LETTER TO THE FRENCH ARCHBISHOPS AND BISHOPS

OUR APOSTOLIC MANDATE

OF THE SUPREME PONTIFF

PIUS X

On the “Sillon”

August 25, 1910

Translated by Yves Dupont, 1974
With added Notes and Commentaries.
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What the Sillon exactly was, and what it stood for, will be made clear in this Encyclical. Briefly, it was a movement grouping the early Christian Democrats of this century. The word “Sillon” is the French for “Furrow.” In a still largely agricultural economy this term denoted work, patience and dogged perseverance. In today’s industrial economy the word “Workshop” would probably be preferred. In fact, “Workshop” was first used by the Communists when setting up their cells in factories to foment industrial unrest, and it is now widely used in the sense of “Study Group” or “Action Group” outside the factory context, and even in Catholic circles. This is not to imply, of course, that the Sillon was a kind of Communist workshop; it is merely designed to explain the use of the word “Sillon” to English-speaking readers by providing an analogy.

This letter was dated August 25, 1910. Why bring it to light again? Because the socio-political errors of contemporary Catholicism and their incidence on the life of the Church, take their origin in Sillonism. This Encyclical therefore, is terribly relevant to our own time; for the first time in the history of the Church, democratic ideas have won official recognition; even the Provincial of a religious order has to abide by the decisions of his “Council”? The poison has permeated every stratum of Church life.

The Sillon was essentially a Democratic Movement; it had its newspaper: The Democratic Awakening. France was the only major European nation with a republican government, and the Sillonists agreed to accept the
Constitution in order to change the Legislation, a policy which the liberal Catholics had already pursued during the reign of Leo XIII. But the Sillonists were far more ‘progressive’ than the Liberal Catholics of some 20 years earlier. The Liberal Catholics had adhered to the main tenets of the Faith, at least in theory, if not in fact. Theirs was a policy aiming at an accommodation between their principles and the practical demands of modern times. The Sillonists went much further: They had made their own the political concepts condemned by Pius IX, 46 years earlier and by Leo XIII some 25 years earlier. Theirs was the first Christian Democratic Movement in Western Europe, and this explains why Pius X sent his letter to the French bishops only, and not to the bishops of other nations. Pius X dealt a deathblow to Sillonism and its ‘democratic dreams,’ as he himself put it. But whilst a movement may be destroyed, ideas cannot. So the Sillonist ideas continued to spread under different labels. By 1945 the Catholic world in its entirety had been infected. 1965 marked their official victory. Innovation for its own sake was the order of the day. Pope Pius X, on the other hand, was not innovating when he condemned Democratic ideas and practices and, at the other end of the pre-conciliar period, Pius XII in no way changed the teachings of his predecessors when he gave his 1944 Christmas message: his definition of the sources of authority was an implicit condemnation of modern political superstitions. Likewise, his discussion of the “Rights of Man” in his 1942 Christmas message bore no resemblance whatever to the Masonic Rights of Man of modern democracies. As he saw it, and as St. Thomas also saw it, True Democracy is not so much a political system, or regime, as it is an institution within a political
system. In fact, he asserted that True Democracy can be found even in an absolute Monarchy, which of course, is perfectly true since True Democracy lies in the designation of leaders (especially within subsidiary bodies), not in the conferring of authority.

As for Leo XIII, he had reminded us in *Diuturnum Illud, Immortale Dei, Rerum Novarum, Graves de Communi*, and other documents, that “Authority cannot be delegated by the people because, in the first place, it does not rest with the people.” All modern democratic ideas in the life of the State, and now in the life of the Church, were condemned in no uncertain terms by all Popes even prior to Pius X, viz. (to name only a few) Pius VI in *Caritas Quae*, Gregory XVI in *Mirari Vos, Singulari Nos, Nunquam Fore*; Pius IX in *Quanta Cura, Maxima Quidem, Ad Apostolicae, Acerbissimum*. It would be wrong therefore, to single out Pius X as a ‘reactionary’ Pope; he simply re-asserted the unchangeable doctrine of the Church at a time when the sons of the Church themselves, the Sillonists, were propagating their Masonic errors. And if Pius X is to be viewed as a reactionary, it would be more correct to say that all Popes up to Vatican II were reactionaries. What has happened since Vatican II is verily and truly a revolution and, in order to combat it, it is imperative to reprint this letter on Sillonism which, to the best of my knowledge, is unprocurable in the English language.

It was published many decades ago in the *American Catholic Quarterly Review,* but this Review is now defunct. I possess a photostat copy of this early translation; I have studied it, and I have compared it with the French original. The French phraseology, style, and sentence
construction, have been transposed in English almost as written by Pius X. This does not make for readability.

In view of this a new translation seemed to be essential. While remaining as close as possible to the original, even at the cost of retaining some words not in very common usage in the English language, I have nevertheless departed from the verbatim (or literal) rendering, and I have adopted a more readable translation: a syntactic (or conceptual) rendering.

However, as an exception to the rule, I have retained the word ‘City,’ whilst the early translator chose ‘State.’ The word ‘State’ conjures up the notion of government and political structures, whereas the word ‘City’ applies more specifically to relations between citizens and to social structures. The use of ‘City’ in this sense is not at all alien to the English language: Mary of Agreda’s masterpiece, “Ciudad de Dios” was translated as “The City of God.” Likewise in St. Augustine’s work of the same name, ‘Civitas’ has been translated as ‘City’ whenever it occurs in the book; and in our own time, the Decrees of Vatican II also use it. It did not seem necessary, therefore, to depart from literalness in this case.

In making a translation of this nature, quite a few difficulties are encountered. I have usually followed the middle course bearing in mind that an Encyclical is not to be translated like, for instance, a novel: we are not aiming at stylistic perfection, but rather at a close adherence to the original on the one hand, and intelligibility and reasonable readability on the other. This is certainly more difficult than opting from the outset for a common English
rendering: it means finding some expressions similar to the original that will be understood in English, while conveying an identical meaning.

In numbering the paragraphs of this Encyclical I have followed the French version of *La Cite Catholique* (Offprint No. 91), undated but probably printed in the ‘50’s. *La Cite Catholique* no longer exists as such, but it has been succeeded by another Association with very similar if not identical aims and purposes, called *Office International Des Oeuvres De Formation Civique Et D’Action Culturelle Selon Le Droit Naturel Et Chretien*. (International Office for the Works of Civic Formation and Cultural Action in Accordance with the Natural and Christian Law.) The books, pamphlets and offprints which this Office publishes or stocks are invaluable for a correct understanding of today’s problems in the socio-political, cultural and religious fields. Some are now available in the English language.

Yves Dupont
Melbourne 1974
Publisher’s Preface

Yves Dupont was one of those rare Catholic laymen who first saw the errors of the Second Vatican Council, which would later claim legitimacy under the nebulous term ‘The Spirit of Vatican II,’ even before the Council concluded in 1965.

