

"The world is where you find Christ"

You need formation, because you need a profound sense of responsibility, if you are to encourage and direct the activity of Catholics in public life and do so with the respect that everyone's freedom deserves, reminding each and every one that they have to be consistent with their faith. (The Forge, 712)

July 26

A man who knows that the world, and not just the church, is the place where he finds Christ, loves that world. He endeavours to become properly formed, intellectually and professionally. He makes up his own mind with complete freedom about the problems of the environment in which he moves, and then he makes his own decisions. Being the decisions of a Christian, they result from personal reflection, in which he endeavours, in all humility, to grasp the Will of God in both the unimportant and the important events of his life.

But it would never occur to such a Christian to think or to say that he was stepping down from the temple into the world to represent the Church, or that his solutions are ‘the Catholic solutions’ to problems. That would be completely inadmissible! That would be clericalism, ‘official Catholicism’, or whatever you want

to call it. In any case, it means doing violence to the very nature of things. You must foster everywhere a genuine 'lay outlook', which will lead to three conclusions: be sufficiently honest, so as to shoulder one's own personal responsibility; be sufficiently Christian, so as to respect those brothers in the Faith who, in matters of free discussion, propose solutions which differ from those which each one of us maintains; and be sufficiently Catholic so as not to use our Mother the Church, involving her in human factions...

Interpret, then, my words as what they are: a call to exercise your rights every day, and not merely in time of emergency. A call to fulfil honourably your commitments as citizens, in all fields — in politics and in financial affairs, in university life and in your job — accepting with courage all the consequences of your free decisions and the personal

independence which corresponds to each one of you. A Christian 'lay outlook' of this sort will enable you to flee from all intolerance, from all fanaticism. To put it in a positive way, it will help you to live in peace with all your fellow citizens, and to promote this understanding and harmony in all spheres of social life. (Conversations, 116-117)

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