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THE SPIRITUAL AND MORAL FOUNDATIONS OF DEMOCRACY

What I really propose to discuss here today is the necessity of faith in a living democracy. However, before facing this problem directly, a few preliminary remarks are in order by way of justifying this topic and demonstrating its strategic importance today and to this gathering.

If someone were to ask me to identify one question that is absolutely central to life in our times, I would suggest the following: Can democracy, as we know it, survive in the face of so many hostile pressures, both external and internal? I am not now going to play the prophet and attempt to answer this question definitively. I can only suggest some factors that will be relevant to the ultimate answering of the question. One could observe, first of all, that the internal pressures to destroy democracy are more accessible to our study and treatment than the external pressures of the cold war. Yet, strangely enough, we are all deeply concerned with these external pressures and threats about which we really know little and can do less, while we rarely, if ever, consider the really more dangerous internal threats to democracy which lie on our very doorstep, and about which we can do a great deal.

How can we describe the internal pressures facing our democracy today. One might begin by saying that democracy is not a self-sufficient and self-sustaining institution. Democracy derives its vitality from strengths and values external to itself. Unless the people in a democratic order possess these spiritual strengths and cherish these human values that give democracy birth and life, there can be no hope for democracy's ultimate survival - even in the absence of all external threats.

Arnold Toynbee has written amply about civilizations that wither from within. Professor John Hallowell of Duke University has stated the case specifically for a democracy: "Our democratic institutions require a philosophy of life to sustain them Without a clear understanding of why the (democratic) institutions exist, we shall have neither the means of defending them intellectually, nor the resolution to defend them by force when the occasion demands it."* This then I take to be the most dangerous internal threat to democracy, and one eminently worth examining: The questionable strength and vitality of our basic human values as a nation.

The external pressures against democracy are more obvious. The defenses against them are fairly obvious too - alliances, strategic bases, nuclear weapons, ICBM's, and anti-missiles. The great danger is, however, that while we gird ourselves physically to deter the outer threat to democracy, we may forget the inner spiritual realities that are more important than democracy itself - the great human values that democracy exists to secure, for which and by which democracy itself exists. Without these spiritual realities, there can be no democracy to defend, because they are the life stream of the democratic order. Again, Hallowell says it well:

"Democracy rests upon a faith in man as a rational, moral, and spiritual creature, and it is as much aspiration as it is fact. The ideals of democracy never have been and never will be achieved with perfection - they are goals constantly to be striven for, but never perfectly realized. In the last

* The Moral Foundations of Democracy, p. 67

analysis, democracy is 'a venture of faith in the moral and spiritual possibilities of men when entrusted with freedom.'"*

We have seen the world in our times torn down the middle in this struggle to have man free or slave. What we often do not see is that the struggle transcends the diplomatic moves and counter moves, the summit meetings, the brush wars, the technological race. At heart, this is a battle for the souls of men, a modern version of the struggle between the powers of light and the powers of darkness. It is really on the high level of idea and spirit that the battle will be won or lost. The real danger is that we will be so carried away by the dramatic physical means of external defense that we will forget the vital ideas and spiritual values that we are ultimately defending. If this should happen, the city within will fall of its own dead weight while we are busily defending the outer walls.

Sir Richard Livingstone of Oxford University pondered the same problem in another context during the last war. His thoughts are just as applicable to our situation today.

"We shall not understand ourselves and our predicament unless we realize what has happened during the past fifty years. Every civilization grows up round and with a system of beliefs and values, which are its vital principle, the nerve which feeds and keeps it healthy. If that principle perishes, if that nerve is cut, then the structure of society which depends on it still remains, but the life has gone out of it, its self-renewing power is gone, and it declines first into decay and then into death. Those who have lived through the last fifty years have witnessed the steady and progressive

* Ibid., P. 128-9

destruction of the soul of Western Civilization; the soul that began some 1500 years ago, to make itself a body which grew with time to such size and strength that nothing seemed able to impair its health. Now it is very sick. And, as with many other illnesses, a disease of soul is undermining the health of the body.

