

## Weighing the Consequences of Character:

### The Contrasting Depictions and Diplomatic Acts of Popes Pius XI and Pius XII

(This article by Professor Robert Hickson has been posted on the *Apropos* website, [www.apropos.org.uk](http://www.apropos.org.uk) Subheadings by the Editor, *Apropos*.)

#### Trying to understand the inexplicable

In my ongoing efforts to understand certain policies of Pope Pius XI—especially his ecumenical *Ostpolitik* towards Bolshevik-Soviet Russia (1922-1933) and his correlative (and concurrent) conciliatory policy towards Leftist France (especially during the years 1925-1927)—I came across a fair and indeed affectionate assessment of the character of Pius XI's successor, Pope Pius XII. This set of discernments was rendered by one of his closest and devoted advisors, Domenico Tardini, who also intimately knew Pius XI; and his testimony has indirectly and unexpectedly helped to clarify many matters about some earlier Papal prudential (and moral) decisions (and some seeming omissions)—before, during, and after World War II—which have hitherto been to me largely unintelligible, not only inexplicable. For, Papal Diplomacy—*Ostpolitik* and Ecumenism—is no substitute, no replacement, for Our Lady's warning words of mercy from Heaven. We may run, but we can't hide from the matter of Fatima. Not even now.

#### Cardinal Tardini's appraisal of Pius XII

Let us, therefore, first welcome the 1959 words of Monsignor (later Cardinal) Domenico Tardini: words which he open-heartedly expressed shortly after the death of Pope Pius XII on 9 October 1958, and it was to be less than two years before his own sudden death on 30 July 1961. These somewhat lengthy depictions and discernments concerning, not only Pius XII, but also Pius XI, should be savored and carefully considered, and not only attentively read:

Pius XII had a gentle and rather timid temperament. *He was not made for struggle.* In this he was very different from his great predecessor Pius XI, who seemed, apparently at least, to relish a struggle. Pius XII, on the contrary, visibly suffered from them. This inclination, which led him to prefer solitude and calm, disposed him to avoid rather than face the battles of life.

His great goodness led him *to please everybody and irritate no one*; to prefer the ways of mildness to those of severity, persuasion to force. *The candor of his soul did not even permit him to suspect a lack of veracity or sincerity in someone else. Humble as he was, he believed that everyone was like him: just as devoted to truth, just as selfless as he was.*

Sometimes at the most difficult moments, his penetrating intelligence, applying itself to the situation, made him see promptly and clearly all the possible solutions [sic]. Immediately there appeared to him the pros and cons, the advantages and disadvantages, the possible favorable or unfavorable consequences. Then he would remain *uncertain, hesitant, as if he were not sure of himself.* Then he had to be left to reflect and pray. *But not everyone acted in this way...One person suggested one thing and another suggested something else.* Everyone—as often happened—claimed to have found the just solution, the only solution, the solution the Pope had to follow. *All that*

troubled him.

**Once the decision was made, it had to be executed: this too was a delicate step, especially if the decision made was by its nature displeasing to some.** In this case, Pius XII loved—as he himself used to say—“to sweeten the pill”....

A question can be asked here: is it possible for a man not only to conquer himself, but to destroy and even annihilate [sic] his own natural dispositions? I don't think so. Given human frailty, something of the temperament remains in the depths of the psychic structure of man, and at certain moments emerges at the surface once more.

*Moreover, a person who occupies an elevated post very frequently encounters among those who approach him, somebody clever enough to exploit his weak side. The interest of the exploiter, his ideas or his friends profits [sic] from the superior's weak side. Pius XII himself cannot be entirely exempted from this common law of human existence.*<sup>1</sup> (III—150-151—italics in the original, my bold emphasis added)

### **Pius XI by contrast**

By way of further contrast, and almost twenty-five years earlier, the scholar Father Philip Hughes had given his own sympathetic and comparably considered assessment of Pope Pius XI's character and deep, spontaneous temperament, to be found in his own 1937 book, entitled *Pope Pius the Eleventh*. What this priestly English scholar reveals also confirms Monsignor Tardini's 1959 words about Pius XI. But, here are Father Hughes's own words:

Pius XI once publicly **thanked God for the grace** that he lives in an age of critical change. **The Pope's whole temperament is**, in fact, to speak philosophically, **cast for the irascible emotions. Action and attack are in his blood. Fortitude, that stimulates in the presence of fear and that tempers impetuosity before attack, is his characteristic virtue.** He can afford to look events in the face, and to know all the facts, for it is his nature [*i.e.*, of his essence] to be happiest when he is facing them.<sup>2</sup> (269-270—my emphasis added)

We may come to see, however, that Pius XI's strength of character did not entirely shield him from some grave illusions, nor their lethal effects—some of which he never knew or, at least, never admitted. For, as it seems, he was not at all inclined to “lose face.”

