

wJohn XXIII
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POPE JOHN XXIII, A WORLD FEDERALIST SAINT?

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Pope John XXIII's canonization

April 27, 2014, will remain a glorious day for us, world federalists. At that date, the late popes John XXIII and John-Paul II were declared saints by their successor, the present pope Francis 1st (1). This event happened on the catholic Feast of the Divine Mercy (2). The double canonization has been an "unprecedented event", to quote the medias (3). It is thought that 800.000 persons were present at the ceremony (4). The new saint, John XXIII, has left an encyclical letter concerning the peace on Earth, "Pacem in Terris" (5), whose teachings on a peaceful world are exactly consistent with world federalism. Indeed, the pope considers that a "public authority with universal competence" is indispensable (6). But a "public authority with universal competence" is the exact definition of a World State. We can therefore affirm that St. John XXIII was a world federalist.

The encyclical "Pacem in Terris" in its historical context

The encyclical "Pacem in Terris" concludes with the following formula: "Given at Rome, at St Peter's, on Holy Thursday, the eleventh day of April, in the year 1963, the fifth of Our Pontificate. John XXIII" (7). The pope died shortly after, on Monday of the Pentecost, June 3, 1963 (8). Therefore, "Pacem in Terris" is the spiritual testament of the saint pope. It is difficult today to imagine the impact of this encyclical at the time it was published. This impact is due to the historical situation. The two world wars were still in all memories. The peoples of the world had been profoundly shaken by these conflicts and were all terrified, when this murderous folly stopped, by the blinding light of the atomic bombs, stronger, it was said, than thousand suns. Indeed, at the end of the Second World War, they founded the Organization of the United Nations, the UNO, "to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war, which twice in our life-time has brought untold sorrow to mankind..." (9). Alas, the peoples and their governments were still too strongly bound to their nationalistic conception of the states, as they had consented so great sacrifices for it, and refused therefore to give to the United Nations the needed power to guarantee peace. The calls to reform the United Nations were not sufficiently strong to create the needed world patriotism. On the contrary, the confrontation between the free world and the communist block was an insuperable obstacle on the way to peace. The efforts to guarantee peace which were done on both sides of the so-called Iron Curtain that divided the world were not enough. The peaceful coexistence cherished by the Soviet leader Nikita Khrouchtchev brought a succession of periods of relative calm, abruptly interrupted by extreme violent tensions, according to Khrouchtchev's unpredictable changes of humour, for example 1962 during the Cuban crisis, which pushed mankind to the fringe of disaster. The relations were very bad between the communists and many religious communities, as the communists considered religions as opium for the peoples, to speak as Marx. The Catholic Church had excommunicated the communists (10). In this atmosphere of mutual defiance, pope John XXIII was one of the persons who took initiatives in order to alleviate the tensions. He received cordially Khrouchtchev's daughter and her husband, Adjoubei (11). He preceded in this way the West-German chancellor Willy Brandt who, beginning 1969, tried to better the relations with Eastern Europe (12).

Pacem in Terris, an appeal to all men of good will

The encyclical "Pacem in Terris" is the logical result of this attitude of the pope. Indeed, St. John XXIII, as chief of the Catholic Church, addressed his message not only to the Catholics, but "to all Men of Good Will" (13). He admitted therefore that adepts of doctrines which are incompatible with the teachings of the Catholic Church can be "Men of Good Will". The putting into effect of the principles guaranteeing the establishment of a just order "frequently involves, the pope writes, extensive co-operation between Catholic and those Christians who are separated from this Apostolic See. It even involves the co-operation of Catholics with men who may not be Christians but who nevertheless are reasonable men, and men of natural moral integrity. In such circumstances ... Catholics ... should show themselves animated by a spirit of understanding and unselfishness, ready to co-operate loyally in achieving objects which are good in themselves, or conducive to good" (14). And he adds: "It is always perfectly justifiable to distinguish between error as such and the person who fails into error ... " (15).

Consequently, the pope encourages the believers to collaborate with persons and movements, when their undertakings are "conform to the dictates of the right reason, and are an expression of man's lawful aspirations ... (16)

It may sometimes happen, therefore, that meetings arranged for some practical end – though hitherto they were thought to be altogether useless – may in fact be fruitful at the present time, or at least offer prospects of success" (17).

