

Leonine Social Anthropology: Analogy, Hierarchy, and Liberalism

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IN THE CENTURY AFTER 1789, the Catholic Church faced numerous challenges to its authority, autonomy, and liberty.¹ The Church's response to these challenges is now part of the Catholic social doctrine tradition. From our vantage point, nineteenth-century social doctrine can seem to be about papal longing for the restoration of monarchy, for a return to the glory the papacy had before the world was remade by the French revolution, for the *ancien régime* and the Church's privileges therein, and for a maintenance of social paternalism that can seem to be a kind of human rights neglect, if not outright

¹ The literature on the nineteenth century is vast, and the literature on the Catholic Church in the nineteenth century only a little less so. For useful introductions to the Catholic Church's situation in the nineteenth century, see: Roger Aubert et al., *The Church in the Age of Liberalism*, trans. Peter Becker (New York: Crossroad, 1981); Aubert et al., *The Church in the Industrial Age* (New York: Crossroad, 1981); Aubert et al., *The Church in a Secularized Society*, trans. Janet Sondheimer (New York: Paulist Press, 1978); Owen Chadwick, *The Secularization of the European Mind in the Nineteenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975), esp. chapter 5, on anticlericalism. For a thorough and fascinating investigation of the French Revolution and its aftermath, see François Furet, *Revolutionary France: 1770–1880*, trans. Antonia Nevill (Oxford, UK: Blackwell, 1988). For an international perspective on the Church and society in Italy, France, Belgium, Germany, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Spain, Latin America, the United Kingdom, and the United States, see *Church and Society: Catholic Social and Political Thought and Movements 1789–1950*, ed. Joseph N. Moody (New York: Arts, Inc., 1953).

abuse.² The reason for such an impression—in part—is our reasonable concerns about the Church’s nineteenth-century desire to see an end to the tumult of an age dominated by political revolution. The Popes of the nineteenth century proposed a vision of social order designed to restore peace and stability in a time of violent upheaval, and from our vantage point, that proposal has more to do with a restoration of the *ancien régime* than it does with any enduring insight into the nature of social and political life.

But the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries are dominated by a revolutionary spirit that challenges the Church’s social doctrine in a new way. This challenge suggests that the nineteenth-century social magisterium possesses insight still necessary for a Catholic vision of social and political life in the twenty-first century. As Russell Hittinger has recently argued, Catholic social doctrine is now struggling to respond to a revolutionary spirit that has brought to the fore a critical disparity between the Church’s social tradition and contemporary Western society.³ Hittinger high-

² Below, I will engage the work of the philosopher Michael Rosen on the history of the concept of human dignity. Rosen attempts to make the case that Leonine thought regarding dignity and social order effectively occludes the personal dignity of individual human agents.

³ Russell Hittinger, “The Three Necessary Societies,” *First Things*, June 2017, accessed October 29, 2017, <https://www.firstthings.com/article/2017/06/the-three-necessary-societies>. Hittinger here picks up something Pierre Manent has been developing since the 1990s. See Manent, “On Modern Individualism,” in *Modern Liberty and Its Discontents*, ed. and trans. Daniel J. Mahoney and Paul Seaton (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 1998), 151–59, at 152: “The communities to which people belong in the democratic world no longer command them. In the domestic sphere, the law has abolished the power of the head of the family. . . . In the national sphere, even a government that is legitimately . . . elected dares not order citizen-soldiers to die for their country. . . . In the Catholic Church, the Roman magisterium, even while maintaining intact the place of ‘ultimate ends’ in its authoritative teaching documents, has since the end of the Second Vatican Council ceased, in its ordinary pastoral ministry, to insist upon the urgency of salvation and the imperious necessity of obeying the church’s commandments in order to obtain it. . . . Finally, the past itself, understood as the community of those who are dead, has lost all authority to command . . . and is no more than a collection of ‘memorable places’ thrown open to historical tourism.” The more polemical edge of Manent’s criticism of deinstitutionalization can be found in his recent book on the place of Islam in a “secular” France: *Beyond Radical Secularism: How France and the Christian West Should Respond to the Islamic Challenge*, trans. Ralph Hancock (South Bend, IN: St. Augustine’s Press, 2016). There, Manent

lights how the Catholic social doctrine tradition has been committed to speaking of human happiness in terms of the *necessity* of three great societies—Church, state/polity, and family/matrimony—and the ideal of their complementary order. But, whereas the revolutionary spirit animating nineteenth-century nationalisms could inspire liberal legislatures to revise ideas of complementarity and of order among these three societies, the contemporary revolutionary spirit Hittinger identifies offers a new temptation: to completely overhaul our vision of the nature and purpose of the societies themselves. This revolutionary work seems necessary to us on account of the oppressive nature of the hierarchies built into the societies.⁴ So, if we are to allow the societies to survive, they must supposedly be reimagined, not as the necessary conditions of human happiness, but rather as subsequent to and optional for personal fulfillment. This is nowhere more obvious than in contemporary debates about matrimony in Western societies. In Hittinger's estimation, however, the magisterial

suggests that secularism and individualism are ill-equipped to deal with Islam as an authoritative institution to which its adherents gladly submit, and out of which secularism does not seem capable of drawing them (any time soon).

⁴ One can observe the Church's response to this revolutionary work in *Gaudium et Spes*. The Council Fathers, after giving pride of place to the sublimity of the human person, turn to the great social institutions: Church, family, culture, economy, society, and political association (in that careful order). The treatment of each institution is marked by a modern concern for the defense and preservation of personal dignity, autonomy, and conscience. The human person and the needs following on his dignity are the center around which the institutions orbit and from which they derive their life and meaning. Regarding the Church, *Gaudium et Spes* §41 does not teach on the nature of the Church (reserved for *Lumen Gentium*), but on how she can enhance human life. She possesses the unique ability to "raise the dignity of human nature above all fluctuating opinions which, for example, would unduly despise or idolize the human body." In a deft moment, the fathers write that only the Gospel entrusted to the Church can truly liberate the person and protect him from "all traces of false autonomy." Each of the other great social institutions perform, *mutatis mutandis*, a similar task. The document is perhaps overly soft-spoken regarding the disjunctures we might identify between the human person's search for meaning and fulfillment, on the one hand, and the Gospel's unique and strident demands, on the other. The possibility of disjuncture is surely what the fathers have in mind by distinguishing between a true and a false autonomy, which difference the Church alone is competent to identify and navigate. (English translations of *Gaudium et Spes* here are from *Vatican Council II*, vol. 1, *The Conciliar and Postconciliar Documents*, ed. Austin Flannery, O.P. [Northport, NY: Costello, 1998], 903–1001).

response to these new social realities—especially as that response is recorded in the *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*—has lacked the synthesis and coherence of the nineteenth-century social magisterium.

Indebted to Hittinger, I suggest here that, among scholars of Catholic social doctrine, a revision of our perspective on the nineteenth-century social magisterium is critical. This revision is critical because it provides a contemporary Catholic response to social change with the philosophical and theological precision necessary to defend a vision of human nature and human sociality rooted both in Sacred Scripture and in the tradition of Church. I consider this defense necessary in the face of novel forms of deinstitutionalization and social revolution: namely, the de-institutionalization and social revolution made possible by the consonance in our day of modern individualism and modern statism. It is becoming clearer that this consonance further authorizes the state with the power to manipulate, redefine, re-create, and even dismantle other nonstate societies, always in the name of the liberty and equality of persons.⁵

⁵ From at least 1789 onward, Catholic social and political inquiry has dealt with a Janus-faced issue in modern individualism and statism. Though putatively opposite, as we live further into the end of modernity, it seems that the distance between individualism, on one end of the spectrum, and statism, on the other, is being shortened. Or perhaps there never was a spectrum. For his part, Manent laments the consequences of a secular and individualist culture of rights and liberal procedures that effectively dismantles the political will of the nation-state and leaves us without authentic political life. This would appear to be a post-political, post-social hyper-individualism. But Douglas Farrow has asked provocative questions about the distance between such individualist contractarianism and statism. Following in a tradition of trying to preserve marriage and family from the undue influence of the state—a tradition that stretches back to Leo XIII and Louis de Bonald before him (among many others)—Farrow wonders whether contemporary judicial activism in Canada and the United States has licensed the state to take a more paternalist role deep within the inviolable jurisdiction of the family and the matrimonial unit. Following the thought of the Canadian legal scholar F. C. DeCoste, Farrow worries about contemporary iterations of a “redemptive politics” whereby the state enjoys the final prerogative in imprinting its moral vision on its citizens—especially when they are young. De Bonald, responding to 1789, and Leo XIII, responding to liberal Italian legislation, would recognize Farrow’s anxieties. We are seeing more clearly the mutual dependence of modern, methodical individualism and statism inasmuch as modern individualism is now more openly put to the service of aggrandizing the state rather than being imagined as a bulwark or refuge against it. Farrow draws out the possible consequences in his

A key piece of this revision of our perspective is a retrieval of Pope Leo XIII's social magisterium in its historical, philosophical, and theological context. This contextualization is necessary for at least three reasons. First, post-conciliar inquiry into the Leonine magisterium has typically focused on only two of Leo's ninety-plus letters: *Aeterni Patris* (1879) and *Rerum Novarum* (1891).⁶ This narrow focus

collection of essays on marriage, *Nation of Bastards: Essays on the End of Marriage* (Toronto: BPS Books, 2007). For a more direct treatment of individualism and statism as pathologically codependent, see Patrick J. Deneen, *Conserving America: Essays on Present Discontents* (South Bend, IN: St. Augustine's Press, 2016), esp. the chapter "Community and Freedom OR Individualism and Statism" (169–80), wherein Deneen explores some of Robert Nisbet's (and, arguably, Christopher Dawson's) insights into dependencies between individualism and collectivism. See Christopher Dawson, *Enquiries into Religion and Culture* (Freeport, NY: Books for Libraries Press, 1968), esp. "The New Leviathan" (3–19); Nisbet, *The Quest for Community: A Study in the Ethics of Order and Freedom*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1953), esp. 45–74, on community as a modern problem, and 98–120, on the state as the "revolution" possessing the "single most decisive influence upon Western social organization" (98). Manent treats state power in relation to individualism throughout his oeuvre, but with particular force and with special care for the fate of migrants and religious others in *Beyond Radical Secularism*.

