



Contributions and novelties of the SDC to understand the politics from Christ.

Reflective text by Hernán Bressi on the Pontifical Magisterium in social matters  
By: Hernán Bressi | Source: catholic.net

The papal Magisterium, as a whole, preserves us from the dangers that modern philosophies, ideologies and false ecumenism effect on the transcendent dignity of man; reminding us that the purity of it comes from the Church of Christ. Naturally, there are many themes, which are indirectly related to the fundamental problems of politics in the ordinary magisterium that would deserve a more detailed evocation and analysis, even if very general as an object of study. The best service we try to provide for a better understanding of the subject studied was to use the sources, trying to respect its genuine meaning and avoiding the manipulation of its contents, to engage in its dissemination and deepening, motivating a movement of doctrinal internalization as a point of reflection to the problems investigated. Many of the problems faced by laic Catholics in the different dimensions: doctrinal, social, political, economic, anthropological, cultural, are there, arise as a challenge for us to bear witness to the truth. The go-to Thomas as safeguard against the modern nonsense, because he is the synthesis of all good philosophy and all good theology, assisted by the vision of Augustine on history; they have helped us to analyze, without falling into determined ideological positions, more seriously and positively the involvement of Christians in today's political world without forgetting their transcendent end and dignity.

If I have stopped to deepen various doctrinal aspects of the Catholic worldview on politics with critical curiosity, it is because there is in this peculiar phenomenon, a series of confusions that lead to a new earthly religion reducing eternal salvation to worldly success by distorting the influence masterful of the Tradition. The spiritual vitality of a society is built on the response and predisposition to the requests of grace.

The Catholic Church does not canonize a particular form of government to the detriment of the rest, but it leaves to the free discernment of the Catholic societies, giving them the opportunity and the criteria to organize and develop

their governments according to their specific traditions and idiosyncrasies. The Magisterium of the Church, without disturbing the exercise of its spiritual power, cannot become the diffuser of an ideology because it does not have that objective as its mission. He cannot be the mouthpiece of a saving political recipe with the hope of conquering a syncretism where all men concur in a prayer, which pretends to be common, although irreconcilable positions rub shoulders with it.

Political ideology usually points to an understanding of different modern political currents. To do so, it had to consent in its preaching to a series of principles that belong in their own right to ideological thinking and that the Magisterium of the Church has condemned on several occasions, trying to weaken in this way the objective faith by eliminating the revealed and infallible divine character and distorting the dogmas proposed by the Church in pursuit of political success. This interpretation depends on the ideological position adopted by the evolution of consciousness.

Both atheist and liberal materialism and liberation theology are phenomena that understand themselves, as a political religion, a laic substitute for the traditional teaching of the Catholic Church, possessing an incontestable truth, which has a purely immanent soteriological meaning, sacralizing the social redemption of man, the free market and the proletariat as opposed to eschatological salvation. The perennial Gnostic temptation to cement the Civitas Dei in the earthly homeland.

The structures of sin must give way to the social Kingdom of Christ and through it the salvation of men. Both access to culture and work education are fundamental measures for this purpose. The model to follow is found in the figure of Jesus of Nazareth, not in an omnipotent and omnipresent Caesar. We Catholics serve Cesar better when we serve God first, bearing witness to the truth, both at home and in public life, at work and the polls. We cannot be good Catholics if we do not persevere with their deposit and worry about the sufferings of the world. Faith, although it is essentially personal, is never merely private, but has implications in public life for that reason Catholics cannot give in to the temptations of the world, giving rise to policies that, for example, favor secularism, without fighting to avoid it, and not only with social support policies but also by changing the laws. Catholicism is not an ideology and the Church is not a political party, but its moral testimony has political consequences. It is not its mission to shut up to agglutinate the world or a determined political system. For the Church, the role of Catholics in public life is not reduced to palace intrigues or partisan threads but has to do with an eschatological vision of salvation. Where the people see Catholic politicians, the Church looks more deeply, discovering souls with transcendent destiny, given that the actions we carry out in this life bring consequences in the afterlife. When politics are absolutized as a means of earthly salvation, the souls and dignity of the peoples are sullied.

The atmosphere that surrounds our world suffers both physical and moral contamination. The sign of our time is the revelation of the vanity of half-hearted

resolutions [ ] To cure ourselves of adventurous temptations there is no better resource than patient and conscientious preparation for the mission. From a meditation for politicians of the Ascension of the Lord an important idea can be drawn, that there are two successful ways of acting: the first in the company of Jesus and at his direct orders; the second, after the Ascension, alone, well assisted by the Holy Spirit, but having to adopt and take initiatives on their own. Also in the life of the politician, there are two great periods. In the beginning, the service to some ideals is identified with the assistance to a leader who is helped little more than manually while a slow work of formation is made. Then you ascend to positions of more responsibility, where you have to move without waiting to be moved.

