



‘Legio Sanctae Familiae’ The Legion of the Holy Family

Under the Patronage of
The Sacred Heart of Jesus
The Immaculate Heart of Mary
The Most Chaste Heart of St Joseph



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As I begin the fourth article in this series on Pope Pius XI's encyclical letter *‘Divini Illius Magistri’* the Irish government has just published the wording of two referenda to be held on March 8th 2024. Once again we witness the Irish government attacking the institution of the traditional Catholic family and attacking mothers who wish to stay at home to nurture and educate their children in the Catholic faith, rather than become slaves of industry. The Irish government is slowly but surely denuding the Irish constitution of the last vestiges of a once proud Christian society. They wish to replace it with a dangerous ideology which will eventually lead to the collapse of Irish society. The Irish government are not acting in the best interests of the citizens of their country nor are they acting at the behest of those citizens. The orders for their actions come from powers residing outside of Ireland. Later on in this encyclical Pope Pius XI will delve into the rightful authority of the civil state and its limitations. I hope to write more on this shortly, but for now let us continue with Pope Pius XI's examination of the role of the Catholic Church in the education of children.

“The extent of the Church’s mission in the field of education is such as to embrace every nation, without exception, according to the command of Christ: “Teach ye all nations;” (Matthew 28:19) and there is no power on earth that may lawfully oppose her or stand in her way. In the first place, it extends over all the Faithful, of whom she has anxious care as a tender mother. For these she has throughout the centuries created and conducted an immense number of schools and institutions in every branch of learning. As We said on a recent occasion:

Right back in the far-off middle ages when there were so many (some have even said too many) monasteries, convents, churches, collegiate churches, cathedral chapters, etc., there was attached to each a home of study, of teaching, of Christian education. To these we must add all the universities, spread over every country and always by the initiative and under the protection of the Holy See and the Church.

That grand spectacle, which today we see better, as it is nearer to us and more imposing because of the conditions of the age, was the spectacle of all times; and they who study and compare historical events



Catholic High School for boys in Philadelphia - 1917
(Photo: Catholic Historical Research Centre
Archdiocese of Philadelphia)

remain astounded at what the Church has been able to do in this matter, and marvel at the manner in which she had succeeded in fulfilling her God-given mission to educate generations of men to a Christian life, producing everywhere a magnificent harvest of fruitful results.

But if we wonder that the Church in all times has been able to gather about her and educate hundreds, thousands, millions of students, no less wonderful is

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it to bear in mind what she has done not only in the field of education, but in that also of true and genuine erudition. For, if so many treasures of culture, civilization and literature have escaped destruction, this is due to the action by which the Church, even in times long past and uncivilized, has shed so bright a light in the domain of letters, of philosophy, of art and in a special manner of architecture. (Pope Pius XI - Discourse to the students of Mondragone College, May 14, 1929) (**Divini Illius Magistri 25**)

Because the Catholic Church's mission to teach comes directly from God, it is above the civil law. Any civil laws enacted which seek to prevent the Catholic Church from fulfilling her mission to teach all nations are contrary to the moral order of God. They are, therefore, not binding on Catholics. In our time, what we see happening is that the civil authorities are taking over the education system established by the Catholic Church and corrupting it to their own ideological ends. Nowhere is this more apparent than in Ireland.

In Ireland we lack true leadership in the Catholic Hierarchy and our bishops are allowing the corruption of the once Catholic education system without any significant push-back against the secular authorities. It is possible that the Irish bishops are fearful of what the state authorities might do were they to publicly oppose the false and dangerous gender ideology that is being mandated in the Catholic schools of Ireland. At some stage, the corrupt and corrupting Irish civil authorities will have to be rigorously opposed regardless of the short term consequences. The lives of children in Ireland are already being destroyed by government policies.

The Irish bishops seek to compromise with the secular state by devising catechetical programmes for use in the religious classes of Catholic schools. This allows the perverse ideologies to be introduced into other subjects in the schools. There is a pretence that what makes a school Catholic is the religious syllabus.

But even were this true, the catechetical programmes that have been in use in Irish Catholic schools for many decades are severely deficient when it comes to handing on the Catholic faith. It is not popular for a Catholic layman to point out this unsavoury truth, but the fact remains, that, in Ireland, the Catholic schools are for the most part, not really Catholic.

As a consequence of this, the levels of apostasy from the Catholic faith in Ireland are astounding. In a homily given at the ordination of seven deacons in 2011, the Archbishop of Dublin, Archbishop Diarmuid Martin noted that, "On a given Sunday only about 18% of the Catholic population attends Mass in the Archdiocese of Dublin." He also noted that "Many young people, despite years of religious education, have only marginal interest in the message of Jesus." (Archbishop Diarmuid Martin - Homily at Diaconate Ordinations 29/05/2011).

The difficulty I have with all of this is that nobody within the Irish Catholic hierarchy wants to take responsibility for the failure of the Catholic schools to play their part in handing on the Catholic faith.



Kylemore Abbey - Catholic Girls School - Galway

Parents are sometimes called to task but, Catholic parents are not charged with ensuring that Catholic schools are Catholic. That is not their job. Catholic parents did not devise the disastrous catechetical programmes that were used on their children in the Catholic schools of Ireland. These programmes were commissioned and deployed by the Irish bishops. These programmes have been a colossal failure and this needs to be both admitted and then a plan needs to be devised to correct the severe deficiencies in these programmes. But that is not all.

