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True Dignity is Submission to Christ's Kingship

Introduction

Man derives his integral dignity not from himself, but from God. In the order of nature, man's rationality raises him above the visible universe. In the order of grace, he is called to communion with God through Christ, who alone is the Way, the Truth, and the Life (John 14:16). The twofold order of nature and grace, both of which ultimately have their source in God, must be understood according to the distinctions proper to each—because faith presupposes reason, and Divine grace builds upon human nature. Hence, man discovers his integral dignity only by submitting to God both in the order of nature (i.e., by acknowledging God as Creator), and in the order of grace (i.e., by acknowledging God as Redeemer). Because man is a social animal, individuals and societies alike, must publicly affirm the Universal Kingship of Christ—the God-man. Hence, in what follows, employing a theoretical and dialectical methodology, I argue that the state qua the state has a *presumptive* obligation to publicly affirm the universal kingship of Christ, both related to, and apart from its *presumptive* obligation to privilege the Catholic Church. The former is the duty the state directly owes to Christ. Given the impracticality of immediately pursuing this goal in Sri Lanka, the Church should prioritize the conversion of non-baptized adults into Catholicism while prudently awaiting the opportune moment to establish a Christian state-constitution.

Outline

In what follows, first, employing *Dignitatis Humanae*, *Immortale Dei*, *Quas Primas*, and John Finnis, I demonstrate how Vatican II leaves intact the pre-Vatican II teaching on the primacy of the Divine law over civil society. Then, drawing on Cyril of Alexandria, the Council of Nicaea and Pope Pius XI, I show the organic development of the teaching on Christ's universal kingship. Next, relying on both Garrigou-Lagrange and Pius XI's *Quas Primas*, I highlight the three distinct titles of Christ's kingship. Afterwards, I discuss proximately related considerations in Pius XI and Matthias Joseph Scheeben SJ. Then, I explain how Denis Fahey, C.S. SP, understands the mode of Christ's kingship employing three main categories: i) spiritual kingship; ii) spiritual kingship as conferring the right of intervention in temporal affairs, and iii) temporal kingship. The foregoing also extensively incorporates Aquinas.

After this, I demonstrate that Pope John Paul II in *Veritatis Splendor* (*VS*), endorses Pius XI's affirmation of Christ's universal kingship. I begin by distinguishing the Divine law from the eternal law and the natural law, principally employing Edward Feser's interpretation of Aquinas. Next, I explain how *VS* understands the relationship between freedom, autonomy and civil society in light of past Magisterial teachings. Then, I discuss how the Catechism of the Catholic Church illuminates *VS*, and how *VS*, in turn, upholds Christ's kingship, and ecclesial authority over civil authority. Here, I demonstrate the logical implications of the arguments in *VS*. In light of the state's obligation to publicly acknowledge Christ's universal kingship, and the Church's correlative duty to at least remotely facilitate the Christianization of political authority, I conclude with some concrete recommendations to gradually facilitate the Christianization of Sri Lanka.

Vatican II

Any discussion of the integral dignity of the human person in the face of current adversities must necessarily heed Vatican II's teaching in *Dignitatis Humanae* which unabashedly affirms the “**traditional** Catholic doctrine on the moral duty of men and societies toward [*not merely any, but*] the **true** religion and toward the one Church of Christ” (*DH*, 1). Viz, Vatican II upholds Pope Leo XIII's teaching in *Immortale Dei* that “nature and reason, which command every individual devoutly to worship God in holiness, because we belong to Him and must return to Him ..., bind also the civil community by a like law” (*ID*, 6). This also means that Vatican II affirms Pope Pius XI's teaching in *Quas Primas*, that “Christ is our King by acquired, as well as by natural right,” (*QP*, 13) not only in spiritual matters but also “in civil affairs,” because “by virtue of the absolute empire over all creatures committed to Him by the Father, all things are in His power” although “during His life on earth, He entirely refrained from the exercise of such authority” (17). Relatedly, as John Finnis (2011, 94) argues, “all the elements of the Council's declaration of” the right to “religious liberty are taken from authorities as traditional as Aquinas,” and that “none of the principles defended by Aquinas is contradicted.” Finnis further states:

As the drafting committee advised the Council fathers orally and in writing in the two days before the final vote adopting *Dignitatis Humanae*, the old thought that **error has no rights** remains unchallenged. (*Ibid.*)

This evidently means that no political constitution or government has any right to officially give primacy to any non-Christian religion. Given the primacy of the spiritual over the material, the eternal over the temporal, and therefore, the Divine Law over the civil law, *in principle*, even after Vatican II, the Catholic Church retains her right to exercise authority over civil political powers.

The Universal Kingship of Christ

In the 5th century, Cyril of Alexandria taught that “Christ has dominion over all creatures, a dominion” that is not “seized by violence nor usurped, but his by essence and by nature” (*In huc*. X; *QP*, 7). Nearly a century earlier, the Council of Nicaea had affirmed the Church's belief in the consubstantiality of the Son with the Father, and had added the following words to the Creed: “of whose kingdom there shall be no end” (*QP*, 5). Pope Pius XI interpreted this addition as an affirmation of “the kingly dignity of Christ” (*Ibid.*). This affirmation of Christ's universal kingship was based upon and testified to by the Scriptures (Garrigou-Lagrange, 1957, Chap. XXXIX).

The Titles of Christ's Kingship

Garrigou-Lagrange OP bases Christ's claim to kingship upon three titles: two titles He claims by natural right, namely the hypostatic union and the plenitude of created grace, and one title He claims by an acquired right (through His sacrifice on the cross), namely His redemption of humanity (Garrigou-Lagrange, 1957, Chap. XXXIX).

First, Garrigou-Lagrange observes that Christ, because of the hypostatic union, “transcends all creatures, even the higher choirs of angels, who must adore and obey Him” (Garrigou-Lagrange, 1957, Chap. XXXIX). Moreover, because of the hypostatic union, Christ's “acts are theandric and of infinite value” (*Ibid.*). Hence, Pius XI teaches that because of Christ's kingship “founded upon the ineffable hypostatic union,” not only is Christ “to be adored by angels and

men *as God*,” but also “to Him *as man*, angels and men are subject” (*QP*, 13). Therefore, all “must recognize his empire” (*Ibid.*).

Second, Garrigou-Lagrange holds that by His “plenitude of grace, virtues, and gifts,” Christ “excels all creatures, and is the head of the Church,” and “has the highest degree of the light of glory and charity” (Garrigou-Lagrange, 1957, Chap. XXXIX). Pius XI elaborates that Christ reigns “by reason of the keenness of his intellect and the extent of his knowledge,” and “also because he is very truth” (*QP*, 7). Moreover, it is from Christ “that truth must be obediently received by *all* mankind” (*Ibid.*).

Third, Garrigou-Lagrange affirms that Christ “is entitled to be King because He has redeemed us” (Garrigou-Lagrange, 1957, Chap. XXXIX). All of Christ’s acts are “meritorious and satisfactory, and of infinite value,” because they “are theandric” (*Ibid.*). Hence, Christ transcends even “the angels who are His ministers and who must assist the redeemed in attaining their end” (*Ibid.*). Therefore, Pius XI teaches that “Christ is our King by acquired, as well as by natural right, for he is our Redeemer,” and that we “are no longer our own property, for Christ has purchased us ‘with a great price’” (*QP*, 13). Everyone, including the unbaptized, comes, at least virtually if not actually, under Christ’s authority even under the aspect of redemption, because God antecedently wills salvation for all, although it is voluntarily appropriated only by some.