⁶ Interest in *Aeterni Patris* is rooted in historical research into the fate of Thomistic theology and philosophy in the twentieth century. See: James J. Hennesey, S.J., "Leo XIII's Thomistic Revival: A Political and Philosophical Event," *Journal of Religion* 58 (Supplement, 1978): S185–S197; Gerald A. McCool, *Catholic Theology in the Nineteenth Century*, (New York: Seabury, 1977), esp. 1–16 and 216–40; and Pierre Thibault, *Savoir et Pouvoir: Philosophie thomiste et politique cléricale au XIXe siècle* (Québec City, QC: Les Presses de L'Université Laval), esp. 123–40, on Leo himself, and 141–58, on the encyclical. Interest in *Rerum Novarum* is rooted in various presentations of Catholic social doctrine as either (a) essentially pro-capital (because pro-private property), (b) essentially pro-labor (because pro-union), (c) essentially ahead of its time (because anti-totalitarian), or (d) essentially behind the times (because hopelessly paternalistic). One need only consult the myriad introductions to Catholic social doctrine, in which *Rerum Novarum* is always reprinted or summarized alongside commentary. For a representative sample, see: Brian J. Benestad, *Church, State, and Society: An Introduction to Catholic Social Doctrine* (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2010); Donal Dorr, *Option for the Poor: A Hundred Years of Vatican Social Teaching* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 198); *Modern Catholic Social Teaching: Commentaries & Interpretations*, ed. Kenneth R. Himes (Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 2005); Mary Hobgood, *Catholic Social Teaching and Economic Theory: Paradigms in Conflict* (Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press, 1991); and Michael Novak, *Freedom with Justice: Catholic Social Thought and Liberal Institutions* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1984).

is a disservice to our own inquiry inasmuch as these two letters are but particular determinations of Leo's broader social doctrine, which makes them possible in the first place.⁷ Second, the lack of attention to the Leonine social magisterium is insufficient to the historical import of the Leonine pontificate in relation to Leo's own context. Leo inherited a very difficult social and political situation for the Church. This was especially true with regard to the "Roman Question" in young Italy.⁸ But it was also true with regard to the Church's position in France, Germany, and other European nations going through processes of liberal nationalization prior to the great wars of the early twentieth century.⁹ The Holy See's navigation of these difficulties is impressive in its own right.¹⁰ So, thirdly, Leo's response provides us

⁷ Notable recent exceptions to this focus on *Aeterni Patris* and *Rerum Novarum* exist in Hittinger's work and in the debate about religious liberty between Fr. Martin Rhonheimer and Thomas Pink. See: Hittinger, "The Coherence of the Four Basic Principles of Catholic Social Doctrine: An Interpretation," *Nova et Vetera* (English) 7, no. 4 (2009): 791–838; Hittinger, "Social Roles and Ruling Virtues in Catholic Social Doctrine," *Annales Theologici* 16 (2002): 295–318; and Hittinger, "Toward an Adequate Anthropology: Social Aspects of *Imago Dei* in Catholic Theology," in *Imago Dei: Human Dignity in Ecumenical Perspective*, ed. Thomas Albert Howard, (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2013), 39–78; Rhonheimer, "Benedict XVI's 'Hermeneutic of Reform' and Religious Freedom," *Nova et Vetera* (English) 9, no. 4 (2011): 1029–54; Pink, "The Interpretation of *Dignitatis Humanae*: A Reply to Martin Rhonheimer," *Nova et Vetera* (English) 11, no. 1 (2013): 77–121; Rhonheimer, "*Dignitatis Humanae*—Not a Mere Question of Church Policy: A Response to Thomas Pink," *Nova et Vetera*, (English) 12, no. 2 (2014): 445–70; Pink, "Jacques Maritain and the Problem of Church and State," *The Thomist* 79 (2015): 1–42.

⁸ Useful documentary history on the Roman Question can be found translated in: *Church and State through the Centuries*, ed. Sidney Ehler and John Morall (Westminster, MD: The Newman Press, 1954), and J. F. Maclear, *Church and State in the Modern Age: A Documentary History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995). For interpretation, Luigi Sturzo's work more than suffices: *Church and State*, trans. Barbara Barclay Carter (New York: Longmans, Green and Co., 1939), esp. at 421–33 and 439–44. See also Joseph Moody, "The Church and the New Forces in Western Europe and Italy," in *Church and Society*, 23–92, esp. at 23–49.

⁹ See Aubert et al., *The Church in the Age of Liberalism* and *The Church in the Industrial Age*.

¹⁰ Leo's navigation of diplomatic situations, let alone his grasp and analysis of social and political realities, was conditioned, of course, by other theologians and philosophers. Chief among these influences were Luigi Taparelli, Wilhelm Emmanuel von Ketteler, Matteo Liberatore, and Joseph Kleutgen. Whatever other intellectual influences may be discerned in the contours of Leo's thought and in the output of his social magisterium, these four men

with critical historical and conceptual background to the way the magisterium envisioned political and social life prior to the Second Vatican Council.¹¹ For, it fell to Leo to synthesize into a coherent whole his predecessors' anxieties about overweening nation-states and their appetite for authority in nonstate societies like marriages, families, schools, religious orders, and of course, the Church.

The core of this synthesis is Leo's social anthropology, which I am proposing as a critical resource for a clearer articulation of the Catholic response to social changes today. In this essay, I will examine Pope Leo XIII's social anthropology as a response to the nation-state's inordinate desire for authority. In the first part of the essay, my interest is in the Roman Question as the proximate background for Leo's response to the nation-state. Then, in the second part of the essay, I draw our attention to Leo's social anthropology itself. My focus is on a key passage of an early encyclical and the role of analogical relations in Leo's vision of both human nature and the social order. In the final part of the essay, I respond to a recent portrayal of Leo's social anthropology by arguing against the dismissal of his social doctrine as little more than an ideological commitment to a paternalistic social ethics held over from the *ancien régime*. Instead, I draw

contribute to the most fundamental formation of Leonine theological and philosophical perspective. For a useful introduction in English to the work and influence of Taparelli, see: Thomas C. Behr, "Luigi Taparelli D'Azeglio, S.J. (1793–1862) and the Development of Scholastic Natural Law Thought as a Science of Society and Politics," *Journal of Markets and Morality* 6, no. 1 (2003), 99–115; Behr "Luigi Taparelli, the Scholastic Revival, and Catholic Economics," *Journal of Markets and Morality* 14, no. 2 (2011), 607–11; and Behr, "Luigi Taparelli on the Dignity of Man," paper at the *Congressa Tomista Internazionale* at the *L'Umanesimo Cristiano Nel III Millennio: Prospettiva di Tommaso D'Aquino*, Rome, September 21–25, 2003. Paul Misner's *Social Catholicism in Europe: From the Onset of Industrialization to the First World War* (New York: Crossroad, 1991) is an indispensable guide to von Ketteler's influence in the mid-century German context and on later Leonine social teaching. For a useful introduction to Liberatore and Kleutgen, especially with regard to the influence of their Aristotelian-Thomistic method on papal teaching, see Gerald A. McCool, S.J., *Catholic Theology in the Nineteenth Century* (New York: Seabury, 1977).

¹¹ Leo's social magisterium appears to play a very limited role in the conciliar treatment of social and political matters. For example, *Gaudium et Spes* cites Leo four times, thrice from *Rerum Novarum* and once from *Libertas. Dignitatis Humanae* cites Leo three times, referring obliquely to *Immortale Dei*, an encyclical on Church–state relations that does not make the conciliar fathers' job any easier.

attention to how Leo's analogical social anthropology functions as a sophisticated indictment of liberal nationalism's inordinate desire for authority. I will close with some suggestions regarding Leonine social anthropology's enduring relevance in a time when Catholic Social Doctrine searches for ways to defend the *humanum* in new and difficult contexts.

