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CATHOLIC SOCIAL TEACHING AND THE ORIGINS OF EUROPEAN UNION

Tiberiu Brailean*
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Abstract: *Many papal encyclicals were not directly concerned about the appearance of European Union due to many historical, political and social contexts. The fundamental principles developed through several encyclicals from early 19th century to the present day reaffirmed the neutrality of the Church regarding to many forms of government. But the most important idea has its root in the restoration of the Christian principles in society. In a time of de-Christianization and secularism, the role of Church as the foundation of peace is also important to notice. It was considered that every modern democracy is the image of the revealed heart of the universal law of charity (Jacques Maritain). That is why between a supranational entity like the European Union and the Catholic Church should be a friendly and close relationship. A unite Europe has its roots in Christianity, especially in Catholicism. The soul of Europe is animated by religious principles. Whether we talk about Schuman or Adenauer, their Christian faith is the engine for their political success. After the Second World War, in Western Europe, the Christian democratic parties had a huge impact for the democratic governance. The socio-economic policies of these parties were anchored in Catholic social teaching.*

Keywords: Catholic Church; social teaching; encyclicals; Christian democrats; Europe.

JEL Classification: A13; B000; Z120.

INTRODUCTION

The way religious ideas influence the life of the individuals is extremely complex and full of beauty. The social thinking of a particular religion may enrich the human action. But a lack of dogma goes inevitably to despair and anomy. Tocqueville once said the following words: “When religion is destroyed among the people, doubt takes hold of the highest portions of the intellect and half paralyzes all the others. Each person gets accustomed to having only confused and changing notions about the matters the most interest his fellows and himself. You defend your opinions badly or you abandon them, and, since you despair of being able, by yourself, to solve the greatest problems that human destiny presents, you are reduced like a coward to not thinking about them. Such a state cannot fail to enervate souls; it slackens the motivating forces of will and prepares citizens for servitude.” (Tocqueville, 2010, p. 744-745) It is needed to know some of Catholic social thinking documents and encyclicals because of their important impact on each faithful’s life.

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It is imperative to articulate an ethic (individual and social) of social life as an effect of the industrialization over the general social sphere in order to respond to the new context. (The Christian Democracy, 2011, p. 10-11)

The essentially Christian-based nature of European unification into a Federation is linked with the search of peace, freedom and justice which created a monolith with its roots based on Christian Democratic principles such as pluralism, personalism, solidarism and subsidiarity. In this direction, such an image of European federalism is based on Catholic social theory. (Burgess, 1989, p. 96)

1. CATHOLIC SOCIAL TEACHING IN THE 19TH CENTURY

In the nineteenth century, papal encyclicals include the entire social thinking of the Catholic Church. The first to submit a letter to the faithful and to the Church was Pope Benedict XIV (1740-1758). And until the already famous papal encyclical, *Rerum Novarum* (1891), no papal encyclical has submitted any doctrine or social teaching.

In 1832, Pope Gregory XVI wrote the *Mirari Vos* encyclical in which he rejects liberalism and the French Revolution because both relativize knowledge and absolute truths and lead to ignoble indifference. (Kraynak, 2001, p. 132) Another encyclical of his, called *Commisum Divinitatis* (1835), related to the state-church relationship, suggested that the state should not interfere in matters which exclusively concern the church, so as not to regulate or control in any way what is externally communicated to the faithful and the parishes, or the episcopal synods' organization and the clergy elections. Pope Pius IX (1846-1878), in his encyclical *Qui Pluribus* (1846), condemned the doctrine of human progress and its importance in the Catholic teaching and also the communist one since their effect over formal and informal institutions (laws, government institutions, private property) and the whole society is disastrous. In *Quanta Cura* (1864) one explains that the denial of natural law imprinted in the hearts of men leads to societal problems and difficulties. In *Mirari Vos* the same pope condemned communism and socialism. (Gilley, Stanley, 2006, p. 143)

In the same direction, in 1864, Pope Pius IX drafted an official document of the Holy See, *Syllabus Errorum*, in which he rages against progress and values promoted by liberalism and modern civilization. (Kraynak, 2001, p. 132)