In the midst of the cold war, this appeal to co-operation was an unexpected relief for all those who, on both sides of the Iron Curtain, worked for peace.

Were "Pacem in Terris" teachings put aside?

It seems however that despite its extraordinary success, this major work received only a superficial attention. Indeed, it was often mentioned during a long period. The pacifist and leftist groups referred to it. Their adversaries too. But nobody was interested to study more profoundly its teachings. Laziness, but also nationalism and the fear to be considered as utopists explain probably the fact that the idea of a "public authority with power, organization and means, co-extensive with ... problems, and with a world-wide sphere of activity" (18) has been put aside. Could we herewith contribute modestly to rise the attention of the people to this essential work.

"Pacem in Terris" and the Christian tradition

What is the place of the encyclical "Pacem in Terris" inside the Christian tradition? We should remember that all great religions have an universal vocation. As for the Bible and the Koran, all humans are offsprings of the mythic figures of Adam and Eve and of Noah. Human unity is the necessary consequence of this teaching. The Christian churches have also never forgotten that the Roman empire, in whose time the Christian religion was born, had more or less guaranteed peace on the shores of the Mediterranean sea and great parts of Western Europe. The political ideal of the Middle Ages had been to restore this unity under papacy and Empire. This ideal certainly inspired the founders of the international institutions and a man like Woodrow Wilson. Popes Benedict XV during the First World War, and Pius XII during the Second supported the ideas of the League of Nations and of the United Nations (19). Pope Pius XII received a delegation of our World Federalist Movement, called at that time "World Movement for World Federal Government", during our 4th congress in Rome, which convened from April 2 to 9, 1951. He declared to our delegates that the aims of our Movement are absolutely conform with the traditional doctrine of the Church and that, to be efficient, the political organization of the world has to be federalist in its form. He said:

"Votre Mouvement, Messieurs, s'attache à réaliser une organisation politique efficace du monde. Rien n'est plus conforme à la doctrine traditionnelle de l'Eglise ...

Vous êtes d'avis que, pour être efficace, l'organisation politique mondiale doit être de forme fédéraliste. ... ici encore, vous êtes d'accord avec les principes de la vie sociale et politique fermement posés et soutenus par l'Eglise" (20). He concluded congratulating our delegates, wishing them a full success and trusting them to God's protection.

Structure of the encyclical

In the introduction of his encyclical "Pacem in Terris", pope John XXIII explains that "Peace on Earth ... can never be established, never guaranteed, except by the diligent observance of the divinely established order" (21). The following five chapters are dedicated to the following matters: 1. "Order between Men" (22); 2. "Relations between individuals and the public authorities" (23); 3. "Relations between states" (24); 4. "Relationship of men and political communities with the world community" (25); 5. "Pastoral exhortations" (26). We will pay special attention to chapters three and four, concerning the international relationship and the organization of the world community. To begin with, the pope establishes a fundamental principle: "The same law of nature that governs the life and conduct of individuals must also regulate the relations of political communities with one another" (27). He continues: "The first point to be settled is that mutual ties between States must be governed by truth. Truth calls for the elimination of every trace of racial discrimination, and the consequent recognition of the inviolable principle that all States are by nature equal in dignity" (28). The common good of any State, he says, "certainly cannot be divorced from the common good of the entire human family" (29). This common good of humanity requires a general agreement "on a suitable disarmament program, with an effective system of mutual control" (30). The organization of the world community has to take in account the realities of modern world, which is characterized by the interdependence of nations. Of course the unity of the human family has always existed, he notes. But in the past, "rulers of States seem to have been able to make sufficient provision for the universal common good ..." (31). In our own day "the universal common good gives rise to problems of the utmost gravity, complexity and urgency ... the rulers of the individual nations ... largely fail in their efforts to achieve this" common good, despite their sincerity and enterprise, merely because "their authority is not sufficiently influential" (32). John XXIII concludes with a fundamental statement: "Today the universal common good presents us with problems which are world-wide in their dimensions; problems, therefore, which cannot be solved except by a public authority with power, organization and means co-extensive with these problems, and with a world-wide sphere of activity. Consequently the moral order itself demands the establishment of such general form of public authority" (33). The chapter ends with considerations on the United Nations Organization, the UNO, which John XXIII wishes to transform into that universal public authority. "It is therefore Our earnest wish, he writes, that the United Nations Organization may be able progressively to adapt its structure and methods of operation to the magnitude and nobility of its tasks. May the day be not long delayed when every human being can find in this organization an effective safeguard of his personal rights; those rights, that is, which derive directly from his dignity as a human person, and which are therefore universal, inviolable and inalienable" (34).

