

## AMERICANISM

“If a blind man leads a blind man both will fall into a pit.”

*Matthew 15 : 14*

On 1<sup>st</sup> March, 2010, Charles Chaput, Archbishop of Denver, Colorado, addressed a Protestant gathering at Houston Baptist University. He praised America's bishops for a pastoral letter, *The Christian In Action*, issued in November 1948 for its strong endorsement “of American democracy and religious freedom”. The Archbishop's address maintained an interpretation of Catholicism which has been in vogue in America now for more than a century.

In January, 1895, in his encyclical *Longinqua oceani* to America's bishops, Pope Leo XIII had said this :

“[T]he Church among you, unopposed by the Constitution and government of your nation, fettered by no hostile legislation, protected against violence by the common laws and the impartiality of the tribunals, is free to live and act without hindrance. Yet, although all this is true, it would be very erroneous to draw the conclusion that in America is to be sought the type of the most desirable status of the Church, or that it would be universally lawful or expedient for State and Church to be, as in America, dissevered and divorced.”

Four years later, in the encyclical *Testem Benevolentiae*, directed likewise to the American bishops, the Pope addressed a further matter, a heresy he labelled *Americanism*, whose character he had detected in certain of the writings of American Catholics.

“[Its] underlying principle... is that, in order more easily to attract those who differ from her, the Church should shape her teachings more in accord with the spirit of the age, relax some of her ancient severity and make some concessions to new opinions... not only in regard to ways of living, but even in regard to doctrines which belong to the deposit of the faith. [Many] contend that it would be opportune, to gain those who differ from us, to omit certain points of her teaching which are of less importance and tone down the meaning the Church has always attached to them... The Vatican Council [1870] says concerning this point : '[T]he doctrine of faith which God has revealed has not been proposed as if it was a philosophical invention to be perfected by human ingenuity... Hence that meaning of the sacred dogmas is perpetually to be retained which our Holy Mother the Church has once declared, nor is that meaning ever to be departed from under the pretence or pretext of a deeper comprehension...”

“We cannot consider as altogether blameless the silence which purposely leads to the omission or neglect of some of the principles of Christian doctrine, for all the principles come from the same Author and Master, 'the Only Begotten Son, Who is in the bosom of the Father.' - John i, 18...”

That the rot of Americanism was well entrenched among the American clergy even as the Leo XIII addressed it is manifest in the denial by the Archbishop of Baltimore, James Cardinal Gibbons—to whom the encyclical was addressed—and other American prelates that American Catholics held any of these positions. There was no fire that had caused the smoke the pontiff had detected.

The view that the United States is a Protestant country has become an *idée fixe* among commentators. It is not true. America is a Masonic country. Its founding fathers were Masons and Deists who

imported the errors of the French Revolution into the country's legislative framework. The concepts of religious liberty and of separation of Church and State embodied in the American Constitution are not Protestant protocols but Masonic. Protestantism (that is, anti-Catholicism) is merely the sea in which the country floats. America is saturated with Masonic and quasi-Masonic organisations, the average American seeing nothing abnormal about including in his *curriculum vitae* membership of one or more of these God-mocking associations.

The 1948 pastoral letter *The Christian In Action* was a response *inter alia* to a decision of the United States Supreme Court handed down the previous year, *Everson v The Board of Studies*, which rendered explicit the Masonic principle of separation of Church and State in the US Constitution. Marked by deference to the US Constitution rather than criticism of its shortcomings, the letter consisted largely of generalisations about the importance of a 'Christian', as opposed to a secular, way of life. It was notable not so much for what it said as for what it did not say. What should it have said ?