In *Diuturnum* (1881), Pope Leo XIII confirmed the hierarchical model of state-Church, explaining that the one who does not respect his leaders does not love God, the state being an entity that seeks good for its citizens. Thus, the divine origin of power is assigned beyond its mundane

appearance. In the encyclical *Quod Apostolici Muneris* (1878), he castigated the socialists, communists and nihilists, and then appealed to Catholic wisdom which is based on natural and divine laws to criticise the Freemasons. In 1890, he stated that the Church should not decide which is the most suitable and the best of all existing forms of government and that any Catholic should respect his country as much as he loves the church. In *Plurimis* (1888) and *Catholicae Ecclesiae* (1890) any form of slavery is virulently condemned because the deprivation of liberty is contrary to the divine and natural law. In the encyclical *Libertas* (1888) the concept of human freedom was the most cherished and it was insisted upon the fact that the natural or eternal law tells men what is good and what is bad. Moreover, the human law has divine origins and thus human society must be seen through the lens of transcendental sphere. In 1891, the famous encyclical *Rerum Novarum* is made known to the general public. Therein, socialism is dismissed in its entirety and the Marxist class struggle issue is considered to be contrary to reason. The division of social classes of early capitalism is also fined in the papal encyclical, but not completely since all private property is considered to play a very important part in the economic and social gear. The monopoly is disavowed. The inherent individual rights highlight the essential role that the family should play in society. The care for the less fortunate of the society is mentioned (the poor), and also subjects such as the fair salary issue, the social justice, the shortcomings of the freedom of workers coalition unions are tackled. (Gilley, Stanley, 2006, p. 144-151)

Regarding wages, the income received by a worker is made under the law of supply and demand, and is not just since the individual has no choice but to choose what is being offered, thus becoming a victim of injustice. As previously mentioned, socialism is virulently condemned because it neglects and removes from the equation the private property, that it is hostile towards religion, and that it places great emphasis on social equality. On the contrary, Pope Leo, following medieval theological thinking, highlighted that inequality and hierarchy are necessary ingredients in a society where the classes have to live together harmoniously. The state's role is well defined and it must intervene to protect the rights of the poor and the working-class. (Sniegocki, 2009, p. 106-108.)

Thus, “He glimpsed thus the possibility to link the fundamental value of freedom and market institutions, related to this, with the idea of social justice so as to create a balance that was at the basis of the economic order.” (The Christian Democracy, 2011, p. 11)

His variable position takes epistemological value regarding the citizen reporting to private property. On the one hand, Pope Leo XIII is Thomistic, being the adept of the preservation of natural rights of property; on the other hand, he adopts a vision of separation between private property and possessive individualism. Property rights are considered sacred and inviolable, being

justified by God's choice of making his creation the master of the created visible world, through the need to cultivate generosity, philanthropy and charity in terms of gaining material wealth by the very existence of people unequally endowed with skills, talents and abilities. (Kraynak, 2001, p. 140-141)

1.CATHOLIC SOCIAL TEACHING IN THE 20TH CENTURY

An extremely important papal encyclical that helped crystallize the Catholic social ethics is *Quadragesimo Anno* (1931) written by Pope Pius XI. This encyclical was a *Rerum Novarum* reaffirming (1891) in some essential points: the workers' right to fair wages, protection of the poor by the state or criticism of capitalism and socialism. For example, in full economic depression, capitalism is considered to have established a true "economic dictatorship", a cruel, ruthless and merciless system, where many people suffer from poverty, unemployment and an uncertain future, where few have become stronger. In this bleak landscape, corporations are guilty of "heinous abuses" and numerous frauds and injustices. Therefore, the state's intervention is imperative in order to regulate and supervise the unordered movement in the economy congruent with the requirements of social justice and the common good. (Sniegocki, 2009, p. 111)

Not even the state itself is free from constructive criticism. It is believed that it has become a slave of material wealth. But the role of the state in the economy must obey the principle according to which legal and social order that circumscribe to economic activities must be protected and restored by the state. The state, according to the natural and divine law, must decide what is lawful for the owner. The property has a double valence: private and public. It is considered that the private property helps work against the common good even if it comes across it, but it does not abolish it, but it rather hinders it. Collectivism is dangerous, individualism is evil, and unregulated competition brings many shortcomings to the society. The compromise solution between collectivism and individualism resides in the concept of subsidiarity. (Sniegocki, 2009, p. 111-112)