"The soul of Europe is partly Greek and partly Christian. The vital force of our civilization comes from two sources, beyond which no others count seriously, from Palestine and from Greece. We may not believe in Christianity. We may not like it, but whether we deplore it or not, the main source of Europe is Christianity the mass of people drew and still draw the best part of their beliefs and standards in life and conduct from Christianity, however confused and diluted the channels through which they pass. To attack Christianity was ultimately to attack the spiritual life of Europe, to weaken it was to weaken that life And so we get our modern civilization - a civilization of means without ends, with an ample body, but with a meagre soul, with a rich inheritance, but without clear values or a ruling principle There is a phrase in Plato which exactly describes our condition the danger of living 'by habit without an intellectual principle.' His point is that mere habit is well in settled times, but that it does not stand up to severe stresses; and as a man who lived in a world almost as difficult as our own, he had reason to know. Recent events in Europe confirm his belief. In 1930, Germany was a highly educated nation, living in the traditions of European religion, morals, and civilization; in 1940, it was a country where truth, liberty, justice, and mercy were forgotten words. In the past, these virtues had been guaranteed and reinforced by the metaphysics of Christian belief: that had imperceptibly worn away and the house that seemed so stable proved to be

without foundations and, struck by the storm, collapsed. It was a mere 'habit without intellectual principle.' What happens, in the experience of us all, to individuals, happened to a people, and for the same reason. Let us not be too confident of our own immunity from a like fate, incredible and remote as it seems."*

This, I take it, is a prelude and a statement that can serve as a background for our subject today: the necessity of faith in a living democracy. We are not interested here in the superficial aspects of the present world crisis. Our subject takes us to the heart of the matter. We are not merely interested in defeating Communism as an opposing world view. We are rather seeking for the dynamic sources of life in our own democratic form. If Communism were to be wiped from the face of the earth today or tomorrow, we would not ourselves be better than we are today, only perhaps less harassed. And, in the providence of God, perhaps we are faced with the present crisis in order that we might assess more urgently those truths by which we profess to live. This achievement alone, in truth and in reality, would be the most effective kind of death blow to Communism and its claims.

Reinhold Niebuhr says that "history pitches the drama of life on continually higher levels, but the essentials of the drama remain the same."** The essentials today, as yesterday, are the stark realities of life and death, the continual struggle to possess our souls, the basic truths and beliefs that, like the starry heavens at night, securely guide our paths from darkness to light.

* Sir Richard Livingstone, Crisis of Civilization in the Deeper Causes of the War, pp. 98-99, 103-104 London, 1940, Allen and Unwin Ltd.

** Reinhold Niebuhr, Article in Nation, February 22, 1947.

Our subject today, the necessity of faith in a living democracy, is a stirring invitation to lay bare the raw elements that are in most basic conflict. The key word in the title is Faith.

It is part and parcel of the intellectual and moral climate in which we live that the title might well be interpreted in two different ways: the one way being an illusion that would keep us on the surface of the conflict, and the other interpretation, the one to which I shall most seriously address myself, taking us to the heart of the crisis.

First, a few words about the interpretation that could lead us fruitlessly astray. This would emphasize the necessity of faith in a living democracy, democracy being the object of our faith, and the faith itself being not a religious, but rather a secular faith. This secular or civic faith is not a bad thing, except in this, that it might be conceived as a goal, while in reality it is a half-way house. The democratic principles in which it believes are both good and valid, but by itself, this faith tends to terminate in practical conclusions that are held without a deep consciousness of their real root principles. This faith, standing by itself, occasions what many modern thinkers have described as the real poverty of our age: that we are living on the spiritual capital of ages past, that we eat of the fruit of ages past without being conscious of the tree and branch of our spiritual heritage.

Almost everyone in the Western World would profess this secular faith in the democratic charter. Yet there are far too many who profess this secular faith as a matter of form, or of practical conclusion and pragmatic living, without ascribing to the ultimates that alone can validate the principles of democracy. The best description of this anomaly that I have found is in the contribution of

some Princeton professors to the second Symposium on Science, Philosophy, and Religion. In condemning the modern naturalistic philosophy of life which continues the Rousseauistic exaltation of man by himself they say:

"Naturalism denies both man's relation to an order of ultimate values and his dependence upon a cosmic spiritual Power. It thus divorces him from the moral and spiritual order to which he belongs and upon which he depends for strength and direction. It encourages him to determine his ends for himself as a completely autonomous being, without any norm beyond his own interests and desires, individual and collective. As a result it leads inevitably to pride and egotism. The individual, having nothing higher than himself to worship or serve, worships himself, his reason, his culture, his race.

