

The Church and the New Left

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In common with many other countries, the Catholic Church in America today is closely intertwined with the major party on the left. In my religious congregation, for example, the U.S. Province is 60 to 80 percent Democrat. This is also the case in other religious orders and many whole dioceses.

People caught up in this mixing of worlds have to flip back and forth between Catholic concepts and Democrat ideology as they go through the day. Unfortunately, many bishops do not show them anything better.

Catholicism was never meant to be a department of a political party, either party: “The Church, by reason of her role and competence, is not identified in any way with the political community nor bound to any political system. She is at once a sign and a safeguard of the transcendent character of the human person.” (Vatican II)

As its name indicates, Catholicism deals in universals. The dictionary tells us that the word universal means “pertaining to the whole of something, occurring everywhere.” Catholicism holds the total and ultimate meaning for everyone everywhere.

The Church is the Body of Christ who really is the Way, the Truth and the Life – for everyone. For the New Left, however – the Left that we have seen in action over the past few years – this is not and cannot be true. The New Left holds that it holds the total meaning of the world for the world. There can be no legitimate rivals. This mindset comes from the radical wing of the Enlightenment, via various later developments, with its vicious hostility to Catholicism and its denial of the role of Christ.

Now, for example, from Divine Revelation, Catholicism teaches the universals of human nature. Thus, seeing an individual human being means seeing all of the possibilities of that human being. This is the exact opposite of working to kill a human being, born or unborn. Here we come to the foundation of the Left’s thinking. The Left is all about power over human

beings – carefully disguised with the claim that it’s for their own good, of course.



Catholicism, on the other hand, is not about power, but simply about the truth. Although some Catholics have misused power over the centuries, for the rest (a very large number), the Catholic truth is Christ taken in the fullness of His presence as the Divine Word – and is its own reward. For the Left, the reward is power for the Left’s elite core. Their constituent groups get various kinds of payoff.

Catholic thinking is only Catholic thinking when it sets out the universal aspects of man and nature, and our relation to God. So, as might be expected, there is a long tradition of social, legal, and political reflection. Catholicism conceives of a nation as an entity with sovereignty, a legal structure and its just application, all concepts that the Left only uses when it is convenient.

Historically, the Left always has to leech on wealth and institutions that it did not create, and in the process, the Left elites become prosperous. These pre-existing resources provide power bases for the growth of the Left.

Catholicism, on the other hand, is not parasitic. Real Catholicism provides vast services to millions and does not expect anything in return.

The Church knows too, for example, that there are objectively evil acts. The Left does not. Catholicism knows what marriage is. It knows what calumny and detraction are. Acting as if the Church does not know – the radical Enlightenment position as well as the current socialist position – means that God’s revelation in Judeo-Christian history did not happen. And does not matter.

Trying to shoehorn Leftist slogans into the Catholic doctrine and practice eats away at the value of the Church from the inside. When I think of much that has transpired in the Church in the past half-century and more, it reminds me of the Hagfish, which are known to devour their prey from the inside.

Yet one of the Catholic events of recent decades that the Left often celebrates takes a different view: “The Church and the political community in their own fields are autonomous and independent from each other. Both, under different titles, are devoted to the personal and social vocation of the same men.” (Vatican II)

The “different titles,” within the same human being, are the key. When a particular individual acts politically, he has only one source for knowing how things really are. That is the Church. If he acts according to two sets of contrary ideas, he is denying his integrity as a human being. You cannot serve two masters.

Lastly, in some general sense, the people in the pews know whether Father or Bishop is a leftist. They either go along with politicized religion that ends up as some kind of liberal Protestantism or they move on to some other religious community that actually believes and practices a faith that is not consumed by politics.

When segments of the Catholic hierarchy pass on the Faith in a form that is not quite right, or never really mention the inconvenient non-political side of the Faith, they are departing from the fullness and depth of Christ, from the presence among us that He promised until the end of the world. The New Left does this to all of the institutions onto which it latches. It hollows them out and devours them. Remember the Hagfish!

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