Pius IX, Leo XIII, and the Roman Question

Russell Hittinger notes that the French Revolution's creed of "liberty, equality, and fraternity" carried with it a dual vision of the human person: (1) as "a being of nature, having natural liberties and rights which had been obscured or broken by the historical order"; and (2) as a citizen possessed of political equality.¹² In order to restore the liberty obscured and broken, and in order to protect the equality newly secured, the Revolution proposed state membership as the preeminent form of fraternity, for it was supposed to reconstitute "the broken relations of nature and history."¹³ By associating human fraternity with citizenship in the nation-state, the Revolution created the unique conditions in which "other social memberships claiming their origins in nature, history, or divine revelation" had to seek legitimacy elsewhere.¹⁴ Nature, history, and even revelation legitimated only the human person and the state he created. All other social bodies—matrimony, family, Church—were "deemed legitimate only insofar as they were either the private choice of individuals, or insofar as they were permitted or 'conceded' by the state."¹⁵ This revolutionary proposal is a feature of what John Milbank has called the "chronotope of enlightenment." That is, the implicit claim made in 1789 and throughout Europe thereafter is that only *now, here* in these blessed modern days has it become "apparent, after the decay of complex and exotic mythical hierarchies, that political reality is a 'simple space' suspended between the mass of atomic individuals on the one hand, and an absolutely sovereign centre on the other."¹⁶ As Western history after 1789 shows, modern nation-states see the creation of modern citizenship as essential to the maintenance of this simple space, which is the venue in which

¹² Russell Hittinger, "Toward an Adequate Anthropology," 40.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ John Milbank, *The Word Made Strange: Theology, Language, Culture* (Cambridge, MA: Blackwell, 1997), 275.

those same states sought to aggrandize themselves beyond imagination after the supposed demise of the *ancien régime*.

In what follows in this section, I will situate our subsequent examination of Leo's social anthropology within a confrontation between, on the one hand, liberal Italy's efforts to simplify social space via nationalization and, on the other hand, the Holy See's response to this process of simplification. Though I will not detail all of the Church's practical efforts to maintain complex social space against the state's jurisdictional aggressions, I will work to deepen our understanding of what liberal Italy and the Holy See both felt was at stake for their respective vocations. This confrontation creates what we now call the "Roman Question" and enables us to understand the mandate behind Leo's extensive and nuanced social magisterium and how it would treat the critical issue of social order in a world where nation-states sought to dominate that order.

In the nineteenth century, the Roman Question in Italy is a metonym for conflict between the Holy See and nations throughout Europe: how will the state abide the sovereign voice of an international authority in the lives of its own citizens? In Italy, the question was doubly pressing, as that international authority occupied a tract of land that physically divided the peninsula's northern and southern ends but also united the peninsula in a shared Catholic faith that transcended (to some degree) local cultural and linguistic differences. Thus, the Holy See's temporal and spiritual power prevented Italy from making the unified territorial and cultural claim thought to be essential to modern statehood. But this question of the pope's Rome and its relation to the rest of the peninsula has a unique career in history and can be framed in different ways.

In 1848, Italian nationalists were agitating for war against Metternich's Austria in the hopes that the Italian peninsula could be rid of Austrian authority and become an autonomous national unity. The nationalist faction was hopeful that their fellow Italian, the recently crowned Pius IX,¹⁷ would bless their efforts. After all, his first year

¹⁷ Cardinal Giovanni Maria Mastai-Ferretti became Pope Pius IX at a critical moment in Italy's national history. He is often remembered as a potentially progressive pope that very quickly lost confidence that liberalizing Italy would be good for the Church. Prior to his unexpected election, Mastai-Ferretti had become friends with the liberal Pasolini family—especially the young Conte, Giuseppe, and Contessa, Antonietta. The Pasolinis introduced Mastai-Ferretti to Gioberti's *Del primato* and to other texts of the Italian nationalist/unification movement (the *risorgimento*). G. F.-H. Berkeley suggests that, through the

as pope was characterized by a raft of political, social, and economic reforms—promising signs that the Papal States were finally to be modernized.¹⁸ The situation thus seemed ripe for Pius to bless the campaign for Italian nationhood. With the entrance of Piedmont into war with Austria, the nationalists thought that Pius would send papal troops to fight. Here, early on in Pius's long pontificate, with Piedmont's forces and Pius's spiritual leadership seemingly on the cusp of a more perfect unification, the neo-*guelph* hopes seemed justified: a federally unified peninsula of *Italian* citizens governed under a constitution granted by a modern, liberalizing pope.¹⁹ For a moment, Italian nationalists asked a version of the Roman Question with great

influence of the Pasolinis, liberal and reforming ideas became more and more attractive to the “broad-minded and patriotic” cardinal. These developments prior to his pontificate directly contributed to his national popularity in his first years as Pius IX (G. F.-H. Berkeley, *Italy in the Making*, vol. 1 [New York: Cambridge University Press, 1968], esp. 257–66).

¹⁸ One need only catalogue Pius's famous reforms begun in the *first year* of his pontificate: the controversial but widely popular amnesty granted to political prisoners; the schematics for a railway; inquiry into the connection between crime and unemployment; plans for an educational/trade institute in Rome to address unemployment; the abolition of some criminal law courts and the consolidation of others; setting firmer criteria for the training of the personnel of the criminal courts; improvement of the prison system; reforming the Code of Law; establishment of an Agricultural Institute for the improvement of cultivation and raising livestock; establishment of a gas distillery outside Rome; granting freedom to the press (along with a council of censors consisting of four laymen and an ecclesiastical presider); and the regulation of grain tariffs. Given this energetic spirit, it is little wonder that, by September of 1846, just months after his election, Romans in the Piazza del Popolo placed an inscription on the triumphal arch: “He conquered discord by clemency; he conceded public audiences; he made preparations for railways; he disclosed a fount of civilisation and riches; Applaud, ye nations. Pius is the beloved name which will be blessed by all centuries” (G. F.-H. and J. Berkeley, *Italy in the Making*, vol. 2 [New York: Cambridge University Press, 1968], 54–71).

¹⁹ These hopes are articulated most famously in Vincenzo Gioberti's classic, *Del primato morale e civile degli Italiani*. For my purposes here, it does not matter that, after the publication of *Del primato* in the 40s, Gioberti in the 50s came to advocate for a more liberal understanding of the relations between Church and state in Italy. His *Del rinnovamento civile d'Italia* in 1851 expresses the following: “In our day times have changed; civilization has grown; public opinion is master; and the absolute separation of the spiritual from the temporal is about to be established among the most civilized peoples. These are the best guarantees and the most efficacious safeguards of ecclesiastical autonomy” (quoted in S. William Halperin, *The Separation of Church and State in Italian Thought from Cavour to Mussolini* [Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1937], 4).

hope that it could be resolved by unifying the entire Italian peninsula under the Vatican.

But, given Pius IX's spiritual authority over Catholics on both sides of the conflict with Austria, the Pope was bound to be conflicted regarding his duties as a spiritual father and as an Italian son. In an infamous speech given on April 29, 1848, we see this conflict. In the first version of the speech, Pius said two things: that he could not intervene against his children in Austria *and* that he fully sympathized with the Italian nationalists. But it is likely that Pius's secretary of state, Cardinal Antonelli, edited the speech so that the final draft emphasized Pius's spiritual duty to Austria and eliminated Pius's empathy with the Italian cause. The neo-*guelph* hopes were crushed. As Roger Aubert suggests, it is at this moment that the "liberal pope" became the "antinational pope."²⁰

After this fallout between Pius IX and the Italian nationalists, Italy and the Holy See were forced to negotiate a variety of jurisdictional questions as the nationalization process proceeded without the papal blessing. Between 1848 and 1871, negotiations proceeded along lines set by Count Cavour's doctrine of *separatism*—usually represented by his famous phrase "a free church in a free state." The diplomatic ideal expressed in Cavour's doctrine was that the Church and the state would both achieve a more perfect liberty by remaining sealed within their separate jurisdictional spheres. All indications suggest that Cavour himself believed that this was good both for the Church and for Italy. Indeed, Cavour's separatism, in theory, was designed to *decrease* state influence in society and to *augment* religious liberty.²¹ Despite young Italy's desire to disentangle itself from the temporal power of the Holy See, Catholicism remained the official state religion throughout the period.

Despite the principle of separatism active as an ideal during Cavour's tenure and following, civil legislation regarding the Church

²⁰ See Aubert's study of the redactions of the text in "The First Years of the Pontificate of Pius IX: From the Neoguelf Mythos to the Roman Revolution," in *The Church in the Age of Liberalism*, at 61–62.

