

“LA NECESIDAD LÓGICA Y SOCIAL DE QUE LA ENSEÑANZA
SEA CATÓLICA”

DISCURSO

PRONUNCIADO

EN LA APERTURA ANUAL DE LOS ESTUDIOS

DE LA

UNIVERSIDAD DE MANILA

EL DÍA 2 DE JULIO DE 1878

POR EL

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DEL ORDEN DE PREDICADORES

PROFESOR EN LA MISMA UNIVERSIDAD

«Horum autem malorum causam in eo præcipue
sitam esse Nobis persuasum est, quod despecta ac rejecta
sit sancta illa et augustissima Ecclesiæ Auctoritas, qua Dei
nomine humano generi præest, et legitimæ cujusque
auctoritatis vindex est et præsidium.....»

«Hinc orta effrenis illa libertas prava quæque
docendi et in yulgus edendi, dum ex adverso modis
omnibus Ecclesiæ jus ad juventulis institutionem, et
educationem, violatur et opprimitur....»

«Ea vero tempora optimis institutis, vitæ
tranquilidade, opibus et prosperitate eo magis floruisse,
quo Ecclesiæ regiminis ac legum sese observantiores
populi exhibuerunt.»

*Palabras de Nuestro Santísimo Padre León XIII.
Encíclica del 21 de Abril.*



MANILA
IMPRENTA DEL COLEGIO DE SANTO TOMÁS

1878

FOREWORD

THE LOGICAL AND SOCIAL NECESSITY FOR A CATHOLIC EDUCATION

Belén Lorezca-Tangco, O.P.

The distinguished professor commences his lecture with a clarification on his presence as a form of obedience to his superiors, and as a sacred task accomplished on the happiest day, ever, in his life.

Professor Julián Rivilla Ramiro, O.P. recognizes the intense activities and the inexhaustible zeal of the faculty members in their difficult and painstaking ministry. Likewise, highest tributes were showered upon the great multitude of young students, who are actively diligent and assiduously attentive in classes, avidly listening to their teachers, surpassing the sublime aspiration of those who had the delicate mission of directing their intelligence by the rugged paths of learning, and in proper time, who had flooded the hearts of their mentors with joy. He paid tribute to those who contributed to the development and perfection of instruction in the Islands. In carrying out his tasks, he first aimed at demonstrating the necessity of subjecting one's knowledge to the supreme judgment of an infallible and divine authority; then, stating that this authority exists in the world, and the Catholic Church alone has the faculty of teaching man the truth which he received from the Divine Founder, Jesus Christ; and lastly, talking about the immense influence the Catholic doctrine wields over humanity. Corollary to this, Fr. Ramiro says, the general thesis of his lecture is: the logical and social necessity of education being Catholic.

It is an interesting and fundamental question of education that the first word the Savior of mankind uttered when He sent out His apostles to regenerate the world and reclaim it, was “enseñanza” (education) “Teach all nations.” And the Vicar of Christ on earth, His Holiness Pope Leo XIII, addressed all the bishops of the Catholic world, with the word “teaching” for the first time. He asked his Venerable Brothers to actively work and with care so that the seedlings of the heavenly doctrines would be extensively scattered in the field of the Lord, and so from those tender years when the teachings of the Catholic faith were instilled in the spirit of the faithful, roots would be deeply planted and preserved from errors.

Truth is the nourishment of the spirit, so, man's soul reclaims it on compelling necessity, as the body necessitates material nourishment. But the truth which reclaims the human spirit, the truth which sustains man's intelligence, is not an imperfect truth, eclipsed by the black ink of error, not a muting and temporal truth in all the winds of

beguiling discussion; but a perfect truth, pure and without any blend of error, a truth which is complete and indisputable, firm and constant, which can serve as a narrow and profound base on which a grandiose structure of science could be constructed. And so, human understanding in the investigation of truth naturally heads for the primordial truth, fountain and beginning of all truths, heading towards the eternal divine and infallible truth which always remains permanent and immutable amidst the changing environment. When man spontaneously directs himself to God, it is rare that he starts directing his gaze upon the exterior world first and upon himself afterwards. It is because man is of divine race, like what the old poets say. He carries in his soul the image of an infinite substance, and therefore, there is in him a noble aspiration to reach God, the principle of his existence and the fountain of his life and happiness. For this, the profoundest thought of his soul, the most sublime and powerful sentiment of his heart, the unchanging end which fills his aspirations is the thought of what is eternal of the infinities, of the thought of God. From this thought of the eternal, and the infinite, is the thought of God. From this sublime thought, like a fecund germination, spontaneously blossoms a precious, holy, heavenly flower whose fragrance makes smooth and sweet the bitterest instances of human existence; this inestimable flower is Religion.