---

1 Frère Michel de la Sainte Trinité (b.1948), CRC (the Little Brothers of the Sacred Heart), *The Whole Truth about Fatima*—in 4 Volumes. (Buffalo, New York: Immaculate Heart Publications, 1989), pp. 150-151 in Volume III—the Original French Edition was copyrighted in 1983. Most of the quotations and citations in the above Essay will be from Volume II and Volume III, and all references in the text above, unless otherwise specified, will give the page number and the volume number in parentheses immediately following the extended quotations. These lengthy and well-researched volumes combine the sacred events themselves and ecclesiastical history with temporal-secular political history—to include the history of the Revolution and various revolutionary movements (*e.g.*, Bolshevik, Fascist and National Socialist, Revolutionary-Utopian Liberal Democracy, and Theological Modernism). The four volumes should be read in their entirety—also to consider the multiple footnotes and bibliography provided. Each of the four volumes has a subtitle: Volume I—“Science and the Facts”; Volume II—“The Secret and the Church” (1917-1942); Volume III—“The Third Secret” (1942-1960); Volume IV (Now Being Prepared)—“In the End My Immaculate Heart Will Triumph” (1960-1989)

2 Philip Hughes, *Pope Pius the Eleventh* (New York: Sheed & Ward, 1937-1938), pp. 269-270.

## Hoist by Ostpolitik

Pius XI, while being and remaining resolutely silent about Fatima, was, surprisingly, not to perceive the deceits and worldly maneuvers of “The Moscow-Paris-Rome Triangle” which gradually was formed with the intermediation of the French Foreign Office (the Quai d'Orsay), especially in the years 1925-early 1927. The French Foreign Office cleverly strove to become indispensable to the Pope: to be the designedly “indispensable” mediator or specious “facilitator” for Pius XI's *Ostpolitik*, and thereby create a situation to produce Pius XI's just sense of moral indebtedness to them.

So, too, was Pius XII later to become “a Pope torn between” a set of objectively and starkly incommensurate alternatives. (III—149) He was to show himself to be a sensitive, indecisive Pope who regrettably and persistently vacillated between following, on the one hand, the challenging requests of Fatima, and, on the other hand, complying with another kind of *Ostpolitik*: namely the laxer (and delusional) *Ostpolitik* of the American President F.D. Roosevelt, who had his own even more dangerous illusions about Stalin and the Soviet Union, illusions which Pius XII, in his own heart, did not have, as he thus bore the increasing burdens of conscience in silence, in a trembling silence.

## The price of papal silence

Pius XII put his views in a candid diplomatic Letter he wrote to an American in September of 1942 **already**, only a little over a year after the 22 June 1941 attack by Germany on the Soviet Union, which cruel despotism then became the purported “New Ally” of the chimerical Western Democracies:

I fear that the articles on **liberty of conscience** or religion [cf. Leo XIII's “*deliramentum*”] that you [Americans] have promised, in the name of your government, to include in future agreements between the [Western] Allies and Soviet Russia, will **not** appear there. You [Myron Taylor] have given me the relevant acts, **but knowing what I know about communism, I have the greatest doubts about this illusion of your government.** At the request of President Roosevelt, **the Vatican has refrained from all polemics** [sic] against the communist **regime** [and doctrine, too?], but **this silence which weighs on our consciences** has **not** been understood [?] by the Soviet leaders, who continue their persecutions against the Church and the faithful in the U.S.S.R. and the countries occupied [even as of late 1942] by Red Army troops. **May God grant that the free world** [sic—and the Soviet's captive nations, too?] **may not have to regret my silence one day.** (III-149—my emphasis added) <sup>3</sup>

## Ostpolitik shaped by Westpolitik

In view of these above depictions and character-assessments of two distinctively different Popes, we may become more aware of two things: not only about Pius XII's sensitive hesitations, but also about his predecessor's contrastingly more obdurate, even clenched, resoluteness, to include his perceptibly obstinate silence about Our Lady of Fatima and also about the heroic lay leader of beset Portugal himself, Antonio Salazar. What I have only recently and very suddenly come to realize—if as yet in but an inchoate way—is that Pope Pius XI's own “Westpolitik”—to include his diplomatic policy of conciliation towards anti-clerical-socialist-largely passivist Political France, and even towards the