²¹ See Halperin, *The Separation of Church and State in Italian Thought*, 7–8. This speaks to Cavour's sensitivity to the actual local, civic situation on the peninsula. Of the liberals, Cavour's moderation is notable. See Pier Carlo Boggio, *La chiesa e lo stato in Piemonte: sposizione storico-critica dei rapporti fra la S. Sede e la corte di Sardegna dal 1000 al 1854*, 2 vols., (Turin, IT: S. Franco e figli, 1854), esp. book IV in vol. 1, where Boggio treats his own context and gives the Cavourian doctrine its fullest exposition.

throughout Italy remained practically wedded to eighteenth-century modes of jurisdictionalism whereby the state refused to remain sealed in its own jurisdiction and, instead, gradually crowded the Church out of a variety of social spheres in order to claim the Church's prerogatives as its own.²² So, despite the Cavourian emphasis on the liberty of the Church, Italy's various attempts to negotiate features of the Roman Question demonstrated that Cavourian freedom for the Holy See was an entirely spiritual freedom separated from all matters of temporal sovereignty. The Holy See's temporal sovereignty was increasingly imagined as properly belonging to the civil authority. In other words, in practice, Cavourian separatism liberated the Church to be precisely the sort of Church a liberal nation-state required it to be: one separated from the social and political implications of its own existence as a real social body in time.

As the state's authority continued to grow, Pius felt pressed to protest and famously proclaimed himself a "prisoner of the Vatican." His early reforming zeal was gone. And whatever diplomatic energy he may have had was hardened into immovable protest.²³ And then, in 1871, the Italian parliament sought an end to the Roman Question by passing the Law of Guarantees.²⁴ Despite whatever good

²² See *ibid.*, 10n26.

²³ See Wilfrid Parsons, S.J., *The Pope and Italy* (New York: The America Press, 1929), 35–37: "By refusing the Law of Guarantees, Pius IX created an 'entirely novel situation' for the papacy." Parsons notes that "there are three means by which an independent sovereignty might safeguard that sovereignty: possession of force to repel invasion, international agreement to protect sovereignty, and/or 'free, juridical status before international law.' Here was the Pope possessing none of these, and yet remaining a sovereign. The explanation of the anomaly is that a fourth mode of national existence had come into being, that of *protest*. For by protest, and not by any other means, did the Popes protect their precious sovereignty for fifty-nine years. That they did protect it is evidenced by the fact that in the year 1928, twenty-seven countries had full-fledged diplomatic representatives, ambassadors or ministers plenipotentiary, at the court of the Holy See. Since the Pope could not be called a plenary subject of international law, the lawyers invented a new and exclusive term for his status: they denominated him a subject *sui generis* of international law, and as such he was entitled to entertain diplomatic relations" (emphasis original).

²⁴ The law included the following stipulations: that the pope's person is sacred and inviolable, akin to the person of a king; that the pope be given an annual endowment of over 3 million *lire*; that papal property consist of the Vatican and Lateran palaces and Castel Gandolfo; that the pope and cardinals enjoy liberty in exercising their spiritual government in these properties; that clergy may assemble freely; that the Italian government adjust its role—even in terms of renunciation—in nominations of bishops and in relation to other ecclesiastical

intentions we might discern in the parliament's efforts, the law was a unilateral promulgation rather than a treaty or concordat bilaterally negotiated. It treated the Holy See's sovereignty as a supposedly "Italian" issue. Thus, the Law bore within its structure and content the fundamental rationale of Cavourian separatism as it had developed throughout post-1848 Italy. From our contemporary vantage point, in which religion has been disestablished and we have been taught that disestablishment is essential for everyone's liberty, it is difficult to appreciate how condescending the parliament's promulgation appeared to Pius. And, even in 1871, perhaps the condescension was muted by a certain naïveté on the part of the Italian government. But Pius seems to have appreciated exactly what was at stake. From the Pope's perspective, the Roman Question could not be asked, let alone resolved, within the national valence as the Law of Guarantees attempted to do. In political terms, the Law of Guarantees neglected the international valence of the Roman Question. Moreover, this international valence was further situated within the divine mission of the Catholic Church, set for her by Christ himself. Pius's letter, *Ubi nos*, promulgated two days after the 1871 Law of Guarantees, is explicit on both these points. Regarding the properly international scope of the Roman Question, Pius writes in response to the Law of Guarantees that the Lord has willed that the pope's civil rule would "be protection and strength for the Apostolic See. . . . For if the Roman Pontiff were subject to the sway of another [read: Italian] ruler, but no longer possessed civil power, neither his position nor the acts of the Apostolic ministry would be exempt from the authority of the other ruler. This ruler could be either a heretic or a persecutor of the Church or constantly at war with other rulers."²⁵ By passing a

affairs, including spiritual and civil matters in the courts (Maclear, *Church and State in the Modern Age: A Documentary History* [New York: Oxford University Press, 1995], 256–59).

²⁵ Pope Pius IX, *Ubi Nos*, §7: "quo divina Providentia Sanctam Sedem Apostolicam munitam et auctam voluit, quemque Nobis confirmant tum legitimi inconcussique tituli, tum undecim et amplius saeculorum possessio. Plane enim cuique manifesto pateat necesse est quod, ubi Romanus Pontifex alterius Principis ditioni subiectus foret, neque ipse revera amplius in politico ordine suprema potestate praeditus esset, neque posset, sive persona eius sive actus Apostolici ministerii spectentur, sese eximere ab arbitrio illius, cui subesset, imperantis, qui etiam vel haereticus vel Ecclesiae persecutor evadere posset, aut in bello adversus alios Principes vel in belli statu versari" (*Acta Sanctae Sedis* 6 [1871]: 260; English translation accessed October 28, 2017, <https://www.ewtn.com/library/ENCYC/P9UBINOS.HTM>).

Law of Guarantees rather than negotiating a treaty or concordat, the Italian parliament asked Pius to obey an authority that had reached very far beyond its jurisdiction. Despite language ostensibly to the contrary, the parliament spoke to Pius not as to a fellow sovereign, and not even as to a fellow son of the peninsula, but as to an Italian citizen.²⁶

But this is not all. In addition to the matter of the Church's liberty and autonomy in temporal relations with sovereign nations, Pius must also consider the redemptive mission of Christ's Church, given directly to the Church by the Lord along with "all rights of authority" and with every liberty necessary for the commission of the Church's duty. The Church's rights and liberty "were produced and acquired by the blood of Jesus Christ and must be valued in accordance with the infinite value of His divine blood. So We would not be valuing the divine blood of Our Redeemer if We borrowed Our rights from the rulers of the earth, especially in the curtailed and defiled condition in which they now want to present them."²⁷

From Pius's perspective then, the highest stakes are involved in the Roman Question. A distortion of the temporal relations between the Holy See and the nations bespoke a distorted understanding of the spiritual nature of the Church and her divine mission. The Catholic Church exists and accomplishes its mission according to the divine will and not at all by state permission. It is difficult to overestimate the importance of this link between the temporal and the spiritual for Pius and his successors. Again and again, the Holy See's position is that stripping the Church of her temporal authority is of a piece with depriving her of the wherewithal to accomplish her spiritual mission

²⁶ In this respect, the *Law of Guarantees* is thoroughly Cavourian and in line with his famous ideal of "a free church in a free state." According to Halperin, Cavour envisaged "the conferment upon the church of the same juridical status enjoyed by all other associations within the state—a status which allowed the maximum freedom consistent with the requirements of public order" (*The Separation of Church and State in Italian Thought*, 13, 19–22).

²⁷ Pius IX, *Ubi Nos*, §8: "Quod autem ad habitudinem pertinet inter Ecclesiam et Societatem civilem, optime nostis, Venerabiles Fratres, praerogativas omnes et omnia auctoritatis iura ad regendam universam Ecclesiam necessaria Nos in persona Beatissimi Petri ab ipso Deo directe accepisse, immo praerogativas illas ac iura, aequae ac ipsam Ecclesiae libertatem, sanguine Iesu Christi parta fuisse et quaesita, atque ex hoc infinito divini sanguinis eius pretio esse aestimanda. Nos itaque male admodum, quod absit, de divino Redemptoris Nostri sanguine mereremur si haec iura Nostra, qualia praesertim nunc tradi vellent adeo deminuta ac turpata, mutuaremur a Principibus terrae."

in history. And interfering with the Church's spiritual mission is not simply a frustration to the Holy See, but rather a sin against the people for whom the nation-state is supposed to care most: its citizens.

