

# The Vatican's New Place in World Politics



## **Introduction by the webmaster.**

This is from the December 1920 edition of the *Converted Catholic Magazine*. If the Vatican wielded so much power in 1920 according to the article, think how much it wields 104 years later in this present day. In my previous article [The Vatican's Immigration War](#), Christian J. Pinto says the following:

"The Jesuits and ultimately the Vatican developed social justice, socialism, and communism back in the 19th century... Right now you've got people arguing that we already live in a communist country based upon how the courts are operating, based upon how the Deep State and the government and everything else is operating, some people argue that we are full-blown communism. The reason I don't agree with that is, if the communists had complete control, they would not be pushing for further destabilization. You see, once they get complete control, they don't destabilize everything anymore. They crack down and they demand law and order and everybody has to be obedient. So if they were fully in control of the country, they would not be allowing this open borders situation. The reason they're doing it is because they need more destabilization. They need to build up a foreign population in our country to counter constitutional Americans who believe in our heritage, our history, and our faith. In order to overturn our culture and our history, they need to bring in foreigners who cannot relate to that history and then teach an alternative history to them. That's, I believe, where they're headed with all of this.

So there you have it, the Jesuit / Vatican plan for America in a nutshell. I believe it. That's how I see it. And I also think those who may not believe it are the ones who don't know history! This is why I am posting a lot of history on this website. A friend tells me we don't need to know history to correctly interpret Scripture, all we need is the Bible. I disagree. I think knowing history is very important. The Bible indicates in 1 Corinthians 10:11 that knowing the history of how God dealt with people in the past is important!

*Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written*

*for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come.*

So this article is more history for you to be able to correctly understand the present a little better.

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The Vatican is again (in 1920) a great power in world politics. It has been my business to examine many of the manifestations of this immense revival, and not in one, but in practically every country in Europe, and to a considerable extent in Canada and America. There are certain phenomena that are occurring all over the globe in which the Church of Rome is playing indubitably a prominent part after some years of comparative political extinction, and it is impossible not to put together the various movements and events and come to the conclusion that once bound Romanism has become a huge force to be reckoned with.

It always has been necessary to take Romanism seriously into the reckoning, but never anything like so much as now, and the Vatican is out to capture more and more control of world affairs. It is hardly an exaggeration to say that the Vatican controls the world in a much more real and widespread way than any other individual Government. Governments are striving, each from its own center, to control the world, and are keenly realizing how powerless they are in the confusion of things—how their writ does not run far or effectively beyond their own realm; whereas **the Vatican**, which has no territorial realm, which has only a center, **has its spiritual kingdom everywhere.**

## **Power of the Vatican**

To it politicians, no matter what their creed, are turning for help. Apparently, the statesmen find it impossible to preserve order in the complex and topsy-turvy universe without its influence. It is so vital a factor in restoration that even Protestant (or rather agnostic) Englishmen like Mr. Arthur Balfour are asking that the moral authority of the Vatican be utilized on the League of Nations in order to make the League something of a reality; that even the anti-Catholic rulers of France are willing to make any concessions that public opinion would stand to enlist the diplomatic support of the Pope in the government of Alsace-Lorraine and the formation of a great Catholic bloc in Central Europe to counterbalance the aggressive and Protestant Prussia; that even the Italian King and authorities are seeking something more than “frozen enmity”—a real reconciliation—with the Pope, who regards them as usurpers on his proper territory, because without Papal assistance they may be swallowed up in the revolutionary vortex; that even—but we shall see how manifold are these manifestations of a new respect for the political power of the Curia (the body of congregations, tribunals, and offices through which the pope governs the Roman Catholic Church).

Before proceeding to elaborate on these statements and show their practical importance for America, let us consider for a moment how inevitable is this revival. There have been bad blunders made by the political directors of the Holy See, and there has been great opposition to them, with some reversals of fortune perhaps not altogether deserved. **But nothing could rob this**

**tremendous organization, with its 300,000,000 of adherents forming a solid bloc in almost every civilized country, of its influence on affairs.** The Church, unlike others except the Mohammedan Church, is a worldwide institution. All other forms of Christianity are essentially national. Rome stands eternal, and if the Papal possessions are gone, the influence of Rome transcends all questions of territory. It has no frontiers. The orders of Rome mean more than the orders of any other outside authority, and often more than the orders of the inside authority, and this power goes everywhere. It is shut up in no watertight department of State.

