystery, however, is the mystery of “the shattering of mankind’s original unity by the sin of Adam.” By it mankind did not lose its basic nature, which remains in the natural image of God. But the supernatural image was defaced, Adam’s capacity for a higher knowledge was destroyed, and the privilege of sonship forfeited. “Mankind literally fell apart”; and “disunity, discord, shattering” are “the etiquette” under which Catholics sum up what they call original sin. There is discord within the individual: “man is split off from himself; man is absent from himself;

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<sup>32</sup> At the beginning of his third lecture, Murray indicated that his portrait was designed to offer a Catholic alternative to other views: “We have seen in our own time--even my own time, which doesn't go back so very far--the rise of ideas that are directly opposed to it and that have a tremendous force for change in the world. We have seen the rise of the various mysticisms of race, of culture, and of class. They have been comparatively recently born, they are still operating, and their operation, as we know, is devastating, seductive ideologies, that are seductive, of course, like all error, because of the element of truth that is in them, but ideologies that, because they are false, necessarily will led to disastrous consequences for humanity.

“Against these particularistic mysticisms the Church opposes her dynamic idea of humanity as a whole, her universalistic idea in [her] view of man, her real idea, not a sentiment, but a real idea, which has behind it all the power and all the inspiration that comes to the Catholic from that [*sic*: the] fact that that idea is associated with the person of Christ.”

man is at war with himself.” There is discord in his social life: “man has been individualized in the worst sense of the word.”<sup>33</sup> He has become “an egocentric unity who only very painfully achieves that outgoing quality of life which even psychologists point out as essential to mental health and to social harmony.” Finally, there is “a state of discord with the material world. Natural forces are destructive, operate against him and his works.” “This state of scatteredness” is what is meant by original sin; it is a state, a privation, “the absence of that integrity, of that unity, which God established in the primitive creation of man.”

Murray then found in John 11:52 a biblical text that sums up the Catholic doctrine of redemption: Christ died in order to gather into one the scattered children of God, to restore mankind to its primitive unity. Christ is the second Adam, the new head of the human race. Murray illustrates this view with citations from the Fathers, drawn, it seems, from de Lubac, in which to express “the profound mystery that all of us are in Christ and that the common person of humanity is restored to life by his entrance into it.”

He then summed up his argument:

Such, therefore, are, very briefly expressed, the four major truths of Christian anthropology: The community of man in nature and his solidarity in nature; his solidarity in grace; his solidarity in guilt; his solidarity in restoration.

His point in recalling them was this:

To one who holds those doctrines as true, naturally the result would be the genesis in his soul of an intense sense of the collective responsibility of all for all. No one who holds those four truths could possibly regard himself as simply an isolated individual; nor could he regard any man as isolated from the fate of humanity as such, because humanity, in his mind would exist as it exists in the mind of God, as a concrete unity; and hence he would see himself in the total fate of humanity as such.

It is these four truths that are at the very basis of the whole Catholic concept of the social mission of the Church and the social program of the Church. Behind, you see, therefore, this collective responsibility of all for all, and giving it operative effect, you have all the compelling urgency of a religious motive; and you have, moreover, the fact, which is constantly present to us, of course, that it is precisely upon our faithful discharge of our social responsibilities that we will ultimately be judged.

We maintain, of course, that the whole historical process will culminate in a general judgment. The whole purpose of that general judgment is in order that to the eyes of each one of us there may be displayed mankind as it is, as a unit; and that we may see what we do not see now: The history of man also as a unitary process. We shall see the part that each one of us has played in it for good or ill.

At the beginning of his second lecture, Murray added a further explanation of his purpose, namely, to show

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<sup>33</sup> Compare de Lubac, *Catholicism*, p. 33: “original sin as a separation, a breaking up, an individualization it might be called, in the pejorative sense of the word.”

the true character of our intuition into Man's unity. It is to us an essentially theological and religious idea. We do not arrive at it simply through an exploration of our hearts wherein we find a natural affinity for all men--a certain natural sympathy for all men. It is not arrived at either by study of the world, in all fields of human life, economic, cultural, and all the rest.... for us the idea came from God through Christ and our acceptance of it is motivated by the authority of God revealing. We maintain that it is a true idea because it is God's idea, an idea that He gave me--an idea, therefore, that is not subject to question on my part nor subject to revision. I accepted it and go on from there to live it as best I may. It is that religious and theological character of this idea that gives it its power as a motive force in life, does not leave it at the mercy of experience, which, as I said, is so often seemingly contrary to it.

