

The Kingdom of Heaven is Like Unto ?

Once personal taste usurps the throne of reason and prejudice seeks to broadcast its private view as 'essentially Catholic,' depend upon it the devil is mischief making in the net.

To the suggestion that agricultural pursuits provide the surer training in sanctity, that holiness flourishes more abundantly in the country than in the town, that the Catholic Faith is dearer to the peasant than to the citizen, the reply is: history can but partially endorse these *obiter dicta*, the experience of rural life contradicts them. It has been observed with truth, 'we live in times that were quite unknown to the ancients.'

JOSEPH CLAYTON.

PAX ROMANA

PAX ROMANA is the International Secretariate binding together Catholic University Students, organised in their respective national Federations, for all forms of common action.¹

From this definition, it is at once evident that one cannot in general become a member of Pax Romana individually.² First the student joins the local Catholic Students' Union or Group of the University to which he belongs, this Society in turn adheres to the

¹ Definition given by Mr. Edward Bullough in a pamphlet *Pax Romana*, printed by Wm. J. Schneider & Bro., New York.

² A resolution was however passed this year at the Bordeaux-Lourdes Congress-Pilgrimage that two classes of persons may now become individual members—the *Anciens* (old fellow workers in Pax Romana) and the *Amis de Pax Romana*, namely anyone interested and sympathising with it. Ordinary students must nevertheless become members in the way described in the text.

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National Federation of Catholic Students' Societies of the country, and finally this National Federation adheres to the International Secretariate—Pax Romana.

Pax Romana is eleven years old. An attempt was made so far back as 1888 by the late Baron de Montenach, at that time President of the Swiss Group of Students, to found such a Secretariate, and indeed a constituent assembly was held in Rome in 1891, but it was found to be impracticable. It was not until July 21st, 1921, that Pax Romana was actually born in the small University town of Fribourg, Switzerland.

At this first meeting of Pax Romana, the Students' Societies of twenty-three countries gave their adhesion and fifty members represented these groups or societies.³ Since the inaugural meeting of Pax Romana a series of annual congresses has been held. These assemblies have taken place in Fribourg 1922 (for a second time); Salzburg 1923; Budapest 1924; Bologna (the Holy Year) 1925; Amsterdam 1926; Warsaw 1927; Cambridge 1928; Seville 1929; Munich 1930; Fribourg 1931 (for the third time); and Bordeaux-Lourdes 1932. The numbers of the delegates attending have steadily increased, to the present high number of three hundred. At the risk of being tedious, we give here a list of the countries adhering to Pax Romana. Austria, Belgium, Great Britain,⁴ Czecho-Slovakia

³ We may note here that in some countries, as for example Germany, there is more than one National Federation of Students' Societies. As the years go on, more and more of these are adhering to Pax Romana. It is, of course, the aim, object and hope of those who work for Pax Romana, that in time all such societies, the wide world over, will join.

⁴ The University Catholic Societies' Federation of Great Britain is made up of nineteen separate entities:—

Aberystwyth Catholic Society.

Birmingham University Newman Society.

(three federations), Denmark, France (two federations), Germany (four federations), Switzerland (two federations), Ireland, Spain, Holland, Hungary, Italy, Lithuania, Portugal, Luxemburg, Poland (two federations), Rumania, Yugo-Slavia, the Alumni Federation of the United States. The following are worthy of special note owing to the fact that they have joined within the last twelve months: Rumania (in addition to the Transylvanian Federation), Swiss Women Students, Uruguay (most important as the first South American Federation). Thus twenty nations are represented in Pax Romana, and by thirty-one federations.⁵

At first, as was inevitable, the assemblies dealt mostly with matters constitutional. At the same time there was a tendency, owing to post-war conditions, to attempt to deal with matters of national distress and European crises affecting students. But for some years now attention has been directed more to matters moral

Bristol University Catholic Society.
Cambridge Society of Catholic Students.
Durham University Catholic Society.
Catholic Students' Union, University of Edinburgh.
Glasgow University Catholic Men's Society.
Glasgow University Catholic Women's Association.
Hull University College Catholic Society.
Leeds Newman Society.
Liverpool University Catholic Society.
University of London Catholic Society.
University Catholic Association of Manchester.
Newman Society, Oxford.
Margaret Roper Society, Oxford.
Hugh Faringdon Society, Reading University.
Padley Society, Sheffield.
University College of Southampton Catholic Society.
University College of Swansea Catholic Society.

⁵ Another Hungarian Federation, *Emericana*, has been accepted in principle and contacts have been made, which it is hoped will lead to affiliation, with a new Belgian, a Bulgarian and a French-Canadian Federation.

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and intellectual, especially those lying within the province of a secretariate of university men and women.

So much for the nature and history of Pax Romana. We pass to its *raison d'être*. To understand this we must have some knowledge of the University Student class. Two facts stand out—it is a class apart, and it is a class of great importance. Every class of man is of course a class apart, but every class is not of equal importance. The University class—the world over—is of great importance because it is a class which deals with the things of the mind. In this will be its great use to the Church if it can only be kept in union with and, so far as needs be, brought into submission to the mind of the Church. The Catholic Student has his own difficulties and dangers, his own helps and privileges, and the ideal which the Catholic student sets before himself is that he may be *Homo perfectus catholicus*. He wills to be a good man, a staunch Catholic, knowing his Faith and able to defend it, deeply read and widely so, cultured and that with no mere insular or national culture.

