

### ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON POPULATION\*

The concern expressed by the 69 signatories to the questionnaire of December 1969, on Philippine Society and Population Problems, and addressed to Philippine theologians, is one more encouraging manifestation of the involvement of the intelligentsia in matters of deep contemporary significance. It is another hopeful sign that those in positions, in which they can be influential, are disposed to devote themselves and their energies in seeking solutions to the dilemmas that confront Philippine society today. In their list of seven questions relating to the population problem in this country, they raise legitimate issues which should be deeply considered and answered satisfactorily so that the issues involved — whether economic, social, cultural, or moral — might be clear in the minds of all and so that, further, based on this clarity, realistic programs of action might be organized and implemented.

The questions set forth and addressed to the Philippine theologians are not theological in character. They are rather of a pastoral nature, and the answers to them should be sought, not from the theologians, but from the Hierarchy, which is entrusted with proposing the practical guidelines to action in terms of Christian morality, which is, in short,

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\* The population problem is a very complex problem, and consequently a problem difficult to solve. Great efforts must be exerted, without delay, individually as well as collectively, to give it the right ethical solution, i.e. one in keeping with the dignity of man, in conformity with the laws of reality. At the root of most social, economic and political problems the nation is facing and anxiously awaiting a satisfactory solution, there lies a moral problem and it may well be said, that if these pressing problems have not received as yet a satisfactory answer, it is because the solutions thus far given are not in full accordance with the moral order, with the law of reality. The laws of morality, like the laws that govern our body and our mind, are written into our nature, but the moral laws are harder to discover and they are moral essential to be known. By submitting freely to these laws man has everything to gain.

entrusted with the pastoral care of their flock. The Roman Catholic Bishops, on July 4, 1969, issued a statement concerning the population issue. It is their prerogative, their right, their responsibility, and their authority to exercise the Magisterium or teaching mission of the Church, as Paul VI points out: "The role of the Hierarchy is to teach and to interpret authentically the norms of morality. This is echoed by the Constitution on the Church and the Modern World when it entrusts to Bishops "the task of ruling the Church of God." The Magisterium of the Church is exercised when the hierarchy speaks in an official and authentic manner, to interpret for the faithful, the true and valid teaching of the Church. This, the signatories seem to recognize, in the context of their question, referring to national groups of Bishops.

As a point of fact, the Church has already spoken on the matter.<sup>1</sup> The Magisterium has been exercised through the Papal pronouncements

<sup>1</sup> It may be of interest to many of our readers to know what the mind of theologians, physicians, bishops throughout the world, was in pre-war days, concerning the much talked about "contraceptive practice."

In 1935, a "Casus Moralis" was submitted to five theologians. They were among the most prominent in the world, at that time. Moreover, they represented four or five different nationalities, and were acquainted with conditions in their respective countries. They were: Frs. A. Vermeersch, S.J., F. Capello, S.J., B. H. Merkelbach, O.P., M. Lopez, S.J., and F. Hurth, S.J., professor at the Ignatius-Kolleg, Valkenburg, Limburg, Holland, and considered by many as among the foremost theologians of S.J., at that time.

The solution to the "Casus Moralis" calls for an answer to 6 questions, the first of which reads as follows — "May marital onanism be ever permitted?"

-- Here are the answers of the five mentioned theologians:

A. Vermeersch: "Onanism conjugalis numquam permitti potest. Est res intrinsece mala."

F. Capello: "Negative" (i.e. numquam permitti potest.)

H. B. Merkelbach: "Negative."

M. Lopez: "Onanism" conjugalis, utpote contra ipsam naturam, ea intrinsece malus; numquam ergo, permitti potest."

F. Hurth: "Ipse onanism conjugalis et omnis ad eum cooperatio formalis, est semper illicita." Cf. The Ecel. Review, June 1936, pp. 587-593.