Mr. Dupont was born in Paris in 1922, and educated at the College de Royan near Bordeaux. He converted to the Catholic religion whilst serving in the French Colonial Army in North Africa in 1941. He was awarded the Croix de Guerre whilst fighting in Alsace in 1944. After the war he lived for several years in Paris before migrating to Australia with his English wife and four children.

It was in Melbourne in 1962 that Mr. Dupont began publishing his review ‘World Trends.’ When these early issues are re-read with the benefit of hindsight, nearly thirty years later, the reader can only be amazed at the perception of this man. “My observations of the proceedings of Vatican II prompted me to express fears and misgivings for the future of the Church” was a comment of his at the time. His readers in those early years were incredulous at his predictions of trouble ahead for the Church. Most of the fears he expressed in those early days have come true.

Mr. Dupont’s main study had been of various prophecies made by well-known and lesser known ‘seers,’ as well as those of Our Blessed Lady at La Salette, Fatima and other places. His writings in World Trends could lead one to believe that he was somewhat of a prophet himself. He was the author of several books, both in French and
English, on prophecy. Perhaps his best known in English is *Catholic Prophecy* TAN Books and Publishers 1970, which has been reprinted many times and is presently enjoying a resurgence of interest. The book shows the scholarship of Yves Dupont, and it remains a valuable work. Mr. Dupont was also concerned with the diffusion of good Catholic literature, which he carried out under the name of ‘Tenet Books.’ Mail still arrives from people who have read an issue of *World Trends*, or some literature published under the name of ‘Tenet Books,’ for the first time. Mr. Dupont died in December 1976, and it is a tribute to him that his work is still so valuable. A limited number of the early *World Trends* are still available from Instauratio Press.

This present work, *Our Apostolic Mandate*, a letter of Pope Saint Pius X to the French Bishops, was first published by Mr. Dupont in March of 1974. Stock of the original issue is exhausted and this reprint became necessary. We have reset the book and retained Mr. Dupont’s commentary from the original publication.

Instauratio Press
May 31, 1990
Feast of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Queen
Letter of our Holy Father Pope Pius X to the French Archbishops and Bishops

To Our Well-Beloved Sons Peter Hector Coulié, Cardinal-Priest of the Holy Roman Church, Archbishop of Lyons; Lewis Henry Luçon, Cardinal-Priest of the Holy Roman Church, Archbishop of Rheims; Paulin Peter Andrieu, Cardinal-Priest of the Holy Roman Church, Archbishop of Bordeaux; and to all Our Other Venerable Brethren, the French Archbishops and Bishops.

Venerable Brethren,

1. Error Must Be Condemned.
Our Apostolic Mandate requires from Us that We watch over the purity of the Faith and the integrity of Catholic discipline. It requires from Us that We protect the faithful from evil and error; especially so when evil and error are presented in dynamic language which, concealing vague notions and ambiguous expressions with emotional and high-sounding words, is likely to set ablaze the hearts of men in the pursuit of ideals which, whilst attractive, are none the less nefarious. Such were not so long ago the doctrines of the so-called philosophers of the 18th century, the doctrines of the Revolution and Liberalism which have been so often condemned; such are even today the theories of the Sillon which, under the glowing appearance of generosity, are all too often wanting
in clarity, logic and truth. These theories do not belong to the Catholic, or for that matter, to the French Spirit.

2. Credit Is Given to Sillonists for their Dedication.
We have long debated, Venerable Brethren, before We decided to solemnly and publicly speak Our mind on the Sillon. Only when your concern augmented Our own did we decide to do so. For we love, indeed, the valiant young people who fight under the Sillon’s banner, and We deem them worthy of praise and admiration in many respects. We love their leaders, whom We are pleased to acknowledge as noble souls on a level above vulgar passions, and inspired with the noblest form of enthusiasm in their quest for goodness. You have seen, Venerable Brethren how, imbued with a living realization of the brotherhood of men, and supported in their selfless efforts by their love of Jesus Christ and a strict observance of their religious duties, they sought out those who labor and suffer in order to set them on their feet again.

3. The Origin of the Sillon; the Courage of its Members.
This was shortly after Our Predecessor Leo XIII of happy memory had issued his remarkable Encyclical on the condition of the working class. Speaking through her supreme leader, the Church had just poured out the tenderness of her motherly love over the humble and the lowly, and it looked as though she was calling out for an ever growing number of people to labor for the restoration of order and justice in our uneasy society. Was it not opportune then, for the leaders of the Sillon to come forward and place at the service of the Church their troops of young believers who could fulfill her wisdom and her hopes? And in
fact, the Sillon did raise among the workers the standard of Jesus Christ, the symbol of salvation for peoples and nations. Nourishing its social action at the fountain of divine grace, it did impose a respect for religion upon the least willing groups, accustoming the ignorant and the impious to hearing the Word of God.[1] And not seldom, during public debates, stung by a question, or sarcasm, you saw them jumping to their feet and proudly proclaiming their faith in the face of a hostile audience. This was the heyday of the Sillon; its brighter side accounts for the encouragement, and tokens of approval, which the bishops and the Holy See gave liberally when this religious fervor was still obscuring the true nature of the Sillonist movement.

4. Straying from the Right Path.
For it must be said, Venerable Brethren, that our expectations have been frustrated in large measure. The day came when perceptive observers could discern alarming trends within the Sillon; the Sillon was losing its way. Could it have been otherwise? Its leaders were young, full of enthusiasm and self-confidence. But they were not adequately equipped with historical knowledge, sound philosophy, and solid theology to tackle without danger the difficult social problems in which their work and their inclinations were involving them. They were not sufficiently equipped to be on their guard against the penetration of liberal and Protestant concepts on doctrine and obedience.

5. Ignoring Advice and Admonition Calls for Censure.
They were given no small measure of advice. Admonition came after the advice, but, to Our sorrow, both advice
and reproaches ran off the sheath of their elusive souls, and were of no avail. Things came to such a pass that We should be failing in Our duty if We kept silence any longer. We owe the truth to Our dear sons of the Sillon who are carried away by their generous ardor along a path strewn with errors and dangers. We owe the truth to a large number of seminarians and priests who have been drawn away by the Sillon, if not from the authority, at least from the guidance and influence of the bishops. We owe it also to the Church in which the Sillon is sowing discord and whose interests it endangers.

In the first place we must take up sharply the pretension of the Sillon to escape the jurisdiction of ecclesiastical authority. Indeed, the leaders of the Sillon claim that they are working in a field which is not that of the Church; they claim that they are pursuing aims in the temporal order only and not those of the spiritual order; that the Sillonist is simply a Catholic devoted to the betterment of the working class and to democratic endeavors by drawing from the practices of his faith the energy for his selfless efforts. They claim that, neither more nor less than a Catholic craftsman, farmer, economist or politician, the Sillonist is subject to common standards of behavior, yet without being bound in a special manner by the authority of the Church.