"Many who hold to this view in democratic countries are unaware of the dangers in their position. Influenced by the last remnants of philosophical idealism, romantic transcendentalism, or religious Theism in our day, they act as if they still believed in the spiritual conception of man which they have intellectually repudiated. They try to maintain their feelings for the dignity of man, while paying homage to an essentially materialistic philosophy according to which man is simply a highly developed animal. They are loyal to their democratic society and culture, but by their theory they deny the spiritual nature of man and the values upon which our society has been built. In short, they are living off the spiritual capital which has come down to them from their classical and religious heritage, while, at the same time, they ignore that heritage itself as antiquated and false. Since this contradiction will prove to be intolerable, scholars and teachers must recover and reaffirm the spiritual

conception of man and his good which we have derived from Greek and Hebraic-Christian sources."*

However good then is the object of this secular faith in democracy, the secular faith itself is an empty shell without the religious faith which inspires it and gives it depth. Without the inspiration and foundation of religious faith, secular faith alone gives rise to Plato's indictment of living "by habit without an intellectual principle", the unexamined life which is hardly adequate to the crisis which faces us.

We may well emphasize again that the choice today is not between a healthy or a more-or-less healthy democracy. We are facing the issue of the life or death of democracy, in the face of a protagonist who will have all the world or nothing. A mere secular faith, living side-by-side with a naturalistic or materialistic philosophy, will be little comfort and less strength in a struggle with a world force which is born of naturalism and materialism full blown, and erected into a vital, all-embracing Weltanschauung. Here is the issue as John LaFarge expressed it in the Duddleian Lecture at Harvard:

"Naturalism is not just a bog of decay, a spiritual slough of despond into which lapses an age of weak faith and worldly preoccupations. Naturalism is today a militant force, fired inwardly with pride and passion and aimed outwardly with the might of a vast political power, of elaborate world organization, of clever propaganda, of bewildering ability to confuse, divide and disrupt. What we are faced with now is not a choice between the positive assertion of God and spirit, and a complete zero. It is a choice between the positive assertion of God and spirit, and an active militant all-exacting negation."**

* Science, Philosophy, and Religion, Princeton University, 1942, p. 254-255

** J. LaFarge, S.J., Two World Concepts, Harvard Divinity School Bulletin, 1948, p. 30.

It should be apparent now why the key word in our title today is faith, and that, not a mere secular faith, unfounded or at least unexamined, but virile and vital religious faith, based upon the most secure foundation of God's word.

Once established that we are speaking about the necessity of religious faith, another clarification is immediately necessary. What is the object of this religious faith? I may seem to be doing violence to my subject, the necessity of faith in a living democracy, when I state that this religious faith is by no means a faith in democracy as such. The fact is that reason may stir the soul, and humanism ennoble it, and democracy does indeed answer the deep yearnings of the human spirit. However, no opinion or doctrine or regime of merely human origin, no matter how valid and true it may be, but only those truths revealed by God Himself can force themselves upon the religious faith of man. Now God has not revealed to us considerations of a political order. We find nothing in the Old or New Testament regarding democracy as the only true and valid form of government. Is there then no bridge between religion and politics? no relation between religious faith and democracy? Of course, faith is necessary in a living democracy, but faith's function must be rightly understood because we are speaking of democracy and not theocracy.

Dr. Nathaniel Micklem, Principal of Mansfield College, Oxford, wrote a thoughtful book some years ago entitled, "The Theology of Politics." His basic thesis is that all political problems are at the bottom theological since "Man's political thought is colored or even determined by his real thought or thoughtlessness about God and man and the meaning of human life."* Much of the crucial situation, to which we have already referred in our preliminary

* N. Micklem, The Theology of Politics, Oxford, 1941, p. X

remarks, results from a growing secularistic attitude which divorces theological considerations of God and man and the values of faith from all aspects of human life, especially the political.

We must admit, of course, that the state and the political regime, whether they be democratic or any other, are by their nature a temporal and secular reality. But we cannot forget, and this is the whole import of our discussion on the spiritual and moral foundations of democracy, that religious faith has inspired and directed man in all of his noble institutions, since faith allows us to see man in the totality of his being and nature, as it were, with the eyes of God. It is faith in this total view of man that gives depth and substance and vitality to the democratic charter, and it is in this sense that religious faith is necessary for a living democracy.

Moreover, the present conflict between democracy and Communism is most clearly seen on the high level of our living faith and Communism's denial of this faith and all it believes about God and man. So closely is our faith related to the life of democracy that our antagonist today would exterminate both of them together. Even without the diabolic efforts of Communism, democracy will surely wither from within if our faith weakens, for it was this same religious faith that watched over our birth and grew with us to maturity. It is still our best weapon in the present conflict.