In 1944 the Christmas radio message of Pope Pius XII (1939-1958) defined democracy as compatible with individual freedom and dignity. Also, the economic sphere must not overwhelm the spiritual, since the latter makes the former. (Sniegocki, 2009, p. 113-114)

Pope John XXIII carefully leans on society and the economy. *Mater et Magistra* In (1961) he considered as positive the findings in science and technological advances that have generated economic prosperity and improved living standards in human communities. This progress is consonant with and justifies the welfare of the state that becomes increasingly stronger, although

the individual's economic initiative remains pre-eminent and decisive. The Keynesian ideas that were fashionable at that time determined the pope to say that the state has an important role in reducing disparities, economic disorder and the reduction of the exploitation of the weakest in society. Also, fiscal and monetary incentives from the State towards the Small and Medium Businesses become an imperative need to improve living conditions. In comparison, when referring to the so-called Third World, poverty and hunger are referred to as effects of a primitive economy, unable to absorb and apply advanced technologies and scientific progress performed by the developed countries. The solutions lies in abandoning old patterns of economic development based on traditionalism and encourage the modernization as the top solution, based on capital accumulation, industrial technology and education. Loans and financial assistance provided by developed countries to the least advanced ones are commendable actions and have a deep moral substrate, but a warning should be mentioned that they can have a shade that betrays danger that of manipulating and dominating politically. The relationship between economic growth and equity and justice is brought to the fore, as well as relations towards workers which should be based on dignity. Without these moral ingredients, any performant system is unjust and immoral. (Sniegocki, 2009, p. 115-119)

Another encyclical written by Pope John XXIII is entitled *Pacem in Terris* (1963). Unlike the liberal tradition of human rights based on political and procedural rights, the Pope renewed this vision by integrating social and economic rights such as the right to food, shelter, medical care or social services. From this perspective, it should be noted that an employer must provide its employee satisfactory working conditions and fair wages. In the event that a worker cannot work normally then the state must help him to fulfill his basic needs. It is believed that constitutional democracy is the best option for protecting human rights. In other words, the Pope reaffirms the features that need to accompany the financial aid for the poorest countries of the world: respect for their freedom, moral and ethnic characteristics and no motivation on the part of the developed countries to dominate them politically. (Sniegocki, 2009, p. 119-121)

Following the Second Vatican Council, the bishops decided to interpret the world and the changes it is subdued to through the lens of the Gospel. As Pope John XXIII asserts in the encyclical *Gaudium et Spes* (1965) the dignity and the social nature of individuals, the preeminence of human rights and the role of the state in the economy should be emphasized. Also, the progress derived from applying the latest achievements of science and technology is brought to the fore. He criticizes the excessive consumerism and the elimination of the spiritual component from and the marginalization of the socio-economic life. In addition, the encyclical *Gaudium et Spes* (1965)

warns that economic inequalities between regions and states are steep and in some cases deepen increasingly, causing the escalation of violence and undermining social justice, causing an urgent need for a thorough reform. Since everything on earth is God's creation and therefore is divided equally, then some limits can be considered when speaking about private property. The idea is put forward: when private property harms the general context, the public one has to take this role. Economic development must not be a privilege only for a few powerful people or rich countries, but as many people as possible should participate in this process. (Sniegocki, 2009, p. 122-125)

Starting from the encyclical of Leo XIII, the idea that private property is lawful is resumed, but it becomes limited in certain circumstances. The property belonging to an individual should not be regarded as exclusive possession, but this situation should be seen as one in which the goods are actually common in order to generate satisfaction not only to the owner but also to others. Moreover, private property is considered an extension of the individual's freedom, also having a poignant social feature given by the common destination of material goods. (Ică Jr., Marani, 2002, p. 158)

The encyclical of Pope Paul VI, *Populorum Progressio* (1967), states that it is unfortunate that the liberal capitalist economic system was built on a foundation which considers profit as the key to economic progress, competition as the supreme law of the sphere of economy and private ownership over production means as an absolute right, without limits and which does not entail therefore specific social obligations. This unrestrained release that occurs only within such a rational human construct, leads to dictatorship rightly denounced by Pius XI as one that produces an "international imperialism of money." (Paul VI, 1967)