7. Their Claim Is Unjustified.
To reply to these fallacies is only too easy: for whom will they make believe that the Catholic Sillonists, the priests and seminarians enrolled in their ranks have in
sight in their social work, only the temporal interests of the working class? To maintain this, We think would be an insult to them. The truth is that the Sillonist leaders are self-confessed and irrepressible idealists: they claim to regenerate the working class by first elevating the conscience of Man; they have a social doctrine, and they have religious and philosophical principles for the reconstruction of society upon new foundations; they have a particular conception of human dignity, freedom, justice and brotherhood; and in an attempt to justify their social dreams, they put forward the Gospel, but interpreted in their own way; and what is even more serious, they call to witness Christ, but a diminished and distorted Christ. Further, they teach these ideas in their study groups, and inculcate them upon their friends, and they also introduce them into their working procedures. Therefore they are really professors of social, civic, and religious morals; and whatever modifications they may introduce in the Organization of the Sillonist movement, We have the right to say that the aims of the Sillon, its character and its action, belong to the field of morals which is the proper domain of the Church. In view of all this, the Sillonists are deceiving themselves when they believe that they are working in a field that lies outside the limits of Church authority and of its doctrinal and directive power.

8. They Teach Positive Errors.
Even if their doctrines were free from errors, it would still be a very serious breach of Catholic discipline to decline obstinately the direction of those who have received from heaven the mission to guide individuals and communities along the straight path of truth and goodness. But, as We have already said, the evil lies far deeper: The Sillon,
carried away by an ill-conceived love for the weak, has fallen into error.

9. They Uphold a Condemned Democratic Error. Indeed, the Sillon proposes to raise up and re-educate the working class. But in this respect the principles of Catholic doctrine have been defined, and this history of Christian civilization bears witness to their beneficent fruitfulness. Our Predecessor of happy memory re-affirmed them in masterly documents, and all Catholics dealing with social questions have the duty to study them and to keep them in mind. He taught among other things, that “Christian Democracy must preserve the diversity of classes which is assuredly the attribute of a soundly constituted State, and it must seek to give human society the form and character which God, its Author, has imparted to it.”[2] Our Predecessor denounced “A certain Democracy which goes so far in wickedness as to place sovereignty in the people and aims at the suppression of classes and their leveling down.” At the same time, Leo XIII laid down for Catholics a program of action, the only program capable of putting society back onto its centuries old Christian basis.[3] But what have the leaders of the Sillon done? Not only have they adopted a program and teaching different from that of Leo XIII (which would be of itself a singularly audacious decision on the part of laymen thus taking up, concurrent with the Sovereign Pontiff, the role of director of social action in the Church), but they have openly rejected the program laid out by Leo XIII on the essential principles of society; they place authority in the people, or gradually suppress it and strive, as their ideal to effect the leveling down of the classes. In opposition to
Our Apostolic Mandate

Catholic doctrine, therefore, they are proceeding towards a condemned ideal.

10. They Ignore the Natural Laws Governing Human Nature.
We know well that they flatter themselves with the idea of raising human dignity and the discredited condition of the working class. We know that they wish to render just and perfect the labor laws and the relations between employers and employees, thus causing a more complete justice and a greater measure of charity to prevail upon earth, and causing also a profound and fruitful transformation in society by which mankind would make an undreamt-of progress. Certainly, We do not blame these efforts; they would be excellent in every respect if the Sillonists did not forget that a person’s progress consists in developing his natural abilities by fresh motivations to operate within the frame of, and in conformity with, the laws of human nature. But on the contrary, by ignoring the laws governing human nature and by breaking the bounds within which they operate, the human person is led, not towards progress, but towards death. This nevertheless, is what they want to do with human society; they dream of a Future City built on different principles, and they dare to proclaim these more fruitful and more beneficial than the principles upon which the present Christian City rests.

11. Human Society Must Be Built According to God’s Plans.
No, Venerable Brethren, We must repeat with the utmost energy in these times of social and intellectual anarchy when everyone takes it upon himself to teach as a teacher
and lawmaker—the City cannot be built otherwise than as God has built it; society cannot be setup unless the Church lays the foundations and supervises the work; no, civilization is not something yet to be found, nor is the New City to be built on hazy notions; it has been in existence and still is: it is Christian civilization, it is the Catholic city. It has only to be set up and restored continually against the unremitting attacks of insane dreamers, rebels and miscreants. Omnia Instaurare in Christo. [4 & 5.]

12. The Main Points of the Sillonist Doctrine.
Now, lest We be accused of judging too hastily and with unjustified rigor the social doctrines of the Sillon, We wish to examine their essential points.

The Sillon has a praise-worthy concern for human dignity. But it understands human dignity in the manner of some philosophers, of whom the Church does not at all feel proud. The first condition of that dignity is liberty, but viewed in the sense that, except in religious matters, each man is autonomous. This is the basic principle from which the Sillon draws further conclusions: today the people are in tutelage under an authority distinct from themselves; they must liberate themselves: political emancipation. They are also dependent upon employers who own the means of production, exploit, oppress and degrade the workers; they must shake off the yoke: economic emancipation. Finally, they are ruled by a caste called Intelligentsia which, by its very nature, enjoys undue preponderance in the direction of affairs.[6] The people must break away from this domination: intellec-
tual emancipation. The leveling-down of differences from this three-fold point of view will bring about equality among men, and such equality is viewed as true human justice.[6a] A socio-political set-up resting on these two pillars of Liberty and Equality, to which Fraternity will presently be added, is what they call Democracy.

However, liberty and equality are, so to speak, no more than a negative side. The distinctive and positive aspect of Democracy is to be found in the largest possible participation of everyone in the government of public affairs. [7] And this, in turn, comprises a three-fold aspect, viz. political, economical, and moral.

15. The Political Aspect: Authority in the People.
At first, the Sillon does not wish to abolish political authority; on the contrary, it considers it necessary; but it wishes to divide it, or rather to multiply it in such a way that each citizen will become a kind of king. Authority, so they concede, comes from God, but it resides primarily in the people and expresses itself by means of elections or, better still, by selection. However, it still remains in the hands of the people; it does not escape their control.[8] It will be an external authority, yet only in appearance; in fact, it will be internal because it will be an authority assented to.

All other things being equal, the same principle will apply to economics. Taken away from a specific group, management will be so well multiplied that each worker will himself become a kind of employer. The system by which
the Sillon intends to actualize this economic ideal is not Socialism, they say, it is a system of guilds in a number large enough to induce a healthy competition and to protect the workers' independence; in this manner they will not be bound to any guild in particular.