The answer to that question lies in an analysis of the evils adopted uncritically in the Supreme Court decisions. The issues in *Everson* turned on a series of errors in natural principle over the education of children, Masonic protocols, embraced willy nilly by an American populace blind to ultimate principle which, by their silence, had been tolerated by America's bishops for decades. The pastoral letter failed—

- to defend the Church's insistence, against the claims of the US Constitution and its component States, that it is the right and duty of parents, not of the state, to educate their children, a right which includes the concomitant right that they not to be deprived by state exaction of the means to fulfil their duty ;
- to point out that any rights the state may have in education are limited to the setting of standards consistent with the natural moral law and oversight as to compliance with those standards ;
- to insist that the state exists to support, not to derogate from, these parental rights ;
- to point up the systematic injustice of a system of state patronage founded on the erroneous assertion of state rights over education ;
- to fulfil their duty of proclaiming that the Church Christ instituted is the one true religion on earth and that all other religions are but human inventions ;
- to insist, against the claim in the American Constitution, that no reality corresponds to the alleged right to 'religious liberty', that is, a liberty to adopt any but the one true religion established by Almighty God on earth, the Catholic faith ;
- to insist, moreover, that the American Constitution is defective in its exclusion of the assistance that the Catholic Church, the Church that God has established on earth, could give it—

and failed to support these various issues with appropriate rational arguments.

The pastoral letter contained a remarkable sentence. After commenting on the secular interpretation of the language of the First Amendment ('Congress shall make no laws respecting an establishment of religion or forbidding the free exercise thereof') in recent court decisions, the bishops said this :

“One cannot but remark that if this secularist influence is to prevail in our Government and its institutions, such a result should be, in candor and logic and law, achieved by legislation adopted after full, popular discussion and not by the ideological interpretation of our Constitution.”

Is this appeal to 'the will of the people' as final resort an argument one would expect from a Catholic bishop ? Or is it, rather, what one might expect from an American citizen indifferent to the truth or otherwise of the Catholic faith ? Is it the sort of argument a man would offer who thought his first allegiance was to the Church of the God-man, Jesus Christ, whom he had sworn to serve ?

*The Christian In Action* was an Americanist manifesto, its nominal adherence to Catholic principles compromised by ambivalence over their application to society. The bishops' silence on the issues mentioned was the silence Leo XIII had reproved.

There will be those who may consider this judgement harsh, who will assert that no bishop could reasonably be expected to assert the principles referred to above, even if it be conceded they are Catholic principles, in the face of the overwhelming claims of the secular in the world. This argument might be strengthened, for the current age, with the consideration that the popes themselves have deferred to the secular at the expense of Catholic principle as, for instance, Paul VI in his address to the United Nations General Assembly on 5<sup>th</sup> October 1965, and the subsequent addresses to that body by Pope John Paul II. Why should an individual bishop seek to distinguish himself by bucking the trend ? The answer is that a bishop is a successor of the Apostles and bound to look to them and the courage they exercised rather than to the example of other bishops, however eminent, caught up in the *zeitgeist* of the modern world.

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"It has become fashionable among Church historians," writes Peter Kwasniewski, "to deny that there ever existed a heresy called Americanism, at least on the shores of America itself. The usual line is that it was only ever a living idea in France, and even there, it meant little more than the liberalism of advocating the absolute separation of Church and State..." (*Resurgent in the Midst of Chaos*, Kettering Ohio, Angelico Press, 2014, ch. 4)

American Catholics lament the evils that beset them as a result of secular, and atheistic, interpretations of their country's laws. It never occurs to them that these are precisely the perils of which Leo had warned. Nothing is more symptomatic of their blindness than their appeal to 'religious liberty' as the solution. They do not understand that that concept is itself the problem. 'Religious liberty' derives from the false liberty trumpeted by the French Revolutionaries, a liberty that refused to acknowledge that human actions are governed in their very nature by the rule of morals laid down by the Author of creation. The symbol of Americans' governance by that false understanding is the *Statue of Liberty*, gift of the Masonic French to the American people.