The attitude of St. John XXIII's successors

The popes succeeding to St. John XXIII followed the path he went. Pope Paul VI went personally to the United Nation's General Assembly on October 4, 1965. In the speech he made on this occasion, he declared that the UN reflects on the secular level what the Catholic Church wishes to be on the spiritual level: unique and universal, and he adds that everybody

should understand the necessity to build up a world authority able to act efficiently on juridical and political level (35). Indeed, at the Council Vatican II the necessity of a World Republic has been affirmed even by the conservative cardinal Ottaviani (36). St. John-Paul II declared that there will be peace if the entire humanity discovers its original vocation to become one unique family (37). Pope Benedict XVI also demanded an effective world political authority in his encyclical "Caritas in Veritate", published on June 29, 2009. He writes:

"In the face of the unrelenting growth of global interdependence, there is a strongly felt need, even in the midst of a global recession, for a reform of the *United Nations Organization*, and likewise of *economic institutions and international finance*, so that the concept of the family of nations can acquire real teeth. One also senses the urgent need to find innovative ways of implementing the principle of the *responsibility to protect* ... *This seems necessary in order to ... bring about integral and timely disarmament, food security and peace; to guarantee the protection of the environment and to regulate migration: for all this, there is urgent need of a true world political authority*, as my predecessor Blessed John XXIII indicated some years ago. Such an authority would need to be regulated by law, to observe consistently the principles of subsidiarity and solidarity, to seek to establish the common good, and to *make a commitment to securing authentic integral human development inspired by the values of charity in truth*. Furthermore, such an authority would need to be universally recognized and to be vested with the effective power to ensure security for all, regard for justice, and respect for rights. Obviously it would have to have the authority to ensure compliance with its decisions from all parties, and also with the coordinated measures adopted in various international forums. Without this, ... international law would risk being conditioned by the balance of power among the strongest nations. The integral development of peoples and international cooperation require the establishment of a greater degree of international ordering, marked by subsidiarity, for the management of globalization. They also require the construction of a social order that at last conforms to the moral order, to the interconnection between moral and social spheres, and to the link between politics and the economic and civil spheres, as envisaged by the Charter of the United Nations" (38). Such ideas can be found not only in the Catholic Church. The Protestant Churches follow the same way, as can be seen in a declaration of the Federation of Swiss Protestant Churches, which required a UN reform with elements of a World State (39). People of all religions as well as agnostics are also in favor of such ideas. They are part of the Bahai's teachings.

What is a public authority with a world-wide sphere of activity?

To understand the message of St. John XXIII, it is therefore necessary to know exactly what is that "public authority with power, organization and means ... and a world-wide sphere of activity" which he requires. At a seminar organized by the faculty of law of Aix-en-Provence, 1988, the proposals of St. John XXIII concerning world order have been analyzed and the speeches have been published under the direction of Jean Chelini who places his own contribution under the title "The Christian mundialism" (40). Chelini writes that the states are no more able to guarantee alone Humanity's common good, and that therefore St. John XXIII demands, as his predecessor Pius XII, a law superior to the states with the purpose to establish an international order (41). As we have, Chelini mentions the demand of the encyclical to reform the UN, a demand, he says, in conformity with the realism characterizing the whole encyclical (42). We insist on the fact that Chelini writes from a law superior to the states, this means a law which the states will be constrained to execute; but only a state superior to the states, this means a World State, can constraint the states. A commentary joined to the encyclical "Pacem in Terris" in the French edition used by the undersigned confirms this interpretation. The mentioned commentary refers to the well-known catholic philosopher