We come now to the principal aspect, the moral aspect. Since, as we have seen, authority is much reduced, another force is necessary to supplement it and to provide a permanent counterweight against individual selfishness. This new principle, this force, is the love of professional interest and of public interest, that is to say, the love of the very end of the profession and of society. Visualize a society in which, in the soul of everyone, along with the innate love of personal interest and family welfare, prevails love for one's occupation and for the welfare of the community. Imagine this society in which, in the conscience of everyone, personal and family interests are so subordinate that a superior interest always takes precedence over them. Could not such a society almost do without any authority? And would it not be the embodiment of the ideal of human dignity, with each citizen having the soul of a king, and each worker the soul of a master? Snatched away from the pettiness of private interests, and raised up to the interests of the profession and, even higher, to those of the whole nation and higher still, to those of the human race (for the Sillon's field of vision is not bound by national borders, it encompasses all men even to the ends of the earth), the human heart, enlarged by the love of the common-wealth, would embrace all comrades of the same profession, all compatriots, all men. Such is the ideal of human greatness and nobility to be attained
through the famous popular trilogy: Liberty, Equality, Fraternity.[9]

18. The Three Aspects are Inter-Related.
These three elements, viz. political, economic and moral, are inter-dependent and, as We have said, the moral element is dominant. Indeed, no political Democracy can survive if it is not solidly anchored to an economic Democracy. But neither one nor the other is possible if it is not rooted in an awareness by the human conscience of being invested with moral responsibilities and energies mutually commensurate. But granted the existence of that awareness, so created by conscious responsibilities and moral forces, the kind of Democracy arising from it will naturally reflect in deeds the consciousness and moral forces from which it flows. In the same manner, political Democracy will also issue from the trade-guild system. Thus, both political and economic Democracies, the latter bearing the former, will be fastened in the very consciousness of the people to unshakable bases.

To sum up, such is the theory, one could say the dream of the Sillon; and that is what its teaching aims at, what it calls the democratic education of the people, that is, raising to its maximum the conscience and civic responsibility of every one, from which will result economic and political Democracy and the reign of Justice, Liberty, Equality, Fraternity.

20. A Doctrine Contrary to Catholic Truth.
This brief explanation, Venerable Brethren, will show you clearly how much reason We have to say that the Sillon
opposes doctrine to doctrine, that it seeks to build its City on a theory contrary to Catholic truth, and that it falsifies the basic and essential notions which regulate social relations in human society. The following considerations will make this opposition even more evident.

21. The Real Source of Authority.
The Sillon places public authority primarily in the people, from whom it then flows into the government in such a manner however, that it continues to reside in the people. But Leo XIII absolutely condemned this doctrine in his Encyclical *Diuturnum Illud* on political government in which he said: “Modern writers in great numbers, following in the footsteps of those who called themselves philosophers in the last century, declare that all power comes from the people; consequently those who exercise power in society do not exercise it from their own authority, but from an authority delegated to them by the people, and on the condition that it can be revoked by the will of the people from whom they hold it. Quite contrary is the sentiment of Catholics who hold that the right of governing derives from God as its natural and necessary principle.”[10]

Admittedly, the Sillon holds that authority—which it first places in the people—descends from God, but in such a way “as to return from below upwards, whilst in the organization of the Church power descends from above downwards.”[11]

But besides its being abnormal for the delegation of power to ascend, since it is in its nature to descend, Leo XIII refuted in advance this attempt to reconcile
Catholic Doctrine with the error of philosophism. For, he continues: “It is necessary to remark here that those who preside over the government of public affairs may indeed, in certain cases, be chosen by the will and judgment of the multitude without repugnance or opposition to Catholic doctrine. But whilst this choice marks out the ruler, it does not confer upon him the authority to govern; it does not delegate the power, it designates the person who will be invested with it.”

22. Authority, Liberty and Obedience.
For the rest, if the people remain the holders of power, what becomes of authority? A shadow, a myth; there is no more law properly so-called, no more obedience. The Sillon acknowledges this: indeed, since it demands that threefold political, economic and intellectual emancipation in the name of human dignity, the Future City in the formation of which it is engaged will have no masters and no servants. All citizens will be free; all comrades, all kings. A command, a precept would be viewed as an attack upon their freedom; subordination to any form of superiority would be a diminishment of the human person, and obedience a disgrace. Is it in this manner, Venerable Brethren, that the traditional doctrine of the Church represents social relations, even in the most perfect society? Has not every community of people, dependent and unequal by nature, need of an authority to direct their activity towards the common good and to enforce its laws? And if perverse individuals are to be found in a community (and there always are), should not authority be all the stronger as the selfishness of the wicked is more threatening? Further, unless one greatly deceives oneself in the conception of liberty, can it be
said with an atom of reason that authority and liberty are incompatible? Can one teach that obedience is contrary to human dignity and that the ideal would be to replace it by “accepted authority”? Did not St. Paul the Apostle foresee human society in all its possible stages of development when he bade the faithful to be subject to every authority? Does obedience to men as the legitimate representatives of God, that is to say in the final analysis, obedience to God, degrade man and reduce him to a level unworthy of himself? Is the religious life, which is based on obedience, contrary to the ideal of human nature? Were the Saints, the most obedient of men, just slaves and degenerates? Finally, can you imagine social conditions in which Jesus Christ, if He returned to earth, would not give an example of obedience and, further would no longer say: “Render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar’s and to God the things that are God’s”?

Teaching such doctrines, and applying them to its internal organization, the Sillon therefore sows erroneous and fatal notions on authority, liberty and obedience among your Catholic youth. The same is true of justice and equality; the Sillon says that it is striving to establish an era of equality which, by that very fact, would be also an era of greater justice. Thus, to the Sillon, every inequality of condition is an injustice, or at least a diminution of justice. Here we have a principle that conflicts sharply with the nature of things, a principle conducive to jealousy, to injustice and subversive to any social order. Thus, Democracy alone will bring about the reign of perfect justice! Is this not an insult to other forms of government which are thereby debased to the level of sterile makeshifts? Besides, the Sil-
lonists once again clash on this point with the teaching of Pope Leo XIII. In the Encyclical on political government which We have already quoted, they could read this: “Justice being preserved, it is not forbidden to the people to choose for themselves the form of government which best corresponds with their character or with the institutions and customs handed down by their forefathers.”

And the Encyclical alludes to the three well-known forms of government,[12] thus implying that justice is compatible with any of them. And does not the Encyclical on the condition of the working class[13] state clearly that justice can be restored within the existing social set-up, since it indicates the means of doing so? Undoubtedly, Pope Leo XIII did not mean to speak of some form of justice, but of perfect justice. Therefore, when he said that justice could be found in any of the three aforesaid forms of government, he was teaching that in this respect Democracy does not enjoy a special privilege.[14] The Sil-lonists who maintain the opposite view either turn a deaf ear to the teaching of the Church or form for themselves an idea of justice and equality which is not Catholic.