Religion authorizes man to the most intimate of his being in the most powerful way from the first dawns of rational knowledge; that is why man is religious from the days of his infancy. Religion is natural in man; it is a fundamental law of his spirit. Wherever men are found, religion is also there. In whatever place a member of the human species breathes, a soul also breathes, and the breath of the soul is prayer.

Centuries had transpired and the human reason had not given more than contradictory answers on the most important questions of life. Fr. Ramiro recalls a period of more than fifty centuries. Human intelligence has made progress truthfully extraordinary in the sphere of exact sciences and in the material world, and has always conquered a great number of truths. It has classified the stars which move in incommensurable spaces; has calculated its revolutions, and has reduced to formulas and numbers the mechanism of the sky; has descended to the openings of the earth and has penetrated the mysteries of its constitution and formation. Human reason knows almost all beings of the universe, the interior of those which it has profoundly studied, as well as the forms and functions.

The human spirit has made advance truths in the study of the exterior and visible world; but by disgrace, it has not followed the same with respect to the knowledge of God, and by the same, the origin of all things. After that immense apostasy which came from half of Europe in the 16th century, great efforts were exerted to reconstruct the science of man and of God on purely human bases; what happened was the coming of rationalism, that doctrine of weak spirits, which instantly believed that they would be the owner of the future. From that divinization of man and matter,

materialism set in, usurping thrones for man who equals to God, descending to the lowest level of the brutes. There are the advances which pure reason has made in the knowledge of God and of man, and of all things. Nevertheless, the knowledge of God and of ourselves means infinitely more for us than the science of the world: a moral truth interests us than the science of the starry sky.

But if the philosophy of the past and of the present has not been able to give solution to the problems which are most important to human life, would it not be possible for a philosophy more powerful and wise to come? A philosophy which realizes the ideal of a perfect science, pure and without taint of error, which satisfies the necessities of the human spirit? Fr. Ramiro says no. Considering the weakness of the human intelligence after that fall in paradise, it would be morally impossible that mankind by itself alone acquire the whole and complete truth in questions that most interest him; and so there is a need for a divine assistance, a superior light which shows and manifests pure truth, without any shade of error, the perfect and undisputable truth. This comes from the understanding of the Angelic Doctor, St. Thomas Aquinas, speaking of the necessity for a divine science in this way. With respect to those things which refer to God and can be researched by human reason, it was necessary for God to instruct man because the truths related to God seen alone by the light of reason, would be known little by little and that, after a long time, with a blend of many errors.

Nevertheless, the human spirit necessitates the truth, not an imperfect truth, obscured by the shadows of errors, not of a simple probability, but an absolute, perfect and undisputable truth which allows one to face death in tranquility. Because, as St. Thomas says, upon the knowledge of this truth depends the salvation of men, which is in God. Man needs an exact knowledge which is founded on the most solid assurance as regards its nature, origin, and destiny; and this is not only at the end of his life, but also at all times, and principally in the turbulent days of his youth, so as to give his soul the solidness, the impulses, and the force he needs in that critical epoch of his existence.

A truth of this kind cannot come to man from a human intelligence left to his powers alone, considering the actual state of his nature and the great influence that the imagination and sensuality exercise over him. By consequence it is necessary that there exists a superior, infallible and divine authority to teach the truth to mankind; precisely that God whose word is truth itself talk to man; the complete truth without any blend of doubt nor error. The wisest philosophers of paganism know this necessity. Plato said it was necessary for a teacher to come down from the heavens to instruct humanity.

Considering the philosophical development which preceded the immense diversity of doctrines, sects and schools, some contraries to the others, and that all

boasted the right to teach, they saw the impossibility of a man teaching the rest of mankind. It was necessary that God himself come down from heaven to undertake this post. It would only be before a divine and infallible authority can all contradictions disappear and systems silenced.