It would be strange, indeed, if no use were made in the political sphere of this might. Its powers, transmitted from one center through an endless chain of functionaries, an unbroken, trained hierarchy, will have an amazing potency.

## **Power in United States**

The Czech can be affected by the same decision of the same authority as the Irish-born American. There is certainly no other power to compare with that of the Vatican, in spite of its vicissitudes of the last hundred years or so. And in point of numbers the Church controlled from Rome is growing at an incredible rate. Take the case of America. There were in 1910 something over 12,000,000 members; in 1915 nearly 14,000,000, and in the last year 16,000,000. I am giving official figures. It would be hard to match this progress, and if the Church has grown so remarkably in America it has always been far and away the largest individual Church, the Protestant bodies being broken up into a score of sects.

Sixteen million active adherents! What a wonderful voting organization, and how could the Vatican fail to direct in some measure the policies of candidates, of the eventual President? That in fact this pressure was used is well known. Individual priests like Dr. Mannix, of course, mean something, but prove nothing. He helped the fiery crusade; but he is a single and rather compromising person; and it is perhaps good tactics to repudiate him. What is much more important is the general attitude of Catholic agents of all kinds, an attitude that is not expressed in wild gestures, but in quiet work.

## **Influence in Ireland**

In Ireland itself the influence of the priesthood may be more clearly discerned. All who have had occasion to visit that unhappy country have borne testimony to the responsibility of the priests for the strength of the national movement. It is not my purpose to assess the moral values of the fact; but that the Vatican could have exercised a decisive influence—and in fact did—on events is obvious. The interest of the Vatican as conceived by Cardinal Gasparri, who is the astute political director, is to obtain the largest measure of liberty for Roman Catholic populations everywhere in the world, in order that Romanism itself may be strengthened in a religious sense and in its diplomatic relations with the Courts and foreign offices.

For many ages [we may quote from the Statesman's Year Book] until Pius IX.'s reign, with some comparatively short breaks, the Popes or Roman Pontiffs bore

temporal sway over a territory stretching across Mid-Italy from sea to sea and comprising an area of some 16,000 square miles, with a population finally of some 3,125,000 souls. Of this dominion the whole has been incorporated with the Italian Kingdom. Furthermore, by an Italian law dated May 13, 1871, there was guaranteed to his Holiness and his successors for ever, besides possessions of the Vatican and Lateran palaces and the villa of Castel Gandolfo, a yearly income of 3,225,000 lire, or £129,000, which allowance (whose arrears would in 1915 amount to 145,125,000 lire, or £5,805,000, without interest) still remains unclaimed and unpaid.

The central administration of the Roman Catholic Church is carried on by a number of permanent committees called Sacred Congregations, composed of Cardinals, with consultors and officials. There are now eleven Sacred Congregations, viz., Holy Office, Consistorial, Discipline of the Sacraments, Council, Religious, Propaganda Fide, Index, Rites, Ceremonial, Extraordinary Ecclesiastical Affairs, Studies. Besides these there are several permanent commissions, for example, one for Biblical studies, another for historical studies, another for preservation of the faith, in Rome, another for codification of canon law. Furthermore, the Roman Curia contains three tribunals, to wit, the Apostolic Penitentiary, the Supreme Tribunal of the Apostolic Signature, and the Sacred Roman Rota; and, lastly, various offices, as the Apostolic Chancery, the Apostolic Datary, the Angaiglic Chamber, the Secretariate of State, etc.

The States wherewith the Holy See maintains diplomatic relations were (before the break-up of Europe) Austria-Hungary, Bavaria, Belgium, the Netherlands, Portugal, Prussia, Russia, Spain and the United Kingdom (1914), together with most of the American republics, except the United States and Mexico.

Thus it will be observed that there is, in spite of the alleged loss of temporal, or rather territorial, power, a State Department at the Vatican to which are attached Ambassadors. Now, it is precisely the number of Ambassadors or other Ministers attached to the Holy See which will serve to prove the reality of the diplomatic power of the Pope and the extent of that power.