24. Fraternity Vs. Charity.
The same applies to the notion of Fraternity which they found on the love of common interest or, beyond all philosophies and religions, on the mere notion of humanity, thus embracing with an equal love and tolerance all human beings and their miseries, whether these are intellectual, moral or physical and temporal. But Catholic doctrine tells us that the primary duty of charity does not lie in the toleration of false ideas, however sincere they maybe, nor in theoretical or practical indifference towards
the errors and vices in which we see our brethren plunged, but in zeal for their intellectual and moral improvement as well as for their material well-being. Catholic doctrine further tells us that love for our neighbor flows from our love for God, Who is Father to all and goal of the human family; and in Jesus Christ whose members we are, to the point that in doing good to others, we are doing good to Jesus Christ Himself. Any other kind of love is sheer illusion, sterile and fleeting.

Indeed, we have the human experience of pagan and secular societies of ages past to show that concern for common interests or affinities of nature weigh very little against the passions and wild desires of the heart. No, Venerable Brethren, there is no genuine fraternity outside Christian charity. Through love of God and His Son Jesus Christ our Savior, Christian charity embraces all men, comforts all, and leads all to the same faith and same heavenly happiness.

By separating fraternity from Christian charity thus understood, Democracy, far from being a progress, would mean a disastrous step backwards for civilization.[15] If, as We desire with all Our heart, the highest possible peak of well-being for society and its members is to be attained through fraternity or, as it is also called, universal solidarity, all minds must be united in the knowledge of Truth, all wills united in morality, and all hearts in the love of God and His Son Jesus Christ. But this union is attainable only by Catholic charity, and that is why Catholic charity alone can lead the people in the march of progress towards the ideal civilization.[16]
25. Human Dignity.
Finally, at the root of all their fallacies on social questions lie the false hopes of the Sillonists on human dignity. According to them, Man will be a man truly worthy of the name only when he has acquired a strong, enlightened and independent consciousness, able to do without a master, obeying only himself, and able to assume the most demanding responsibilities without faltering. Such are the big words by which human pride is exalted, like the dream carrying man away without light, without guidance, and without help into the realm of illusion in which he will be destroyed by his errors and passions whilst awaiting the glorious day of his full consciousness. And that great day, when will it come?

Unless human nature can be changed, which is not within the power of the Sillonists, will that day ever come? Did the Saints who brought human dignity to its highest point, possess that kind of dignity? And what of the lowly of this earth who are unable to raise so high but are content to plow their furrow modestly at the level where Providence placed them? They who are diligently discharging their duties with Christian humility, obedience and patience, are they not also worthy of being called men? Will not Our Lord take them one day out of their obscurity and place them in heaven amongst the princes of His people?

26. Effect of the Sillonists’ Errors on their Policy.
We close here our observations on the errors of the Sillon. We do not claim to have exhausted the subject, for We should yet draw your attention to other points that are equally false and dangerous, for example on the
manner to interpret the concept of the coercive power of the Church. But We must now examine the influence of these errors upon the practical conduct and upon the social action of the Sillon.

27. The Sillonist Organization.
The Sillonist doctrines are not kept within the domain of abstract philosophy; they are taught to Catholic youth and even worse, efforts are made to apply them in everyday life. The Sillon is regarded as the nucleus of the Future City and accordingly, it is being made to its image as much as possible. Indeed, the Sillon has no hierarchy. The governing elite has emerged from the rank and file by selection, that is, by imposing itself through its moral authority and its virtues. People join it freely, and freely they may leave it. Studies are carried out without a master, at the very most, with an adviser. The study groups are really intellectual pools in which each member is at once both master and student. The most complete fellowship prevails amongst its members, and draws their souls into close communion; hence the common soul of the Sillon. It has been called a “friendship.” Even the priest on entering, lowers the eminent dignity of his priesthood, and by a strange reversal of roles, becomes a student, placing himself on a level with his young friends, and is no more than a comrade.

In these democratic practices and in the theories of the Ideal City from which they flow, you will recognize, Venerable Brethren, the hidden cause of the lack of discipline with which you have so often had to reproach the Sillon. It is not surprising that you do not find among the lead-
ers and their comrades trained on these lines, whether seminarians or priests, the respect, the docility and the obedience which are due to your authority and to yourselves; nor is it surprising that you should be conscious of an underlying opposition on their part, and that to your sorrow, you should see them withdraw altogether from works which are not those of the Sillon or, if compelled under obedience, that they should comply with distaste. You are the past; they are the pioneers of the civilization of the future. You represent the hierarchy, social inequalities, authority and obedience, worn out institutions to which their hearts, captured by another ideal, can no longer submit. Occurrences so sad as to bring tears to Our eyes bear witness to this frame of mind. And We cannot, with all Our patience, overcome a just feeling of indignation. Now then! Distrust of the Church, their Mother, is being instilled into the minds of Catholic youth; they are being taught that after nineteen centuries She has not yet been able to build up in this world a society on true foundations; She has not understood the social notions of authority, liberty, equality, fraternity and human dignity; they are told that the great Bishops and Kings, who have made France what it is and governed so gloriously, have not been able to give their people true justice and true happiness because they did not possess the Sillonist Ideal!

The breath of the Revolution has passed this way, and We can conclude that, whilst the social doctrines of the Sillon are erroneous, its spirit is dangerous and its education disastrous.
30. A Reprovable Doctrine and a Reprovable Action. 
But then, what are we to think of its action in the Church? What are we to think of a movement so punctilious in its brand of Catholicism that, unless you embrace its cause you would almost be regarded as an internal enemy of the Church, and you would understand nothing of the Gospel and of Jesus Christ! We deem it necessary to insist on that point because it is precisely its Catholic ardor which has secured for the Sillon until quite recently, valuable encouragements and the support of distinguished persons. Well now, judging the words and deeds, we feel compelled to say that in this action as well as in its doctrine, the Sillon does not give satisfaction to the Church.

31. The Church Does Not Care for Democracy.
In the first place, its brand of Catholicism accepts only the democratic form of government which it considers the most favorable to the Church, and so to speak, identifies it with her. The Sillon therefore, subjects its religion to a political party. We do not have to demonstrate here that the advent of universal Democracy is of no concern to the action of the Church in the world; we have already recalled that the Church has always left to the nations the care of giving themselves the form of government which they think most suited to their needs.

What We wish to affirm once again, after Our Predecessor, is that it is an error and a danger to bind down Catholicism by principle to a particular form of government. This error and this danger are all the greater when religion is associated with a kind of democracy whose doctrines are false. But this is what the Sillon is doing. For the sake of a particular political form, it compromises the Church, it sows division among Catholics, snatches away young
people and even priests and seminarians from purely Catholic action, and is wasting away as a dead loss part of the living forces of the nation.

32. The Duty to Use Politics to Defend Religion
And, behold Venerable Brethren, an astounding contradiction: It is precisely because religion ought to transcend all parties, and it is in appealing to this principle, that the Sillon abstains from defending the beleaguered Church. Certainly, it is not the Church that has gone into the political arena: They have dragged her there to mutilate and to despoil her. Is it not the duty of every Catholic then, to use the political weapons which he holds to defend her? Is it not a duty to confine politics to its own domain and to leave the Church alone except in order to give her that which is her due? Well, at the sight of the violences thus done to the Church, we are often grieved to see the Sillonists folding their arms except when it is to their advantage to defend her; we see them dictate or maintain a program which nowhere and in no degree can be called Catholic. Yet this does not prevent the same men, when fully engaged in political strife and spurred by a provocation, from publicly proclaiming their faith. What are we to say except that there are two different men in the Sillonist; the individual who is Catholic, and the Sillonist, the man of action, who is neutral.

