

FOUNDATIONS
OF A
CATHOLIC POLITICAL ORDER

Thomas Storck



1998

DESIGNER: H. Donald Kroitzsh

FOUR FACES COLOPHON DESIGN: Daniel Nichols

Copyright © 1998 by Thomas Storck. All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted, in any form, or by any means, electronic, mechanical, recorded, photocopied, or otherwise, without the prior written permission of the copyright owner, except by a reviewer who may quote brief passages in a review. For information or orders contact Four Faces Press, P O Box 902, Beltsville, MD 20704, USA. Phone—301-345-1935

Printed in Canada

Foundations of a Catholic Political Order
ISBN: 1-886699-11-9

So long as Christ does not reign over nations, His influence over individuals remains superficial and precarious. If it is true that the work of the apostolate consists in the conversion of individuals and that nations as such do not go to Heaven, but souls, one by one, we must not forget, nevertheless, that the individual member of society lives under the never-ceasing influence of his environment, in which, if we may not say that he is submerged, he is, at least, deeply plunged. If the environment is non-Catholic, it prevents him from embracing the faith, or if he has the faith, it tends to root out of his heart every vestige of belief. If we imagine Catholic social institutions, with Our Lord no longer living in the hearts of the individual members of society, then religion has there become a displeasing signboard which will soon be torn down. But, on the other hand, try to convert individuals without Catholicizing the social institutions and your work is without stability. The structure you erect in the morning will be torn down by others in the evening. Is not the strategy of the enemies of God there to teach us a lesson? They want to destroy the faith in the hearts of individuals, it is true, but they direct still more vigorous efforts to the elimination of religion from social institutions. Even one defeat of God in this domain means the weakening, if not the ruin, of the faith in the souls of many.

- Louis Cardinal Pie, 1815-1880

...oral instruction, the common opinion of men, the example of our neighbours, and the trend of life in general, play a smaller part in the formation and instruction of Catholics than they did formerly. People do not go to hear sermons now as they used to; religion is not talked about, at least, with any accuracy; our neighbours often have ideals that are far from Catholic - if indeed they have any at all; and there is little in our general surroundings that is of direct help to incite us or to help us to find God. In fact the general effect of our modern environment is not merely negative; it has even a positive tendency to lead us away from God. This it does not so much by being against God, but rather by leaving Him out. We live in fact in a pagan civilization.

- M. Eugene Boylan, *This Tremendous Lover*

No person of experience will question the powerful influence of daily environment upon any human being.

- John A. O'Brien, *The Faith of Millions*

To my wife



Mulieris bonae beatus vir
numerus enim annorum illius duplex.
- Sirach 26:1

Contents

Preface	vii
Chapter One: Introduction	1
Chapter Two: The State and Religious Liberty	21
Chapter Three: The Framework of Economic Activity	43
Chapter Four: Censorship	87
Chapter Five: Family Law and Other Legal Matters	99
Chapter Six: Democracy	115
Chapter Seven: The Ultimate Preservatives of a Christian Culture	125
Epilogue	135
Appendix I	137
Appendix II	147

(Portions of chapters 2 and 3 appeared first in altered form in *Homiletic and Pastoral Review* and *Social Justice Review* respectively.)

Preface

This book is intended to be a continuation of the general theme I first treated of in my 1987 book, *The Catholic Milieu*, which dealt with the culture of a Catholic civilization. In this present work I develop the political and juridical aspects of such a culture, that is, those formal political and juridical institutions, in their most general aspects, which seem to me necessary for the preservation, stability and perfection of a Catholic culture. Because this connection between Catholicism and the political order will strike many as novel, I think it might be well to say a few words about this here.