Other Relevant Considerations

In addition to the aforementioned three specific titles, Pius XI notes that “the title and the power of King belongs to Christ as man in the strict and proper sense too,” because “it is only as man that he may be said to have received from the Father ‘power and glory and a kingdom’” (*QP*, 7). This is because “the Word of God, as consubstantial with the Father, has all things in common with him” and hence, “has necessarily supreme and absolute dominion over *all* things created” (*Ibid.*).

Moreover, Aquinas, explaining what it means for Christ to sit at the right hand of the Father, notes that this “can be understood according to habitual grace, which is more fully in Christ than in all other creatures” (ST III q. 58, a 3). This fulness of habitual grace is such that “human nature in Christ is more blessed than in all other creatures, and possesses over *all* other creatures royal and judiciary power” (*Ibid.*). Aquinas clarifies that “judiciary power goes with royal dignity” (ST III q. 59, a 4). Garrigou-Lagrange explains that for Aquinas, kingship means “to rule, to govern,” and that “universal government belongs to the king, ordering things to a good end” (Garrigou-Lagrange, 1957, Chap. XXXIX). Therefore, Garrigou-Lagrange concludes, “the king is in his kingdom as God is in the world, and as the soul is in the body” (*Ibid.*).

Furthermore, Matthias Joseph Scheeben SJ, highlighting some implications of the Incarnation and Atonement, states that Christ, as “mediator of men, and of creatures in general” by “bringing God so close to creatures,” “brings creatures so close to God” (Scheeben, 1954, 411). Hence, Christ “acts in creatures as their head, and they conduct themselves toward God in His name” (*Ibid.*). Thus, Christ “as mediator of creatures to God,” offers “God the hymn of an acknowledgment and praise proportionate to His majesty” (*Ibid.*). Therefore, in and with Christ, creatures render to God a tribute of adoration and “satisfaction which is worthy of God’s infinite eminence” (*Ibid.*), and which “counterbalances the affront done to Him by sin” (*Ibid.*, 412). Hence, Christ “can and should subject creatures so completely to God’s dominion that in Him and with Him creatures serve their Lord with a kingly service” (*Ibid.*). Thus, Christ

represents men at God's court "as a king who in place of them and through them, renders to God the noble, free service of a Son" (Ibid.).

Finally, Scheeben holds that neither the Incarnation nor the Atonement "is justified *only* as a means motivated by the purpose of exterminating or compensating for sin" (Ibid., 428). This is because Christ's kenosis metaphysically cannot be "merely" the "means for the attainment of ends" far inferior to Him "such as the salvation of men," or are "incidental to" the world's order, "such as the compensation for sin" (Ibid.). The reason for this is that the "infinite dignity of the God-man makes it impossible for Him to play a subordinate, secondary role in God's plan" (Ibid.). Viz, Christ's identity and acts cannot metaphysically "exist exclusively for the sake of man or on account of sin" (Ibid.). Therefore, although Christ is delivered up for men, men "belong to Him more than He belongs to them" (Ibid.). Christ's surrender cannot conduce more to men's advantage than it redounds to "His own honor and to the glorification of His Father" (Ibid.). Scheeben, therefore, concludes that as Christ is ordained to the salvation of all, so "men and the whole world are ordained to Him as their head and king who ... makes of them His kingdom (Ibid.).

The Extent and Mode of Christ's Kingship

Denis Fahey, C.S. SP, understands the mode of Christ's kingship employing three main categories: i) spiritual kingship; ii) spiritual kingship as conferring the right of intervention in temporal affairs, and iii) temporal kingship (Fahey, 1931, 3-9).