If, in 1871, the Law of Guarantees diplomatically deployed the separatist logic of the Cavourian doctrine, by the time Archbishop Pecci was crowned Pope Leo XIII in 1878, a more explicitly anti-Catholic regime was managing negotiations.²⁸ Consider prime minister Francesco Crispi's spectacular condescension and wild misrepresentation of both the Holy See's interests and the Catholic conception of religion in a speech given to parliament in 1895. In his speech, Crispi argues for separation but roots it in his own psychological and political definition of "religion" as a "comfort" to believers who hope in "an eternal future." Crispi suggests that Italian separatism is now a sort of "fortress in which the Supreme Pontiff can take refuge" so that he can remain "immune from all attacks."²⁹ What is more, Crispi suggests that such sovereignty as the pope has under the new Italian dispensation is a sovereignty that is, mysteriously, conferred by the Italian parliament. Thus does Crispi redefine the purpose of Catholicism as a private comfort and then resituate it within the national valence as a state-sponsored service offered to those humans who desire it. Then, in a moment of apparent confusion coupled with unprecedented paternalism, Crispi suggests that: "[The] Pope is subject only to God, and no human power can touch him. Surrounded by all the honours and privileges of a monarch, freed from the embarrassment of the temporal power and from all

²⁸ See John Pollard, *Catholicism in Modern Italy: Religion, Society and Politics since 1861* (New York: Routledge, 2008), 39–43, for a summary of anticlerical animus under the ministries of Agostino Depretis and Crispi (whom Pollard calls a "fire-eating anti-clerical" and a "*mangia prete*" ['priest eater']) during Leo's pontificate. As Pollard puts it: "Governments of the Sinistra [left] pursued their legislative campaigns against the Church for two main reasons: first, they were afraid of being outflanked by the Estrema [radical left]; and second, especially under Crispi who became prime minister for the first time in 1886, they sought to reduce the influence of Catholicism in Italian society and politics, which they judged to be dangerously excessive" (40). See also David I. Kertzer, "Religion and Society, 1789–1892," in *Italy in the Nineteenth Century 1796–1900*, ed. John A. Davis (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 181–205, esp. at 191–203.

²⁹ Given in the Italian Chamber, November 28th, 1895, on the occasion of an unveiling of a statue of national military hero, Garibaldi, and quoted in A. C. Jemolo, *Church and State in Italy 1850–1950* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1960), 69–70. Elsewhere in the speech, Crispi suggests that Italy is a "shield" for the papacy.

the hatreds, resentments and anxieties that go with it, he exercises a sovereign authority over those who put their trust in him. . . . No prince on earth resembles him or is his peer. . . All the world forms part of his celestial empire; and with that he should be content.”³⁰

So, whereas Pius IX dealt with an articulation of the Roman Question that remembered the neo-*guelph* hopes of mid-century, his successor, Leo XIII, would deal with an articulation of the Roman Question that viewed papal authority as somehow both from God and little more than a matter of the personal preference of those who choose to pay attention to the pope at all. For, though Crispi mentions the pope’s “empire,” he nevertheless has in mind the individual consent of the persons who choose to put their trust in the pope. One can almost see Crispi winking as he says, “he exercises his functions in complete independence, he communicates with all the world, he prays, he dominates men’s consciences.”³¹ In a relatively short amount of time, liberal Italy goes from wondering whether or not the pope could rule a federated Italy to relegating the pope’s sovereignty to the private sphere of an individual believer’s conscience. Of course, from our perspective, the neo-*guelph* hopes of mid-century seem hopeless and perhaps even dangerous. The philosophy of religion articulated in Crispi’s speech has become our norm. But, in the midst of the Roman Question, it was not clear to the Holy See that Crispi’s position was inevitable, rational, or feasible.

None of this would be lost on Leo XIII. It fell to him to address in a more systematic and nuanced manner the ways in which the liberal state’s desire to deprive the Church of temporal power expressed more profound disorders in modern social and political imaginations and how these disorders threatened human well-being. Leo’s task was to articulate a rational justification for the Holy See’s prerogatives: the proper unity of the temporal and spiritual powers, and the Church’s jurisdiction in social and political interests. Along the way, as Leo developed a systematic way of speaking about the spiritual and temporal power of the Church, he reached further in order to articulate the *concordia* that ought to obtain among the various societies that constitute the theater of human action and flourishing. Through historical, philosophical, and theological argument, Leo rooted the Holy See’s defense of its temporal power in a broader social anthropology that sees not only the Church and the state, but all spheres or

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Ibid.

levels of society, as intimately related to each other in a complex social space that necessarily escapes the jurisdictional appetites of liberal parliaments. Within this complex of societies, all social unities exist in both unity and distinction for the array of goods that comprise the flourishing of the rational animal created in the image of the Lord and destined for communion with the Blessed Trinity. These were fighting words in the liberalizing and nationalizing context, for without explicitly saying so, Leo proclaimed the Church an expert in humanity, natively competent to restore the broken relations of nature and history through the ultimate fraternity of membership in Christ's body.

Leo's Analogical Social Anthropology

Now that we have a clearer view of the sociopolitical difficulties Leo inherited, I want to move on to examine Leo's social anthropology as a response to his context. I will show that his social anthropology is best described as *analogical* and that an analogical social anthropology is valuable as a critique of deficient social anthropologies in the liberal-nationalist context. I will treat in the third section how Leo's anthropology withstands certain criticisms that are relevant in our own context. In the present section, I will show how Leo's social magisterium is programmatically committed to an analogical predication of sociality to both individual persons and the groups they comprise. As a shepherd of souls, Leo is attentive to the personhood of the individual human as a creature uniquely willed by the Creator, tasked with the pilgrimage toward sanctity, and destined for communion with the Triune Lord. But Leo consistently attends to the individual in terms of the individual's membership in an array of societies. The relationships that obtain between the societies in this array are of greater moment to Leo than the relationship of individual to group,³² or of individual to individual.³³

I propose to examine a single passage in Leo's 1878 encyclical *Quod Apostolici Muneris*³⁴ as representative of Leo's entire social anthropol-

³² A relation that will come more to the fore in papal doctrine during and after the advent of twentieth-century totalitarianisms.

³³ A relation that will come more to the fore in papal doctrine during John Paul II's pontificate.

³⁴ Promulgated eight months after Leo's inaugural encyclical, *Inscrutabili Dei Consilio*, 1878's *Quod Apostolici Muneris* is Leo's statement against the manifold errors of socialism. For Leo, the chief error of socialism is that it works to eliminate the natural hierarchy of divinely ordained sociality. John Milbank is

ogy and as containing the justification for every foundational element in that anthropology. I quote Leo at length:

For, He who created and governs all things has, in His wise providence, appointed that the things which are lowest should attain their ends by those which are intermediate, and these again by the highest. Thus, as even in the kingdom of heaven He hath willed that the choirs of angels be distinct and some subject to others, and also in the Church has instituted various orders and a diversity of offices, so that all are not apostles or doctors or pastors, so also has He appointed that there should be various orders in civil society, differing in dignity, rights, and power, whereby the State, like the Church, should be one body, consisting of many members, some nobler than others, but all necessary to each other and solicitous for the common good.³⁵

It is difficult to overestimate the importance of this passage for interpreting Leo's social magisterium. The passage contains several elements that are essential to our appreciation of the way Leo

perhaps correct in criticizing Leo for caricaturing socialism: "The caricatures of socialism presented by *Rerum Novarum*—that it abolishes all private property and threatens the institution of the family—are indeed caricatures even in the case of German social democracy, yet could be applied to the latter with somewhat more plausibility. (It should be added that much papal suspicion of socialism had the character of dislike of a quasi-religious grouping—which socialism was, as much as a political organization—outside the aegis of the official Church; hence the desire for explicitly *Catholic* trade unions etc. more subject to hierarchical control)" (*The Word Made Strange*, 272–73). For all of Milbank's dependence on Gierke in his analysis of Catholic social doctrine, it is remarkable that his criticisms of Leo's caricatures in *Rerum Novarum* rest themselves on caricatures of Leo's social vision. If my interpretation of Leo is correct here, Leo's criticisms of socialism are not *firstly* concerned with the abolition of private property or the escape of quasi-religious groups from the aegis of the Vatican. Instead, Leo's criticisms of socialism are principally that it exempts a fundamental human social form (polity) from the pluriform society donated to rational creatures by the Creator. Oddly enough, this reading of Leo would only strengthen Milbank's case, as he seeks to reinsert the social and political into a richly Christian metaphysical context.

³⁵ Leo XIII, *Quod Apostolici Muneris*, §6. All citations, unless otherwise noted, come from the Vatican website's translations of the Leonine corpus, accessed October 29, 2017, <https://w2.vatican.va/content/leo-xiii/en/encyclicals/index.html>.

envisions human personhood in a social context and the way that social context is structured in an analogical array. By drawing these elements out, we see how Leo contextualizes citizenship (along with all other social relations) in a “complex space” that corresponds to the nature and needs of human persons and groups.

*Human Sociality Is an Effect of the Divine Wisdom Created in
Creatures for the Proper Ordering of Their Flourishing.*

If we track Leo’s reference to the Christian doctrine of creation throughout his corpus, we find that his use of Aquinas helps him negotiate what we would now call the nature–grace debate. This debate does not tidily map onto questions of the Church’s relationship to the state or to society. Nevertheless, the Christian negotiation of the several jurisdictions traced out by the authoritative social spheres does require an ability to articulate the relationship between the Lord’s creating and sustaining of a providentially ordered world *and* the presence of morally culpable agents and societies enjoying a participated integrity that is truly their own, even as it is gift. In describing the essential office of the Catholic Church, Leo is ever insistent that grace perfects nature and that the presence of a divine authority articulated by the Church in society is not a threat to that society’s flourishing, but is rather its very condition.