He then expanded on the restoration of human solidarity in the unity of the Catholic Church. This was first articulated in the early chapters of the Acts of the Apostles which portray the Church's unity of faith, of love, of heart, of ritual and worship, and "of obedience to one authority: Peter." The second part of the same book "portrays the unity of the Church in the act of becoming Catholic, transcending all barriers of race and culture" and becoming that "one person" in whom there is "neither Jew nor Greek, nor slave nor free, neither male nor female."

*Lecture II, February 17, 1942*

The proper theme of the second lecture was "the idea of the unity of nature and grace," which pervades Catholic theology and can be summed up thus: "...we hold that, in the achievement of the salvation of mankind, the total salvation, both human and divine energies mingle suchwise that the total and adequate principle of human salvation is neither the divine alone nor the human alone but the divine in unity with the human." This is best seen in Christ, according to the formula of Chalcedon, in whom there is a union of the divine and the human while both remain integral and distinct.

This doctrine has consequences throughout the whole Catholic conception of religion. The first of these is "God's affirmation of the validity of all things human," which obliges us "as a sacred duty to have a respect for all things human: for human intelligence, the human will, human sense, life, even for the animal part of our organism, because that as part of human nature belongs to its integrity and was ennobled by the fact of the Incarnation. We can have no contempt for matter as such." The second is the idea of "human cooperation in the work of salvation." God effected our salvation by becoming man. "In the light, therefore, of the Incarnation, we must assert that all human energies are to be enlisted in the work of man's total salvation. Therefore, the problem of society and religion demands for its solution not simply the thought of theologians but the thought of economists, politicians--shall I call them "statesmen"?--of industrialists, of government. All human forces are valid and have their place and are necessary and must cooperate toward the solution of this tremendous human problem." This excludes what Pius XII had called "the theory of false supernaturalism, the idea that redemption and salvation of the world is God's work alone and that he will do it in some apocalyptic, catastrophic fashion." [Look for reference.] Even prayer is not

enough: “It has its place, it is necessary, but its function must partly, at any rate, be to render action fecund. There must be action and cooperation.”

On the other hand, thirdly, the Incarnation also is “an affirmation of the radical insufficiency of purely human effort in saving man,” a condemnation of sheer naturalism--the theory that maintains that man has within himself all the energies necessary in order to achieve perfect humanity both in the personal order and in the social order.” For this reason, “we have to hold that the redemption of society cannot be the work of sheer technicians, of economists and statesmen. By himself man cannot be “the artificer of his own unity” either in the personal sphere or in society.

These three principles yield the fourth and supreme one: “the affirmation of the necessity of both the human and the divine operating as one, as the adequate principle of man's salvation.” This is “a medial way between a false supernaturalism and an equally false naturalism. We maintain that man is called to be human--totally human--in his personal life and in his social life. We maintain, however, also, that he will never be human unless he is divinized by the grace of God, and by ‘the grace of God’ I mean the descent into the soul of divine energies.”

From these four affirmations Murray drew a final one, which would enable him then to move on to practical considerations: “The humanization of man, the redemption of man, the salvation of man--I use these terms synonymously--is an historical process, and for an historical process time is needed.” Neither nature nor God goes by leaps and bounds. “The economy of salvation is an historical economy; it is subject, therefore, to the law of all history, which is the law of growth, and that historical process of man's unification is actually going on.” Evidence for this process was visible at the time. Whatever God’s purpose in permitting the present, total war, it was resulting in a uniting of all mankind “in a solidarity of suffering,” and we might all pray that “through mankind’s experience of solidarity in suffering, mankind may come to a realization of its own unity, of that great Christian truth of which I have been speaking.” In addition, the growing economic and material unity of the world might itself be “a preparation for the great spiritual unity toward which mankind cannot help but aspire.” Murray concluded:

The Christian gaze looks forward over the whole earth where it believes, I say, this great historical process of man's spiritual and material unification is going on and that behind that gaze is confidence that this whole process tends toward one glorious determination that this God has designed men for unity. Somehow he will achieve it.