Populorum Progressio (1967) supports the argument that development is not synonymous with economic growth; it is more than that, a new peace formula. It is not enough to produce goods and services that respond only to material needs, as they should be filled with sincere and Christian moral sentiments such as: love, friendship, solidarity, faith. The integrative concept of development must meet the need to promote the natural and human welfare, defined as a process to transform the individual into a "more humane" one. Though being a supporter of economic growth and human progress, the Pope highlights the danger that under the new conditions the traditional structures can be abused to extinction. It is considered that the implementation of free trade, besides being the foundation of economic liberalism, is not capable of generating satisfactory results for participants if not carried out under conditions of social justice. Private property, another constituent element of liberal capitalism should not be regarded as an absolute and unconditional right of the individual. The goods of the earth equally belong to all. It requires urgent, systemic and in depth transformation

of the way in which individuals act in society and the way in which they foster prosperity. (Sniegocki, 2009, p. 126-131)

The second encyclical of Pope Paul VI was called *Octogesima Adveniens* (1971) and follows the principles of Catholic social thought in different social contexts. It emphasizes the need for affirmation of equality in society, women should get equal rights with men. Reforms of the international division of production, trade structure and control of profits or the issue of international monetary system should be continued brisk and profound. Multinational corporations are seen as new economic powers emerging, largely independent of their host states and therefore very difficult to regulate when it comes to the common good. The fear that these companies would become aggressive political and social monopolies is reiterated. Another aspect considered is the ecological component, considered of prime importance for humanity. (Sniegocki, 2009, p. 133-134)

The first encyclical of Pope John Paul II was entitled *Lab Exercens* (1981). The main ideas expressed define in a proper sense the Pope's complex vision of man and society. Human labor gives meaning, strength and dignity to the individual. Work is considered to be at a superior level compared to the capital. The dignity and rights of workers are essential and always reaffirmed. Solidarity in workers must be encouraged and perfected as a struggle for social justice. Wherever the dignity and rights are restricted and assaulted by exploitation, famine, poverty, the Church has an obligation to help those burdened. Liberal capitalism and socialism are criticized aggressively. (Sniegocki, 2009, p. 142-143)

In 1987, Pope John Paul II drew his second encyclical *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis*. The Pope deplores the deteriorating situation of those in poverty and tries to formulate a number of causes that contributed to the status quo. On the one hand, the obsolete and incomplete economic development models are to blame; then structural injustice is considered a key factor for the deterioration of living standards in many parts of the world. He warns that the fracture between the few rich who live in order to "posses" and not "to exist" and the many poor who are deprived of basic goods increases and raises a big question mark for the state in which human society finds itself everywhere. Development seen as a social profound change must take place without violence and with solidarity. (Sniegocki, 2009, p. 143-144)

The last encyclical of Pope John Paul II's *Centesimus Annus* was written in 1991, 100 years after another famous encyclical, *Rerum Novarum*. The Pope analyzes the transformation of former communist states and demonstrates that the failure of the communist conception consists in the impossibility of seeing Man as *imago Dei* and in the violence with which it imposed a mundane order that was not the effect of any reasons and freedoms. The economic collapse of the communist

regimes is marked by the suppression of private initiative, private property and restricting any kind of freedom in the economic sphere. (Sniegocki, 2009, p. 144-145)

Pope John Paul II shows that, if in the past the production factors were the land and the capital, today the primordial production element is the man himself with his ability to know, to be organized, to produce for himself and for others, to cooperate and make progress. Capitalism is a social and economic system that prevailed real socialism precisely because its ethos and its ingredients cultivated integral human freedom, oriented towards the common good, whose backbone is ethical and religious. (Ică Jr., Marani, 2002, p. 169)

The capitalist system has some gaps that have an impact on individuals, such as the weight carried by those in poverty, who are unable to escape from the ghetto helplessness, the absolute primacy of capital, which impacts the property and erodes the freedom and dignity of the individual, the phenomenon of consumerism, the ecological problem. Regarding the first issue, it is necessary that those in poverty (due to the dignity that characterizes them) to be helped to educate themselves, to acquire new capabilities in agreement with the market requirements in order to be inserted into the economy to earn a wage to support their family, and to be protected in case of unemployment and retirement. (Ică Jr., Marani, 2002, p. 159-162)

The Pope opposes to capitalism not the bankrupt socialism, but an alternative model, a “society of free work, of enterprise and of participation. It does not oppose the market, but demands that it be adequately controlled by social forces and the State, in order to guarantee the basic needs of the whole society.” (Ică Jr., Marani, 2002, p. 162) Therefore, a so-called genuine “human ecology” is required, which consists in cultivating family values grounded in the sacrament of marriage between man and woman.