I have noticed in the last few years a growing awareness on the part of Catholics of the necessity for what can be called Catholic culture, that is, we are becoming aware that Catholicism is not an individualistic religion. The Faith transforms not only individual lives but societies. The Faith creates a social order and does this on every level of culture. And as Catholics devote more attention to this fact, sooner or later we are going to have to face up to the question of the political order. Can the political order likewise be brought into subjection to Christ the King? Or is it somehow outside any possibility of being baptized? Our tradition, of course, is clear on this matter: the state can be christianized. Catholic teaching long ago consecrated the notion of the Catholic state, and Catholic practice, however imperfectly, attempted to make that teaching a reality. In doing so, as I will argue, we were simply facing up to the fact that man organized on a political level is as much in need of God as man organized in any other way. When we realize this, then we can begin thinking seriously about what form a Catholic state might take.

Catholics in America have rarely been comfortable with such an inquiry, however. We have generally been satisfied, even happy, with our constitutional arrangements toward church and state. But as long ago as 1895 Pope Leo XIII felt called upon to remind us that, however prosperous the condition of the Church was in the U.S., “it would be very erroneous to draw the conclusion that in America is to be sought the type of the most desirable status of the Church” or that the separation of Church and state was “universally lawful or expedient.” Moreover, he stated that the Church in this country “would bring forth more abundant fruits if, in addition to liberty, she enjoyed the favor of the laws and the patronage of the public authority” (Encyclical *Longinqua Oceani*, January 6, 1895). And because of what I consider widespread misunderstandings of

what the Second Vatican Council really taught, it has become even harder to find a sympathetic audience for this traditional teaching than it was a century ago.

The question of a Catholic state should, it seems to me, be regarded as an aspect of the question of the sanctification of culture. That is, if we realize the necessity, even inevitability, of the Faith influencing the external and public life of Catholics, then the question of the political order becomes inescapable. Only considered in this way will the arguments in this book make sense. For if we approach the question of a Catholic state simply and primarily as a political question, not only will we be committing an intellectual error, but we will be stirring up all the bitterness that political questions too often give rise to. For the Catholic state is ultimately rooted in the faith and holiness of individual Catholics, and in the faith and holiness that we naturally seek to create in the world around us.

It is true, of course, that today not only are there no Catholic states in existence, but there is no prospect for the establishment of any. But nonetheless I do not think that an attempt to explore this question is useless, and that for two reasons. First, an attempt to delineate truths, no matter how far from a foreseeable application, is never vain, since it is never vain to set our thinking in order; and second, it may be that in future centuries Catholic cultures and Catholic states will again become realities, and thus our thinking about what they should be like may perhaps make some small contribution to the work of our descendents in the Faith.

To many outside the Church, no doubt it seems that now is hardly the time to be planning for future Catholic civilizations, for as far as they can see, not only is Catholic culture dead, but the Catholic Church herself is in an irreversible decline. For them our discussion of this subject may be likened to the action of those Romans who so irritated Hannibal. After defeating nearly every Roman army sent against him, Hannibal was finally encamped in front of the walls of Rome. While there he learned to his dismay

...that the very land on which he had encamped had just been sold at no loss of value whatsoever. It seemed to him to be such supercilious insolence for a buyer to have been found for the very land which he himself occupied... (Livy, bk. 26, chap. 11, trans. Hadas and Poe).

Though our foes see us as dying, we Catholics know that the first Resurrection presaged many another in his Mystical Body, the

Church. And in one of these future resurrections of the Mystical Body, the beginnings of which it may please God that we ourselves shall see, perhaps Christian civilization will again have another day of glory.

This book is not a complete treatise on the state or the relations between Church and state. It deals with only a limited aspect of the subject. Of works known to me, the closest to this book is E. Cahill, S.J.'s *The Framework of a Christian State* (Dublin : Gill, 1932). Fr. Cahill's work, however, is more of an historical account than this present effort of mine, and on the whole more general in its discussion of the character of a Christian state.

Lastly, I wish to thank those individuals who in any way helped this book move from vision to reality, especially all those who read parts of the manuscript and aided me with suggestions, in particular, Rupert Ederer, Kirk Kramer, and my wife, Inez Storck, who in addition, before the English version was available, translated portions of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* for me from the French.

Thomas Storck
Feast of the Most Holy Trinity, 1998