---

3 In Pope Pius XII's important 22 September 1942 Letter to Myron Taylor, F.D. Roosevelt's special envoy (or informal, but effective, ambassador) to the Vatican, the Pope quite candidly reveals his own struggles of conscience in conflict with his purportedly expedient Papal silences about a very dubious and short-sighted, secular diplomatic “expediency.”

complementary and tendentiously Progressive French Hierarchy and Clergy—indispensably helped to form (and further deform) his own growing astigmatism and delusional expectations about his Catholic *Ostpolitik* towards the Soviet Union during the years from 1922-1933, but especially in those manifoldly decisive years of 1925-1926, just before the Papal condemnations of Action Française. (V.I. Lenin had died on 21 January 1924, and, then, Joseph Stalin was gradually to take over power, after a brief, precarious period of “the triumvirate government of Stalin, Zinoviev, and Kamenev.”)

### **Perfidious France**

For, if one now considers the strategically preparatory years of 1925-1926 and how deftly the French government and the progressive-ecumenical French Ecclesiastics both helped facilitate Pius XI's *Ostpolitik*—especially by way of smoothing the way for the chimerical operations of the soon-to-be-made Bishop Michel d'Herbigny and for his three trips to visit Stalin and Stalin's Soviet Russia—one is then much more unsurprised by, and more attentive to, the big “Return Favor”, the *Quid Pro Quo*, that Socialist-Masonic France and the Progressive Churchman in France would soon seek from Pius XI. They were to seek some very special recompense for that “special diplomatic favor” they had provided “to help the Pope.” And what was it that they would so soon seek and receive?

In the words of Frère Michel de la Sainte Trinité, it was to be some actions from Rome that were to aid the grave weakening of Traditional (not just Nationalist and latently Monarchist) France: actions that would also foster the undermining of a strategic Catholic Witness and Moral Resistance in France. And that truly grave tragedy was unwittingly to come about, says Frère Michel, due to:

The terrible blame and harsh canonical sanctions [including excommunications] that struck the members of *Action Française* **from September of 1926 to March of 1927**. Thus it happened that, to repeat an expression of Cardinal Pacelli [later Pope Pius XII], “well-known and sometimes very meritorious Christians were treated with a rigor not applied to infidels [and certainly not to the Communist Party and its Accomplices and Comintern *Nomenklatura!*]” (II—593—my emphasis added)

We must notice the years, and the specific interval of time of these cumulative sanctions. They were inflicted not very long after Father (later Bishop) Michel d'Herbigny's French-facilitated and papally approved missions of *Ostpolitik* were successfully launched and then dubiously arrived on Soviet soil.

Frère Michel had posed his own acutely pertinent question, and then offered a reply:

Would the Vatican finally understand that **its conciliatory policy** towards the Bolsheviks had resulted in **a crushing failure** [not only because, and when, the American Father Edmund Walsh, S.J., with an acute sense of futility and of Stalin's cruelty, made his own insistent and final departure from Moscow], **that it was not only illusory and vain, but disastrous for the Church and Christendom?** Alas, no! For Moscow cleverly made new advances, to which the Vatican hastened to respond. (II—582—my emphasis added)

### **The Revolution takes off with gusto**

Some ten years later, in June of 1937—*i.e.*, still during the Spanish Civil War and three months after Pius XI's forceful, but all-too-belated, Encyclical against Atheistic Communism, *Divini Redemptoris* (19 March 1937)—the magnanimous Charles Maurras himself—the Head of the 1926-1927 papally condemned *Action Française*—was then still wholeheartedly and publicly supporting “the Pope's courageous Crusade against Bolshevism and Nazism.” Indeed, somewhat surprisingly, he even wrote a

Letter to “Sister Madeleine of the Carmel of Lisieux” which showed his fuller perspicacity:

It is enough to have read and followed events closely. It is enough to see: the present crusade against communism had been requested **in 1922** [15 years earlier] **by Cardinal Mercier** of Malines [Belgium], **while the first act of the pontificate [of Pius XI], in April of 1922, had been to make [Ostpolitik] advances to Bolshevik Russia which were abominably repaid!** And Germany! Germany, which had been fed, coddled, strengthened in every way, and which responds—just like the Germans!—to **so many imprudent benefits...**

Have I told you how the great Spanish errors were determined, like a lightning bolt, by a **generous blunder** of King Alfonso XIII, **for whom Cardinal Merry del Val had requested protection so that he would not be treated like Cardinal Billot** [his sought-for resignation in 1927]? In 1931, the [Spanish] clergy had been **mobilized against the monarchy** and overturned it, and when a religious and national somersault had somewhat restored the Spanish situation, the fear of all firm and powerful **civil authority** once again **turned the spiritual forces in favor of the revolution**, in February of last year [1936].