## 1) Political Parties.

### a) Principle and Genesis.

There are many more excellent works on this issue that can enrich the reader more than these humble lines. I hope that these paragraphs awaken in those who read it, the concern for the search for truth, the charity of truth as Saint Paul teaches us.

Liberal democracy as a system of government needs, as a presupposition of existence, the absolute divinization of the Rousseauian conception of the State through which political truth ceases to be a permanent category to become decisions of the sovereign will of an electoral majority. This political dogma believes that the decisions resulting from an electoral contest are good and legitimate just because they are the direct effects of this simple selection mechanism, even if they contain in their precepts the major atrocities.

As the modern State is the servant of this doctrine, which allows everything to be questioned, including the convenience of the natural order; its function becomes that of a mere spectator of the luxury of the electoral bids of the different factions, fronts or political parties desisting from being the guarantor of the Common Good.

From a historical perspective, the novelty of political parties emerged in the eighteenth English century, when two factions of English parliamentarians meet for interests and ideology to increase their power spaces within Parliament in front of an already weakened monarchy. Formerly, there were political clubs, thought associations, parliamentary groups but not political parties. The novelty involved the alternation and plurality within the balance of power. Two parties were formed: 1. the Tories (conservatives) and 2. The Whigs (liberals). The parties gave fruit to the committees to gather support for their causes outside the parliament.

Its heyday was in the twentieth century and today many political analysts are warning of a crisis. The crisis is manifested by 1. de-ideologization, 2. decline in membership, 3. loss of sense of militancy, 4. difficulty in finding funding and 5. new forms of social communication such as the Internet or television. It is in its very

nature to divide and divide according to the mandate of ideologies, for liberalism: the market and for Marxism, the class struggle. Juan XIII to this sectarian proposal of participation that departs from the common good; gives an alternative based on alternative participation styles explaining that: it is necessary that many associations or intermediate organisms are fused, capable of achieving the ends that individuals alone cannot obtain effectively. Such associations and organizations should be considered as indispensable instruments to the utmost degree to defend the dignity and freedom of the human person, leaving the sense of responsibility safe. (PT, 24)

The political parties have the task of favoring broad participation and the access of all to public responsibilities. The political parties are called to interpret the aspirations of the civil society orienting them to the common good, offering to the citizens the effective possibility of concurring to the formation of the political options. The parties must be democratic in their internal structure, capable of political synthesis and visualizing the future. (CDSI, 413) But the duty to be is not always reflected in the being. There is a valid criticism applied to be, to its defective concrete functioning, at least in Argentina, which we will try to explain to show that what the Compendium illuminates us, in our country is a pure utopia.

The problem of political parties is related to two other issues that are closely linked to each other, such as political participation and the essence of party structures. Political parties are artificial associations external to the nature of man, created as an extension and manifestation of liberalism as an instrument of power pressure for the struggle and achievement of political power within the democratic system. These circumstantial associations for the elections were converted from their origins in England to the present day in powerful bureaucratic mechanisms that modify the balance of power of a nation, manipulating and controlling a large political clientele at the expense of the degradation of the dignity of the human person. We remember the words of an authoritative voice like Pius XI, in his encyclical *Ubi Arcano* that immortalized us this problem: Add party struggles for the government of public affairs, in which the contending parties usually ordinarily hostile with he looks at it not sincerely, according to the various opinions, in the public good, but the achievement of their advantage with damage to the common good. And so we see how the conspiracies are increasing, how they originate traps, attacks against citizens and the same ministers of authority; how to resort to terror to threats, to frank rebellions and other similar disorders, all the more harmful the greater the part in a government that happens to modern representative forms. These forms of government, while not condemned by the doctrine of the Church (as is not condemned any form of the fair and reasonable regime), however, it is known by everyone how easily they lend to the evil of the factions. (AU, 4)

John Paul II in his encyclical *Centesimus Annus* denounces the crisis of values of democratic systems: After the collapse of Communist totalitarianism and of many other totalitarian and "national security" today we are witnessing a predominance, not without contrasts, of the democratic ideal together with a lively attention and

concern for human rights [??] Among the main ones we must remember: the right to life, of which the right of the child to grow under the mother's heart is an integral part, after having been conceived; the right to live in a united family and in a moral environment, favorable to the development of one's personality; the right to mature one's own intelligence and one's freedom through the search and knowledge of the truth; the right to participate in work to value the assets of the land and collect from it the sustenance of oneself and of loved ones; the right to freely found a family, to welcome and educate the children, making responsible use of their own sexuality.