The role of profit as an indicator of the effective functioning of an enterprise is recognized by the Catholic Church. But while profit shows that resources are used in the best way possible, this is not the only objective indicator. It is possible that a company earns its profits through illegal business or by exploiting its staff. Or (if people's dignity is taken into account) if a firm is in fact a community of people, it is impossible not to take into account the fact that by analyzing and comparing the size of the profit we simply neglect the essential moral and human aspects. (Ică Jr., Marani, 2002, p. 162)

In other writings, John Paul II continued to reflect upon the change the whole world undergoes. Regarding the widespread phenomenon of globalization, he asserts that if market laws are only directed by the rich then the results will be unemployment, deteriorating public services, pollution, depletion of natural resources, increasing inequalities between social classes, fierce

competition which will further isolate poor countries. (Paul II, 1999) Thus, in an article called The Ethical Dimensions of Globalization, the Pope stressed that globalization can be seen as a new form of colonialism.

Neoliberal capitalism, which subordinates the individual to the unseen forces of the market, generates increasingly higher prosperity for a small group of rich countries, while a large number of countries become poorer and poorer. (Paul II, 1998)

2.CATHOLIC SOCIAL TEACHING IN THE 21ST CENTURY

Pope Benedict XVI has not written any papal encyclical, but he was concerned with the many formulas of Catholic social thought. He turned out to be a successor of Pope John Paul II, speaking about the role of solidarity in society and greater justice in the distribution of wealth across the globe. He strongly argues that the elements that define the economic sphere must not dominate the political ones. (Sniegocki, 2009, p. 152)

Pope Francis recently released a new encyclical entitled *Fidei World* (2013). Some important ideas are worth highlighting: the role of faith and love, the family spirit are the foundations of the contemporary society. If faith is fading, it perverts mutual trust, balance is weakened and the only binder in our society would only be fear.

In *Gaudium Gospels*, Pope Francis shows how individuals are considered consumer goods in today's world, which are exchanged when they expire with more powerful and adapted ones. The problems of inequality persist in the world and fierce competition in conjunction with social Darwinism causes social exclusion. The market's economy system that generates economic growth and social justice is considered naive. The globalization of indifference is the general symptom, the lack of compassion for those in poverty and suffering is a problem that grinds and gives food for thought. The dominance of money in everyone's life turned into pure idolatry. Man was reduced to the status of passive consumer. Pope Francis rediscovers what the previous encyclicals already warned us about: the increasing distance between the rich and the poor. It is believed that the source of these blatant inequalities (that produce and maintain widespread poverty) is given by ideologies that emphasize the absolute autonomy of the market and financial speculation, refusing any form of statist control. Corruption, tax evasion, deficits spoil the purchasing power and the standard of living of the individuals. This is why, ethics is designed to soften and somehow humanize the mysterious and ineffable social order. The current social and economic system is unjust in its depths, leading to instability and violence between individuals, regions and nations. Consumerism

with radical inequality affects social structure. Economic policies should be articulated according to the dignity of individuals and to the pursuit of the common good. The invisible hand of the market is no longer considered valid, the focus moves to the distribution of income in the economy, creating new jobs and aid to the poor. (Francis, 2013)

The unitary principle of the Catholic Church's social doctrine is the foundation upon which the Catholic social thought is built. Whether talking about human dignity, the common good, the reality of subsidiarity or solidarity, all circumscribe to the moral and religious principles that bring forth the love of God and neighbor. (Paul II, 2004)

3. THE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRACY AND THE EUROPEAN UNION

Until 1878, the whole Catholic Church became very centralised, a true “supranational” force, a real “supernatural fortress.” (Conway, 1996, p. 13) The European Catholics felt of belonging to “a civilization ... as a whole way of life involving many different folk communities, each having its own physical identity but bound together by a higher order ... of shared legal and moral norms, sacred cultural rites and performances, overlapping forms.” (Boyer, 2004, p. 20) Until World War I, the transnationalisation of Catholicism from a religious point of view and the centralisation of the institution of Catholic Church determined the Catholic political parties to follow a nationally perspective. Seymour Lipset and Stein Rokkan considered that the Catholic parties are the creations of the Catholic Church as a counter-attack process for the rise of anticlericalism and mass politics. (Lipset, Rokkan, 1967, p. 103) In these conditions, the Pope became the main figure of the Catholic resistance in the culture wars throughout Europe. (Kaiser, 2007, p. 12-20)