The Roman Catholic Medical Association of the Netherlands convoked a convention for June, 1935, for the sole purpose of discussing the specific problem, "Biological sterility and fertility in Women." A summary of the conclusions and recommendations was published in the most widely read organ

related to these issues, through the documents of the Second Vatican Council, and through the statement of the Philippine hierarchy most particularly the statement of July 4, 1969, interpreting the Papal teaching for the Philippines. This document the signatories of the questionnaire invoke as the invitation for their reflections and the questions posed. Truly, the statement referred to, urges full discussion and open dialogue on all aspects of the question, pointing out particularly the "urgent need for critical examination of the premises basic to the formulation of population policies." It adds that this is specially so in matters "economic and social, where conclusions are open to dispute." Yet, at the same time, the statement re-affirms "the basic rights of spouses which both the United Nations and Vatican II insisted as setting limits to what government can do," adding that matters which touch on personal fertility control are "best left to the initiative of appropriate private agencies, those of humanitarian or religious character."

It is not the role of the theologian precisely to serve in this matter as arbiter of morals and of ethics. While it is true that this may be their field of specialization, theologians serve a special function within the Church, as technocrats, as professional consultants, as advisers, as academicians, so to speak, whose role it is to serve the Church in formulating its magisterium, in clarifying the doctrines of the Church for the faithful, in speculation even as to the implications of church doctrine — but

of the German-speaking priesthood, "Linzer Quartalschrift" in its first issue of 1936. Here are two of the most pertinent recommendations:

1. "Married people must regard the procreation of children as the principal object of marriage."
2. "Birth-control is mortally sinful, if it involves the abuse of the act, or any other seriously sinful, unnatural means" (Cfr. *The Ecl. Review*, June 1936, p. 582).

This Guild reflects well the mind of Catholic Physicians Guilds in the West, at that time.

As to the stand of Catholic bishops throughout the world, on this matter, the June issue of "Periodica," 1967, M. Zalba, S.J. gives a summary of his survey "Circa ordinem rectum in usu matrimonii, episcopi per orbem, quid tradiderint" (pp. 61-87). Many of our readers will find this resume enlightening and inspiring. It is the real moral teaching on marriage (and the right use of marriage) proposed with constant firmness by the teaching authority of the Church, solemnly confirmed by Pope Paul VI in the encyclical "Humanae Vitae" of July 25, 1968.

all this, and always, within the context of the Magisterium of the Church.<sup>2</sup> The authority is not theirs to propose practical moral guidelines for the faithful independently of the Magisterium as exercised by the Hierarchy. It is only through the Hierarchy that they function and their opinions are valid, in so far as these are meant to be practical guidelines for the faithful. It would seem regrettable, therefore, that the signatories of the questionnaire, "in the hope of continuing the fruitful dialogue begun by the Hierarchy," should address the questions "to theologians" instead of the Hierarchy itself. And it would be more regrettable still if conflicting personal views of individual theologians were interpreted to mean that the Church has no mind in these matters, and that therefore, cannot contribute effectively and adequately to the solution of the problems solved. This is so, particularly since it seems clear that the Magisterium of the Church on these issues has already been expressed repeatedly.

<sup>2</sup> What the nature of theology, what the function of the Catholic theologian is, Paul VI stated in clear, unambiguous words, in his address to participants in the First International Congress, on the theology of Vatican Council II — Oct. 1, 1966. Rome. Here are some pertinent paragraphs:

"Sacred theology, in fact, by means of intelligence illumined by faith and not without a certain illumination from the Holy Spirit, to which the theologians must be attentive and docile, has the task of bringing greater understanding and penetrating to the truths of revelation; of communicating to the Christian community and particularly to the magisterium itself the fruits of its research, so that thru the teaching transmitted thru the Church's hierarchy, it may illuminate the whole Christian people. Finally, it has the task of cooperating in illustrating, justifying and defending the truth authoritatively taught by the magisterium."

"Their task forms part of the Church's great task of saving souls... They will therefore take care to study above all problems and questions that more closely concern the salvation of souls, and will share with the magisterium the preoccupation of bringing to the knowledge of the faithful *no so much their own* truths, but the truth of Jesus, such as it is universally believed in the Church under the guidance of its magisterium".