Jacques Maritain who calls again that in accordance with the traditional doctrine the state is a "perfect society", a community which gives to the persons all the goods they aim at in the natural order. But it is clear that no political community can now guarantee all these goods. What community can therefore become a perfect society? We translate this note as follows: The problem, according to Maritain, is to raise the international community to the level of a perfect society (at the sense given to this expression in the vocabulary of the scholastic philosophy), this means to the level of a politically organized international society. This requires two revolutions, a moral one, and a political. The moral revolution has to bring the peoples of the world to develop the will to live together. The political revolution requires the building of a pluralist political community, including not only the supranational institutions of the world authority, but also each of the existing political communities (to-day's national "states") with their multiple institutions, cultural and national patrimonies (43). These ideas fit exactly to the conception of a federal and democratic World State. But can we hope that the peoples will develop the will to live together, which Maritain considers necessary? Certainly. History teaches us that the reaction to world catastrophes is always a step forward to unity. The First World War forced Humanity to create the League of Nations, the Second World War brought us the United Nations, the atrocious events that happened in Rwanda and when Yugoslavia collapsed were followed by the creation of the International Criminal Court. If Humanity remains divided, similar catastrophes are programmed. These catastrophes will necessarily constrain Humanity to unite. Let us try to unite Humanity before we are forced to do it by cataclysms. It is possible to succeed in such an endeavour. This will be an exalting undertaking. Let us make History under the guidance of the spirit which can heave mountains. This is necessary because no generation before ours had such great opportunities as we have; no one had to prevent so terrible dangers; no one was burdened with so heavy a responsibility. We will not rest, as Tennyson predicted it, till the war-drum will throb no longer and the battle-flags will be all furled "in the Parliament of Man, the Federation of the World" (44).

Notes:

- 1) http://fr.wikipedia.org/Jean_XXIII, n° 2.4 « Mort, béatification, canonisation et postérité, 7th paragraph ; consulted June 28, 2014.
- 2) <http://spiritualité-chrétienne.com/faustine/misericorde.html> Fête de la Divine Miséricorde, consulted May 7, 2014.
- 3) "événement sans précédent", Libération, 1st edition, April 26-27, 2014, p. 5, columns 2-4.
- 4) Le Matin, April 28, 2014, p. 16.
- 5) Pacem in Terris, Encyclical of Pope John XXIII on establishing universal peace in truth, justice, charity and liberty, April 11, 1963, www.va/.../encyclical/documents/...enc_11041963_pacem_en.html.
- 6) Ibid., n° 137.
- 7) Ibid., final formula.
- 8) John XXIII, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pope_John_XXIII, consulted on June 6, 2014.
- 9) Department of public information, United Nations, Charter of the United Nations and statute of the International Court of Justice, Preamble, New York, no date, p.1.
- 10) Jean Chelini, Jean XXIII et l'ordre du monde. Actes du colloque 1988 de la faculté de droit d'Aix, sous la direction de Jean Chelini, Paris 1989, p. 167.
- 11) Ibid., p.169.
- 12) <http://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ostpolitik>, consulted on April 25, 2014.
- 13) John XXIII, op.cit., preamble.