Jacques Maritain has given us a stirring account of the battle in progress, not in terms of planes and tanks and the armaments of atomic warfare, but on the spiritual plane of our fundamental beliefs:

"The Christian spirit is threatened today in its very existence by implacable enemies, fanatics of race and blood, domination and hate. At the

core of the horrible ordeal, everything indicates that in the depths of human conscience a powerful religious renewal is in preparation, which concerns and which will restore to their vital sources all the persecuted, all the believers of the great Judeo-Christian family, not only the faithful of the Catholic Church, and those of the Protestant Churches, but also those of Judaism And it is by working in the density of the life of the world, in an attempt to transform temporal existence, that this spiritual renewal, whatever be the irreducible division that it involves on the dogmatic and religious plane, will exercise a common action and will bring forth common fruits.

"Democracy, too, is threatened in its very existence, and by the same enemies Here, too, everything indicates that a great renewal of the spirit is taking place which tends to restore democracy to its true essence and purify its principles Thus in the fearful upheaval, on which the Pagan Empire is staking its all to liquidate at the same stroke Christianity and democracy, the chances of religion, conscience, and civilization coincide with those of freedom; freedom's chances coincide with those of the evangelical message."*

This then is the basic issue in its most elemental terms, not just democracy versus Communism as two opposing political orders, even less the physical might of the West against the armed divisions of the totalitarian regime, but two world views and two views of man locked in mortal combat. We are addressing ourselves today to the heart of the struggle on the high battlefield of ideas and faiths. It may sound strange to speak of a Communistic faith, but there is one, just as there is a Communistic religion, a Communistic sacrifice and asceticism. The reason that there is a Communistic faith may be found in the

* J. Maritain, Christianity and Democracy, New York, 1947, p. 41

famous phrase of Pascal: "L'esprit croit naturellement, et la volonte aime naturellement, de sorte que, faute de vrais objets, il faut qu'ils s'attachent aux faux." The human spirit believes and loves so naturally, that if it does not have true objects of faith and love, it will have faith in and love false things.

If then we are to face this present scourge and conquer it, and indeed, if we are to grow and survive independently of this threat, we must re-discover and reactivate the faith that gave birth to our democracy, and make of this faith an active, vital force in the world today. Thomas Aquinas put the task very neatly when he said that there are only three truly important endeavors in life: to know the right things to have faith in, to hope for, and to love.

What then does religious faith tell us that will strengthen our devotion to democracy and the democratic ideal. It tells us first of all, and this is most fundamental, that there is one supreme, personal God. Not a cosmic force, not a pantheistic nature god, but a transcendent, spiritual being, who is both a creator and a preserver of this world, who is the greatest of all reality upon which all other reality, including man, is dependent. This acknowledgment of God is the irreplaceable foundation of our world view, the most important point of our differences with Communism which is evil, first and foremost because it is atheistic, teaching that there is no God. All of the other errors of Communism stem from this basic atheism. And the strongest bond of unity which unites the West, and hopefully the East also, in opposition to Communism is our common belief in God, the one personal supreme Master of us all. This is our faith, enunciated in our Declaration of Independence, engraved on our coins and stamps, pledged in our allegiance, invoked in all our popular assemblies, the source of

all our blessings, the object of our faith and prayers, "that this nation, under God, shall not perish from the earth."

The second object of our faith is man, not the self-sufficient man of Rousseau and the naturalists, but man who possesses dignity and even immortality because God has created him after His own image and likeness; a person whose spiritual soul possesses the godlike powers of knowing and loving, a person endowed by God with all those unalienable rights which are necessary for him to act humanly, and to fulfill his God-given destiny according to his own enlightened conscience. The Founding Fathers in their Declaration of Independence state: "We hold these truths to be self evident that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights, that among these are life, liberty, and pursuit of happiness And for the support of this Declaration, with a firm reliance on the protection of Divine Providence, we mutually pledge to each other, our lives, our fortune and our sacred honor." Five years later in our Constitution, they enacted this first amendment, further specifying these unalienable rights: "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble and to petition the government for a redress of grievances." In like manner, 47 of the 48 states call upon God in their constitutional documents.