Also in countries where democratic forms of government are in force, these rights are not always fully respected. And we refer not only to the scandal of abortion but also to various aspects of a crisis of democratic systems, which sometimes seem to have lost the ability to decide according to the common good. (CA, 47)

What identifies all political systems is the selection of the best ones for the training of their cadres and future leaders. The difference between the regimes comes from some strategic precautions, to take into consideration such as 1. Definition of the best and 2. The most appropriate procedure for classification and selection. In modern democracy and especially in the Argentine Republic, the hegemonic parties using Giovanni Sartori's classifications, opt for those tables more able to negotiate and move in the arena of sectoral interests of the party than for those seeking the temporary common good as supernatural. The process of selecting leaders is done by vote; prior to the general elections between the parties, internal elections are held among the militants of the different factions for the dispute of a greater portion of power, a mechanism that serves to retain the candidates who have the most favorable profile to the party structure and shake the others. People do not choose the best but those that intrigue and proselytizing supporters offer. Therefore, political parties do not represent the people, nor what the people could do through them. We understand by people what the R.P. Santiago Ramírez in his book *Saint Thomas Political Doctrine*, as two meanings, but in reverse: a primary, which is the crowd or material part of the political society as opposed to distinct and opposed to power or authority, which it's your formal part; and another derivative, which is the whole constituted by the crowd and by the authority. Money is the strongest political weapon behind which and by which decisions are made and powers and charges are distributed. The most serious problem of the current party system is the massification and the struggle for power because in it there is a decline in the ethical factors of society.

## 2. Can we talk about a Catholic Party?

The theme of this section touches on the most vivid of the current political problems in Argentina. It is about defining the essential condition of Christians' response to the instrument and purpose in the seizure of political power.

The criterion of action that the Spanish bishops contributed in their document

Witnesses of the Living God is very illuminating: From the assessment of different circumstances, in the light of common moral principles, different opinions and preferences may arise among Catholics, of which each one is personally responsible. The freedom of Catholics in public life is a consequence of the recognition of the legitimate autonomy of secular institutions and the religious and civil maturity of Christians. Therefore, it is not possible to impose a certain political project on Catholics for exclusively religious reasons (see G.S., No. 43)?

The Catholic must be supported in the aid of Revelation, Grace and the Magisterium. At this point of the trial and with some texts read we are able to affirm without fear of being wrong that we cannot speak of a Catholic party but Catholics acting in political life because of the natural sociability of men derives the right of assembly and association; that of giving associations that create the most suitable way to obtain the proposed goals; to act within them freely and with their own responsibility, and to lead them to the expected results (PT, 23) Study centers, volunteering, universities and other intermediate bodies can be more appropriate means to bear witness to the truth. Add to what has been said that the dignity of the human person agrees the right to take an active part in public life and contribute to the common good. For, as our predecessor, with a happy memory, Pius XII, says, man as such, far from being an object and a purely passive element of social life, is, on the contrary, and must be and permanent his subject, foundation, and purpose. (PT, 26)

Being Catholic means being universal, so it cannot be said that a party or a party, monopolize and seizes the revealed truth. The richness of Catholicism lies in its universality. For that reason, we allow ourselves to claim that Rome is the only universal and eternal city. The pretense of imposing an ideology on the part of the political parties would lead to the dictatorship of the spirits, the worst of all (OA, 25). A lifestyle based on a policy for the person and society finds its basic criterion in the attainment of the common good, as well for all men and all men, correctly offered and guaranteed free and responsible acceptance of people, individually or associated? (CHL, 42)., Based on an active and sincere commitment to the poor of society should be the banners of the Catholics in public life and not the interests of the X or Y party. It touches the established groups by cultural and religious ties - within the freedom that corresponds to its members - to develop in the social body, in a disinterested way and by its way, these ultimate convictions about the nature, the origin and the end of the human person and the society. In this field it is worth remembering the principle proclaimed by the Second Vatican Council: "The truth is imposed only by the force of truth itself, which penetrates the spirit with as much sweetness as power". (OA, 25).

It is necessary to ensure that the Christian experience influences the programs, strategies, and means of the parties, civil associations, NGOs, centers of study in all areas of the life of society with the right reason and social ethics. Do not fall into idealisms that absorb the dignity of the person. Prudence, concord and the spirit of charity and justice should encourage the conduct of men to achieve the common good. In the exercise of political power, that spirit of service is fundamental, which,

together with the necessary competence and efficiency, is the only one capable of making "transparent" or "clean" the activity of political men, as, precisely, Besides, people demands (CHL, 42).