There is hardly an American Catholic commentator, bishop, priest, theologian or layman—even the best of them—capable of recognising the problem besetting his faith.<sup>1</sup> In 2014 Anthony Esolen published a study of the social teachings of Pope Leo XIII (*Reclaiming Catholic Social Teaching*, Sophia Press, Manchester, New Hampshire) analysing the content of various of the great Pope's encyclicals. He did not neglect his most important encyclical, that on the nature of human liberty, *Libertas*

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<sup>1</sup> Dr John Rao of The Roman Forum is an exception. See his *Americanism And The Collapse Of The Church In The United States* at <http://jcrao.freeshell.org/Americanism.html> Peter Kwasniewski is another.

*praestantissimum* (20<sup>th</sup> June 1888), or those addressing the evils of Freemasonry. Nor did he ignore *Longinqua Oceani* (6<sup>th</sup> January 1895) or *Testem Benevolentiae* (22<sup>nd</sup> January 1899). But he offers no comment on the influence on American Catholics of Masonic protocols or on the mindset that immersion in them has wrought.

More recently, we have had from the studious and incisive American commentator, Thomas Storck, a collection of essays over twenty years bearing the encouraging title *From Christendom To Americanism And Beyond* (Kettering Ohio, Angelico Press, 2015). The collection contains much that is valuable, including his assessment of the contribution of the empiricist John Locke to the concept of 'religious freedom'. He advances a Catholic assessment of social principle, but he does not address the disposing cause of Americanism, the failure of America's bishops to confront the country's Masonic mindset. Indeed the title of his collection is misleading. For Catholics—not just American Catholics—have not got *beyond* Americanism. They remain enmeshed in it.

As far as the internet goes, *The Catholic Thing* website might better be termed *The Americanist Thing*, and *First Things* termed *First Americanist Things*. Hardly a month goes by where some commentator on one or other does not appeal to the 'religious liberty' guaranteed in the Constitution as the way to relieve the Catholic faithful of the burden of Masonic impositions which daily grow heavier. Contributor George Weigel is on record as saying that John Courtney Murray S J, signal promoter of Americanism, should be raised to the ranks of the blessed.<sup>2</sup> Principals of the various American Catholic blogsites, even as they pass judgement on every passing issue, are similarly bereft of insight.

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In his address to the Houston Baptists Archbishop Chaput condemned John Fitzgerald Kennedy, Democrat candidate for the US Presidency, for an address he gave to the Greater Houston Ministerial Association in 1960 in which he endorsed the Masonic doctrine of separation of Church and State.<sup>3</sup> Archbishop Chaput's condemnation was, with respect, fifty years too late. The vast majority of the bishops of the Catholic Church had long since adopted this Masonic protocol as a consequence of the acceptance of the Americanist position at the Second Vatican Council, manifest most clearly in the final document, *Dignitatis Humanae*, the Declaration on Religious Liberty.

Consistent with that mind, in the years after the Council the Vatican pressed for the alteration of the concordats the Church enjoyed with the governments of various Catholic countries to remove reference to the fact that Catholicism was their official religion. This brought in its wake enormous damage to the faith and to the welfare of the inhabitants of the relevant countries. (Cf. Michael Davies, *The Second Vatican Council and Religious Liberty*, The Neumann Press, Long Prairie, Minnesota, 1992, Appendix III, *Dignitatis Humanae and Spain*)

If anyone is in doubt about this fundamental shift in the Church's 'official' position, let him study Pope

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2 'Misreading Murray, Yet Again', *First Things*, 9<sup>th</sup> October, 2013

3 See the author's consideration of certain of those evils in his *Archbishop Chaput On The American Bishops, John F. Kennedy & Religious Liberty* and *More On Archbishop Chaput, John F Kennedy & The American Bishops* in the Index under the heading 'Freemasonry and the Church' at [www.superflumina.org](http://www.superflumina.org)

John Paul II's letter to the French episcopacy (11<sup>th</sup> February 2005) marking the anniversary of the 1905 Law of Separation pursuant to which the Masonic French government had confiscated all the Church's property in France. On 11<sup>th</sup> February 1906, in his encyclical *Vehementer nos*, Pope Pius X had condemned that law as founded upon “a thesis absolutely false, a most pernicious error”. One hundred years later, Pope John Paul told the French bishops that now “the principle of *laïcité* (secularity), to which your Country is deeply attached, is also part of the social teaching of the Church.” Pius X's majestic sacrifice in the face of a Masonic imposition which had caused immense suffering to the French clergy and faithful was degraded by John Paul II to the level of a quixotic gesture to impracticable principle.