Our adversary on the other hand cannot recognize this basic human dignity, or these familiar human rights, because Communism without faith does not recognize God who is the Divine Author of man, his dignity, and his rights. Man, in this world view, is purely of the earth, earthly. He has no soul, no eternal destiny. He is, in short, just another animal to be used as other animals

are used as means to an end, and in this case, for the purposes of the state. Whatever rights he may have are not unalienable, because they are given to man by the state and the state may take them away. Man, in the Communistic scheme of things, is like any chattel, expendable. Thus it is again that political questions are theological in their roots, reflecting the thought and thoughtfulness of man about God and human values.

Pursuing the matter somewhat further, we find two other corollaries to this basic belief or unbelief about God and man. Because of our faith in God and man, we believe in an objective moral order of good and evil. We may call it the natural law philosophically, God's plan for order in this world, or the Ten Commandments as we have them from God's revelation. We believe that this unchanging moral code establishes the broad basis of justice and charity in the various relationships between man and his God, between man and man, and even between nation and nation.

On the other hand, Communism sneers at this objective moral order as it sneers at God from whom the moral order is ultimately derived. Once more, the state is the arbiter of morality, law, justice. Charity is an unheard of word. The Party establishes its own version of the true and the good. It may be one thing today and another tomorrow.

The second corollary I would draw from our faith in God and in man under God is our notion of government. We look upon the state as the agent to serve man, the citizen, in the possession and exercise of his basic human rights, and to promote the common good of all the people. In other words, the state is for man, not man for the state. As Lincoln put it, we have a government of the people, for the people, and by the people.

Despite the fancy words of Kremlin propaganda, the state is supreme in Communistic theory and practice. Man is the servant and the slave of the state, stripped of all dignity and rights if need be. Not he starves as did millions of Kulaks because it seemed best for the state that the harvest be taken from those who grew the wheat. Again, men are banished by the millions to slave labor in Siberia and freedom fighters are machine gunned in Hungary, because such is the will of the state, whatever the dictates of justice. All of this can happen and does happen in a thousand degrading ways once God is denied and the state is put in His place as the supreme arbiter. Matter reigns over spirit, force over right, slavery over freedom, power over justice. A new reign of terror spreads over half a world. We alone are standing between the hammer and sicle, and what is left of the free world.

It seems likely at this juncture that the spread of this totalitarian scourge can only be arrested by a democratic order that has a full consciousness of its strength in the spiritual and moral order. But we must be clear as well as firm in our belief. We must know, as the Princeton scholars have stated, that "Democracy is not an end in itself, to be attained by any means, as are the totalitarian utopias. Rather, it is means, perhaps the best means yet found, to an end. This end is the realization in human society of certain ideals -- human dignity, moral responsibility, spiritual freedom -- which have their historic roots in Greece and Palestine, their sanction in a moral and spiritual order which transcends history. These ideals may in the past have been preserved to a limited extent without democracy. But democracy cannot survive without them."*

There is a further advantage in stressing the objectives of our faith

* Second Symposium on Science, Philosophy, and Religion, p. 256.

in that they can easily be understood by all men of good will throughout the world, even by people who may be inclined to quibble about this or that precise form of democratic government. These objectives of our faith, to be realized by some legitimate political order, as they are so well realized in our own, are themselves indivisible objectives. No one can quibble about the deep aspirations of human dignity, human freedom, human rights -- and these are the realities born of our faith in God, and in man made in God's image. So often the face we present to an embattled world is a face that is rich and yet poor in its utter materialism, technological with all the trappings of tractors and airplanes and gadgets, and yet seeming not to know or speak of our rich spiritual treasures of wisdom and justice and freedom. If we are to stem the tide that threatens half a world yet free, we should speak to their hearts the message that comes from the heart of our faith, to give life and vigor to our world view.

Jacques Maritain in an eloquent passage tells us of our task, what we must do for ourselves and our world, with God's help, if we and they are to survive:

"To keep faith in the forward march of humanity despite all the temptations to despair of man, that are furnished by history and particularly contemporary history; to have faith in the dignity of the person and of common humanity, in human rights and in justice -- that is, in essentially spiritual values; to have, not in formulas, but in reality, the sense of and the respect for the dignity of the people, which is a spiritual dignity and is revealed to whoever knows how to love it; to sustain and revive the sense of equality without sinking into a leveling equalitarianism; to respect authority knowing that its wielders are only men, like those they rule, and derive their trust from the

consent or the will of the people whose vicars or representatives they are; to believe in the sanctity of the law and in the efficacious virtue of political justice at long range in the face of the scandalous triumphs of falsehood and violence; to have faith in liberty and in fraternity, an heroic inspiration and an heroic belief are needed which fortify and vivify reason, and which none other than Jesus of Nazareth brought forth in the world."*