A sad history, and it was the same with you [in the Church in France and Rome]! The famous *confidential memorandum* [?] aiding and supporting the Reds in 1924: while at Rome Cardinal Billot [a supporter of *Action Française*] heard these words [from Pius XI himself]: “Your Frenchmen have voted very badly.” “Most Holy Father, it is your nuncio's fault.” “My nuncio applies *my policy, my policy, my policy...*” **And he banged on the table.** A most unfortunate policy.

And then again, in 1926, their loyal servants in *Action Française* were pushed aside, as had been their [the Popes'] loyal servants in the Society of Jesus in the eighteenth century; **and the revolution** [with the complicity of the same “Girondist-Mencheviks” or Liberal Christian Democrats and the Sillonists] **went on with gusto even in those circles which were least prepared for it.** (II—699-700—italics in the original, my bold emphasis added)

### **The cruelty of sentimentalism**

As Alexander Solzhenitsyn repeatedly said and wrote, the Girondins always prepare for the Jacobins, the Mensheviks always prepare for the Bolsheviks. For, unlike the Girondins and Mensheviks, the Jacobins and the Bolsheviks are not hesitant nor squeamish about blood, nor about the hard use of power. The Girondins and the Mensheviks—and the Sillonists, we dare to add—soften things up and inflict their own debilitating, even sentimental, subversions: an example of “the cruelty of sentimentalism” (in the wise and widely applicable words of Maïke Hickson). Such is the way of “utopian and revolutionary democracy”—especially when it is also, like Marc Sangnier's Sillonists, a speciously “religious democracy”—which often enough, as both Charles Maurras and Saint Pius X saw, becomes a morally disarmed and effective “accomplice” or “useful idiot” for a man like Stalin, who was himself a much harder revolutionary and also a calculating “grand strategist” who takes a much longer view of things, at least in temporal terms. (He probably didn't know how big a Millstone is.)

### **Msgrs Roncalli, Montini and the Sillon**

A few years before Pope Pius XII was to beatify and then to canonize Pope Pius X—on 3 June 1951 and on 29 May 1954, respectively—an incongruous and seeming perfidious set of acts transpired in France, perpetrated by two of Pius XII's close associates, Monsignor Roncalli and Monsignor Montini.

We propose to consider these actions before we return to the time of World War II, and to how Pope Pius XII himself ambiguously acted after 22 June 1941.

As we consider now what later flagrantly happened in France on the occasion of the death of Marc Sangnier in 1950, we must recall that Pope Saint Pius X had promulgated in 1910 his important Encyclical on the Sillon Movement and the Sillonists, and its declared expansion into “the Greater Cosmopolitan Sillon.” The Encyclical is entitled *Notre Charge Apostolique* (Our Apostolic Mandate), being addressed to the French Bishops, and its symbolic date of promulgation was on 25 August 1910, the Feast of King Saint Louis IX of France.

### **Maurras and Modernism**

We should also take note that the monarchist Charles Maurras, the founder of *Action Française*, had also four years earlier published a searching book on the Head of the Sillon (“**Furrow**,” in English), entitled *Le Dilemme de Marc Sangnier* (1906). Moreover, Maurras had published, two years after the 1910 Encyclical, a collection of his own earlier published articles and analyses on Religious Democracy in France, entitled *La Politique religieuse* (1912). A third book was to be published two years later, and entitled *L'Action française et la Religion catholique* (1914). This later book, it will be noticed, came after Saint Pius X's major anti-modernist Encyclicals and follow-up *Motu Proprio*: namely *Lamentabili Sane Exitu* (A Lamentable Departure Indeed) of 3 July 1907; *Pascendi Dominici Gregis* (Feeding the Lord's Flock) of 8 September 1907; and the Oath against Modernism on 1 September 1910, in the *Motu Proprio Sacrorum Antistitum*, an Oath which was abolished—but **quietly rescinded**—by Pope Paul VI (Montini) in July of 1967. (That is to say, all the Fathers and Periti at the Vaticanum II were still required to have taken the solemn Oath against Modernism, and we hesitate to ask how many of them—not only Karl Rahner—had earlier before the Council, or at least during the years 1962-1965, equivocally or unequivocally perjured themselves.)