Modern political philosophies describe human sociality as a concession made by previously/primordially individual or isolated humans in a “state of nature.” From this perspective, human sociality is an artifact of the human will that has not so far devised another way of tempering power and creating peace. But, from Leo’s perspective, human sociality escapes human deliberation and is more accurately described as a human endowment or power that images the Lord.³⁶

³⁶ Because my interest in this essay is to examine Leo’s estimation of the analogical social array in time, it would take me too far afield to provide complete justification for an analogy between human sociality *per se* and the Lord’s life/attributes. That justification belongs in a subsequent article. Here, suffice it to say that I am persuaded so far by Hittinger’s account of the relationship between human sociality and its divine cause (“Toward an Adequate Anthropology: Social Aspects of *Imago Dei* in Catholic Theology,” 53: “Following Thomas Aquinas, Leo XIII and his successors took [the] Aristotelian rubric of a social unity of order and grafted it onto Pseudo-Dionysius. Dionysius held that creatures imitate God in a twofold manner: first insofar as each creature has its own perfection in the order of substance; second insofar as creatures cause good in others. Thus the famous dictum: *bonum sui diffusivum est*, the

*Human Sociality and the Flourishing That Redounds therefrom
Is Naturally Hierarchical.*

Sociality is properly a participated activity expressed in hierarchies: angelic, human, and nonhuman. Within human sociality, Leo is most concerned with the hierarchy of Church–State–family. In such a scheme, the participatory nature of sociality is readily apparent in terms of the offices occupied by every member of the hierarchy and in terms of the interdependence of these offices for the complete care of human persons. But, even within the societies that constitute the hierarchy, hierarchical participation is the norm. Given that hierarchy is the principal mechanism by which a society reconstitutes itself from generation to generation in history, and given that hierarchy is the principal mechanism by which a society forms the social imagination of its members, the normativity of hierarchy resists even the most strident dismissals of hierarchy as pure hegemony. As Leo notes in his discussion of intermediaries and of the choirs of angels, hierarchy is the structural complement of natural difference, or in his terms, “inequality.”

By way of justification of hierarchy’s natural status, Leo points to societies of the angels and of the Church in order to argue that hierarchy is not simply domination. Leo refers to the angelic hierarchy precious few times in his social magisterium. But we should not dismiss this characterization of the angels. Leo is on the receiving end of a confrontation between varying conceptions of politics and its relationship to fallen human nature. One tradition, often labeled the Augustinian, typically characterizes politics—and so hierarchical order and the presence of authority in a society—as concessions to a fallen human nature. Were humans to have remained in paradise, no political authority would be necessary. But, since humans have become disordered, they require the strictures of order and authority.³⁷ Distinct from this line of reasoning is what is often labeled

good is diffusive of itself. The greater the good, the more it is communicable and shareable”).

³⁷ It is worth noting that Rowan Williams questions this presentation of Augustinian politics as purely concession to human fallenness; see Williams, “Politics and the Soul: A Reading of the *City of God*,” *Milltown Studies* 19/20 (1987): 55–72. Williams’s read of *De civitate Dei* is in fact an argument, against Hannah Arendt, that Augustine does not repudiate politics, but rather introduces us to a more authentic politics that proceeds according to truth, justice, and most of all, humility, rather than according to the *superbia* that characterized ancient politics. On Williams’s read, politics is, for Augustine, a natural good corresponding to the exigencies of human nature inasmuch as politics is supposed

the Aristotelian-Thomistic tradition, which characterizes politics as a natural good corresponding to the exigencies of created human nature—fallen or not. So, if hierarchy, order, and authority obtain among the perfect angels, then what hierarchy, order, and authority we observe among fallen humans cannot be described solely in terms of a concession to our sinfulness. Instead, it must be imagined as a created good providentially ordered to the flourishing of rational creatures.³⁸

Moreover, the Church is not accidentally hierarchical. St. Paul's analogy of the body eliminates any doubt that hierarchical order within an historical community of humans is somehow an artifact of our fallenness. Leo is making his argument for hierarchy's natural status in the strongest manner possible. Hierarchy, order, and authority are here conceived as essential to human salvation, to the accomplishment of the final end of human nature.³⁹

*The Proper Metaphor for Hierarchical Order is the Bodily Metaphor
in which Parts of the Whole Are Considered Members of the
Organically Unified Body.*

Though it is our predisposition to conceive of hierarchy language in terms of stratification, power exertion, dominance, and subversion and to conceive of contractual relationships as the condition of human liberation from such abuses, Leo's predisposition is almost thoroughly conditioned by the Pauline notion of an organic unity. We must say "almost," for Leo's deployment of Paul's ecclesiology in speaking of social bodies is not simply an application of Christian Scripture to institutional forms. Rather, Leo's use of an organic/corporeal metaphor for *all* institutions hearkens back not only to Paul, but to the medieval reception of Pseudo-Dionysius and the effort to develop a doctrine

to be a school of virtue. That politics is corrupted in history by the *libido domini* does not exempt it from its high calling to minister to humans.

³⁸ For one among many useful introductions to these two streams of thought in the Christian tradition, see Wilfrid Parsons's two articles, "The Influence of Romans XIII on Pre-Augustinian Christian Political Thought," *Theological Studies* 1, no. 4 (December 1940): 337–64, and "The Influence of Romans XIII on Christian Political Thought II," *Theological Studies* 2, no. 3 (July 1942): 325–46.

³⁹ See Otto Gierke, *Political Theories of the Middle Age*, trans. Frederic William Maitland (Boston: Beacon Hill, 1958), 22–30, to see how the corporeal metaphor of Pauline thought is at work in medieval concepts of social organization. The influence of Paul's ecclesiology on Western social forms cannot be overestimated.

of human sociality that comprehended both the Church and the civil power. Leo's vision of hierarchical order is the product of centuries of Christian legal philosophy using Scripture, patristic thought, Augustine, Aristotle, local custom, canon law, and Roman law.⁴⁰

This work of philosophy creates interesting opportunities and challenges in developing a social ontology. I will return to this topic below, but here, I would only point out that, on the one hand, the emphasis on organic unity is a suitable antidote to the "simple space" created by modern political monism. And Leo deploys the idea of organic unity with just this sort of antidotal work in mind. On the other hand, for Christians, organic unity *par excellence* is found in the supernatural Body of Christ. The translation of ecclesial unity into terms that may apply to other forms of social unity is not impossible, but neither is it a simple task. The socialities at play here do not differ in degree, but rather in kind. In other words, the human sociality being completed or perfected by the Church is itself a unique created good possessing a dignity rooted in the Divine Wisdom. So, for Leo, the mediation of salvation to society through the sacramental ministry of the Church is not the introduction of *more* or *better* sociality to an aggregate of beasts who have decided to contract a polity with each other. Neither is it the introduction of yet one more social form destined for eventual nullity. Rather, the mediation of salvation to society perfects natural sociality by drawing it toward a supernatural completion.

What hierarchical order we find in civil society and in the state is thus analogously related to the hierarchical order that obtains among the choirs of angels and in the Church.⁴¹ As the hierarchy of the heav-

⁴⁰ See Gierke, *Political Theories of the Middle Age*, 1–2: "And then to all that was obtained from these various sources Jurisprudence added the enormous mass of legal matter that was enshrined in Roman and Canon Law, and, to a smaller degree, in the ordinances of the medieval Emperors, for Jurisprudence regarded what these texts had to say of Church and State, as being not merely the positive statutes of some one age, but rules of eternal validity flowing from the very nature of things."

⁴¹ See Leo XIII, *Quod Apostolici Muneris*, §6: "Sicut igitur in ipso regno caelesti Angelorum chorus voluit esse distinctos aliosque aliis subiectos; sicut etiam in Ecclesia varios instituit ordinum gradus, officiorumque diversitatem, ut non omnes essent Apostoli, non omnes Doctores, non omnes Pastores; ita etiam constituit in civili societate plures esse ordines, dignitate, iuribus, potestate diversos; quo scilicet civitas, quemadmodum Ecclesia, unum esset corpus, multa membra complectens, alia aliis nobiliora, sed cuncta sibi invicem necessaria et de communi bono sollicita [Thus, as even in the kingdom of heaven

only choirs is distinct from but related to the hierarchy of ecclesial offices, so are civil and political hierarchies distinct from but related to heavenly and ecclesial hierarchies. In a world where society is dominated by a political imagination that would see all distinctions leveled to the simple space of the State/citizen dyad, Leo sees society as constituted by a complex plurality of hierarchical institutions, “differing in dignity, rights, and power.” This trio of properties emphasizes the natural integrity and irreducible necessity of these institutions—their *reality*, in other words.⁴²

Leonine Paternalism and National Desire

Leo’s social anthropology is thus freighted with hierarchical language and imagery that is easy to characterize as quaintly outdated or paternalistic at best and implicitly exploitative and violent at worst. How could anyone confuse Leonine social anthropology with a case *for* the human *against* the state (let alone any other social authority)? By way of response to this reasonable question, I want to consider Michael Rosen’s historical-philosophical work on the concept of human

He hath willed that the choirs of angels be distinct and some subject to others, and also in the Church has instituted various orders and a diversity of offices, so that all are not apostles or doctors or pastors, so also has He appointed that there should be various orders in civil society, differing in dignity, rights, and power, whereby the State, like the Church, should be one body, consisting of many members, some nobler than others, but all necessary to each other and solicitous for the common good]” (*Acta Sanctae Sedis* 11 [1878]: 375; English from Vatican website).