There is an old scholastic adage: *nemo dat quod non habet* -- no one gives what he does not have. In the present anguish of a divided world, we who believe in God must ask ourselves if our faith is vital enough to meet the demands of our times and to be a match for the historical event. No other power than the spiritual power of our faith is adequate to meet the challenge with a response that will be heard and followed around the world. This is the time, then, to purify our actions and our thoughts, to bring our faith to bear on every aspect of our lives as a nation and as individuals. Now is the hour for courage and devotion, for hope and prayer, for a reawakening of our faith in those great divine and human realities in which we believe, and which are the last hope of an embattled world.

Charles Malik of Lebanon puts our problem squarely before us:

"If there is a God and if He has spoken, then history cannot go on without Him and His word the ultimate challenge is whether the West is going to center its life in God or in something else, such as 'progress', or 'adjustment' or 'science' or 'social justice' or 'higher and higher standards of living.' Secularism or God -- this seems to be the challenge. The rebellion and fanaticism of Communism can only be met by a power and conviction that, for the West, only its real God, reaffirmed on a broad national basis, can provide."**

* J. Maritain, Christianity and Democracy, p. 60

** C. Malik, "Magnitude of the Communist Challenge", Thought, Winter, 1952-53

This reaffirmation of God on a national basis is directly the work of the churches. The state can provide the body politic; it cannot provide the soul. What practically is involved in the reaffirmation of God in our nation? We have spoken amply of the theory, of the spiritual and moral foundations of our democracy, what of the practice? We have mentioned the threat without, from the great adversary that claims the world for totalitarianism, as we claim it for democracy. We have hardly spoken of the division in our own ranks that makes for disunity within as we oppose the great enemy without. I do not speak here of disunity of doctrine or worship, for the case presented thus far has been in terms of a common belief in God and in man created in God's image. But I do speak of the practical disunity created by those who share the benefits of democracy without professing actively or practicing a religious life that should follow the religious faith that is at the heart of democracy. There is a name for the effects of a weak or devitalized faith. Secularism is the root reality, moral anarchy is its obvious effect.

We cannot say that we have not been warned. The Founding Fathers professed their faith, following the best traditions of the Western World. They left no doubt about the necessity of faith in God as the true basis of our democratic charter. George Washington, the founder of our country, and our first President, said in his farewell address:

"Of all the dispositions and habits which lead to political prosperity, religion and morality are indispensable supports Reason and experience forbid us to expect that national morality can prevail in exclusion of religious principle."

Abraham Lincoln pleaded with the people of his day to count their blessings and recognize God as their source. Eight times during his Presidency, he

issued proclamations of thanksgiving and days of prayer and fasting. Would that we could hear his own strong voice telling us today the message of his Proclamation of March 30, 1863:

"We have been the recipients of the choicest blessings of Heaven: we have been preserved these many years in peace and prosperity but we have forgotten God. We have forgotten the gracious hand which preserved us in peace, and multiplied and enriched us, and we have vainly imagined, in the deceit of our hearts, that all these blessings were produced by some superior wisdom and virtue of our own. Intoxicated with unbroken success, we have become too self-sufficient to feel the necessity of redeeming and preserving grace, too proud to pray to the God that made us."

We cited earlier the words of Niebuhr to the effect that "History pitches the drama of life on continually higher levels, but the essentials of the drama remain the same."

President Eisenhower has described the higher level of the current crisis: "Two atomic colossi stand doomed malevolently to eye each other indefinitely across a trembling world." And our President has issued a call to action in the best tradition of our Founding Fathers, along the same lines as Washington and Lincoln. Speaking at Evanston, he said: "The time has come when for mankind there is no substitute for a just and lasting peace." And he suggests, as Lincoln did, the price of this peace. He calls for worldwide prayer as a mighty, simultaneous, intense act of faith and added that faith can move mountains.