"If in your search for truth you wander away from this magisterium, there will be the danger that you will be teachers without disciples, separated from all, or that you will waste your labor without producing fruits for the community of the faithful. It might even expose you to the danger of deviating from the right path, choosing your own judgment, not the thinking of the Church ("sensus ecclesiae") as the criterion of Truth. This would be an arbitrary choice — "airesis," the road to heresy." (Cfr. B.E., XL (1966) Dec. pp. 759 ff. .

1. Question: How do you define the role of the Church in coping with the population problems of the Philippines?

Paul VI in his encyclical *Populorum Progressio* defines the role of the Church in matters such as this by quoting the Vatican II Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World which says that She "ought to scrutinize the signs of the times and interpret them in the light of the gospels . . . in language intelligible to each generation (to respond) to the questions . . . about this present life and the life to come, and about the relationship of one to the other." The purpose of the Church, says the Constitution is a religious one, primarily, (AA,n. 2) one of teaching the moral issues involved in matters related to the question of population and the solutions proposed. This, the Philippine Hierarchy had done at various times, as it did in its declaration of July 4, 1969, and in its pastoral letter of October 12, 1968. It might be added that although this is the principal role of the church "when circumstances of time and place produce the need, She can and indeed should initiate activities in behalf of all men, specially those designed for the needy, such as the works of mercy and similar undertakings."<sup>3</sup>

<sup>3</sup> An *Adequate* answer to the question "How to define the role of the Church in coping with population problems of the Philippines?" would call for the insertion here of the Constitution of Vatican II -- "The Church Today," part I, ch. 4, and part II, ch. 1, 3,4. and of the Decree on the "Apostolate of the Laity" (A.A.). 1965. Vatican II doctrine is briefly and clearly stated, and up-to-date to necessitate a comment; but this is *not* within the scope of this paper.

The population problem, we have stated is a very *complex* problem. Its *social, economic and political* aspects are not the *proper mission or sphere of activity of the Church*, and consequently, to the extent population problems are social, economic and political, they are rather within the sphere action of human institutions to solve them; it is a work left to man's own thought, man's creative spirit and invention. The Church does not wish to *supersede* these human institutions, rather she wishes to do as much as it is within her power, to *stimulate nations, organizations, economic, social and cultural in purpose*, to perform their work and achieve their objectives in such a manner, that man's perfecting of himself, both in the natural and in the supernatural order, is rendered less arduous.

Facile answers to complex and difficult problems are far worse than useless. One of the unwise of human acts is to grasp the handiest and easiest solution and leave it to the following generations to discover how perverse has been

2. Question: Given the emphasis in *Humanae Vitae* on responsible parenthood, what obligation does the Church have to disseminate information, especially among the poor, about the social and personal advantages of family planning?

The responsibility of the Church in this regard is the presentation of its doctrine in its fullness, pointing out the positive as well as the negative aspects of her teaching, and consequently the ethical and moral responsibilities of individuals in terms of current conditions. As *Humanae Vitae* itself points out, conjugal love requires in husband and wife an awareness of their mission of responsible parenthood, meaning by this, "knowledge and respect for their functions," the development of "that necessary dominion which reason and will must exercise over" instincts and passions, so that in terms of "physical, economic, psychological and social conditions" parenthood is exercised by deliberate and generous decision. Above all she should emphasize that responsible parenthood, "implies a more profound relationship to the objective moral order established by God." *Humanae Vitae* continues: "The responsible exercise of parenthood implies... that husband and wife recognize fully their own duties towards God, towards themselves, towards the family, and towards society, in a correct hierarchy of values. The Church must therefore teach the faithful all those elements that are necessary for the husband and wife to exercise parenthood responsibility, not merely the social and personal advantages of limiting their family size, but the entire Christian doctrine in these matters. As the Constitution on the Church in the Modern World points out: Presentday conditions of life, in many ways different from those of the past, and differing in various countries ... call for mature decision, which recognizes all aspects of the question, particularly, educational responsibility, while seeking the greater good."\*

the error, how great the price that has to be paid for such fickleness. Blunders are all the more common in this field because the characteristics of population growth and the decline, and the factors involved, manifest themselves but *slowly*.

\* The Constitution "The Church Today" n. 87. says: "For in keeping with man's inalienable right to marry and to generate children, a decision concerning the number of children they will have, depends on the right judgment of the parents, and it cannot in anyway be left to the judgment of public authority.