With respect to Charles Maurras and his *Action Française* which were papally condemned during the years of 1926-1927—and not very long after Pius XI's own splendid Encyclical on Christ the King, *Quas Primas* (11 December 1925)—he and his literary friends were to publish in **1921** an inclusive volume of Maurras' earlier writings, entitled *La Démocratie religieuse* (1921). This profound work combined the three above-mentioned works (1906, 1912, and 1914), along with some new and very useful summaries and indexes of names and themes. Therefore, at the time of *Quas Primas* (11 December 1925) and the later Vatican Condemnations, Charles Maurras' thought was very open and well known and eloquently articulated, and not at all obliquely, **especially** on the matter of utopian and revolutionary democracy, to include its various counterfeit forms of so-called Religious Democracy.

But to return to 1950 and to the death of Marc Sangnier, former chief of “the Greater Sillon.”

### **Taking the side of the innovators**

In his special Appendix I (III—352-379) entitled “The Alarming Progress of Subversion in the Church (1950-1953),” Frère Michel begins his analysis in an unexpected way:

On June 1, 1950, while preparations were being made for the canonization [on 29 May 1954] of the Pope who had condemned [in 1910] the pernicious and chimerical doctrines of the “Sillon,” at Paris, a solemn funeral service at Notre Dame was being granted to Marc Sangnier, honorary president of the M.R.P. [in English, the Popular Republican Party—the Christian Democratic Party]. It is remarkable, however, that **at first** *Documentation catholique* felt bound

to a certain discretion on **the founder of the Sillon**, contenting itself with describing the event very briefly. Would anyone dare to brave the vigorous condemnation of Pius X [40 years ago]? To deliver our Paris progressives from all fear, nothing less was needed than the intervention of two highly placed members of the hierarchy, who were both called to the most brilliant future. They were **Archbishop Roncalli**, then the Nuncio at Paris, and **Msgr. Montini**, substitute for [subordinate to] the [Vatican] Secretary of State. **In this summer of 1950, both of them deliberately took the side of the innovators against the reigning Pope.** (III—352-353—my emphasis added)

Pope Pius XII was already distrustful of, and in an ongoing contention with, the Italian statesman, De Gasperi concerning the leftward slide and conscious shift to the Left of “Christian Democracy” in Italy—even in its explicitly announced “opening to the left” (“*apertura à sinistra*”), and in its firm rejection of any opening to the Right. Meanwhile, up in France we are to see the analogously dubious Rehabilitation of Marc Sangnier and his Sillonist Doctrines and Movement:

On June 6 [1950], [moreover,] Archbishop Roncalli sent this letter of condolences to Mrs. Sangnier, which strongly resembled an act of allegiance to the Movement and ideas of the Sillon. (III-353)

It is thus fitting to give some sense of this scandalous letter, using Roncalli's own words;

“Dear Madame,

I first heard of Marc Sangnier at Rome around 1903 or 1904, at a meeting of Catholic youth. The powerful fascination of his words, of his soul, had thrilled me, and the liveliest memories of my entire priestly youth are for his person and his political and social activity.”

I interrupt our quotation [says Frère Michel], for this stupefying text is worth reading over and commenting upon. At Rome in 1904, Father Roncalli was not, as was the young prelate Pacelli [Pius XII], enthralled by the zealous soul and fiery words of Pope Saint Pius X. No, he was thrilled by “the powerful fascination” of Marc, “of his words, of his soul” and of **his “political and social activity” which was inseparable from his doctrine.** (III—353—my emphasis added)

### **This saint is not of my parish**

Earlier in his analysis, Frère Michele had also said, by way of clarifying contrast:

In contrast with the mortal hatred which **the ringleaders of neo-modernism and progressivism** bore the holy Pope [Pius X], Pius XII wished by his canonization [of him] to impose his example and his doctrine on the entire Church....One need only remember the formula of Father [Henri] Brémond **in his discourse of reception into the Académie française in 1923**: “I have lived under four pontiffs: Pius IX, Leo XIII, Benedict XV, Pius XI.” Saint Pius X? **For our crypto-modernist** [so admired by Michel d'Herbigny, S.J.], **he had not existed.** “This saint is not of my parish, [François] Mauriac [a crypto-Jansenist?] would say during the [May 1954] canonization....In 1949, **four [progressive] Jesuits** were proposed [by the Jesuit Superior General, **Father Janssens**] to Pius XII for the post of secretary general of the Central Commission for the Ecumenical Council in preparation [which was later entirely cancelled by the manipulated and misled Pope]. They were **Father Bea, Boyer, Charles, and Dhanis**....Finally, **the icy silence [concerning Fatima]** of the

