

LA Church's Answer to Communism

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Those pessimists who doubt the growth of tolerance in the United States might well consider the years 1928 and 1967. Thirty-nine years ago there were, no doubt, many thousands who believed the rumor that if the Democrat Alfred E. Smith were elected President, the Pope or his representative would move into the White House. A joke went around after the defeat of Smith that someone had addressed a one-word telegram to the Pope: "Unpack."

During the Christmas season in 1967 an American President traveled halfway around the world to visit the Pope.

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While intolerance has so greatly subsided in the United States and in other Western nations, the Roman Catholic Church itself has shown a remarkable capacity to adjust itself to new knowledge and new conditions of all sorts.

One such example was in the once celebrated case of Father Edward McGlynn of New York City. In 1886 he became pastor of St. Stephen's Church in a parish on which poverty and destitution laid a heavy hand. The compassionate priest, who was respected for his learning, had read Henry George's "Progress and Poverty" shortly after it appeared in 1880. He had also listened to the impassioned oratory of the famous reformer.

Inspired by the belief that George was correct in asserting that progress and increasing wealth were accompanied by more and more

poverty and that the remedy lay in making land "common property." Father McGlynn founded an Anti-Poverty Society. In his public utterances he went beyond George by claiming that private ownership of land was per se sinful.

When George ran for mayor of New York in 1886, Father McGlynn was his vociferous supporter. This undoubtedly greatly irritated Archbishop Michael Corrigan, who sought to maintain the political status quo in New York, which in those days was controlled by the Democratic machine. He ordered Father McGlynn to stop speaking about land reform and appealed to Rome.

Pope Leo XIII ordered the priest to present himself in Rome, but Father McGlynn disobeyed the order. For that he was excommunicated.

Six years later, however, the Holy See sent a special representative, Monsignor Satolli, to New York to investigate the McGlynn Case.

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The priest submitted a comprehensive statement of his views on the land question. As a result, Monsignor Satolli and five other theologians stated that there was nothing in the McGlynn philosophy that was contrary to the Christian faith and Catholic doctrine. This was announced officially in 1892, and the pastor was restored to his priestly status and his parish.

In the years since then, the Roman Catholic Church's official doctrine on land has radically changed. Pius XII in 1943 and 1944 made it clear that the common right to possess land had precedence over private right of possession. In 1966 the Vatican Council ranged the Church on the side of land reform. And when the United Nations called a World Land Reform Conference in Rome, Paul VI entertained the delegates.

And so, as the world changes, so does the Roman Catholic Church. One such change is the growing realization that the most gripping problem of emerging is land monopoly by a few. The Church recognizes, therefore, that the best answer to communism is land reform.

Answers to News Quiz

(Questions on Page 5)

- 1—False.
- 2—Open talks.
- 3—President of Liberia.
- 4—4.4% of the first \$7,800.
- 5—Nothing.
- 6—No.
- 7—8 cents.
- 8—Cecil Day-Lewis.
- 9—Gardner Ackley.
- 10—The phonics method.

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