3. Question: How do you define the role of the State in coping with the population problem of the Philippines?

The answer to this question is clearly stated in the statement of the Catholic Bishops published on January 17, 1970, as "supportive."<sup>4</sup> The

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But since the judgment of the parents presupposes a rightly formed conscience it is of the utmost importance that the way be opened for everyone to develop a correct and genuinely human responsibility, which respects the Divine law and takes into consideration the circumstances of the situation and the time. But, sometimes this requires an improvement in education and social condition, and above all formation in religion, or at least a complete moral training.

Men should discreetly be informed furthermore of scientific advances in exploiting methods whereby spouses can be helped in *regulating* the number of their children, and whose safeness has been ascertained."

In the encyclical "Humanae Vitae" Paul VI expressed the same thought: It is particularly desirable that according to the wish already expressed by Pius XII, medical science succeed in providing a sufficiently secure basis for a *regulation of birth*, founded on the observance of *natural rhythms*" (n. 24). On the licitness of recourse to infecund periods see N. 16, of the same papal document.

<sup>4</sup>Pope Paul VI, in the "Populorum Progressio" n. 37 answers this same question thus: "It is true that too frequently as accelerated demographic increase adds its own difficulties to the problem of the development: the size of the population increases more rapidly than available resources, and things are found to have reached apparently an impasse. From that moment the temptation is great to check the demographic increase by means of a radical measure. It is certain that public authorities can intervene within the limit of their competence, by favouring the availability of appropriate information and by adopting suitable measures, provided that these be in conformity with the moral laws, and that they respect the rightful freedom of married couples. Where the inalienable right to marriage and procreation is lacking, human dignity has ceased to exist. Finally it is for the parents to decide, with full knowledge of the matter, on the number of their children, taking into account their responsibilities toward God, themselves, the children they have already brought into the world and the community to which they belong. In all this, they must follow the demands of their conscience enlightened by God's law *authentically interpreted*, and sustained by confidence in Him."

A population program must be viewed as an integral part of — rather than as an alternative to — efforts towards social and economic development of the country. It is often stated (*incorrectly*, one may well say) that no effort should be devoted to population planning or to fertility reduction, because such effort would slow up program of industrialization, agricultural development,

earlier statement issued July 4, 1969, categorically justifies the consideration of the demographic factor in long-range national planning and, because adequate national development or its maintenance may require the need for the Government to form a Commission on Population. Then it adds: "It is the competence of the Government to undertake necessary macro-measures of population control. To name a few: the concerted effort of state and society to raise the minimum age of marriage, or to delay it through social, economic or juridical means; the integration of sex education; a system of pensions for old age to minimize dependence on children for security; the expansion of recreational facilities; the control of internal migration." The encyclical *Humanae Vitae* itself points out that "public authority can and must contribute to the solution of the demographic problem, not by permitting that, by legal means, "practices contrary to the natural and the divine law be introduced into that fundamental cell, the family, but rather by way of a provident policy for the family, of a wise education of peoples in respect of the moral law and the liberty of citizens." It quotes the encyclical of John XXIII *Mater et Magistra*, which pointed out that no solution to these difficulties is acceptable "which does violence to man's essential dignity."

4. Question: Is the State morally justified in initiating a population program that would make available a variety of family planning techniques, even though a number of these techniques are morally objectionable to some?

The state is bound to respect the plan of God as already pointed out in the quotations from the encyclicals *Humanae Vitae* and *Mater et Magistra* and *Populorum Progressio*, in relation to the previous question. In the event that it does make available family planning techniques which are morally objectionable to a sector of the community, but which others of different religious persuasion may consider legitimate, the State may not be held censurable since it is not an arbiter of morals. In prudence, however, the State should not sponsor, through legislation or

health improvement and educational expansion. On the other it is sometimes claimed (equally "falsely") by extreme advocates of family planning, that resources devoted to social and economical development, in the absence of effective birth-limitation or control are completely wasted. It seems reasonable to believe that the ultimate aim of a population program is to accelerate economic development to improve health and nutrition, to increase both the quality and



favorable recommendation, methods morally offensive to the religious standards of the majority of the population.