33. From the Little Sillon to the Greater Sillon.
There was a time when the Sillon as such was truly Catholic. It recognized but one moral force—Catholicism; and the Sillonists were wont to proclaim that Democracy would have to be Catholic or would not exist at all. A time came when they changed their minds. They left to
each one his religion or his philosophy. They ceased to call themselves Catholics and for the formula “Democracy will be Catholic,” they substituted “Democracy will not be anti-Catholic,” any more than it will be anti-Jewish or anti-Buddhist. This was the time of “the Greater Sillon.” For the construction of the Future City they appealed to the workers of all religions and all sects. These were asked but one thing: to share the same social ideal to respect all creeds, and to bring with them a certain supply of moral force. Admittedly they declared that “The leaders of the Sillon place their religious faith above everything. But can they deny others the right to draw their moral energy from whence they can? In return, they expect others to respect their right to draw their own moral energy from the Catholic Faith. Accordingly, they ask all those who want to change today’s society in the direction of Democracy, not to oppose each other on account of the philosophical or religious convictions which may separate them, but to march hand in hand, not renouncing their convictions, but trying to provide on the ground of practical realities, the proof of the excellence of their personal convictions. Perhaps a union will be effected on this ground of emulation between souls holding different religious or philosophical convictions.”[17] And they added at the same time (but how could this be accomplished?) that “the Little Catholic Sillon will be the soul of the Greater Cosmopolitan Sillon.”

34. From the Greater Sillon to a Really Ecumenical Union.
Recently the term ‘Greater Sillon’ was discarded and a new organization was born without modifying, quite the contrary, the spirit and the substratum of things: “In order
to organize in an orderly manner the different forces of activity, the Sillon still remains as a Soul, a Spirit, which will pervade the groups and inspire their work.” Thus a host of new groups, Catholic, Protestant, Free-Thinking, now apparently autonomous, are invited to set to work:

“Catholic comrades will work between themselves in a special Organization and will learn and educate themselves. Protestant and Free-Thinking Democrats will do likewise on their own side. But all of us, Catholics, Protestants and Free-Thinkers will have at heart to arm young people, not in view of the fratricidal struggle, but in view of a disinterested emulation in the field of social and civic virtues.”[18]

35. Very Serious Remarks.  
These declarations and this new organization of the Sillonist action call for very serious remarks.

36. The Action Reflects the Philosophy.  
Here we have, founded by Catholics, an inter-denominational association that is to work for the reform of civilization, an undertaking which is above all religious in character; for there is no true civilization without a moral civilization, and no true moral civilization without the true religion: it is a proven truth, an historical fact. The new Sillonists cannot pretend that they are merely working on “the ground of practical realities” where differences of belief do not matter. Their leader is so conscious of the influence which the convictions of the mind have upon the result of the action, that he invites them, whatever religion they may belong to, “to provide on the ground of practical realities, the proof of the excellence of their
personal convictions.” And with very good reason: all practical results reflect the nature of one’s religious convictions, just as the limbs of a man, down to his fingertips, owe their very shape to the principle of life that dwells in his body.

37. A Misguided Political Ecumenism.
This being said, what must be thought of the promiscuity in which young Catholics will be caught up with heterodox and unbelieving folk in a work of this nature? Is it not a thousand-fold more dangerous for them than a neutral association? What are we to think of this appeal to all the heterodox, and to all the unbelievers, to prove the excellence of their convictions in the social sphere in a sort of apologetic contest? Has not this contest lasted for nineteen centuries in conditions less dangerous for the faith of Catholics? And was it not all to the credit of the Catholic Church? What are we to think of this respect for all errors, and of this strange invitation made by a Catholic to all the dissidents to strengthen their convictions through study so that they may have more and more abundant sources of fresh forces? What are we to think of an association in which all religions and even Free-Thought may express themselves openly and in complete freedom? For the Sillonists who, in public lectures and elsewhere, proudly proclaim their personal faith, certainly do not intend to silence others, nor do they intend to prevent a Protestant from asserting his Protestantism, and the skeptic from affirming his skepticism. Finally, what are we to think of a Catholic who, on entering his study group, leaves his Catholicism outside the door so as not to alarm his comrades who, “dreaming of disinterested social action, are not inclined to make it
serve the triumph of interests, coteries and even convictions whatever they may be.”? Such is the profession of faith of the new Democratic Committee for Social Action which has taken over the main objective of the previous organization and which, they say, “breaking the équivoque which surrounded the Greater Sillon both in reactionary and anticlerical circles,” is now open to all men “who respect moral and religious forces and who are convinced that no genuine social emancipation is possible without the leaven of generous idealism.”

38. Reversing Traditional Values.
Alas! Yes, the équivoque has been broken: the social action of the Sillon is no longer Catholic. The Sillonist, as such, does not work for a coterie, and “the Church,” he says, “cannot in any sense benefit from the sympathies that his action may stimulate.” A strange situation indeed! They fear lest the Church should profit for a selfish and interested end by the social action of the Sillon, as if everything that benefited the Church did not benefit the whole human race! A curious reversal of notions! The Church might benefit from social action! As if the greatest economists had not recognized and proved that it is social action alone which, if serious and fruitful, must benefit the Church! But stranger still, alarming and saddening at the same time, are the audacity and frivolity of men who call themselves Catholics and dream of re-shaping society under such conditions, and of establishing on earth, over and beyond the pale of the Catholic Church, “the reign of love and justice” with workers coming from everywhere, of all religions and of no religion, with or without beliefs, so long as they forego what might divide them—their religious and philosophical convictions, and so long as
they share what unites them—a “generous idealism and moral forces drawn from whence they can.” When we consider the forces, knowledge and supernatural virtues which were necessary to establish the Christian City, and the sufferings of millions of martyrs, and the light given by the Fathers and Doctors of the Church, and of the self-sacrifice of all the heroes of charity, and a powerful hierarchy ordained in heaven, and the streams of Divine Grace—the whole having been built up, bound together, and impregnated by the life and spirit of Jesus Christ, the Wisdom of God, the Word made man—when we think, I say, of all this, it is frightening to behold new apostles eagerly attempting to do better by a common interchange of vague idealism and civic virtues. What are they going to produce? What is to come out of this collaboration? A mere verbal and chimerical construction in which we see, glowing in a jumble, and in seductive confusion, the words of Liberty, Justice, Fraternity, Love, Equality and human exaltation, all resting upon an ill-understood human dignity. It will be a tumultuous agitation, sterile for the end proposed, but which will benefit the less Utopian exploiters of the people. Yes, we can truly say that the Sillon, its eyes fixed on a chimera, brings Socialism in its train.