Spiritual kingship

First, Christ's kingship is spiritual. Based on Romans 5:17, Fahey considers Christ to be our head, who, as Aquinas affirms "has a twofold influence upon the members" namely interior and exterior (ST III. q. 8. a. 6.). It is interior in as much as "the head transmits to the other members the power of moving and feeling," and it is exterior inasmuch as "the head directs a man in his exterior actions" by "the sense of sight and the other senses which reside in it" (Ibid.). Employing this Thomistic analogy, Fahey explains that Christ, "by His grace of headship," exerts His "interior influence of supernatural life" via the power of justification stemming from His hypostatic union, and His "exterior influence by His government of His subjects" (Fahey, 1931, 3). While justification belongs to Christ as priest, government herein belongs to Him as king, under spiritual kingship which concerns "His primacy in the supernatural order" (Ibid.) Thus, Christ, by virtue of His spiritual kingship, sets "before the faithful the common end they should attain," and points out to the faithful "the means of attaining it," thereby "guiding the exterior and visible movement of the whole Mystical Body to eternal happiness" (Ibid., 4). Christ also imposes sanctions, rewards and punishes. Christ's spiritual kingship involves a militant "struggle against moral evil" here below—until the completion of His triumph in eternity (Ibid.). Christ's priesthood and spiritual kingship, though distinct, are not separate, for it is by uniting souls to God, via justification, that "He withdraws them from sin and conquers them for His kingdom" (Ibid.).

Spiritual Kingship as Conferring the Right of Intervention in Temporal Affairs

Second, Christ's aforementioned spiritual kingship includes the right to intervene in temporal affairs (Ibid., 5). The "divine life of grace" which Christ bestows on man is more sublime than his natural human life (Ibid.). Hence, man's supernatural vocation is nobler than his natural ends. Consequently, Christ's "mission of salvation" which "confers on Him the full power of governing in the spiritual order" extends to the material (Ibid.). Indeed, grace elevates our

activity “by lifting it up to the God of Revelation,” but we still “have to work out our salvation in the conditions of existence imposed on us by our situation in the world” (Ibid.). Moreover, the “temporal order, with the rulers appointed to maintain it, subsists along with the supernatural order and the ecclesiastical hierarchy” (Ibid.). Thus, reason, illuminated by faith, demands the prioritization of the supernatural over the temporal. While the temporal and the spiritual belong to distinct spheres of authority, “the temporal is in subordination to the spiritual” (Ibid.). Furthermore, “because the final end of man, the end which dominates all others, is supernatural,” “the ruler in the supernatural order” possesses “a right of intervention in the strictly natural sphere” (Ibid.). Yet this right “must be measured by the necessity or utility of maintaining and developing the divine life of grace in souls” (Ibid.). Viz, the right under discussion here is *not* one of “commanding and legislating in view of conducting human society” to its natural common good, which properly belongs to the “civil power” (Ibid.). This right is an instrument of Christ’s spiritual kingship that may i) oppose every hindrance to the “supernatural life” and the “social order consonant with it,” and ii) procure from civil authority the requisite cooperation for the supernatural life (Ibid., 6). Examples of these include Christ driving out traffickers from the temple (Ibid., 5), appropriating a donkey to ride on into Jerusalem (Mk 11:3; Lk 19:31) (Ratzinger, 2011, Chapter 1), and indicating a moral right to tax exemption despite waiving that right (Mt 17:26). To this may be added Paul temporarily blinding Elymus for hindering the preaching of the Gospel (Acts 13:9-12), and Peter pronouncing the divine judgment of capital punishment upon Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 5:1-11). Pope Benedict XVI explains Jesus’ appropriation of a donkey by noting that the “use of an animal on which no one had yet sat is a further pointer to the right of kings,” and that “Jesus claims the right of kings, known throughout antiquity, to requisition modes of transport” (Ibid.).