5. Question: If the State should initiate such a program, how should the individual react: a) as a civic leader? b) as an employee who is asked to become directly involved in it? c) as a volunteer worker?

It is clear from the Hierarchy's reaction to the questionnaire that should such a program be adopted, none are "bound to obey those directive in the program that do violence to their consciences." A leader, or an employee, may, in such a case consider himself a conscientious objector and should refuse to become a part of the program violative of his religious convictions. It would be the duty of the State to respect these objections on moral grounds, and not require leaders or employees to play an active role in such a program. While the purely voluntary nature of participation in such a program has been emphasized, it should also be kept in mind that there are many different ways in which an individual can be made to suffer consequences for his objections on moral grounds. A constant and alert vigilance on the part of all is essential to preserve the true freedom of such a participation.

6. Question: How are married couples to react to the differences of opinion in the Church concerning "artificial" contraception, as manifested in the varied responses to *Humanae Vitae* given by some national groups of Bishops?

There are no real fundamental differences of opinion in the Church as manifested in the various responses to *Humanae Vitae* given by various National Conferences of Bishops.<sup>5</sup> The apparent differences arise from the various ways in which National Hierarchies have interpreted the encyclical's directive expressed in the following terms: "To diminish in no way the saving teaching of Christ constitutes an eminent form of charity for souls. But this must even be accompanied by

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the coverage of education, and to help provide more universal, more productive, and more rewarding employment ... a sound population policy and the other elements of a development program are *mutually re-inforcing*.

<sup>5</sup> As far as we know *Holland is alone in criticizing the encyclical Humanae Vitae*. Many feel sad it did! — One must point out the text and context in the statements of Bishops of other countries expressing disagreement with the doctrine contained in the Encyclical of July 25, 1968, if any. It isn't a question of "either" the Pope "or" the bishops, but rather "the Pope and the

patience and goodness, such as the Lord Himself gave example of in dealing with men. Having come not to condemn, but to save, He was indeed intransigent with evil, but merciful towards individuals. In any case, the guidelines set down by the Philippine Hierarchy should constitute the authoritative rules for this country, just as the guidelines set forth by another National Hierarchy are authoritative for the faithful of that country. The "differences" usually reflect the special conditions and mores of each national culture, and has not been wondered at in the past, e.g., the rules of fasting and abstinence, etc. It is, to repeat, the Philippine Hierarchy that holds this authority for the Philippines.

7. Question: How are married couples to resolve a conflict of conscience between their considered convictions and the teaching in *Humanae Vitae* on conception control?

Rightfully, the question implies recognition of the fact that the encyclical *Humanae Vitae* places certain restrictions on the means of conception control that may be utilized by couples legitimately. *Humanae Vitae* itself exhorts them to "face up to the efforts needed", recognizing as it does the fact that the problems of married life may often be difficult. And to priests, it addresses the admonition to "be the first to give, in the exercise of your ministry, the example of loyal internal and external obedience to the teaching authority of the Church".<sup>6</sup>

bishops" both can and, as far as many of the documents referred to are known to us, *are true*: there is no contradiction.

<sup>6</sup>The words just quoted from the encyclical "*Humanae Vitae*" n. 28, voice Vatican II teaching (Const. *Lumen gentium*, n. 25). "In matters of faith and morals, the bishops speak in the name of Christ, and the faithful are to accept their teaching and adhere to it with a religious assent of soul. This religious submission of will and of mind must be shown in a special way to the authentic teaching authority of the Roman Pontiff even when he is not speaking of *cathedra*. That is, it must be shown in such a way that his supreme magisterium is acknowledged with reverence, the judgments made by him are sincerely adhered to, according to his manifest mind and will. His mind and will in the matter maybe known chiefly either from the character, or from his manner of speaking or from a further elucidation on the subject, or and by subsequent statements and declarations. Writes F.S. Sheed: "I have already quoted twice the text of St. Paul Hebrews 5:8-9 although Christ was Son, he learned *obedience* through what he suffered; and being made perfect he became the source of eternal salvation to all who obey him."