We append, for the benefit of readers who have not studied his works, an extract from Michael Davies' *The Second Vatican Council and Religious Liberty* which deals with the influence of Fr Courtney Murray and his sponsors at the Council. Canadian commentator, John R T Lamont, has recently argued, and persuasively, that the mentality promoted by the Council Fathers owed more to the influence of French thinkers such as Jacques Maritain than to the Americans. (*Catholic Teaching on Religion and the State*<sup>4</sup>) It is, with respect, neither here nor there for the evils adopted by the Americans, entrenched in the US Constitution and endorsed time out of number by America's Catholic episcopacy, owe their provenance ultimately to the Masonic French and to the shades of Rousseau and Voltaire.

Thomas Storck has remarked appositely—

“[I]t does not seem to admit of reasonable disagreement that the conduct of the Second Vatican Council, and much more its aftermath and application, have generally been a disaster for the Church, a disaster at once pastoral, intellectual, and institutional...” (*From Christendom To Americanism And Beyond*, op cit, p. 38)

There are times when orthodox Catholics would be forgiven for wondering whether the Church's prelates belong to the Church Christ founded, or to another church, one of their own imagining !

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When are we going to hear from a bishop—just one bishop—that the Catholic Church's chief problems over the last sixty years derive from errors embraced at the Second Vatican Council ? There is a sort of terror abroad over the prospect of criticising the Council. One hears rumblings of concern among the Catholic intelligentsia but nothing more. In his admirable lecture *St Maximilian Kolbe and the Problem of Freemasonry*, (Lighthouse Catholic Media, 2015), for instance, Dr Mark Miravalle of the Franciscan University, Steubenville, insists upon the need, consistent with the teaching of St Maximilian, that Our Blessed Lady be proclaimed *Mediatrix of All Graces* and that we reject the gnostic mindset of Freemasonry among whose tenets are the protocols of 'religious liberty' and separation of Church and state. Dr Miravalle contradicts explicitly views which were embraced by a majority of the Council's bishops but he does not grasp the nettle.

If we had one, sane, outspoken bishop to point up the extent of the evils that have flowed from Vatican II the tide would begin to turn. Once turned, the flood of restoration of sanity in the Church

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4 [https://www.academia.edu/877072/Catholic\\_teaching\\_on\\_religion\\_and\\_the\\_state](https://www.academia.edu/877072/Catholic_teaching_on_religion_and_the_state) . A slightly different version of this paper is available in *New Blackfriars*, Vol. 96, Issue 1066, pp. 674-698 (16 July 2015)

would follow.

God send us a pope who will not be afraid to tackle the heresies, such as Americanism, that beset His Holy Church, a pope who will not crave the attention of the masses, or think his chief function is to wander the world talking to journalists, a pope who will direct faithful and unfaithful alike in the way of salvation.

God send us another Leo XIII.

Michael Baker

4<sup>th</sup> April 2016—*Solemnity of the Annunciation of the Lord*

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## *APPENDIX*

Extract from Michael Davies' *The Second Vatican Council and Religious Liberty*,  
The Neumann Press, Long Prairie, Minnesota, 1992, Chapter XII

### FATHER MURRAY THE AMERICANIST

The name of the *Zeitgeist* served by Fr Murray is Americanism. It is never easy to be a member of a minority group within a pluralistic society, particularly when the minority bases its beliefs and attitudes on principles which are radically incompatible with those of the majority. Any sociologist would confirm that the inevitable tendency is for the minority gradually to adapt its beliefs and attitudes to those of the majority. The most effective means of preventing this is to live in a 'ghetto' and reduce contact with the majority to a minimum. This is the means adopted by such groups as the Amish sect in the U.S.A. But for most people in a modern industrial society this is not a practical proposition. Unless the minority group has its own schools its children must be educated with those of the majority—and young people tend to take their values from their own age-group rather than their parents. Even where the group has its own schools, once the children leave them to begin work there is no way of insulating them against the majority attitude.