We fear that worse is to come: the end result of this developing promiscuousness, the beneficiary of this cosmopolitan social action, can only be a Democracy which will be neither Catholic, nor Protestant, nor Jewish. It will be a religion (for Sillonism, so the leaders have said, is a religion) more universal than the Catholic Church, uniting all men to become brothers and comrades at
last in the ‘Kingdom of God,’ “We do not work for the Church, we work for mankind.”

40. Towards the One-World Church.
And now, overwhelmed with the deepest sadness, We ask Ourselves, Venerable Brethren, what has become of the Catholicism of the Sillon? Alas! This organization which formerly afforded such promising expectations, this limpid and impetuous stream, has been harnessed in its course by the modern enemies of the Church, and is now no more than a miserable affluent of the great movement of apostasy being organized in every country for the establishment of a One-World Church which shall have neither dogmas, nor hierarchy; neither discipline for the mind, nor curb for the passions, and which, under the pretext of freedom and human dignity, would bring back to the world (if such a Church could overcome) the reign of legalized cunning and force, and the oppression of the weak, and of those who toil and suffer.[19]

We know only too well the dark workshops in which are elaborated these mischievous doctrines which ought not to seduce clear-thinking minds. The leaders of the Sillon have not been able to guard against these doctrines. The exaltation of their sentiments, the undiscriminating goodwill of their hearts, their philosophical mysticism, mixed with a measure of illuminism, have carried them away towards another Gospel which they thought was the true Gospel of Our Savior. To such an extent that they speak of Our Lord Jesus Christ with a familiarity supremely disrespectful and that—their ideal being akin to the Revolution—they fear not to draw between the
Gospel and the Revolution blasphemous comparisons for which the excuse cannot be made that they are due to some confused and over-hasty composition.

42. Charity Does Not Justify Compromise.
We wish to draw your attention, Venerable Brethren, to this distortion of the Gospel and to the sacred character of Our Lord Jesus Christ, God and Man, prevailing within the Sillon and elsewhere. As soon as the social question is being approached, it is a fashion in some quarters to first put aside the divinity of Jesus Christ, and then to mention only His unlimited clemency, His compassion of all human miseries, and His pressing exhortations to the love of our neighbor and to the brotherhood of men. True, Jesus has loved us with an immense, infinite love, and He came on earth to suffer and die so that, gathered around Him in justice and love, motivated by the same sentiments of mutual charity, all men might live in peace and happiness. But for the realization of this temporal and eternal happiness, He has laid down with supreme authority the condition that we must belong to His Flock, that we must accept His doctrine, that we must practice virtue, and that we must accept the teaching and guidance of Peter and his successors. Further, whilst Jesus was kind to sinners and to those who went astray, He did not respect their false ideas, however sincere they might have appeared. He loved them all, but He instructed them in order to convert them and save them. Whilst He called to Himself in order to comfort them, those who toiled and suffered, it was not to preach to them the jealousy of a chimerical equality. Whilst He lifted up the lowly, it was not to instill in them the sentiment of a dignity independent from, and rebellious against, the duty of
obedience. Whilst His heart overflowed with gentleness of the souls of goodwill, He could also arm Himself with holy indignation against the profaners of the House of God, against the wretched men who scandalized the little ones, against the authorities who crush the people with the weight of heavy burdens without putting out a hand to lift them. He was as strong as He was gentle. He reproved, threatened, chastised; knowing and teaching us that fear is the beginning of wisdom, and that it is sometimes proper for a man to cut off an offending limb to save his body. Finally, He did not announce for future society the reign of an ideal happiness from which suffering would be banished; but, by His lessons and by His example, He traced the path of the happiness which is possible on earth and of perfect happiness in heaven: the royal way of the Cross. These are teachings that it would be wrong to apply only to one’s personal life in order to win eternal salvation; these are eminently social teachings, and they show in Our Lord Jesus Christ something quite different from an inconsistent and impotent humanitarianism.

43. Be at once Gentle and Fearless.
As for you, Venerable Brethren, carry on diligently with the work of the Savior of men by emulating His gentleness and His strength. Minister to every misery; let no sorrow escape your pastoral solicitude; let no lament find you indifferent. But, on the other hand, preach fearlessly their duties to the powerful and to the lowly; it is your function to form the conscience of the people and of the public authorities. The social question will be much nearer a solution when all those concerned, less demanding as regards their respective rights, shall fulfill their duties more exactly.
44. A Constructive Alternative.
Moreover, since in the clash of interests, and especially in the struggle against dishonest forces, the virtue of a man, and even his holiness, are not always sufficient to guarantee him his daily bread, and since social structures, through their natural interplay, ought to be devised to thwart the efforts of the unscrupulous and enable all men of good will to attain their legitimate share of temporal happiness, we earnestly desire that you should take an active part in the organization of society with this objective in mind. And, to this end, whilst your priests will zealously devote their efforts to the sanctification of souls, to the defense of the Church, and also to works of charity in the strict sense, you shall select a few of them, level-headed and of active disposition, holders of Doctors’ degrees in philosophy and theology, thoroughly acquainted with the history of ancient and modern civilizations, and you shall set them to the not-so-lofty but more practical study of the social science so that you may place them at the opportune time at the helm of your works of Catholic action. However, let not these priests be misled, in the maze of current opinions, by the miracles of a false Democracy. Let them not borrow from the rhetoric of the worst enemies of the Church and of the people, the high-flown phrases, full of promises, which are as high-sounding as they are unattainable. Let them be convinced that the social question and social science did not arise only yesterday; that the Church and the State, at all times and in happy concert, have raised up fruitful organizations to this end; that the Church, which has never betrayed the happiness of the people by consenting to dubious alliances, does not have to free herself from the past; that all that is needed is to take up again, with the help of the true workers for
a social restoration, the organisms which the Revolution shattered, and to adapt them, in the same Christian spirit that inspired them, to the new environment arising from the material development of today’s society. Indeed, the true friends of the people are neither revolutionaries, nor innovators, they are traditionalists.[20]

45. Open to Sillonists.
We desire that the Sillonist youth, freed from their errors, far from impeding this work which is eminently worthy of your pastoral care, should bring to it their loyal and effective contribution in an orderly manner and with befitting submission.