Jesuit Superior General [Janssens] is in astonishing contrast with the enthusiastic attitude of Father Suarez [a Spaniard] who was elected Master General of the Dominicans in 1946. (III—263, 302—my emphasis)

### Nuncio Roncalli's effrontery

Such is a glimpse of what the sensitive and oft-hesitant Pius XII had to contend with. But, to return to Roncalli's 1950 Letter to Mrs. Sangnier:

“His [Marc's] noble and great humility in accepting later, in 1910, *the affectionate and benevolent admonition of Pope Saint [sic] Pius X*, gives the true measure of greatness in my eyes.”

Jean Madiran rightly comments, “Let anyone reread his letter *Notre charge apostolique* of August 25, 1925, they [sic] will see to what extent **the way Nuncio Roncalli speaks manifests a total effrontery.**”

It is true! **As a fallacious reinterpretation of events, it seems difficult to do better!** For in the end, Saint Pius X—after many fatherly admonitions, it is true—completely condemned the grave errors of the Sillon and the culpable obstinacy of its leaders....[For example, from the 1910 Encyclical itself:] “Counsels were not lacking to them [wrote the holy pope], *admonitions* came after the counsels; but we had pain in seeing *advice and reproaches bounce off their elusive souls* and remain without results.” (no. 5) **“Thus they go, against the grain of Catholic doctrine, towards a condemned ideal.”** (no. 9) **“The dream of Sillon...builds its city on a theory contrary to Catholic truth.”** (nos. 19-20) **“Yes, alas, the equivocations are shattered; the social action of Sillon is no longer Catholic...Yes, truly it can be said that the Sillon conveys socialism, its eye fixed on a chimera.”** (no. 38) **“What has become of the Catholicism of the Sillon? Alas, this limpid and impetuous current has been taken over in its path by the modern enemies of the Church, and henceforth forms only a miserable current of the great movement of apostasy organized in all countries for the establishment of a universal church with neither dogmas, nor hierarchy, nor rule for the mind, nor a bridle for the passions....”** (no. 40) The integral text of this masterly document has to be read to grasp the scandalous character of Nuncio Roncalli's letter. (III—353-354, 376-377—italics in the original; my bold emphasis added)

Near the end of his letter, Roncalli soars even more in the swelling peroration of his tribute, also for the sake of a presumably grateful “*posterity, to which the example of Marc Sangnier will remain as an instruction and an encouragement*” (III—353—italics in the original) and, thus, he says:

“On the occasion of his death, my spirit was very comforted to see that the most authoritative voices **able to speak** in the public life of France **came together**, unanimously, **to wrap Marc Sangnier in the honorable cloak of the Sermon on the Mount[!]**. A more eloquent homage and praise could not be rendered to the memory of this outstanding Frenchman, whose contemporaries were able to see in him [as in Bishop Michel d'Herbigny, S.J.?] the candor of a profoundly Christian soul, and noble sincerity of heart.” (III—354 emphasized)

### Sangnier's canonisation

To make this situation even more poignant and prescient, Frère Michel summarizes the dark sophistry

of Nuncio Roncalli's fulsome maneuver (and maybe also his deeper character?), and then moves on to mention, in this context, the lamentable weakness of Pope Pius XII himself:

In short, Archbishop Roncalli, in a letter [to Mrs. Sangnier] clearly intended to be circulated [in its fullness which we do not now quote] in French political circles, **canonized the founder of Sillon**, rejoicing that for their part, **“the most authoritative voices in French public life,” Masonic, laicizing and socialist voices**, also canonized him **in their own way**.