The temptation to conform is particularly great for those in the academic world. When 'intellectuals' have established a consensus on a particular topic, life becomes very awkward for anyone who insists upon remaining outside it. The worst penalty is that of not being taken seriously. The temptation to conform is an ever present one and poses serious problems to members of minorities who wish to be accepted as intellectually respectable, and at the same time continue to be regarded as loyal members of their group. Their response is to try to reconcile the two positions. In my book *Pope John's Council*, I quoted Cardinal Manning on the extent to which Catholic academics in nineteenth century Germany were drawn into the orbit of the all pervading rationalism. It is hard for a Catholic biblical scholar today to avoid being drawn into the heretical consensus long espoused by his Protestant *confrères*, in the direct tradition of German rationalism, and which ultimately removes the entire divine foundation from Christianity. These scholars try to prove that the heretical position they have espoused is, in fact, perfectly orthodox and compatible with Catholicism. As men of great intellect and learning they are often able to present a plausible case, and even to make their opponents appear prejudiced and ignorant. Once they adopt the consensus position they will be lauded by their non-Catholic *confrères*. Their writings will be praised as marking the emergence of intellectually respectable Catholic scholarship. It is those who oppose them who will be on the defensive. It needs to be emphasized that conscious dishonesty will rarely feature in this process.

Those concerned will imagine that their position is the right one. They will often feel sympathy for their brethren who have not yet seen the light.

The traditional Catholic teaching on Church and State has posed a dilemma for prominent American Catholics since the founding of the Republic. Catholics accepted the rights and protection accorded to them by the American Constitution, although official Church teaching permitted a denial of these same rights to Protestants where a Catholic State existed. Superficially, this appeared as the acceptance of double standards whereas, in reality, one single standard, the rights of truth, was observed. A tendency developed in the U.S.A., even among the hierarchy, to accept that in fact it was the American and not the traditional position which represented the ideal. Even where this was not stated explicitly, it was the obvious inference of some of the views expressed, a fact not lost upon some Liberal Catholics in Europe who wished to have the American situation adopted as the norm in Europe. In the United States, where Catholics were a minority, the situation was the best that could be hoped for ; but this was not the case in a Catholic country such as Spain. In January, 1895, Pope Leo XIII addressed his encyclical *Longinqua oceani* to the Archbishops and Bishops of the U.S.A. The crucial passage read :

For the Church amongst you, unopposed by the Constitution and government of your nation, fettered by no hostile legislation, protected against violence by the common laws and the impartiality of the tribunals, is free to live and act without hindrance. Yet, although all this is true, it would be very erroneous to draw the conclusion that in America is to be sought the type of the most desirable status of the Church, or that it would be universally lawful or expedient for State and Church to be, as in America, dissevered and divorced.

On 22 January, 1899, Pope Leo promulgated his encyclical *Testem benevolentiae*, addressed to Cardinal Gibbons and the American Church. The passage [ cited previously ] could have been addressed specifically to Fr. Murray fifty years later, particularly the words :

For they contend that it is opportune, in order to work in a more attractive way upon the wills of those who are not in accord with us, to pass over certain heads of doctrines, as if of lesser moment, or to so soften them that they may not have the same meaning which the Church has invariably held.