This right of intervention in temporal affairs corresponds to the *presumptive* obligation of the state to privilege the Catholic Church—for the following reasons. Christ’s spiritual kingship cannot be “exercised in an efficacious manner” in the absence of “a visible, permanent intermediary, capable of” providing souls “at all times and in all places” with “the directions needed for the safeguard and diffusion of the divine life” (Fahey, 1931, 7). This “mission has been confided only to the Catholic Church” (Ibid.) (cf. *Dei Verbum*, 10; *Veritatis Splendor*, 27; Code of Canon Law, Canon 747). Hence, the Pope and the Bishops are “the representatives of Christ” and the “lieutenants of His spiritual royalty,” who have been charged with “holding up before the world the supernatural ideal of life to be lived by all” and with “laying down the laws and precepts to be observed” for the preservation of the supernatural life (Ibid.). They are also responsible for distributing “all the means confided to the Church for the development of the divine life,” establishing “fitting sanctions for all offences” jeopardizing “that life,” and carrying forward “the struggle against the powers of evil” through “missionary effort” (Ibid.). It bears clarifying that the Church’s participation in Christ’s priesthood is distinct from her participation in Christ’s kingship. Hence, Aquinas explains that the “interior influence of grace can come from Christ alone,” while the exterior influence, “which Our Lord exercises by His exterior government can be communicated to ... the heads of the Church” who “are heads because they take Christ’s place” (ST III. q. 8. a. 6). The Church qua the Church is “without direct power in temporal affairs as such,” but “by her participation in” Christ’s kingship, she retains the “right of intervening in temporal affairs in order to safeguard the interests of the divine life” (Fahey, 1931, 9).

Temporal Kingship

Third, Christ’s kingship is also temporal. Temporal kingship “pursues a temporal end” for the sake of the common good “in the natural order” and promotes “the temporal welfare” of the

subjects (Fahey, 1931, 6). Viz, this does not concern a right of temporal intervention for the sake of the spiritual good. Nor does it necessarily mean that Christ would directly take over the government of any nation. However, Christ “reserves to Himself the right of pronouncing final judgment on the Last Day on the civil administration of all earthly rulers” (Ibid.). Those who occupied civil political authority, on that day, will render an account of how they “sought the natural common good of their subjects,” as well as of how they acknowledged “the indirect power of the supernatural society founded by Him, i.e., the Catholic Church, in temporal affairs” (Ibid.). It bears noting here that the Church as a society cannot fully participate in Christ’s temporal kingship. This is because, by virtue of the hypostatic union, Christ’s royalty receives “a fullness, a universality and a perfection,” which the Church can participate in “only in a limited fashion” (Ibid., 8). Aquinas explains that Christ rules over all mankind regardless of place, time or state, whereas the heads of the Church, govern under the restrictions of time and/or place (ST III. q. 8. a. 6). Moreover, given the natural equality of all human beings, no individual, except Christ, can claim a *natural* right to command and govern another human being. As Aquinas teaches and Pope Leo XIII reiterates, Christ alone, the God-man, by *natural* right, has *imperium* over (all) other human beings (ST. II-II, q. 67, a. 2, ad 2.; *Annum sacrum*, §§5–6, Acta Leonis 19, 74ff.). It bears underscoring that this belongs to Christ by *natural right*. This does yield serious implications for the state *even when* one considers the common good it promotes from the merely *natural* standpoint. For instance, Charles Journet, who distinguishes between divine, spiritual and temporal kingships in Christ, holds that, Christ, by virtue of his infused knowledge, has temporal kingship over all nations, and is thereby allowed to depose kings (Journet, 1998, 315-318). Does this mean that Christ’s is also a civil power resembling authority over a worldwide political empire?

Aquinas teaches that Christ, “although established king by God, did not *wish* while living on earth to govern temporarily an earthly kingdom,” since “He came to raise men to divine things” (ST III, q. 59, a. 4, ad 1). That Christ did not *wish* to govern temporally does *not* mean that He *could not* or *cannot* govern temporally. Garrigou-Lagrange (along with St. Antoninus, the Salmanticenses, etc.) affirms (contra Robert Bellarmine, Toletus, Sylvius and Billuart) that Christ as man indeed possessed “the power of temporal king of the world” (Garrigou-Lagrange, 1957, Chap. XXXIX). While the pope possesses only indirect power in temporal matters, Christ has “direct and immediate power, by reason of the hypostatic union” because “*not* all power that Christ had was granted to the Roman Pontiff” (Ibid.). Christ’s immediate and direct temporal kingship over civil political authority is finally embraced by Pope Pius XI’s *Quas Primas*, which Garrigou-Lagrange interprets as a magisterial declaration that “Christ as man is king by legislative jurisdiction, coercion, and administration ... over **all** men, **all** civil affairs” (Ibid.). Pope Pius XI affirms:

It would be a grave error, on the other hand, to say that Christ has no authority whatever in civil affairs, since by virtue of the *absolute empire over all* creatures committed to Him by the Father, all things are in His power. Nevertheless, during His life on earth, He entirely refrained from the exercise of such authority (*QP*, 17).

The foregoing forms the foundation for the argument that the civil state is *presumptively* obliged to both privilege the Catholic Church, and publicly affirm Christ’s universal kingship. It bears noting that Pius XI’s affirmation is endorsed by Pope John Paul II in *Veritatis Splendor* (*VS*).

***Veritatis Splendor* (VS) and the Divine Law**

The Divine law, which *VS* mentions 10 times, is distinct from both the natural law and the eternal law (wherein the natural law participates). For Aquinas, the divine law is the law directly given by God (ST. I-II, q. 91, a. 4-5). Edward Feser explains that the divine law “differs from the natural law in being knowable, not through an investigation of the natural order, but only via a special divine revelation” even though the former may “incorporate elements of the natural law, as the Ten Commandments do” (Feser & Besette, 2017, 19). Sometimes the divine law could be temporary and suited to historical contingencies, “as those parts of the Old Law given through Moses” which however, “did not overlap with natural law,” and “were superseded by the New Law given through Christ” (Ibid.). Nonetheless, unlike human law, it is “infallible and, while in force, absolutely binding” (Ibid.).

Freedom, Autonomy and Civil Society

VS teaches that human freedom “finds its authentic and complete fulfilment precisely in the acceptance” of God’s moral law, whereby, God, who alone perfectly knows man’s good, proposes it to man (*VS*, 35). Moreover, the royal dominion man has been granted (which shares in God’s dominion) can be exercised only in obedience to God. Thus, the proper autonomy created realities possess, along with their interior laws and values, is ultimately still subordinate to God (38). *VS* does not flesh out in detail what precisely this subordination entails. However, one may reasonably infer that while a ‘proper autonomy’ would uphold a distinction between civil and spiritual authorities, the ‘ultimate subordination’ to God would repudiate a strict separation of the two.

VS also teaches that “only God, the Supreme God, constitutes the unshakable foundation and essential condition of morality,” and that “only upon this truth is it possible to construct a renewed society (...), so as to make way for the authentic freedom of the person” (99). In other words, true human freedom, including freedom of conscience, cannot be realized unless civil and political society is built upon the acknowledgment of God. Citing *Dignitatis Humanae*, *VS* states that the “supreme rule of life is the divine law itself” which is the law “by which God ... arranges, directs and governs the whole world and the paths of the human community” (Ibid. 43 cf. *DH* 3). Hence, the Divine law remains the norm for human law. Moreover, quoting Pope Leo XIII, *VS* teaches that human reason’s command to do good and eschew sin “could not have the force of law unless it were the voice and the interpreter of some higher reason to which our spirit and our freedom must be subject” because the force of law with the authority to sanction conduct, impose duties and confer rights “could not exist in man if, as his own supreme legislator, he gave himself the rule of his own actions” (Ibid. 44 cf. *Libertas Praestantissimum*). Herein, Pope John Paul II’s citation of Pope Leo XIII’ *Libertas Praestantissimum* (18), which condemns “the fatal theory of the need of separation between Church and State,” cannot escape notice. As Jean Madiran has noted, John Paul II’s defense of freedom’s dependence upon truth in *Veritatis Splendor* (34) is “explicitly placed in the perspective and the context of Gregory XVI (*Mirari vos*), Pius IX (*Quanta cura*) and Leo XIII (*Libertas*),” and the “fifty-eight passages of Vatican II, those that are cited and interpreted by the encyclical, no longer cause any *dubium*” (Madiran, 1993).