### *Lecture III, February 24, 1942*

The theme of Murray’s third lecture was “the relation between the spiritual and the temporal mission of the Church--her spiritual mission which can be formulated as her task of saving souls and her temporal mission which can be formulated as her task of creating in this world those institutions which make for a proper human life.” To ground his reply, Murray again went back to Christ, who serves, he said, in the supernatural order the role of the principle of contradiction in the natural: “He is to us the principle of intelligibility of all religion.” His mission was “primarily and properly” spiritual in nature, a doctrinal or revelatory or prophetic mission, a regal or legislative mission, and

a priestly mission, “the work of sealing with His own blood a new covenant between God and man, and perpetuating His sacrifice in the Church.” The Gospels reveal him to have emphasized his spiritual mission and to have rejected the temptation “to bring to man a purely earthly salvation.” “He foiled every attempt to bring Him into conflict with the usurping political authority of the time.” He refused to take the place of secular authority in judging between man and man.

If, then, Christ maintained the clear distinction between the eternal and the temporal, he did not separate them. He was interested in man’s temporal happiness; he healed people and raised others from the dead. His miracles were “revelations and signs of love, of God’s pity for humanity.” The divine power in him “overflowed into the temporal order of man and brought healing even in his material earthly life. “His mission in its totality was not simply the healing of men's souls from the wounds of error and ignorance and passion, but also was to be the healing of men's bodies, because, as I think I said before, the adequate formula for salvation as God conceived it is not the salvation simply of the soul, but the salvation of men and of women who are souls and bodies.”

There follow consequences for the Church:

The Church's mission in the temporal order is to be conceived of--she conceives of it--exactly in the same way. It is the overflow into the temporal order of human culture and civilization of the divine power that dwells in her.

If “the action of the Church in the temporal order is indirect and subordinate,” this makes it, as Leo XIII had said, all the more fruitful. This is illustrated in the lives of the saints whose “sole aim in life was to live simply and solely for God, and yet the action that they exerted upon the world as such was incalculable.”

The source of this “overflow” is the Holy Spirit dwelling in the Church. Murray found three ways in which “His indwelling is a source of beneficent effects in the temporal order. As the Spirit of truth, He “animates the Church in the exercise of her magisterial office.” This office exists in the Church precisely “to liberate man from his basic enslavement, enslavement to error.” Fallen man is subject individually to the sway of sense, passion, and egoistic interest and socially to the power of tradition and of particular historical and social contexts. The magisterium has exercised its liberative role against the “Dawnism” of the modern world: “the idea, namely, that the use of human reason, unfettered human reason, human reason that has slipped off all the bonds, as they thought, of superstitious religion and what-not, the use of unfettered human reason would somehow insure the dawn of a golden age and would bring to men freedom from the triple evil that Rousseau, for instance, saw threatening man: reason would free man from ignorance, free him from suffering, and free him from slavery.” Its political expression was representative democracy, its economic expression laissez-faire capitalism, its working philosophy the nineteenth century’s belief in “inevitably accumulative, unthwartable scientific progress.” The Syllabus of Errors was one of the classic ways in which the magisterium opposed that philosophy. This was “an exercise of the Church's magisterial office in the interests of temporal civilization and culture, because I think by anyone the hypothesis should be entertained that had the world at that time listened to the voice of Pius IX, we might very well have been spared some of the disastrous consequences of that philosophy that we are suffering today.”

The Church's teaching office communicates two types of truths: the first and primary ones are the revealed truths that are inaccessible to human reason. The others are truths accessible in principle to human reason but difficult to grasp: truths of philosophy and morality.

Secondly, there is the Spirit of power and law and discipline, by which the Church possesses also a legislative authority. The Church does not hold to a Rousseauistic view of man, but sees him as in need of discipline precisely in order to liberate him from his "core of ego-centricity" and "self-reference" and to strengthen him against "the solicitations of the personal spirit of evil" and "to liberate him from his enslavement to matter." The moral obligations the Church imposes, not only upon individuals but also upon nations are "her second great contribution to order and peace and stability to all human values in the temporal order."

"Thirdly, the Holy Spirit in the Church is the Spirit of love." The Spirit, who is the principle of unity within the Trinity, dwells within the Church where he is the source of the efficacy of the sacraments and where he is the Spirit of the common sonship and therefore of the brotherhood of man. For individuals he exercises "what I might call a de-individualizing force," replacing "that core of ego-centricity with a core of charity," thus curing us "of our habit of referring all things to ourselves" and imparting "the habit of reference to others." This is far more than "mere humanitarian sentiment," and is not subject to "the vacillation that all sentiments are exposed to when their foundation is simply emotional."