⁴² A complete study of Leo’s social magisterium would not limit attention to Church/state/family, especially when Leo is so attentive throughout his pontificate to educational institutions, workers’ guilds and unions, religious orders, and other non-state, non-Church, and non-family institutions. A complete study of Leo would also have to incorporate the work of Gierke on the fate of social unities of order in Western political theory and Hittinger’s on whether or not it is possible to speak coherently of social orders as real unities capable of imitating the Lord. My work depends on Hittinger’s analysis of the social ontology developed by the modern popes. Three works of Hittinger’s already cited above are critical for understanding his treatment of the neglected scriptural, theological, and philosophical underpinnings of this social ontology: “Toward an Adequate Anthropology,” “The Coherence of the Four Basic Principles of Catholic Social Doctrine,” and “Social Roles and Ruling Virtues in Catholic Social Doctrine.” They are also critical for recognizing the gravity of one of Gierke’s fundamental question: why did Western political theorists opt for a contractual vision of society rather than an organic/corporate vision?

dignity. Rosen illuminates, to a certain extent, the way Leo imagines the social concepts of *hierarchy* and *function* and how these concepts relate to the inherent dignity of the individual human person. Getting clear on what Leo means—and how a modern interpreter like Rosen reads Leo—can help us appreciate how an analogical and hierarchical social anthropology is not simply papal desire for the restoration of the *ancien régime*, but rather a way of countering a corrosive individualism underwriting liberal accounts of society.

Rosen's insight is that, when Leo speaks of human "dignity," he does not mean it in the modern, egalitarian sense of the dignity of individual human persons. Rather, Leo uses the word to speak of the rights, duties, and relative autonomy of social orders/groups within the larger social whole. From Rosen's perspective, the "dignity" of which Leo speaks signifies the "value" of "subordination itself," inasmuch as Leo is interested in keeping all of these social orders in their proper, subordinated place within a strict hierarchy. In treating the same critical passage of *Quod Apostolici Muneris* we just examined, Rosen identifies an "Aquinian [*sic*] conception of 'dignity' as the value something has in virtue of occupying its proper place within a divine order. . . . For the Catholic Church in the nineteenth century, all members of society have dignity, but their dignity consists in their playing the role that is appropriate to their station within a hierarchical social order, one in which some are 'nobler than others.'"⁴³

And in reference to *Rerum Novarum*, Rosen writes: "The idea of the 'dignity of labor' . . . should be understood less as an assertion of equality [of persons] than an expression of the view that labor should be given its proper place within a social order, all of whose members are 'necessary to each other, and solicitous of the common good.'"⁴⁴ Thus, from Rosen's contemporary perspective, a Leonine doctrine of human dignity is focused on social bodies and their proper relations to each other, and Leonine doctrine is inattentive to the position of the individual human person and her rights within those social bodies and within the broader social whole. To be a member of the whole belongs to small societies and not, strictly speaking, to individual human persons. This is a valuable insight into the way Leo imagines parts, wholes, and watchwords like "dignity" and "rights." But the insight goes only so far.

⁴³ Michael Rosen, *Dignity: Its History and Meaning* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2012), 47–49 (emphasis added).

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 49.

Rosen's description of a Leonine conception of dignity illuminates the necessity of appreciating the ways Leo conceives of the human person considered in her social relations. This is critical, for Leo is concerned precisely with the integrity of these social relations in the face of a nation-state that would see its authority increased within the formation and maintenance of marriages, families, educational institutions, and religious bodies. But Rosen also gives the impression that Leo imagines human dignity as relative to the function or office one occupies with others in the social body. And he gives us this impression by subtly transferring Leonine doctrine on social orders to Leonine doctrine on individual human persons. Unfortunately, this is inconsistent. If Leo is as inattentive to individual human dignity as Rosen suggests, and if Leo is as focused on the dignity of social orders as Rosen suggests, then it is a mistake⁴⁵ to suggest that Leo envisions individual human dignity as indexed to the function an individual person serves in a broader whole. For, as Rosen himself admits, when Leo speaks of dignity, order, and function, he is speaking of the relative dignity of social orders and their function within the whole, *not* of individual human persons. Rosen thus attempts to persuade the reader that Leo's focus on the membership of the social orders, rather than on the membership of individual human persons, amounts to Leo's deficient understanding of, and consequent inability to defend, the dignity of those individual human persons. But, by Rosen's own inadvertent admission, Leo's treatment of the dignity of social orders is not the place to look if you want a Leonine vision of the dignity of the individual human person.

Rosen's case against Leo would be strengthened if he could find a place where Leo attends closely to the individual human person and somehow obscures her dignity. But Rosen does not attend to Leo's thoroughly consistent doctrine of the individual human substance and the dignity it owns on account of its relation to the Creator. Elsewhere in the same letter Rosen uses to indict Leo, the Pope is careful to delineate the fundamental core of Christian anthropology and its doctrine of human dignity: "The equality of men consists in this: that all, having inherited the same nature, are called to the same most high dignity of the sons of God, and that, as one and the same end is set before all, each one is to be judged by the same law and

⁴⁵ For my purposes, it does not matter whether Rosen makes this mistake deliberately (for ideological reasons) or accidentally (as a philosopher with limited competence in the history of Catholic Social Doctrine).

will receive punishment or reward according to his deserts.”⁴⁶ Thus, from a Leonine perspective, *pace* Rosen, human dignity is not rooted solely in functional participation in the orders that constitute the broader social whole. Rather, the source of human dignity is twofold, rooted both in a social participation with one’s fellow creature and in the primal gift of one’s own creation by the Blessed Persons. If Rosen were accurate in presenting Leonine doctrine concerning human dignity as simply more hierarchical oppression, then it would appear that a more individualist account of human dignity would be the appropriate antidote. But, in order to accurately present Leonine doctrine, the social hierarchy has to be understood in its proper conceptual and historical context.

I have already introduced important elements of the historical context in the first section of this essay. The conceptual context of the Leonine doctrine here is both philosophical and theological. Philosophically, the Leonine doctrine of human dignity is grounded in several related propositions about reality: (1) that all reality is derived from a single Creative source; (2) that rational life is unique in this reality; and (3) that rational life is inherently relational. Theologically, the Leonine doctrine of human dignity is grounded in several related propositions about this philosophical position: (1) that the single Creative source is the Triune Lord revealed in Jesus Christ; (2) that every human life is not only unique but also precious and peculiarly willed by the Triune Creator’s love and desire to communicate the Divine Goodness; and (3) that human relationality is an imaging or imitation of or a participation in this communication of goodness.

The notion that humans image their Creator by communicating goodness raises the provocative question of whether and how social relations may have a role to play in the human creature’s imaging of the Lord. Do social relations function in any way analogous to the manner in which individual human persons are said to image the Lord?⁴⁷ This is a provocative question in our time because, as I mentioned in the introduction to this essay, in the late modern context of ongoing social revolution, social membership often appears to us either as a voluntary, contractual partnership or as the unjust domination of external forces.⁴⁸ In either case, the notion that

⁴⁶ Leo XIII, *Quod Apostolici Muneris*, §5. See also *Humanum Genus* (1884), §26.

⁴⁷ See Hittinger, “Toward an Adequate Anthropology,” 39–78.

⁴⁸ See *ibid.*, 42: “Genesis 1:26 teaches that the individual member of the species is a sacrament [making an invisible reality visible]. . . . In the visible order of the hexaemeron, it is the individual . . . who is made unto the image and likeness

membership would be a vocation analogous to the vocation to be an individual person standing before the Creator, replete with the high dignity of our rational faculties—such a notion sounds foreign, if not suspiciously fascist.

But in light of the Leonine doctrine we have been considering, the question is worth considering. According to the social imagination flowing from our suspicion of the old orders of authority (marriage, family, state, Church), “membership without consent” is suspected as a sort of “servitude.”⁴⁹ But our assumption that membership is servitude obscures the richness and consistency of the Christian position articulated in what Hittinger calls Leo’s “social ontology.”

By “social ontology,” Hittinger refers to a philosophical account of the nature of “social unities of order.” A “social unity of order” is not a substantial unity, like a horse, or a human person, or an angel. Neither is it an aggregation of substantial unities, like a herd of horses grazing or a group of human persons shopping in a store. Rather, we find a “social unity of order” in a marriage, a family, a college, an orchestra, a sports team, a theater troupe, a parish, and so on: “Each individual retains his own identity and operations; yet the social whole is more than the sum of its parts. It counts as a subject, person, and agent in its own right.”⁵⁰ Were we to ask what these various bodies have in common, we could say they all embody analogous forms. Whether we are speaking of spouses, infielders and outfielders, or winds and strings, in every case, we are affirming that the body’s form is defined by a certain order that makes a common action possible. The end of this common action is a twofold good: internal and external. That is, social unities of order accomplish discrete goods in time and place (children, wins, performances), *and* their common action itself is a good (procreation, cooperation, harmony).⁵¹ Both internal and external goods are indivisible (hopefully!). One cannot own percentages of these goods. One cannot consume these goods

of God, and thus the individual member of the species is a locus of sacrality in the visible world. This idea, so familiar to Jewish and Christian theology, is much contested, even detested, in the secular world of late modernity. Our culture separates the value of the individual as self-determining from the individual’s membership in a certain natural species or kind. A ‘person’ is a pure thisness . . . in his liberty, and is counted as a ‘member’ only by his own choice or consent.”