***Veritatis Splendor* and the Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC)**

VS (5) considers the CCC to be providing its proper context. The CCC affirms that “the duty of offering God genuine worship concerns man both individually and socially,” and upholds “the kingship of Christ over *all* creation and in particular over human *societies*” (2105). The CCC also instructs Catholics to “infuse the Christian spirit into the mentality and mores, laws and structures of the communities in which they live” (2105; cf. *Apostolicam Actuositatem* 13

§ 1). With explicit references to pre-Vatican II encyclicals such as *Quanta cura* of Pius IX, *Quas Primas* of Pius XI, and *Immortale Dei* of Leo XIII, the CCC clarifies that the right to religious freedom “is neither a moral license to adhere to error, nor a supposed right to error” (2108). The preceding could be construed as the post Vatican II Magisterium’s affirmation of the perennial Catholic doctrine that **error has no rights**. Additionally, one may reasonably understand the CCC’s call to “seek recognition of Sundays and the Church’s holy days as legal holidays” (2108) as requiring civil authorities to actively favor the Catholic Church.

The Primacy of Ecclesiastical Authority Over Civil Authority

VS, while acknowledging the proper autonomy of temporal realities, still insists that they are *ultimately* subordinate to the Divine law, and therefore, to Christ. For instance, laws odious to the Divine law cannot have any binding moral force even if they are passed by a democratically elected legislature (*VS*, 101). *VS* also holds that Jesus entrusted to the Apostles and their successors the task of interpreting the Divine law “with the special assistance of the Spirit of truth: “He who hears you hears me” [Lk 10:16]” (Ibid., 25). The Divine law is found in the Word of God, and the “task of authentically [i.e., authoritatively] interpreting the word of God (...) has been entrusted **only** to those charged with the Church's living Magisterium, whose authority is exercised in the name of Jesus Christ” (Ibid. 27; cf. *Dei Verbum*, 10). *VS* also notes that the Catholic Church retains the right “always and everywhere to proclaim moral principles, even in respect of the social order, and to make judgments about any human matter” as required by “fundamental human rights or the salvation of souls” (Ibid. 27; cf. Code of Canon Law, Canon 747).

Christ’s Kingship Over Civil Authority

VS (2) commences by unabashedly affirming Christ as the sole solution to *every* human conundrum. Moreover, God is the source of the goodness that both attracts and obliges. Furthermore, *VS* teaches that the purpose of the Law is to restore man’s original harmony with the Creator and the creation, and draw man into the Divine Law. Granted, the immediate reference here is to the Divine law. However, as seen above, the Divine Law remains the standard for human law, and therefore, the purpose of law herein remains relevant to human law.

VS makes several points, whose logical interconnections yield serious implications for civil law:

- i. The question about good and eternal life is “an essential and unavoidable question for the life of every man” (*VS*, 8).
- ii. God is *the Good*. Thus, only “God can answer the question about the good” (*VS*, 12).
- iii. God has already answered [this question] by “creating man and ordering him with wisdom and love to his final end, through the [natural] law which is inscribed in his heart” (*VS*, 12; cf. Rom 2:15).
- iv. All human law must ultimately be subordinate to the Divine law (*VS*, 44 & 99).
 - a. The Divine law that presently binds is not the Mosaic law, but the New Law given by Christ through revelation.
- v. Christ is the visible image of the invisible God (Colossians 1:15), and it is through Christ that the presently binding Divine law (i.e., the New Law) is given.
- vi. The Law’s core (whence the particular precepts flow and whereto they are ordered) is acknowledging the Lord as God (*VS*, 11).
- vii. Acknowledging God, because of (iv) and (v), requires acknowledging Christ.

- viii. Because of the primacy of divine law over human law, and because Christ is God, Christ holds ultimate authority over all law—including civil law.