Murray summarized his whole argument:

By this triple gift, therefore, the gift of liberation from error through the exercise of her magisterial function, the gift of liberation from enslavement to matter and to passion by the exercise of her legislative function, and, above all, by her supreme gift of the indwelling spirit of love, the Church makes her basic contributions to the problems of religion and society, because this triple gift, which is really one, although its primary purpose is to lead and direct mankind to his eternal goal and destiny, nevertheless has its overflow in the purely temporal order.

#### *Lecture IV, March 10, 1942*

In his final talk, Murray turned to "the Catholic social program," which is summed up under the rubric of "Catholic Action." This was not something new in the sense of the Church's interest in social problems and the temporal order, which is ancient and which Murray sums up as "the creation of such a temporal order as will enable man to live a human life here on earth in accord with the plan of God;" nor are its essential elements or methods new, which are the teaching of the Word of God, the administration of the sacraments, and "the formation of souls to the discipline of Christian morality." What is new about it is "the different reactions that the world opposes to her effort" and "the differences in the social context in which she has to work." To identify what is novel

about Catholic Action, Murray describes six periods in the Church's life and of their particular forms of social apostolate. This description is taken, almost verbatim, from a French article on the subject.<sup>34</sup>

The first period ran from Pentecost to Constantine, when the Church faced the opposition and indeed persecution of the social order. Its "particular form of social apostolate" was martyrdom. The era was marked by hostility between the old order and the emergent new Christian community, and "in that war the Church's means of combat were purely spiritual."

The second period ran from the Edict of Milan to the Middle Ages. It was marked by an alliance between the Church and the temporal power. If it was now advantageous to be a Christian, this meant that the Church's rapid expansion was somewhat superficial and dangerous. The two powers were allied and even confused, alternating dominance. An era of Caesaro-papism ended with the barbarian invasions, which initiated a period when the spiritual power dominated. From then on the Church "assumed a position as the molding force of European civilization." The chief mark of this period was "the compenetration of the spiritual and the temporal." The differentiation of the two powers was at yet indistinct, neither State nor Church yet having "attained that degree of organization and of elaboration that was necessary in order that they might exist in distinction one from the other." During this period the Church's social apostolate

involved the use of the temporal power, added to or conceived as inherent in her own spiritual power. She put at the services of her own social ideal temporal resources, riches, armies, alliances with princes, and other such purely temporal means. The effect was that she created a temporal society that was in harmony with herself and with her own principles, a society that accepted her moral postulates, her institutions, her spirit, her laws--her aim, of course, always remaining the same: to create that social milieu in which souls could live and reach God and His truth. Her aim at that period was to save the world by civilizing it.

The third period, the Middle Ages, "was the period of a united Christendom in Europe, and the Church's social apostolate naturally took the form of direct spiritual action of the Church upon the souls, souls which existed already in a Christian environment." Five Christian ideas held sway during this period: the primacy of the spiritual over the temporal symbolized in the crowning of the emperor by the pope; the organization of work in the medieval guilds not merely for the sake of production but also "in view of the sanctification of men;" the laws of the time which were sanctioned by decalogue, bound in conscience, and derived their force from the moral law of God; the science of the time that acknowledged the queenship of theology; and the arts whose purpose was "the evocation of the supernatural realities of faith," the cathedral being "the perfect embodiment of the medieval spirit."

The fourth period was a period of crises that ran from the fourteenth to the eighteenth century. The Church's social task, well set out in theory but only sketched in practice, suffered from

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<sup>34</sup> See Henri Carpay, "La nouveauté de l'Action catholique," *Nouvelle Revue Théologique*, 62 (1935) 477-95. This essay was expanded into a little book, *L'Action catholique: Essai de justification historique et précision doctrinale* (Tournai: Casterman, 1948). See also Christopher D. Denny, "From Participation to Community: John Courtney Murray's American Justification for Catholic Action," in *Empowering the People of God: Catholic Action Before and After Vatican II*, ed. Jeremy Bonner et al. (New York: Fordham University Press, 2014) 107-22.