In his study of Fr. Murray, Father Pelotte [Donald E Pelotte, *John Courtney Murray : Theologian in Conflict*, New York, 1975] writes :

Americanism grew out of the first genuine attempt to come to grips with the whole gamut of important American values : democracy, pluralism, cooperation between religions, State neutrality towards the churches, and the problem of the relationship of religion and culture. The Americanist crisis involved the question of the extent to which the Church should enter the mainstream of American political, economic, and social life. [pp. 146-7]

Fr Pelotte states that :

It took a man of Murray's stature to take up the scholarly task begun by the Americanists... [p. 145]

And again :

If Murray is to be considered one of the major spokesmen of the Americanist tradition, his life-long difficulty at getting official Church approval for his position must be considered in the context of the Americanist heresy controversy... In fact, J C Fenton, Francis Connell, and George Shea of *The American Ecclesiastical Review* clearly and publicly accused Murray of the errors reproved in the condemnation of Americanism. [p. 146]

Fr Pelotte notes that these priests alleged that Fr. Murray's views were condemned in *Longinqua oceani* and *Testem benevolentiae*. He claims that they misunderstood Fr. Murray, and Fr. Murray himself claimed frequently that he was misunderstood or misrepresented. This was a tactic of the early Catholic Modernists. However, Fr. Murray's own writings, which were examined in Chapter X, make it quite clear that his theories are incompatible with the traditional Catholic teaching. It was also shown in Chapter X that, in proposing his theories as a legitimate development of previous papal teaching, he was simply imposing his own ideas onto what the Popes had written.

Msgr. Fenton had Father Murray in mind when he condemned those who took it upon themselves to question teaching which had been repeated in the encyclicals of successive popes...

Fr Pelotte accepts that Msgr. Fenton was referring to Fr. Murray when he wrote :

There is, however, an attitude towards encyclicals which can be productive of doctrinal evil, and which can lead to a practical abandonment of their teaching. According to this attitude, it is the business of the theologian to distinguish two elements in the content of various encyclicals. One element would be the deposit of genuine Catholic teaching, which of course, all Catholics are bound to accept at all times. The other element would be a collection of notions current at the time the encyclicals were written. These notions, which would enter into the practical application of the Catholic teaching are represented as ideas which Catholics can afford to overlook. [*American Ecclesiastical Review*, 121, 1949, p. 217]

Msgr. Fenton designates this as an attitude 'radically destructive of a true Catholic mentality'. He also noted that the publication of the encyclical *Humani generis* on 12 August 1950 removed any credibility from Fr. Murray's position. In this encyclical, Pope Pius XII taught that :

When the Roman Pontiffs go out of their way to pronounce on some subject which has hitherto been controverted, it must be clear to everybody that, in the mind and intention of the Pontiffs concerned, this subject can no longer be regarded as a matter of free debate among theologians.

This passage was contained in the draft of the Vatican II Constitution on the Church, but was removed. Attempts to have it reinserted in the revised draft were not successful.

Msgr. Fenton considered that the traditional teaching regarding Church and State certainly came into the category of doctrines upon which the mind of the Roman Pontiffs had been made clear, having been reiterated by successive pope on numerous occasions :

... The truth that the State, like every other human society, is objectively obligated to worship God according to the one religion He has established and commanded is so obviously a part of Catholic doctrine that no theologian has any excuse to call it into question. [*American Ecclesiastical Review*, 123, 1950, p. 218]

By 1955, Fr. Murray's unorthodox views had become so blatant that the Holy Office felt bound to intervene. Fr McCormick, his superior, told him that he was to cease writing on the Church-State issue. The extent of the inroads of Liberalism into American Catholicism by that date is illustrated in the fact that Fr. McCormick did not order Fr. Murray to stop writing because his views were heterodox, but because it would be prudent to drop the matter for the moment as time would change : 'It seems to me a mistake to wish to carry on with this controverted question under present circumstances... Time will bring changes.' [Donald E Pelotte, *John Courtney Murray : Theologian in Conflict*, op. cit., p. 52]

Within ten years Msgr Fenton had resigned, and Murray's ideas had influenced the Council to the extent that its teaching on the object or right to religious liberty conformed exactly to that of the American Constitution. Father Murray was able to celebrate his triumph with a champagne party after concelebrating Mass with the Pope himself. Time had indeed brought changes, and in one of a number of commentaries which he wrote upon the Declaration, Murray made it clear how this triumph had been achieved...