The Church sets herself to help young men and women in their struggle to be worthy of the name they bear—Catholics and Students. That is why the Holy See has entrusted to Mgr. Besson, Bishop of Lausanne, Geneva and Fribourg, the direction of Pax Romana, and has given to Pax Romana every possible encouragement in its good work. That is why the Authorities of the Church attach to all Universities a special Chaplain, a whole-time man wherever possible, and give—again wherever possible—the students of every University a Chapel which they may call their own.*

A word must be said here concerning the present

* Out of all the Universities of England, Scotland and Wales, only four possess whole-time chaplains and chaplaincies of their own, namely Oxford, Cambridge, Glasgow and Edinburgh.

University system and its limitations, so that we may see more clearly the need for Pax Romana. For the purposes of this article, we may conveniently divide Universities into Secular and Catholic, and we may carry our division a step further by subdividing the Secular into Old and New. The New Secular University may be called, for lack of a better word, vocational (for the most part), as in it students are prepared for a profession—medicine, law, teaching, etc. Residence in the old sense of the word scarcely exists. There is even such a thing as a degree taken by correspondence course. Students flock to these Universities, eager to prepare themselves to earn their living in a particular profession. General culture they will get too, if they seek it, but only in a measure. How could it be otherwise?

The Old Secular Universities, such as Oxford and Cambridge,⁷ were until about a quarter of a century ago the homes of general culture. Here, as a rule, the leisured classes sojourned for their education, which was reasonably wide and cultured. Here students gained a *savoir faire* of no small value in social matters. But now a change has come about even in these ancient seats of learning and culture. They, too, are becoming vocational—in a word, training centres. Even in their palmy days these Universities were limited, being so closely connected with Protestantism, the very spirit of which is sectional as opposed to universal.

What of Catholic Universities? Vocational training they give. The education of a world-wide culture they give too. Knowledge of the world they give. But the educational power even of a Catholic University has its limits. Why? Just because a true University ought not to be isolated. It ought to be one of many, one,

⁷ Examples must be taken from Universities in these islands, the better to make clear the contention of this article.

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in fact, of all the Universities of the world. Some such ideal did hold in the days before the Reformation. The Universities were all Catholic Universities, recognising the Church as the keeper and the guide of truth. From one University to another teachers and students could go, and did go. Thus the rich knowledge of each became the property of every other, and culture spread and was catholic. Inasmuch, therefore, as so many Universities of this twentieth century of ours are divorced from Catholicism, so those which are not suffer. The exchange of knowledge, experience, and culture has become both limited and difficult.⁸

It is this state of affairs which Pax Romana is meeting, in a small way at present, but, as time goes on, in an ever-increasing and more satisfactory manner. For Pax Romana is in some sense an invisible international University. Year by year Pax Romana meets, questions of major importance to the youth of the world are tackled. The knowledge of many nations is made common to all. Questions are debated from every angle, and always under the guidance of those who are commissioned to teach in the Church's name. Year by year students of many nationalities widen their culture, their very *savoir faire*, by the exchange of courtesy and friendship. Year by year University Chaplains from many an isolated town meet and are able to help and encourage each other, to make common property the experiments and knowledge of each, to comfort, to forewarn, to forearm each other. It does not stop there. The delegates present at the annual congress go home and spread among their fellows a wider, richer spirit. Besides the annual congresses, regional congresses are also held. We may mention those held in Cracow 1929, Dublin 1930, for

⁸ This topic was brilliantly dealt with in a lecture by Professor Halecki of Warsaw at the Fribourg Congress of Pax Romana in 1931.

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women students only at Bordeaux and Louvain 1929, Delft and Grenoble 1931. There have been Pax Romana weeks in Oxford, Rotterdam, Vienna, and Ravenna. Pax Romana circles, too, have been formed in various countries to propagate the general idea of linking up University with University.

So far we have spoken as if the only use and function of Pax Romana was to supplement what is wanting in the education of the Modern University. This is by no means so. Were the whole world Catholic and every University Catholic, Pax Romana would still be wanted, still have its uses and its functions. It would still help, only more easily and more powerfully, that exchange of thought between centres of learning, that give-and-take of culture so much to be desired. It would still be one way in which teacher could meet teacher, student meet student, nation understand nation, man sympathise with fellow man.*

Newly home from the latest congress of Pax Romana, begun at Bordeaux and ended at the feet of Our Blessed Lady of Lourdes, our enthusiasm is boundless. We wish that others may be fired with a like enthusiasm. Shall we tell you our greatest needs? Your interest, your sympathy, your understanding, your prayers, *car s'il est beau de travailler pour Pax Romana, il est parfois aussi difficile de le faire.*

GILES BLACK, O.P.

* Were all Universities to become Catholic again, the work of Pax Romana would be much eased by the fact that all discussions could be conducted in a universal language—Latin. This would not take away from the encouragement which Pax Romana gives to students to learn foreign languages. They would still wish to know as many as possible in order to converse fluently at meal times and at the social functions with their fellows in a variety of different languages. Happily a movement is already afoot to make more use of Latin in Pax Romana.