“one grave defect,” namely “too much engagement of the temporal in the spiritual and the spiritual in the temporal.” Ideally, “the next step in human progress would have been the strengthening of the Christian unity and the Christian order by a progressive differentiation of its two elements, the spiritual and the temporal.” The need for it is revealed both in movements for reform and in the movement of humanism. The first called for the Church to disengage herself from the temporal order and to purify herself. The second involved a “developing consciousness of human values, of human capacities, of human rights,” which led to “that great efflorescence of intellectual life, the beginnings of a certain amount of material progress, a new epoch of culture, and, of course, the rise of the nascent states.” The two types of movement were in the direction of a disengagement of the Church from the temporal order, but this differentiation “did not progress without checks and without excesses.” Instead of simple distinction, what resulted was separation and rupture. Besides the public humiliation of the Church at Avignon, there arose also the principle of private judgment and later of the principle of the absolute autonomy of human reason. The result was “the religious division of Europe.” On the part of the temporal order, the legitimate desire for autonomy was corrupted when politicians “sought their inspiration no longer in Christian political and social theory, but in the theories of the pagan legalists,” such as “the principle of the divine right of kings,” resulting in “the constitution of the secular state in hostility now to the Church.”

The result was the French Revolution and the construction of “the modern lay state, a state which is in opposition to the fundamental laws of the social order as the Church has conceived them, a state in which all the hierarchies, as they are conceived in their Christian sense, are shattered.” Authority is no longer derived from God but is a simple functionary of the people. In science “the engineer supplanted the theologian as at the head of the hierarchy,” and the principle of empiricism began to reign, along with a denial of absolute metaphysical truth--“the invasion of agnosticism.” Human law was separated from the moral law of God, and politics divorced from ethics. In economics, work was divorced from “any moral sanctifying purpose” and became “simply a means to wealth,” and the factory replaced the cathedral as an embodiment of the spirit of the time. The growing secularism induced a growing hostility to religion. “The wheel of history seemed to have come full circle. The Christian Church existed once more in a pagan or, better, in a paganized society.”

The fifth period ran from the French Revolution to 1922, the advent of Pope Pius XI, and was marked by “a new effort at a purely spiritual penetration by the Church into the pagan temporal environment.” The French Revolution had turned a good thing--the differentiation of the temporal and the spiritual--into an evil thing--the hostile divorce between the two. The effect on the Church was an impoverishment, a loss of privileges, that has worked to her benefit, leading to a purification of the Church, “a new purity and a new vitality in the life of the Church.” On the other hand, the effect was “the destruction of a milieu favorable to Christian virtue.” The new social forces,” political, educational, economic, etc., “shaped a new culture that resulted in the progressive demoralization of the masses of men, and there took place...the apostasy of the working class from Christianity.” Within the state there was “a tremendous material progress,” “a period of enlightenment,” and the rise of “‘Dawnism,’ a great confidence of man in his own resources, of reason, of technique, in his power to dominate his material environment, and to wrest it to his own

purposes.” But this basically good thing was rendered sterile by its divorce from all moral aim. Moral education did not keep pace with material advance, and the result was not a development but a “throttling” of man’s spiritual nature. The term of all this has been the great economic crisis of our times in capitalistic countries and Bolshevistic Communism in other countries.

Throughout this period the Church had to operate as she had in the early Christian centuries, within a society that not only was deficient in its practice of Christian principles but rejected them and pursued secularist aims. The Church now had no political power, and she was not listened to when she spoke on political and social matters. Laws and institutions departed from her concepts; education became secular and even irreligious; literature, cinema, and theatre opposed her moral teaching; other inimical cultural influences were shaping the culture of the world: “the spirit of rugged individualism in economic life, the idea that labor is a commodity to be bought in the open market, the notion that men are to devote themselves to sheer production, the production of material things simply for the sake of production of material things.” On the other hand, this period saw also in the Church “a new spiritual rebirth in her religious and devotional life,” a series of great popes, “a renovation of the clergy in learning and in piety, a tremendous outbreak of missionary activity, and, most significantly, a development among the lay people of an élite.”

The sixth period is the one that began with the accession of Pius XI and lasts down to our day, “the period of Catholic Action.” The spiritual forces that fashioned the present world, Murray wrote, “have spent their force for good; if they did much that is valuable, “they have not achieved, certainly, that which they professedly set out to achieve, the liberation of the human personality and the unity of human society.” The great question now is:

Will the nations in their disillusionment return to the Church and end the estrangement from the Catholic Church, who considers herself, in Leo XIII's phrase, "the Mother of peoples and their educator". Will they take up anew, in alliance with the Church and not in hostility to her, the secular work of the education and the civilization of mankind, or will they persist in a prideful independence? That, as we conceive it, is the deepest social problem of our contemporary age. The issue of human society on which all the future hangs is that of the relations between the Catholic Church and human society in its temporal aspects.