After World War I, the threat of socialism was a decisive argument for a specific social action. It supported any right-wing anti-communist authoritarian political regimes. Especially in Italia and Germany, the protection of Church rights was extremely important. (Kaiser, 2007, p. 54-55) The Catholics from all over Europe were eager to participate in the political realm. The support for Franco-German reconciliation gave Catholic parties greater liberty “in developing a less defensive and introspective vision of national and European politics. This also reduced the barriers to transnational contacts and cooperation. In addition, the structures of domestic party competition and the contestation of the dominant domestic and foreign policy issues also changed after 1918.” (Kaiser, 2007, p. 45)

It was considered that after 1918 a double perspective was in the front of German external policy. One is based on the Catholic influence that militated for reconciliation and peace. Another

one is Prussian-based and put in the foreground the military revenge. (Vecchio, 1987, p. 292) In other words, such duality demonstrates the lack of unity, an alienation which began with Luther and the Reformation. In 1866, under Bismark, the Prussian hegemony over the Catholic Austria and the Prussian-liberal Kulturkampf in the 1870s marked the caesura between the Protestants and the Catholics. The formers were the winners. It was considered that the ‘Prussification of Germany’ has an important impact over the National Socialism and the beginning of World War II. (Kaiser, 2007, p. 216) In the eyes of the Christian democrats, such a political regime and structural status quo had deep roots in the nineteenth century where the impact of the materialist ideology of liberalism transformed the society in an amoral and irreligious community. The same politicians considered that what they called the “European collective guilt” has nothing to do with the profound Catholic Europe. (Kaiser, 2007, p. 217)

In this direction, “‘Europe’ became upgraded in the course of Christian democratic party networking and intergovernmental decision-making in the first decade after World War II to their main collective policy instrument ... ‘Europe’ thus became a core element of the Christian democratic parties’ postwar identities, contributing in a major way to their distinctiveness in domestic party competition.” (Kaiser, 2007, p. 188-189)

The role of European Christian democratic parties in the making of the European Union was extremely important for different reasons. The most important one refers to a process where “the Christian democrats’ formal and informal cooperation contributed to the lasting creation of transnational social capital. Compared to interwar Europe, when Catholic party cooperation was still dominated by domestic nationalist claims and inter-state rivalry, the Christian democrats accumulated not instrumental trust directed at securing specific interests, but social trust in the form of normative-emotional bonds between party elites. Their regular party-level meetings in mostly non-politicized private contexts allowed the Christian democrats to communicate their congruent political beliefs and preferences, especially for the creation of an economically integrated core Europe with supranational institutional dimensions and without British participation, over longer periods. In this way, their decision-making as governing political elites in power in all founding member-states of the ECSC in 1950–51 became mutually reliable and calculable despite of conflicting domestic pressures from coalition partners, public opinion and economic pressure groups.” (Kaiser et al., 2009, p. 21)

At the beginning of the fifth decade of the 20th century, French Foreign Minister Robert Schuman reported that the French and German coal and steel industries unified, but there had to be respected several political conditions to realize such an ambitious plan. It was extremely important

that the French proposition should have been accepted by the West German government. The Russian threat was escalating. It is well-known the historical rivalry between France and Germany and some worries rose from it. Only five years have passed since the end of the Second World War. But important French politicians like Georges Bidault and Schuman were close to Adenauer because of the meetings of European Christian democrats since 1947. That is why it was believed that Konrad Adenauer would react favourably to the French initiative. (Kaiser, 2007, p. 191-252)

Adenauer considered the Schuman Plan in political terms as the only way to defend the Western Europe against the Soviet socialism. “The Christian democrats tried to build a Catholic Europe, decentralised federation in the making based on the principle of subsidiarity and excluding Protestant-socialist Northern Europe in its formative phase. It is this shared set of norms and policy ideas combined with the political hegemony of the Christian democratic Centre-Right in continental western Europe around 1950 that largely account for what the socialist Pineau has rightly recalled as the start of integration ‘in a very Christian democratic manner’.” (Kaiser, 2007, p. 251)