46. A Fatherly Exhortation to the Sillonists.
We now turn towards the leaders of the Sillon with the confidence of a father who speaks to his children, and We ask them for their own good, and for the good of the Church and of France, to turn their leadership over to you. We are certainly aware of the extent of the sacrifice that We request from them, but We know them to be of a sufficiently generous disposition to accept it and, in advance, in the Name of Our Lord Jesus Christ whose representative We are, We bless them for this. As to the rank and file of the Sillon, We wish that they group themselves according to diocese in order to work, under the authority of their respective bishops, for the Christian and Catholic regeneration of the people, as well as for the improvement of their lot. These diocesan groups will be independent from one another for the time being. And, in order to show clearly that they have broken with the errors of the past, they will take the name of ‘Catholic Sillon,’ and each of the members will add to his Sillonist title the
Catholic qualification. It goes without saying that each Catholic Sillonist will remain free to retain his political preferences, provided they are purified of everything that is not entirely conformable to the doctrine of the Church. Should some groups refuse, Venerable Brethren, to submit to these conditions, you should consider by that very fact that they are refusing to submit to your authority. Then, you will have to examine whether they stay within the limits of pure politics or economics, or persist in their former errors. In the former case, it is clear that you will have no more to do with them than with the general body of the faithful; in the latter case, you will have to take appropriate measures, with prudence but with firmness also. Priests will have to keep entirely out of the dissident groups, and they shall be content to extend the help of their sacred ministry to each member individually, applying to them in the tribunal of penitence the common rules of morals in respect to doctrine and conduct. As for the Catholic groups, whilst the priests and the seminarians may favor and help them, they shall abstain from joining them as members; for it is fitting that the priestly phalanx should remain above lay associations, even when these are most useful and inspired by the best spirit.

47. A Prayer and a Wish.
Such are the practical measures with which We have deemed necessary to confirm this letter on the Sillon and the Sillonists. From the depths of Our soul We pray that the Lord may cause these men and young people to understand the grave reasons which have prompted it. May He give them the docility of heart and the courage to show to the Church the sincerity of their Catholic fervor. As for you, Venerable Brethren, may the Lord inspire your
hearts towards them, since they will be yours henceforth, the sentiments of a true fatherly love.

48. The Closing Benediction.  
In expressing this hope, and to obtain these results which are so desirable, We grant to you, to your clergy and to your people, Our Apostolic Benediction with all Our heart.

49. Given at Rome by St. Pius X.  
Given at St. Peter’s, Rome, on August 25, 1910, the eighth year of Our Pontificate.

Pius X, Pope
The Social and Political Doctrine of the Catholic Church

The Church does not concern itself with forms of government, but with principles which all forms of government must respect. The following sums up the principles set forth by St. Pius X in his Encyclical Our Apostolic Mandate. Any contrary opinion willfully adhered to is an act of disobedience to the teaching of the Church. Numbers in brackets after each of the following propositions refer to the corresponding paragraph.

1. The doctrines of the philosophers of the 18th century (the so-called ‘enlightenment’), the doctrines of Liberalism, and the doctrines of the French Revolution, are all absolutely condemned by the Catholic Church. [1]

2. Social problems cannot be tackled safely without a sound knowledge of history, philosophy and theology. [4 & 44]

3. The diversity of social classes must be preserved; the leveling down of classes is contrary to Catholic teaching. [9]

4. A person’s progress consists in developing his natural abilities in conformity with the natural laws governing human nature. [10]

5. The Community exists for the individual, not the individual for the Community. [17]

6. The Church has the right to supervise the work of social and political authorities. [11]

7. The so-called ‘Democratic Education’ of the people is nothing but a dream. [19]

8. Sovereignty does not lie in the people.[9]
9. To place authority in the hands of the people on the one hand [15], and to put the interests of Society before the interests of the person on the other hand [17], is a theory contrary to Catholic Truth. [20]

(Translator’s Note: It also contains an in-built contradiction, for the people are in fact, expected to make their decisions in the interests of the Community even if their own particular interests should suffer! What insanity!)

10. The belief that authority comes from the people, and that those who exercise it do so in the name of the people, is absolutely condemned by the Catholic Church. Equally condemned is the belief that the authority of rulers can be revoked by the people, even that such authority—even if it is admitted that it comes from God—flows into the people first, and is delegated by the people. [21]

11. Liberty and authority are not incompatible. Obedience does not lower the dignity of Man. [22]

12. Inequality need not imply injustice. [23]

13. It is not forbidden to the people to choose their own form of government in certain cases, but this choice simply marks out the ruler; it does not delegate authority. [21 & 31]

14. Charity does not imply the toleration of false ideas, errors and vices. [24 & 42]

15. Love of our neighbor rests on the love of God. Any other kind of love is sheer illusion. [24]

16. Love of the common interest is sheer illusion. [24]

17. A Democracy that separates fraternity from Christian charity is disastrous to civilization. [24]

18. Human dignity does not consist in being “Free, Thinking and Responsible.” These are big words by which
human pride is exalted, and they carry Man away to his own destruction. [25]

19. Human dignity consists in being even unto holiness, and in discharging one’s duties in complete humility. [25]

20. Modern democratic practices are conducive to lack of discipline, disobedience and rebellion. [28]

21. It is a serious error to bind down Catholicism to a form of Democracy whose doctrines are false. [31]

22. It is the duty of Catholics to use Politics for the defense of Religion. [32]

23. There is no true civilization without a moral civilization; no true moral civilization without the true Religion. [36]

24. It is wrong, futile and dangerous to seek alliances outside the Catholic flock for the betterment of human society. [37]

25. The Church cannot benefit from social action; rather, social action can benefit from the work of the Church. [38]

26. Priests who are fully versed in Philosophy, Theology, History and Social Science alone can guide a fruitful program of social action. [44]

27. But let no priest be deceived, in a maze of current opinions, by the miracles of a false Democracy. [44]

28. The true friends of the people are not the Revolutionaries, nor the Innovators, but the Traditionalists. [44]
1. [para. 3.] **Historical Context:** Following the Franco-Prussian war in 1871, the French people elected an Assembly which was Monarchist. For various reasons however, the Monarchy was not restored, and gradually the leftist elements prevailed in the Assembly. Other elections followed and by 1886 Freemasons had succeeded in controlling the government. It was their avowed aim to eradicate the Catholic faith. Text books, and even works of classical literature, were ‘doctored’ to exclude all references to God. Church property was confiscated, monks and nuns forcibly driven out of their monasteries and convents, many of whom sought refuge in neighboring countries. By 1910 the Masonic French government had achieved its aim: the less thinking of the French population, (and the more likely to be duped by the lure of systematic demagogy), namely, the working class, had been all but completely de-Christianized.
2. [para. 9.] God gave society a monarchical and hierarchical character which however, does not exclude the practice of elections in some cases. But for an election to be licit it must:
a. represent a **knowing** choice, which implies that the voters must know the candidates personally.
b. represent a **free** choice, which implies that the voters must be free from political pressures and the dishonest propaganda of the parties.
c. provide for **full** authority vested in the successful candidates, which implies that these are not answerable to the people for what they have previously decided or ultimately do.
d. This authority is conferred upon the successful candidates by the supreme ruler, King, or President, who may prefer not to appoint them, and who has the privilege to choose among the successful candidates, appointing some, rejecting others. (Deut. 1:13)
e. The people do not possess the power to confer authority or to terminate the mandate of their elected candidates.