For Pius XI, two great conditions must govern “this new accord, this new harmony, between the Church and temporal society.” First, it must be in harmony with the exigencies of the eternal law of God. “The Catholic Church will not accept exclusion from the affairs of the world.” “All the problems of the world have a spiritual basis, spiritual origins, and she maintains, therefore that she is competent in them.... She cannot permit willingly, gladly, that the world should organize itself without her, much less against her, because it is her conviction that that way lies disaster in the future as it has in the past.”

But, secondly, “it is equally certain that the Church’s mode of insertion of herself into the temporal order today cannot be that and will not be that used in past ages, particularly in the medieval period.” The differentiation of “civil society as a constituted entity” has taken place and there is no going back. “The medieval formula for the relation between Church and State is no longer applicable today.” The Church, therefore, has renounced “the direct guidance of temporal affairs. She has in our day formally retired from politics.” Examples can be found in the Concordat between the

Holy See and Italy, in the condemnation of Action française, and the dissolution of the German *Zentrum*.

These two conditions, therefore, are clear. What they come down to is this: that nowadays there must reign, as there does reign, that full distinction between two societies, the spiritual and the temporal. Each, according to the formula of Leo XIII, is sovereign in its own domain and has all the right, all the authority, and all the prestige that belongs to it by reason of its particular function in history with reference to mankind.

What, then, will be the new formula for the Church's "mission of the penetration of the temporal by the spiritual to which she is committed, whose aim...is simply the creation here on earth of human institutions that will foster the spread and the growth of the divine life that she believes Christ brought to earth?" It will be "a purely spiritual action. She aims to direct nations, to aid them in their task of creating a new human order simply by communicating to them a spirit conforming to her own and conforming, therefore, she believes, to their own basic needs and their own highest aspirations. The Church and the state are to remain perfectly distinct. They ought to become one simply insofar as both share one common spirit." This is the special task of Catholic Action, and it defines "its novelty, its distinctiveness, its appropriateness to the modern context."

Two means are necessary. The first is "to develop new inner spiritual vitality, rekindling the Spirit in all her members, both clerical and lay."

That task is accomplished, of course, by the education of her members to a deeper intelligence of Christian doctrine, especially in its social aspects, accomplished too by the inculcation of a more selfless-spirited charity founded on the selflessness of humility, and the development, too, in them of a spirit of whole-souled, childlike dependence upon God and upon spiritual means, because it is only through that alliance with the divine energies of God himself that any measure of success can be achieved, even in a [*sic*] temporal order.

The second means is "the communication to the laity of the basic preoccupation of conforming all things in human society to the laws of God and thus converting all human energies to the good of souls and to the solid prosperity of the secular order..., the formation of the laity to an intelligent and an intense spiritual life, that they may themselves form civil society and bring it into harmony with Christian principles."

The goal is "the reconstitution of a Christian temporal order," that is, "a social order in which a man can be a man without having to be a hero." The Church wants to create a social milieu "in which a man can reach the truth and can walk in it and can live it." By "a man" here, Murray explained, "I mean one who is a child of the Father in heaven, one who is a living member of Christ, one who is a temple of the Holy Spirit and His instrument for the unification of the world, because that is the Church's definition of manhood."

Murray completed his picture by pointing to certain characteristics of Catholic Action.

First of all, it is basically a lay action.... Today, the task of Christianizing mankind has passed very largely to the hands of the laity. The laity, of course, are not devoted to the construction of that specifically supernatural order, to the direct sanctification of souls, which is the work of the Catholic priesthood. They have only one part in the work of the Church, not the direct fostering of the divine life through the preaching of the Word of God, the administration of the Sacraments, or

moral discipline; but their task is rather the creation of those earthly conditions which will be favorable to the growth of the divine life. They operate, therefore, in a temporal order and not where it touches the spiritual order. They do not operate in a directly, specifically spiritual supernatural order.