And so, after having spoken to men through Adam, Henoc, Noe, Abraham and a continuous series of prophets, God ultimately talked to them through His Son, who being the splendor of the glory living and most perfect image of the Father, and sustaining everything with the word of His virtue, descended from the most high, from the most serene and luminous from the skies and lived among men in mortal flesh. He taught the truth to men, unlike the sages of this world, as one who has all the power, affirming that He was the promised Messiah, the Son of God, and showing the truth of His word with wonderful actions which could only be made with an infinite virtue such as sight to the blind, speech to the mute, movement to the paralytics, food to thousands of men with some bread, calm to the tempests, life back to decomposing corpses, and all with only one word, reigning with sublime majesty as one who dominates the universe and recognized as King and Lord of entire nature.

And these miracles which Jesus made to give testimony of His divinity were publicly executed in the temple amidst the populous cities, before distinguished men of probity and learning and in the presence of His own enemies in an era when the Jewish society had arrived at the summit of its civilization and when skepticism spread out to all the social classes. In this way, the works of Jesus gave testimony on the truth of His words and all the doctrinal affirmations remained guaranteed in a way infallible. These marvels were referred to us by ocular witnesses who solely affirmed what they saw and heard and what they felt with their hands, and these same wonderful works had been confessed with unswerving constancy amidst the most atrocious torments by persons of all ages, gender and conditions, and had been written in an indelible way with the purest blood of millions of martyrs in the world's annals.

This Son of God, power and wisdom of the Father, eternal splendor of the Divine Majesty, who came to the world to give testimony to the truth after having completed His mission on earth, had to go back to the kingdom of His Father from where He came. But as God does things completely and perfectly, it was not convenient that after having taught the truth to the world, He would enter into a perfect repose, catapulting it into disputes among men. Therefore, before lifting Himself to the highest of the skies, he founded the Catholic Church, that is, a supernatural, most excellent, and most perfect society, which would have, in perpetual deposit, His eternal word; which would provide the world with the bread of life that could not deceive Himself nor deceive us; that would teach man the lessons to be learned from its Divine Teacher; that would be a perfect copy of the divine perfections, sublime exemplar, and finished model of the human societies.

He established the Catholic Church over an immovable rock. He gave a most vigorous constitution, endowing her with unity of a monarchy with the expansive action of a democracy, moderating both by a strong aristocracy. The Catholic Church, and only the Catholic Church, has been conferred the faculty to teach the truth to the human beings; she is the pillar and the firmament of the truth; and therefore, she alone has the right to examine the doctrines and condemn the errors, to instruct and educate the youth. Not only do we have to subject our knowledge to the infallible Magisterium of the Catholic Church by necessity and obligation but also by the immense benefits which this submission follows our way, and by the total influence which the Catholic doctrine exercises over society. The Catholic doctrine is eminently a civilizer; only the Catholic Church possesses the great truths about the individual, the family, and the society. The Catholic doctrine communicates to man a living sentiment of his dignity, and contributes to create that individual sphere in which man unfolds all his faculties, says Fr. Ramiro.

Catholicism teaches man the truth about the big problems of life. It tells him the point from where he comes and the end where he is going; it discovers the mystery of his pilgrimage, the secret of life, and the ark of death. It tells him that he comes from God and he returns to Him: from God who is the cause and principle of all that exists, in whom all truth is found, all goodness, all power, all happiness, from Him who animates all, and if He fails, the world would be reduced to dust.

The Lord wants all men saved and that they arrive at the knowledge of the truth. Thus, seeing that the revelations made to the ancient Fathers and prophets were not enough, God talked to us through His Son, who taught us how one possesses all power with words and works which gave testimony to His divinity. Before returning to His Father, He established on earth an authority over all human beings, an infallible organ of His divine revelation; and He established it over a rock, firmest and highest, to be able to speak authoritatively to all men. As aforementioned, this supreme authority is the Catholic Church.

Pope Leo VIII cited many times, “we are convinced that the evils which actually afflict society have for their principal cause the undervaluing and forgetting of this holy and august authority of the Church which governs humanity in the name of God, and which is the guarantee and the support of all legitimate authority.” Consequently, we have the duty to conserve the Catholic teaching not only because the reason and the duty demand it, but also because the well being, the development and perfection of society so demand. It has therefore remained manifest that there is the logical and social necessity for a Catholic education.