The question that remains is whether these points necessarily require civil political authority to explicitly affirm the universal kingship of Christ. A familial analogy affords an apt answer. One owes one's very existence to one's biological parents who constitute the proximate material cause of one's basic substantive good of life. The consequent obligation of filial piety applies immediately to one's parents. Granted, circumstances may hinder or even preclude the adoption of certain projects to honor one's parents. However, the filial obligation customarily prevails over the pursuit of many other goods, whenever its fulfillment becomes possible. The state's direct duty to Christ is analogous to such a filial obligation. The entire created order, including the civil state, exists through, for and under Christ, the God-man (John 1 & Colossians 1:16-17). If one has an obligation towards one's parents, i.e., the proximate material cause of one's existence, the state cannot have any less of an obligation toward Christ Who is its efficient, exemplar and final cause. As it would be reprehensible, under ordinary circumstances, for one to be ashamed of publicly acknowledging one's own parents, it would be gravely wrong for the state, when this becomes prudent and possible, to refuse to publicly acknowledge Christ's kingship.

Conclusion and Recommendations

I have argued above that i) the state qua the state owes a direct obligation to Christ Himself, which is distinct from, and independent of the state's *presumptive* obligation toward the Catholic Church; and that ii) the state qua the state has a presumptive obligation to *publicly* affirm the universal and social kingship of Christ. Despite the apparent impracticality of implementing the foregoing in Sri Lanka, it remains a long-term goal for the Church in Sri Lanka to strive for.

Upholding the integral dignity of the human person requires prioritizing people's spiritual wellbeing over their material welfare. This demands that the Church direct most of its resources into converting the unbaptized and Christianizing Sri Lankan society. As *Nostra Aetate* states, non-Christian religions can "reflect" **only** "a ray of that Truth which enlightens all men" and it is **only** in Christ, "in whom God has reconciled all things to Himself," that "men may find the fullness of religious life" (*NA*, 2). Even *Lumen Gentium*, after acknowledging the narrow possibility of salvation under specific conditions for those who "through **no fault of their own** do not know the Gospel of Christ or His Church," immediately warns that "often men, deceived by the Evil One, have become vain in their reasonings and have exchanged the truth of God for a lie" (*LG*, 16). Hence, "whatever good or truth is found amongst" so-called non-Christian religions is merely "a preparation for the Gospel" (*Ibid.*). Thus, as Vatican II evidently acknowledges, and the Catechism of the Catholic Church explicitly affirms, "**Outside the Church there is no salvation**" (CCC 846-848). Therefore, pursuant to Code of Canon Law, Canon 212, §3, to gradually but strategically facilitate Sri Lanka's Christianization, I recommend:

1. That all Sri Lankan parishes emulate the Catholic parishes in the United States, and adopt OCIA (Order of Christian Initiation of Adults) programs to convert unbaptized adults.
2. That adult converts be baptized during the Easter Vigil in front of the entire congregation.
3. That all Catholic textbooks be reviewed and purged of heresy and doctrinal error.

4. That Catholics taking GCE O/Ls be required to read the entire CCC as part of the syllabus.
5. That the Sri Lankan Conference of Catholic Bishops publish official Sinhala and Tamil translations of the Catechism of the Catholic Church and the Vatican II documents on its official website for Catholics to readily and freely access.
6. That catechists be required to study Aquinas' Summa Theologica as part of their formation.
7. That the Mass be held in the highest honor: that the Mass be celebrated *Ad Orientem* employing the three sacred languages (e.g., mostly Latin in the Latin rite), and attendees be required to dress modestly, and women be strongly encouraged to wear veils.

Nothing in Vatican II requires 'versus populum.' As *Sacrosanctum Concilium* presupposes and Pope Benedict XVI argues, the norm for celebrating the Mass is *Ad Orientem*, which anticipates Christ's second coming as Supreme Judge and King of the Universe (Ratzinger, 2000, 66-73).

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