Secondly, it is universal, leaving “untouched no sphere of human life that has any bearing on the spiritual life and destiny of mankind.” Thirdly, it is spiritual, promoting the grace of baptism and having nothing to do “with the formation of political parties” or “with the creation of societies or organizations whose purpose is specifically economic.” Fourthly, it is hierarchical in the sense that Catholics undertake it not as private individuals but as members of the Church and see their work “as a participation in the total work of the Church, a work that is really one....Each member performs a specialized task, but performs it in union with the Church. Sometimes the tasks, of course, are very modest, but the tasks are always Catholic, because they are part of a vast ensemble of tasks to which each individual makes his own particular contribution.” It is not the individual Catholic’s task “to establish between himself and the world these spiritual relationships,” but rather to be the means by which “the Church is to establish relations between herself and society. Catholic Action, as I said, is the modern form of relations between Church and State, relations that are established not now as they used to be between pope and Christian princes but between the Catholic and his fellow men in a particular social order. It is through the laity, who stand as it were on the frontier touching both the spiritual and the temporal, that the Church comes into contact with the temporal order.”

Finally, this social action is realistic. It follows no abstract plan, but addresses real life and attempts to transform daily ordinary life in its various spheres, where it is undertaken by Catholics who follow the various vocations of those spheres. The formation of a new social order, it is hoped, will be accomplished from the bottom up. “This Catholic Action aims to permeate in a spiritual fashion the whole social context in which we live today.” Murray brought his lectures to an end with a description of the goal the Church pursues:

Our hope, therefore, is that there will be established a real entente between Church and human society, a harmony that will be real because it will not be imposed or exterior, but will be accomplished by a genuine penetration of a Christian human spirit into public life. Once that spirit is created and has permeated public life, we hope that it itself will create institutions favorable for its further development. There is no attempt at infringing any of the prerogatives of the state. There is no idea in Catholic Action of effecting any subordination of the state to the Church, although there is a very definite idea of effecting that necessary subordination of state and of human society and every single individual in it to the eternal principles of the two, law and order, to those eternal laws of human nature whose sanction is God.

The Church, therefore, in this spiritual fashion aims to re-assume the direction of the temporal order, not directly by authority, but indirectly by the multiple and united activity of all her members, each in his place, each penetrated by a full, integral Christian spirit, and all directed by the hierarchy.

Therefore, that is the general social program of the Church with its general purpose, that rapprochement of religion and society, that permeation of the temporal by the spiritual in which we believe all our future hope for humanity lies.

Importance of these lectures: set out for a largely non-Catholic audience the basic theological principles; grounded in dogma (de Lubac); first articulation of the succession of periods with differing social apostolates; the irrelevance now of the medieval formula; the move from below up; the role of lay people; the contemporary form of Church-State relations.

One will note in these early lectures and essays by Murray that the whole emphasis falls upon the temporal mission and tasks of Catholics imposed and undertaken as consequences of their most basic Christian faith, exigencies of their baptism, and ways of cooperating in the fulfilment of God's redemptive purpose of restoring the shattered unity of the human race. The general vision is that given by divine revelation of the essential truths of the divine trinitarian life, of the incarnation, of the redemptive death and resurrection of Christ, and of the corporate character of redeemed community in the Church. There is little, if any, reference to the natural law. The great problem to overcome in the Church is the tendency toward individualism and supernaturalism. The great problem to overcome in the world is the set of competing naturalistic worldviews. Although Murray had proposed in his first lecture at Jewish Theological Seminary as one of the likely questions his mixed audience might have: "what measure of cooperation does the Church expect, or is prepared to accept, from other religious bodies that are also vitally concerned in the construction of human society," he never addressed the issue.

This is all the more striking because by the time Murray delivered these last lectures he was surely already familiar with the debate on interreligious cooperation that had been carried on in the pages of *America*, and he had probably been consulted by Fr. John LaFarge with regard to the Statement of Basic Principles sponsored by the National Conference of Christians and Jews and that was published at the very time of his lectures. In addition, a week after Murray concluded these lectures, LaFarge was able to inform Bishop Thomas H. McLaughlin of Paterson, who was troubled by the NCCJ statement, that the issue of intercredal cooperation would be "thoroughly and soundly investigated from every point of view" in upcoming issues of *Theological Studies*, the journal of which Murray was the chief editor.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> LaFarge to McLaughlin, New York, March 18, 1942 (copy); WCA, LaFarge Papers. I take Murray to have been the "keenly critical theologian" to whom LaFarge had submitted the NCCJ statement before he himself signed it. Murray did not sign the statement and later expressed reservations about it.