Through his excessively complacent [and unmistakably unctuous?] letter, Archbishop Roncalli was surely going beyond Roman directives. It must be noted, **however**, that, **in spite of Pius XII's immense admiration for Pius X** and his firm will [?] to impose Pius X's doctrine and example, **since 1944 Pius XII had rallied over to Christian Democracy** [hence, to **Ecumenical Democracy**, as distinct from Pius XI's own **“Catholic Action”**], **of which Marc Sangnier was the undisputed master**. Pius XII **never dared—not a single time in the innumerable discourses which fill the twenty bulky volumes of his pontifical documents—to recall the vitally important teaching in the “Letter on the Sillon”** [*Notre Charge Apostolique*]. **This silence says a great deal about the fidelity of Pius XII** himself [even] to the spirit of the holy Pope granted to the Church for our [20<sup>th</sup>] century! Unfortunately, **this fidelity was very incomplete!** (III—354-355—my emphasis added)

(As I also recall, but cannot now find the reference, the scholar, Father Robert A. Graham, S.J. also says that Pius XII never publicly quoted Pius XI's 1937 *Divini Redemptoris*, against Communism.)

### **The price of appeasing American democracy**

Referring to Pope Pius XII's troubled conscience and admitted moral “silence”—or self-censorship—concerning the new and putatively “expedient” Wartime Alliance with the Soviet Union after 22 June 1941, Frère Michel repeats the Pope's earlier-quoted words to Myron Taylor, and adds:

“This silence which weighs on our conscience...” Yes, Pius XII was [again!] torn, hesitant...Certainly the message of Fatima impressed him. And like his friend, Cardinal Schuster [of Milan], **and Msgr. Tardini as well**, he perceived the grave danger for Europe and the world if Stalin won **too sweeping** a victory. But he also had a great deal of sympathy and admiration for **the great democratic and moral principles proclaimed** by Roosevelt. He also **feared displeasing Roosevelt, and some of his own entourage**—among others, Cardinal Maglione [Secretary of State] and Msgr. Montini, not to mention the clan of Gaullists, grouped around Cardinal Tisserant, Msgr. Julien and Msgr. Fontenelle—surely influenced him in this sense [*i.e.*, of the need to support Big Democracy and a Big Expedient “Silence” about Stalin's Russia]....

[Moreover,] In writing **these terrible lines** [of his earlier-quoted, intimate characterization of the Pope], was Cardinal Tardini thinking of **the influence Msgr. Montini exerted on Pius XII**? It is very probable, for the lively tensions between the Pope's two closest collaborators reveal that Cardinal Tardini did not appreciate his colleague's encroachments and hazardous [leftward, progressive] initiatives.

[To his above-quoted characterization of the Pope] Monsignor Tardini added: “In his exquisite amiability, the Pope desired to see those whom he received in audience [thus even Myron Taylor] leave him with a grateful memory...*At certain moments he* [the Church's Chief

Executive!] *was unable to say No.*” As it concerned President Roosevelt and his special envoy, Myron Taylor, **this real weakness of Pius XII was undoubtedly combined with a debatable political view:** the Pope did not want to risk gravely displeasing **the powerful American democracy**, on which Europe's fate principally depended after the war [sic—another illusion].... On October 31, 1942, Pius XII performed the consecration of the world to the Immaculate Heart of Mary. **It was a half-measure, an incomplete act....**The Pope had wanted to do something to **obey** Our Lady of Fatima's requests. **Yet** he had not dared to do everything She requested. An explicit mention of Bolshevik Russia, and a solemn act of reparation to finally obtain its conversion [to the Catholic Faith], would have provoked strong displeasure from Stalin's allies. The Pope undoubtedly feared those reactions. (III—151-152—italics in the original; my bold emphasis added)

### Protecting the neo-Modernists

As we move fittingly towards our conclusion, we may briefly consider the further actions of Msgr. Montini during the 1950s, and especially his own deeper moves to progressivism (or worse):

While at Paris [in the summer of 1950] Nuncio Roncalli was rehabilitating Marc Sangnier, at Rome, three weeks after *Humani Generis* [12 August 1950—the Encyclical which was a sort of updated Syllabus of Errors], **the Pope's most intimate collaborator** [Msgr. Montini] **was encouraging and protecting the neo-Modernists.** On September 8, 1950, Msgr. Montini received Jean Guittou [and it went on from there!]....With an unbelievable audacity, the substitute Secretary of State explained to Guittou [documented in Guittou's own detailed 1967 book, *Dialogues with Paul VI*] that “the French theologians” [whose erroneous ideas were mentioned, but **without** their names, in *Humani Generis*] were “*wrong to take as condemnation what was only a warning, a call to prudence, maturity, to go more slowly.*” This is a sign of a paternal direction, which is inspired by *admiration.*” In other words, there was nothing to be afraid of. Pius XII would go no further; he would not condemn **the innovators** by name—Msgr. Montini would guarantee that. As for himself, Montini encouraged them [Congar, de Lubac, et al.] to continue, and what is more, he said he “admired” them, he “envied” them [sic]. **What effective support given to the subversion of the Church by one of the highest Vatican authorities, in the Pope's own antechamber!** (III—355-356—italics in the original; my bold emphasis added)