## **France and the Vatican**

One of the outstanding facts for me in European politics –if not in its ultimate results and its multiple reactions altogether the most important fact–is the renewal of French relations with the Vatican. As I write, this resumption of relations is practically accomplished. There is a strange reversal of policy in France—for France has been for two generations bitterly anti-Clerical, The triumph of the Vatican is one of the most surprising events for all who have known the violent opposition of France, and of the very Ministers who are now turning to Rome, to anything that savored of Vaticanism. The explanation is simple. It is that French diplomacy imperatively calls for the aid of the Vatican for its fulfillment, and the Vatican in return, of course, demands French recognition and French representation. Almost without a murmur, France, for whom republicanism has always meant anti-Clericalism, has accepted this new orientation. The man in the café may not always understand the complicated machinery, he may not know

why the diplomatic wheels turn as they do, but he does understand that conditions have changed, and he is inclined to forget past quarrels with a dim belief that it is better for France to turn Rome-ward.

What the man in the café does not altogether comprehend, the politician knows. He knows what are the guiding lines of French policy. He knows that it may be regarded as influenced by four main considerations—especially in Central Europe—social, commercial, military and Catholic, and the greatest of these is Catholic. It is upon Catholicism that all the rest depend, and the Vatican saw its opportunity and made its bargain. In Middle Europe it is supreme.

## **Alliance Against Bolshevism**

First, France is anti-Bolshevist as is no other country in the world. That is to say, she is actively and consistently so. There have been attempts to make peace with Bolshevism in every other country: in France, never. It is the Catholic Party—the Bloc National contains many elements, all republican, most of them now impregnated with Catholicism, which is the most implacable opponent of Bolshevism—that directs this resistance. M. Jacques Bainville, one of the ablest of all writers on foreign affairs in France, wrote the other day these words, which certainly deserve quotation:

“Will France not dare to be that which she really is, and that which she has appeared to all the world since her rupture with Bolshevism—that is to say, the country of resistance and of counter-revolution? Why pretend, why blush? It is a fact so clear that the epithet reactionary is applied to us everywhere. In the present state of the world it is for us to guard that description. It brings us sympathetic agreement more and more, since there is only France which will consent to bear that name, since there is a growing need of order that only France can satisfy.”

She was led by this anti-Bolshevist spirit to attempt to form a ring of States around Russia. The idea of a Roman Catholic confederation was bound to arise. Immediately there grew up at the Quai d’Orsay the notion that the Danubian States might be welded together. Unfortunately interests clashed. Romania, Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia, formed what is known as the Petite Entente, because they were afraid of the proposed French grouping of Catholic Bavaria, Austria and Hungary. That only helped to give body to the idea. France established herself in Hungary, as her Danubian headquarters; and quickly commercial considerations reinforced the social consideration, for the advantages of controlling that magnificent waterway, which is the key to the commerce of a dozen countries, are obvious. There was also the military, that is to say the more strictly political, consideration. All these things fit in with the Roman Catholic conception which now impels French policy.

## **Policy in Central Europe**

We shall understand why the Vatican is so valuable to France if we remember that France considers that there are two political necessities in the new Europe. The first is the dismemberment of Germany—that chimera which haunts many minds; and the second is the construction of some solid geographical

unity in Central Europe, where the sledgehammer policy of pounding Austria-Hungary into a powder of little states is believed to have been a blunder. The capital fault of the Versailles Treaty was to grind Austria to dust and to assure at the same time the unity of the Reich. That the treaty consecrated this unity is perhaps the greatest grievance that France has against M. Clemenceau. There is little hostility, indeed there is much sympathy, felt for docile Austria, and it is clear that Austria's junction with Bavaria and Bavaria's detachment from Germany would satisfy at once the two parts of the present French political conception.

Under M. Millerand, in spite of the treaty, there has been, and there will continue to be, this return to the ancient French plan of denying the Bismarckian unity, of attempting to destroy it, by means of a rapprochement under French auspices of the Roman Catholic populations of Southern Germany and the Roman Catholic population of Austria. If this were accomplished, certainly German hegemony would be gone forever. Indeed, one might look for French hegemony to be definitely established.