- 14) Ibid., n° 157.
- 15) Ibid., n° 158.
- 16) Ibid., n° 159.
- 17) Ibid., n° 160.
- 18) Ibid., n° 137.
- 19) Jean XXIII, Encyclique *Pacem in Terris*, French edition of the encyclical, Paris 1963, p. 12, note 1, and p. 136, note 57.
- 20) Pius XII, *L'alta parola del Sommo Pontefice ai partecipanti al Congresso del "Movimento Universale per una Confederazione Mondiale"*; *L'Osservatore Romano*, April 7, 1951, 2nd edition, p.1, 1st column. The title of this message is in Italian, but the published original text is in French.
- 21) John XXIII, op.cit., n° 1.
- 22) Ibid., n°s 8-45.
- 23) Ibid., n°s 46-79.
- 24) Ibid., n°s 80-129.
- 25) Ibid., n°s 130-145.
- 26) Ibid., n°s 146-173.
- 27) Ibid., n° 80.
- 28) Ibid., n° 86.
- 29) Ibid., n° 98.
- 30) Ibid., n° 112.
- 31) Ibid., n° 133.
- 32) Ibid., n° 134.
- 33) Ibid., n° 137. The corresponding text in latin is the following:
 "Cum autem hodie commune omnium gentium bonum quaestiones proponat, omnes contingentes populos; cumque huiusmodi quaestiones nonnisi publica quaedam auctoritas explicare possit, cuius et potestas, et forma, et instrumenta aequa sint amplitudine, cuiusque actio tam late pateat quantum terrarum orbis; tum exinde sequitur, ut, ipso morali ordine cogente, publica quaedam generalis auctoritas constituenda sit."
http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_xxiii/encyclicals/documents/hf_j-xxiii_enc_1... Consulted, July 18, 2014.
- 34) Ibid., n° 145.
- 35) Paul VI. L'ONU reflète "dans l'ordre temporel ce que notre Eglise catholique veut être dans l'ordre spirituel: unique et universelle. ... qui ne voit la nécessité d'arriver ainsi ... à instaurer une autorité mondiale en mesure d'agir efficacement sur le plan juridique et politique?" *Le Monde*, October 6, 1965, p. 3.
- 36) "Im Konzil wurde vom Ideal einer Weltrepublik gesprochen." Gustav Hocke, *Das Konzil und die Weltpolitik*, *Die Tat*, November 5, 1965, p. 2.
- 37) Message de Sa Sainteté le pape Jean-Paul II pour la célébration de la Journée mondiale de la paix, January 1st, 2000. In "SI TU VEUX LA PAIX", *Pax Christi Suisse*, n° 59, January-February 2000.
- 38) Encyclical letter *Caritas in veritate* of the supreme pontiff Benedict XVI to the bishops, priests and deacons, men and women religious, the lay faithful and all people of good will on integral human development in charity and truth, n° 67. The italics are in the original text.
http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/encyclicals/documents/hf_ben-xvi_enc_20090629_caritas-in-veritate_en.html; consulted on July 20, 2014.

- 39) "... l'ONU incarne un modèle d'ordre du monde ... avec des éléments restreints d'État mondial." sek.feps, Réformer l'ONU pour la renforcer, Orientations et propositions de la Fédération des Eglises protestantes de Suisse, Berne 2005, p. 12.
- 40) Jean Chelini, see note 10, Synthèse et conclusion, Le mondialisme chrétien, p.175.
- 41) "Les Etats n'étant plus aptes à assurer seuls le bien commun de l'humanité, Jean XXIII réclame, comme l'avait fait Pie XII, un droit supra-étatique pour instaurer un ordre international ..." Ibid., p. 176.
- 42) Ibid.
- 43) „La doctrine traditionnelle faisait de l'État une 'société parfaite', communauté complète où les hommes trouvent l'ensemble des biens auxquels ils aspirent dans l'ordre naturel. Or il est clair qu'aucune communauté politique ... ne suffit plus à assurer l'ensemble de ces biens ... Qui jouera donc maintenant le rôle de 'societas perfecta'? ... 'Le problème, dit J. Maritain, est d'élever la communauté internationale à la condition de société parfaite (au sens qu'a ce mot dans le vocabulaire de la philosophie scolastique), c'est-à-dire de société internationale politiquement organisée' (L'homme et l'État, P.U.F., 1953, p. 192). Ceci exigera, dit-il, une double révolution, morale et politique. La révolution morale consistera à amener les peuples de la terre à une volonté commune de vivre ensemble. La révolution politique consisterait à construire un corps politique pluraliste, comprenant non seulement les institutions supranationales requises par l'autorité mondiale, mais aussi les corps politiques particuliers eux-mêmes (les 'États' nationaux d'aujourd'hui) avec leurs multiples institutions, leurs héritages culturels et nationaux propres.“ Jean XXIII, Encyclique Pacem in Terris, commentaire et index analytique par l'Action populaire, Condé-sur-Escaut, 1963, note 54, p. 130 and 132. See also, Jacques Maritain, L'Homme et l'État, Paris 2009, p. 235.
- 44) Tennyson, Locksley Hall.