### Clandestine opposition

It was noted by others, also by Frère Michel, that, after “this Holy Year of 1950,”

Msgr. Montini declared himself more and more openly favorable to progressivism, in opposition to his Patron [and, more subtly, to his Patron's proposed dogmatic council]. In the antechamber, discourses could be heard contrary to those heard in the Pope's office; thus Montini began a clandestine opposition to the policy of Pius XII....This was also no doubt the period when Msgr. Montini was on the side of [the designedly obstructionist Jesuit priest,] Father Charles and his friends to create obstacles to the [1948-1951] preparations for the future Ecumenical Council. Msgr. Tardini was decidedly favorable to the idea of a [Doctrinal, Dogmatic] Council [as first proposed by the great Cardinal Ruffini of Sicily] and made it known....[But] on January 4, 1951, Pius XII resigned himself to abandoning this project against his better judgment, declaring: “This will be for my successor.” Surely Msgr. Montini had been of the same opinion also, **since the [1948] beginning of the preparatory work.** (III—

358-359—my emphasis added)

### **It didn't start with Vatican II**

The remainder of this Appendix—III-359-379, to include the fifty detailed footnotes—should be closely studied, and prayerfully so. If this is thoroughly done with patience and just differentiations, the reader's view of that important time before the 1962-1965 Vaticanum II will be deepened and enriched. And even if he will not better come to understand the Divine Providence here, he will understand more of the truths that are important to our Faith, and also the roots of the disorders still momentous in subverting our life of the Faith and the Church. For, as it used to be more often said: "It didn't start with the Vatican Council."

### **Coda**

#### **The weakening of one's Cultural Immune System**

To what extent does the Rally to Democracy mean a Rally to the Revolution? (At least towards a *Révolution anti-catholique*?)

If it does, should we not be even more cautious about "Canonizing Democracy," and even a purportedly "Christian Democracy," which is often enough an equivocal Concept and an ambiguous, diffusely ecumenical Reality? And, unlike Archbishop Roncalli, we should not effectively canonize Marc Sangnier himself, much less his increasingly un-Catholic and more inclusive form of "Christian Democracy," known as the *Sillon* or the *Sillon Movement*, which was so acutely unmasked and strongly rebuked by Pope Saint Pius X in 1910, in his Encyclical *Notre Charge Apostolique*.

Already back in 1884 and 1892, when the great Pope Leo XIII first unexpectedly called for a "rapprochement" (though a cautious one) with the laïc and anti-clerical French Third Republic (1870-1914) and then later even a "*Ralliement* to Democracy" itself, it seemed to many faithful Catholics and their struggling families effectively to be "a Rally to the Revolution." For, those same faithful Catholic families had long been resisting the gnawing effects of the French Revolution and its subtler attempts at "de-Christianization by education" and, thus, by controlling the "teacher education," as well.

When one carefully reads the Italian Pope Leo's cautious and highly differentiated, two Encyclicals on these themes—*Nobilissima Gallorum Gens* (8 February 1884) and *Au milieu des sollicitudes* (16 February 1892)—one sees no encouragement, no hint, to "Rally to Republican **Principles**," much less to "Rally to **the Premises of the Revolution**" and its deceptive Democratic Dialectic. In practical terms, however, it was difficult to apply these conciliatory Papal proposals without a gradual weakening of one's "Cultural Immune System" and, thus, one's sustained Catholic Resistance (or "Recusancy"). Such conciliations with the Liberal Republic and Oligarchic Democracy were an even greater challenge and burden to one's honor and integrity, especially in the care and formation of the little children. So, too, today, with the propagation of certain forms of Ecumenism and "Sillonist" Democracy (even in the Church), both of which seem to be more like a "Relativizing and Dissipating Syncretism" and also a form of traditionally condemned "Religious Indifferentism."

The study of the earlier history of these subversive manifestations, as we have but briefly tried to do in this essay, will strengthen our understanding and our just sense of proportion, and, *sub Gratia Divina*, fortify our characters to live out what we know to be the truth: to be a Catholic Witness to the end, and thus never asking the Blessed Mother to leave the Marriage Feast of Cana. Nor to Rescind Fatima.

© 2014 Robert D. Hickson