It will, I trust, now be clear why France for its Middle Europe policy has need of the Vatican, and time alone will show how the project will develop. There dovetail into each other so many advantages—a bulwark against Bolshevism, a control of the commercial waterway of the Danube, the smashing of the power of Germany, and the putting together and consolidation of jigsaw Middle-Europe.

## **France and Catholic Germans**

The general idea, though not all its political consequences, is sustained in Parliament and in the press by M. Maurice Barrés. M. Barrés expounds and defends the theme with his accustomed eloquence, though often with a strange absence of logic. With regard to Germany he would detach all the Roman Catholic States without annexing them. Political annexation of the Rhenish provinces, for example, however much it may be desired, is impossible. But M. Barrés would have a sort of intellectual annexation. France herself must be regarded as a Roman Catholic country; the quarrel with the Vatican is better gradually closed, and there is a distinct poussée (thrust) in the direction of reconciliation.

Nowhere has Roman Catholicism regained something of its lost empire so much as in Middle Europe and in France. The present French Ministry is officially represented at functions in which it would not have taken part a few years ago. The return of Alsace-Lorraine, faithful Roman Catholic provinces, has also helped, as I myself pointed out in the English diplomatic review, "The New Europe," in this new orientation toward Rome. Just as President Wilson distinguished between the German rulers and the German people, the Roman Catholic party (whatever may be its name) is beginning to distinguish between Prussia and the rest of Germany. An intense propaganda is proceeding both sides of the frontiers. Some surprising statements have been made in the most important journals respecting the part that was taken by Southern Germany in the war. One would be tempted to believe that Southern Catholic Germany had always been on the side of the Allies!

## Forces Working for Austria

Let me quote by way of showing that always this Austrian idea—this Roman Catholic idea—was working in France even during the war, a remarkable passage in the remarkable book of M. Jean de Pierrefeu, the writer of the French daily communiqué, entitled “G. Q. G.” M. de Pierrefeu was at headquarters and heard the views of Marshal Pétain and other high officers freely expressed. He writes:

“Pétain was not a partisan of the dissolution of Austria. After the necessary reforms that the Entente should impose regarding the autonomy of peoples, for example, he considered that the empire was alone capable of maintaining union and order between races naturally hostile who, delivered to themselves, would not cease to make war and compromise peace in Europe. He believed in a policy of alliances between France, England and Austria to counterbalance Germany, especially if Germany were not divided. As we can no longer lean on Russia, which is in a state of anarchy for twenty years, he held, it is necessary to put our money on Austria. France must always have a friend in the East!”

The friend in the East is at present Hungary, but there must be an extension of the scheme and always the good offices of the Pope are needed. Is it surprising, then, that there should be the appointment of an Ambassador after so many years of rupture? One should remember, too, that Poland, another friend in the East, is Catholic. Why, even in her diplomacy in Asia Minor France is dependent on the good-will of the Pope. It is the French Catholic community of Beirut that gives her the greatest moral claim to control Syria. Certainly France has the largest interests in Europe, and all her interests are bound together diplomatically by Catholicism; and **at the center of all the strings is the Vatican.**

## Situation in Italy

An entirely new situation has arisen in the world, of which Cardinal Gasparri—for he is the political genius of the Vatican—knows how to take legitimate advantage. The Vatican had lost practically all its power; **as by a miracle it has regained its old power and more.** (Note: Could this be the fulfillment of Revelation 13:3? And I saw one of his heads as it were **wounded to death; and his deadly wound was healed:** and all the world wondered after the beast.) In Italy the Church of Rome has tried desperately hard to stay the tide of Red Socialism. It formed the Partito Popolare Italiano, or Catholic People's Party, as a counter-blow to revolution, and it held the balance of power, making and unmaking Ministries. I have written much of it, but I am content on this subject to quote from that reputed observer, E. Sefton Delmer. He says:

“The party, with its 103 members, after the Socialists, is the best organized and best disciplined party in the Italian Parliament. Like the German Centrum it is the tongue of the parliamentary balance.”