In his book *American Participation in the Second Vatican Council*, Msgr. V A Yzermans writes :

During the ninth public session, on December 7, 1965, Pope Paul VI formally promulgated the Declaration on Religious Freedom after a final vote of 2,308 Council Fathers approving and 70 disapproving. It was a delightful victory for the American hierarchy. Richard Cardinal Cushing of Boston summarized their collective sentiments when he wrote :

'I come home happy and satisfied that the voices of American Catholics have been heard and respected at the Ecumenical Council. We Americans, I feel, by the fact that we have lived in peace and harmony in a pluralistic society, offer to the world a practical lesson of the deeper significance



of religious liberty.'

The realization that the document was '*the American issue at the Council*' was verbalized by Archbishop Robert Lucey of San Antonio in the Spring of 1963 : 'It would be entirely appropriate that the American hierarchy should take the lead of a decree proclaiming authentic and universal freedom of religion, made permanent and unbreakable by constitutional guarantees.' As a matter of fact, that lead had already been given in the second session of the Council through the pleas for a statement on religious freedom by the Americans who spoke during the discussions on ecumenism. That initiative, too, had been exhibited from the very beginning of the conciliar experience by the interventions submitted by Archbishop Karl Alter in 1959 and Francis Cardinal Spellman in 1960 for a clear conciliar declaration on religious freedom. Their sentiments were many times expressed by the American members and consultors of the unity secretariat... The American press also played no small role in fostering a healthy public opinion in favor of the document. From beginning to end, the press followed this document more closely than any other conciliar statement. It was, time after time, through every session of the Council, a constantly recurring subject for discussion at the American Bishops' Press Panel. [V A Yzermans, *American Participation in the Second Vatican Council*, New York, 1967, p. 623]

In 1895, in *Longinqua oceani*, Pope Leo XIII had taught explicitly that 'it would be very erroneous to draw the conclusion that in America is to be sought the type of the most desirable status of the Church, or that it would be universally lawful or expedient for State and Church to be, as in America, dissevered and divorced.' In 1967 Father Murray was able to state with great satisfaction that the teaching of the Church on the object or content of the right to religious freedom had been made identical to that of the American Constitution thanks to the solid and consistent support given by the American bishops to the 'American Schema'.

Murray found nothing anomalous about this *volte-face*. The anomaly, he claimed, lay in the fact that the Church had failed to recognize that the position taken in the American Constitution was, in fact, her own tradition. The popes had failed to appreciate this because, it would appear, they were blinded to this fact by an obsession with what Murray recognized as the aberrations of the French Revolution. He explains :

Caught in the more disastrous aberrations derivative from the French Revolution, the Church long failed to recognize the validity of the American development of what was, in fact, her own tradition. The Declaration accords the belated recognition. The right to religious freedom is not the creature of expedience or even of history alone. It is not a gracious grant of government in concession to social circumstances. It is a requirement of the dignity of the human person. [V A Yzermans, *American Participation in the Second Vatican Council*, op cit. p. 671]

The Declaration on Religious Freedom, Murray assures us, "aligns the Church firmly and irrevocably with the movement of the historical consciousness of contemporary men—with 'those desires in the minds of men' which are 'greatly in accord with truth and justice' from which this epochal document takes its start." [V A Yzermans, *American Participation in the Second Vatican Council*, op cit. p. 676] Murray could hardly have been more explicit, the Declaration is based not upon Catholic tradition and the teaching of the Popes, but upon 'the movement of the historical consciousness of contemporary men'—in other words, with the *Zeitgeist* that was, to a considerable extent, the creation of the American press...

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