⁴⁹ See *ibid.*

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 51.

⁵¹ See *Ibid.*, 51–52.

such that there is not enough for others. And so, the more the individual gives to the common action of the whole, the more the good of the whole redounds to the individual.

So, we ask again, do “social unities of order” make visible an invisible, divine reality in a manner analogous to the human substance’s imaging of the Lord? According to Hittinger’s reading of the theological and philosophical sources informing Catholic social doctrine, the fact that “social unities of order” are formed so as to accomplish common goods provides us with the answer: “Following Thomas Aquinas, Leo XIII and his successors took this Aristotelian rubric of a social unity of order and grafted it onto Pseudo-Dionysius. Dionysius held that creatures imitate God in a twofold manner: first insofar as each creature has its own perfection in the order of substance; second insofar as creatures cause good in others. Thus the famous dictum: *bonum sui diffusivum est*, the good is diffusive of itself. The greater the good, the more it is communicable and shareable.”⁵²

The key verb here is “to imitate.” The affirmation that human persons are created in the *imago Dei* is not only an acknowledgement of the transcendent ground of human dignity, important as the identification of that ground is in our world. Rather, it is also an acknowledgement that the human vocation is imitative. We image the Lord in creation—like the Law, or the Temple, or Christ himself—in order to represent or manifest in creation the Lord’s truth and goodness. Hittinger puts it this way: “What exists simply in God is communicated to creatures in a multiform manner. Thus, a double *imitation or portrayal*. First, a diversity of created things, each having a good according to its participated being. Second, a diversity of created things imitating God insofar as they cause goodness in others—insofar as they bring into existence, through secondary causality, additional modes of participation among themselves and others. The superabundance of what exists in God *simply* is, in creation, most perfectly expressed in a varied manifold.”⁵³

According to this reading of the *imago Dei* as the transcendent ground of human dignity, the many social forms of which one is a member are vital contexts in and through which one lives out the

⁵² Ibid., 53.

⁵³ Ibid., 54 (emphasis original). Hittinger continues: “The creature possesses (imperfectly and from afar) a likeness of image in the order of substantial form (the unity of the soul’s operations), as well as an additional perfection or similitude insofar as he or she communicates with others in a social form” (ibid., 56).

human vocation: to communicate and share with others, not only for pragmatic social and political ends, but in order to bring about goodness and, thus, make manifest the Creator's goodness in history. As Hittinger's analysis suggests, the first aspect of the *imago Dei* is substantial and static (hopefully!): the human person is always already created in the *imago Dei*. But the second aspect of the *imago Dei* is accidental, contingent, and dynamic: the human person is engaged in acts of causation, and so she is engaged in something perfectible. In and through their relations with others, human persons both acknowledge and cultivate the *imago Dei*.⁵⁴ So, from a Leonine perspective, society is not so much a tool for subordinating the lesser to the greater as it is a created gift in which humans can learn to participate in the Divine Life.

Rosen and others⁵⁵ have presented Leonine doctrine with an emphasis on the cosmological and hierarchical tenor of nineteenth-century Catholic social thought. As I have shown, this is insightful as far as it goes. But along with this reasonable characterization of the Leonine doctrine is an assumption that, because the social hierarchy is envisioned as cascading from the eternal will of the Creator, the hierarchy must be static, fixed, immutable, and so on. This assumption seems fair enough, but it does not do justice to the Thomistic synthesis of Aristotle and Pseudo-Dionysius. This synthesis, so important to the Leonine doctrine, presents the cosmological, hierarchical social order as the necessary context of human action, moral formation, and spiritual aspiration. From within our many memberships within the hierarchy, we are tasked not with staying quiet and doing our part to maintain the function of the whole, but with becoming good and with causing goodness in the lives of others. Hittinger puts it well: "Charity perfects a social principle embedded in the creation of angels and men: namely, one loves the good not only as it is possessed and owned, but even more as it is poured forth and communicated to many."⁵⁶

⁵⁴ The Cappadocians spoke of this dual aspect of imaging in terms of the human person's being an "artisan" of the image.

⁵⁵ Cf. Michael J. Schuck, *That They Be One: the Social Teaching of the Papal Encyclicals* (Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 1991), ch. 2 (on the Leonine period of social doctrine). One of Schuck's insights is that the pre-Leonine social magisterium tended to use pastoral metaphors when speaking of society. The Leonine period, however, moved towards a broader cosmological vision of social order.

⁵⁶ Hittinger, "Toward an Adequate Anthropology," 54.

Conclusion

Leo is thus best read as a critic of modern liberal democracies and nationalisms, who engages the undergirding social and political theories of liberalism in terms of the vocation to image the Lord in society. What paternalism is present in Leo's practical recommendations for marital and family life, for capital and labor relations, or for the maintenance of social order in a given context should not obscure the animating spirit of his overarching social doctrine. When we read Leo as asking critical questions about his own time, they turn out to be provocative questions in ours: can or do liberal regimes contribute to the human vocation to cause goodness in others and, so, cultivate the *imago Dei*? If they can, we can describe them in terms of a (relatively) authentic sociality and politics, for they support the fundamentals of human personhood, and so defend individual dignity. But, if they cannot, then such sociality and politics as are practiced in them are so insufficient as to be described as privative and a threat to the freedom of the human person. At this point in the story of liberal regimes, it seems that liberal regimes cannot contribute to this fundamental human vocation. Where and when we see this vocation lived within a liberal regime, it is despite the regime and not because of it.

Nowhere is this reality clearer than in those areas of life that manifest the modern quandaries about personal liberty and its relationship to membership. The Leonine doctrine is peculiarly penetrating with regard to these quandaries. In the current American context, we have a serious choice to make when we speak of membership. On the one hand, we may choose to accent the individual's rights, asking whether such memberships are not really just optional resources for optimizing individual happiness. Or, on the other hand, we may choose to accent the community's rights, asking whether such memberships are not really fixed givens designed for the ordered function of larger wholes. Put more colloquially, it seems today that one can support personal liberty *or* family values, but not both. Above, I noted an analogous binary between "individualism" and "statism." Both words raise social and political specters we rightly fear. And it is easy to imagine the possibilities of individualism and statism to be mutually exclusive—even bulwarks against one another. After all, is not a robust doctrine of individual rights the surest defense against fascisms and theocracies?

But I suggested above that perhaps this binary is not finally a binary at all. As Patrick Deneen remarks so incisively, when one's definition of human liberty "consists of doing as one likes through the conquest

of nature, rather than the achievement of self-governance within the limits of our nature and the natural world,” it makes less and less sense to pit individualism against statism⁵⁷ (not to mention “liberal” against “conservative”). Instead, it becomes clear that they feed off of one another. The desire to see given memberships as resources for optimizing individual happiness leaves us scrambling for protection against the external and prior claims those memberships rightly make on us. The liberal political regime on which Leo set his sights is only too eager to be that protection for us.⁵⁸ The terminus of modern liberty on this reading is thus not the continual aggrandizement of personal power and autonomy. Instead, it is the augmentation of the state’s power to protect us from anything we consider a threat to our personal power and autonomy.

Leonine social anthropology is a vital resource for accurately perceiving the intimate relationship between the premium we place on personal liberty and our willingness to tolerate illiberal politics in the name of that premium. For, ingredient within Leonine anthropology is a vision of a peculiar liberty: that of a person who is free precisely because she is created in the *imago Dei* and, thus, destined with her fellows for communion with the Triune Lord. By characterizing our many memberships as gracious gifts for the life-long task of freely pursuing this communion, Leonine social anthropology—far from reinstantiating the nineteenth-century theocratic monarchies feared by popular imagination—enriches Catholic Social Doctrine’s ability to defend the liberty of the human person. N&V

⁵⁷ See Deneen, *Conserving America*, 180.

⁵⁸ See *Ibid.*, 184. Deneen puts it well: “We begin to see this with ever-growing clarity in our own times—a new, kinder and gentler totalitarianism. It promises its citizenry liberty at every turn, and that liberty involves ever-greater freedom from the partial institutions of civil society, or ones remade in accordance with the aims of the State. As . . . Daniel Henninger pointed out . . . , the states as sovereign political units have been almost wholly eviscerated, and are now largely administrative units for the federal government. Satisfied with that victory, we now see extraordinary efforts to ‘break’ two institutions that have always been most resistant to totalitarianism: churches and family.”