Unfortunately, there has been considerable dissent and confusion, not entirely unanticipated by the encyclical itself, because individual members of the ministry have expressed views divergent from those of the encyclical, and have done so publicly, advising the faithful to follow their own consciences in questions where "doubt" exists. This is particularly regrettable because as representatives of the Church, they are exercising their ministry as a public function, as representatives of an authority whose views they do not only not reflect, but oftentimes run counter to. Had this situation occurred in the political sphere, it would very probably be followed by serious repercussions.<sup>7</sup>

The problem of the individual conscience in relation to *Humanae Vitae* is discussed extensively in the Pastoral Letter of the Catholic Hierarchy of the Philippines of October 12, 1968. It points out that "refusal to accept (the prohibition contained in the encyclical) is a

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*Obedience* at one end — whether His to His Father, or ours to Him, implies authority at the other and an authority made known to us. How are we to obey Christ, if we do not know what His commands are?

"Even if the New Testament contained all the details of His "Whatever I have commanded you", which it does not and could not — the *words* would not be enough, given the vast variety of meanings men have somehow managed to draw from those we have got. If we had only the words, we would be reduced to following our own best opinion of what He would have wanted and *that is not what obedience means*" (F.J. Sheen, op. c. fr. 97); J. Rickaby, s.j., "The Lord is my Light" pp. 51-65, on "Private Judgment" and "Pope Conscience"; "Private judgment says Rickaby, in our days means no teaching Church, in our Lord's day it meant no teaching Christ. Any day it means no Revelation, that we are to hearken to and accept; and no Faith" (p. 56)

<sup>7</sup> In the words of the foremost Evidence Guild's speaker, "I keep being reminded of the beaming face of the lecturer long ago who told us that we had all begun our existence as polymorphous sexual perverts. "That beam is now part of the Catholic landscape. As I have said, (p. 191) *I find it hard to think of a doctrine I have not heard denied by a priest*" ("Is it the same Church?" pp. 212). "I get the feeling", says Mr. Sheed, "that the Pope isn't infallible, and the Council isn't but half the Catholics I meet, are!"... (p. 6). After all is said and done, instead of "progressing", we are rather "retrogressing" to the XVI century slogan — *private judgment versus Church authority*. "Whither goes Thou Churchman?... (Cfr. NRTh, June, 1969).

serious matter of disobedience because by its nature (the encyclical) is an authoritative teaching which commands assent". The letter acknowledges the fact that a man is bound to follow his conscience at all times, as the Vatican Council pointed out in the Constitution on the Church in the Modern World, but stresses, as the conciliar document does, the importance of a correct conscience, particularly in the exercise of parenthood where spouses "must always be governed according to a conscience dutifully conformed to the Divine Law itself, and should be submissive towards the Church's teaching office, which authentically interprets the Law in the light of the Gospel".

Again, sustaining the supremacy of the individual's conscience, the Philippine Bishops do point out nevertheless, that, if abused, "the objective moral order may be totally scrapped", and quote the Vatican Council document on Religious Freedom: "In the formation of their consciences the Christian faithful ought carefully to attend to the sacred and certain doctrine of the Church, the teacher of truth. The Church is, by the will of Christ, the teacher of truth. It is Her duty to give utterance to, and authoritatively to teach, that truth which is Christ Himself, and also to declare and confirm by Her authority those principles of the moral order which have their origin in human nature itself."

As the Pastoral Letter of the Philippine Bishops points out "Any sensible person should have the humility to accept the fact that he can err", and this is particularly significant when large segments of the population lack religious training and adequate education and information to form a well-founded and reasoned judgment of conscience. The fallibility of the individual human conscience is well-known. The great poet and Anglican thinker T.S. Eliot expressed these very fears when his Church changed its position on artificial birth control. He wrote: "I regret . . . that the Bishops have placed so much reliance on the individual conscience. Certainly, anyone who is sincere and pure in heart, may seek for guidance from the Holy Spirit; but who of us is always sincere, especially where the most imperative of instincts may be strong enough to simulate, to perfection the voice of the Holy Spirit."