The role of Christian democrats in the reconciliation between France and Germany needs to be reaffirmed. In western Germany, the inter-confessional party CDU/CSU was led by predominately Catholics. (Kaiser, 2007, p. 218) One of the leaders of CDU (Christian Democratic Union) was Konrad Adenauer. It was believed that “Chancellor Adenauer aims at the creation of a European federation. His entire foreign policy is essentially based on this objective. He considers the Franco-German entente as the cornerstone of his grand design which can only be realised in a wider western European context. Chancellor Adenauer thus sacrifices deliberately the question of German unity. He believes that the integration of western Germany is more important than the restoration of the unity of the former Reich.” (Kaiser, 2007, p. 219)

That is why “The roots of transnational Christian democracy’s constitutional ideas and preferences for European integration were embedded in their largely shared collective experience of the centralised liberal nation-state, their regional political identity, their preferences for societal and political organisation in line with the principle of subsidiarity derived from Catholic social teaching and federalist thought as it largely developed inside the intellectual tradition of personalism – and this combined with the borrowing of essentially liberal interwar ideas about functional market integration as a suitable mechanism for eventually bringing about political integration as well.” (Kaiser, 2007, p. 10-11)

Several traditions of political Catholicism stimulated the new European vocation especially after the Second World War. One of them was based on the continental European orientation of political Catholicism antagonistic to socialist ideology and Stalinist centralisation. Another one was

rooted in the mistrust for the centralised nation-state paradigm, a doubt rooted in the liberal-dominated national integration and the culture wars in the nineteenth century. (Kaiser, 2007, p. 189)

By appealing to the medieval order where the Christendom had to be protected by any external attacks, the Christian democrats became the most powerful political force in Western Europe and the most important pawn against Soviet communism or the “new Islam”. The unity of Europe against the “red threat” was compatible with the Catholic social teaching idea of a human society founded by the principle of subsidiarity. While this concept emphasized the allocation of social tasks at different levels, Christian democrats thought it would be a great idea to stress the division of political decisions at several stages. This was a superior order, more efficient than the collectivist socialists’ design where the economic order was dominated by the emergence of a centralised nation-state. (Kaiser, 2007, p. 228-229)

CONCLUSION

The papal encyclicals we scrutinized were not directly concerned about the appearance of European Union. The most important result was the restoration of the Christian principles in a (post)modern society. The roles of Church as the foundation of peace, unity, justice, freedom and charity, the impact of its power to reduce the economic inequalities, corruption, tax evasion, and deficits are important elements to stress. At least in official terms, such ethical elements were and are followed by European Union’s political sphere.

We found that between a supranational entity like the European Union and the Catholic Church was a close relationship. A unite Europe has its roots in Catholicism and its social teaching. Until World War I, the transnationalisation of Catholicism from a religious point of view and the centralisation of the institution of Catholic Church determined the Catholic political parties to follow a nationally perspective.

The idea of Europe became a core element for the Christian democratic parties’ postwar profiles. The role of European Christian democratic parties in the making of the European Union was important because of their formal and informal cooperation that contributed to the creation of transnational social capital and trust. The Christian democrats tried to build a Catholic Europe, a decentralised federation based on the Catholic principle of subsidiarity.

After the Second World War, in Western Europe, the Christian democratic parties had a huge impact for the democratic governance. The socio-economic policies of these parties were anchored in Catholic social teaching. The political Catholicism stimulated especially the new European

vocation. The continental European orientation of political Catholicism was antagonistic to any socialist ideology and Stalinist centralisation. The mistrust for the centralised nation-state, doubt rooted in the liberal-dominated national integration and the culture wars in the nineteenth century was also important.

The Catholic influence militated for a reconciliation and peace between France and Germany. The so-called “European collective guilt” had nothing to do with the profound Catholic Europe. The fear of France was the appearance of Russia at its borders. The American leaders were on the same wavelength. The Franco-German cooperation in terms of European Coal and Steel Community was a scenario to counterbalance the threat of the Soviet Union. The threat of socialism was a decisive argument for a specific social action. The unity of Europe against the “red threat” was compatible with the Catholic social teaching idea of a human society founded by the principle of subsidiarity.

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