The diocesan bishop is charged under Canon Law with ensuring that everything that happens in a Catholic school is in conformity with Catholic Church teaching and that nothing contrary to the Catholic faith is being taught in these schools.

"Can. 804 §1 The formation and education in the Catholic religion provided in any school, and through various means of social communication is subject to the authority of the Church. It is for the Episcopal Conference to issue general norms concerning this field of activity and for the diocesan Bishop to regulate and watch over it.

§2 The local Ordinary is to be careful that those who are appointed as teachers of religion in schools, even non Catholic ones, are outstanding in true doctrine, in the witness of their Christian life, and in their teaching ability." (1983 Code of Canon Law)

In the case where the schools available to Catholic parents are not "imbued with a Christian spirit," the diocesan bishop is charged under Canon Law with establishing such schools.

"Can. 802 §1 If there are no schools in which an education is provided that is imbued with a Christian spirit, the diocesan Bishop has the responsibility of ensuring that such schools are established." (1983 Code of Canon Law)

The situation in Ireland and elsewhere in the world is very onerous for Catholic parents. Catholic parents have a duty to ensure that their children are educated in the Catholic faith, but the Catholic schools are now undermining the Catholic faith of the children who attend. Most of the bishops seem to be unwilling to intervene or to stand up to the secular authorities regarding Catholic education. There are of course a

few great exceptions, and we mentioned Archbishop Alexander Sample in the previous article.

I will again be falsely accused of ‘bashing’ the bishops for saying what I have said. The reason that I keep coming back to this point is that Jesus Christ appointed the apostles, that is the bishops, to preach and to teach the Catholic faith. The bishops are the stewards of the “Deposit of the Faith”. Jesus Christ entrusted the power of the keys to the bishops. The power of binding and loosing. When the bishops fail to exercise their God given authority in any given society, that society will begin to fail. If the bishops do not reclaim their lawful authority within a society, many souls will be lost. Pope Pius XI’s encyclical ‘*Divini Illius Magistri*’ cannot, of itself, recover what has been lost. The Catholic bishops of the world need to proclaim and to reclaim their authority within society and within the field of education.

That is why the encyclical is first addressed to “The Patriarchs, Primate, Archbishops, Bishops, and other Ordinaries in peace and communion with The Apostolic See” before being address to “all the faithful of the Catholic world.”

In Ireland, the Irish Catholic bishops need to reform the Catholic schools of the country so that a great Evangelisation can once again take place. They need to stop looking to secular legislation for guidance and they must return to their primary mission of teaching the truths of the Catholic faith and of rooting out the errors which are proliferating throughout the Catholic world.

After pointing to the great achievements of the Catholic Church in education, Pope Pius XI continues:

“All this the Church has been able to do because her mission to educate extends equally to those outside the Fold, seeing that all men are called to enter the kingdom of God and reach eternal salvation. Just as today when her missions scatter schools by the thousand in districts and countries not yet Christian, from the banks of the Ganges to the Yellow river and the great islands and archipelagos of the Pacific ocean, from the Dark Continent to the Land of Fire and to frozen Alaska, so in every age the Church by her missionaries has educated to Christian life and to civilization the various peoples which now constitute the Christian nations of the civilized world. **(Divini Illius Magistri 26)**

Hence it is evident that both by right and in fact the mission to educate belongs pre-eminently to the Church, and that no one free from prejudice can have a reasonable motive for opposing or impeding the Church in this her work, of which the world today enjoys the precious advantages. **(Divini Illius Magistri 27)**

This is the more true because the rights of the family and of the State, even the rights of individuals regarding a just liberty in the pursuit of science, of methods of science and all sorts of profane culture, not only are not opposed to this pre-eminence of the Church, but are in complete harmony with it.

The fundamental reason for this harmony is that the supernatural order, to which the Church owes her

And I say to thee: That thou art Peter; and upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

And I will give to thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven. And whatsoever thou shalt bind upon earth, it shall be bound also in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose upon earth, it shall be loosed also in heaven.

(Matthew 16:18-19)



rights, not only does not in the least destroy the natural order, to which pertain the other rights mentioned, but elevates the natural and perfects it, each affording mutual aid to the other, and completing it in a manner proportioned to its respective nature and dignity. The reason is because both come from God, who cannot contradict Himself: “The works of God are perfect and all His ways are judgments.” (Deuteronomy 32:4) **(Divini Illius Magistri 28)**

Man is a composite being of body and soul with the life of the soul being of far greater importance than the life of the body. This truth needs to be re-asserted in our world in order to stop the corruption that worship of the body brings about. The false ideologies which teach children that men can become women and that girls can become boys, must be strongly opposed. But we must remember that the war that we are engaged in is primarily a spiritual war. Therefore those who fight on the side of God need to make sure to remain in a state of Grace. If they fall from that state, then they need to go to confession. We cannot fight this battle without the spiritual weapons spoken of by St Paul in his letter to the Ephesians.

“Put you on the armour of God, that you may be able to stand against the deceits of the devil.

For our wrestling is not against flesh and blood; but against principalities and power, against the rulers of the world of this darkness, against the spirits of wickedness in the high places.

Therefore take unto you the armour of God, that you may be able to resist in the evil day, and to stand in all things perfect.

Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of justice,

And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace: In all things taking the shield of faith, wherewith you may be able to extinguish all the fiery darts of the most wicked one.

And take unto you the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit (which is the word of God).

By all prayer and supplication praying at all times in the spirit; and in the same watching with all instance and supplication for all the saints: (Ephesians 6:11-18)