No less than the eminent Jesuit theologian Karl Rahner chides confessors who are fond of telling their penitents to follow their own cons-

science, with the thought that they are doing so "as if the penitent were not precisely asking, and rightly asking, which of the thousand voices of his conscience is the authentic word of God". And he adds: "When is the voice of God more easy to recognize than when He speaks through the mouth of His Church? It is indeed only when the judgment of conscience coincides with this word that one can be sure of hearing truly the voice of conscience rather than the voice of one's own culpable self-deception."

Rahner reflects: "If we Christians, when faced with a moral decision, really realized that the world is under the Cross on which God himself hung nailed and pierced, that obedience to God's law can also entail man's death, that we may not do evil in order that good may come of it, that it is an error and heresy of this eudemonic modern age, to hold that the morally right thing can never lead to a tragic situation from which in this world there is no way out; if we really realized that as Christians we must expect almost to take for granted that at some time in our life our Christianity will involve us in a situation in which we must either sacrifice everything or lose our soul, that we cannot expect always to avoid a 'heroic' situation, then there would indeed be fewer Christians who think that their situation requires a special ruling which is not so harsh as the laws proclaimed as God's laws by the Church,..."

Karl Rahner elsewhere "Catholic Christians and decent people, we have no right to give a doctrine Church an 'interpretation' of our own that we know has been condemned, or will or would be condemned, by the Magisterium as a perversion of the Faith. The Second Vatican Council recognizes that there can be such a thing as invincible, guiltless error which will make a man dissent from the Church's teaching and yet not cost him his salvation. But on that very account the Church today has less reason than ever to tolerate heterodox teaching within Herself merely so that a heterodox teacher can be 'saved'. So a man, whose consciousness of the truth locks him in irreconcilable opposition to a set doctrine, in fairness to the Catholic community, must have the intellectual honesty and courage to leave the old Church that is "no longer his, not to try to infiltrate it by Modernist methods".

The question of conscience is the thorn in the issue.<sup>8</sup> It is like that of a man who looks at his watch to tell time, and practical indeed is he. But he would not be wise if every so often, he did not pause to check if this watch is telling him the right time, for if it did fail him, he would be in a void by himself.

(Sgd.) Vicente J.A. Rosales, M.D.

(Sgd.) Fr. Leonardo Legaspi, O.P., S.T.D.

(Sgd.) Felix Estrada, M.D.

(Sgd.) Fr. Francisco del Rio, O.P., S.T.D. S.T. Mag.

(Sgd.) Bienvenido Z. Angeles, M.D.

(Sgd.) Fr. Manuel Piñon, O.P., S.T.D., Ph.D.

(Sgd.) Fr. Francisco Mendoza, O.P., S.T.D.

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<sup>8</sup> It has been rightly observed, that while Vatican Council II speaks most lucidly upon the rights of men, *outside the Church*, to follow their conscience, it has not been found that it discusses the relation of the *Catholic* conscience to her own teachings or commands, if it feels them to be contrary to it. The Church (Catholic) is not one in which every member is his own theologian.

The ultimate objective of the overemphasis on *freedom of conscience* is to render null and void the teaching authority of the Church, of the Pope, and "without the Pope, the Catholic Church would no longer be Catholic..." ("Ecclesiam Suam" n. 114). The biting remarks of Heinrich Weinstock, "that the Westerner who *still* refuses to unmask autonomous and arbitrary freedom for what it is, -- a *frightful illusion* -- is beyond help" (Cfr. *God on Trial* by G. Siegmund, p. 437). The modern world is largely a Westernized world, "The taproot of all forms of atheism now plaguing this world is *the will to autonomy*. Because self-assertion, and self-creation conflict with a God whose super-abundance includes all freedom, thereby seemingly abrogating all human freedom, *God must go...*" (ib. p. 400). The superman has arrived. God's must go! European atheism means the dethronement of God for the sake of the freedom of man! Characteristic of our day is not envy or hate, which have always been important elements of social existence, but the *joy of hating*, *hate as a creative power and unifying element*. In 1957, no less than 350 experts on atheistic propaganda from all parts of the Soviet Union were invited to a congress in Moscow. ...