It is unthinkable that the leaders of Communism would ever issue a call for prayer. But here precisely is our special, and practically only,

advantage in this nuclear stalemate. The Communists believe only and fanatically in physical power. In this they may have reached an equilibrium with us, may even some day surpass us. But they cannot pray, for they have no god but themselves. We, as a nation, can call on a higher power. Indeed all our other actions will be meaningless and ultimately fruitless unless we do remain true to the best of our tradition and ask the all-powerful God to aid us in our cause if it is right. "Unless God watches the city, they labor in vain who watch it." (Psalm 126)

But even here is the practical crux of the problem. Our cause must be right if our prayer is to be sincere and if we hope to be heard by God. And our cause will be right if we truly respect the Kingdom of God and His justice.

This means many things, if our religious faith is to be vital and active in the civic and social life of our democracy. It means that we recognize the widespread and disintegrating influence of secularism for what it is in our lives and our institutions today. It means that we repudiate all manifestations of secularism in act as well as in word. It means specifically that we observe the sabbath as a nation, and that our lives during the rest of the week do not give a lie to what we profess in church on Sunday. It means that God and His moral order are given a place of honor and commitment in our homes and in our schools, that the separation of Church and State does not come to mean something that the Founding Fathers never intended: that God is driven out of the heritage that was heralded here at the Pilgrim's landing with the words: "In the name of God, Amen." It means that we address ourselves to find some valid means under the Constitution to insure for young Americans, in or

out of school, a knowledge of the richness and sacredness of our heritage under God, and that we have little time and less patience with educators who would banish this heritage as unsophisticated, unscientific, and inconsequential. Vital faith requires that we apply the moral law to business as well as to pleasure; that justice and charity and equality for all means just that, for all, for all Americans certainly, and indeed for all men everywhere. It means that our vital faith will breathe the spirit of life into the dry bones of all civic and social endeavor. It means, above all, working together as men who believe in God and in the dignity of man under God, our Father, working together as men of good will with an abiding "faith in the brotherhood of man, a sense of the social duty of compassion for mankind in the person of the weak and suffering, the conviction that the political work par excellence is that of rendering our common life better and more brotherly, and of working so as to make of the structure of laws, institutions, and customs of this common life a house for brothers to live in."*

All this at least, I believe, must be encompassed in any profession of the necessity of faith in a living democracy. Indeed the theme might be restated to read: the necessity of a living faith in God and in the dignity of man under God if democracy is to live and grow and ultimately survive.

A few concluding remarks are in order. First, there is so much mention of religious tensions in our country that I think it even more important to note that many Protestants, Catholics, and Jews have recognized a new and badly needed strength in standing together as God-loving and God-fearing Americans, standing together at least against this black denial of God and spirit that is

* J. Maritain, Christianity and Democracy, p. 56

our greatest and common adversary. This alone is like a sudden burst of light in the darkness. Let us recognize this new strength and be grateful for what it promises for America. We have too often stood apart, even in this basic allegiance to God and His moral law, in which we are together at heart. While we stand together with faith in God and His law, I should be less than frank with all of you and myself, did I not admit that what I have expressed in these pages is a bare skeleton of my faith, and a poor reflection of what richness you must find in your own. However incomplete is this small portion of our faith, at least it represents the antithesis of the power of evil that stands against us. May God grant that all of us, with the full power of our faith and religious practice, may rally together in full spiritual array against this evil thing that eats at the heart of humanity.

My second reflection is born of a hope that the rightness of our cause is the best presage of eventual victory, if only we can labor valiantly and courageously and with the grace of God to make our heritage alive in these evil days. I have often shared with you throughout this paper the thoughts of one of my favorite philosopher-friends, Jacques Maritain. One final sharing I trust you will allow me -- because I cannot match in words of mine, the call to heroism in our endeavor, that I find in the stirring words of one who has discovered as a foreigner what we perhaps have taken for granted.

"(America) knows that the man of common humanity has a right to the 'pursuit of happiness' -- a slogan which, if well understood, denotes a series of implications: it denotes the pursuit of the primary conditions and primary possessions which are the prerequisite of a free life, and whose denial, endured

by so many multitudes, is a cruel wound in the flesh of humanity; it denotes the pursuit of the superior possessions of culture and the mind, the pursuit of liberation from want, from fear, and from servitude; it denotes the pursuit of that freedom and that human plenitude which is bound up with the mastery of self, which in the imperfect order of temporal life, is the highest goal of civilization, and which, in a superior order, asks to be perfectly realized by means of the spiritual transformation of the human being and which man can attain only by great love and the incessant gift of self. Here heroism is needed, not to overcome a tragedy, but to bring to a satisfactory close a wonderful adventure, begun for this country at the time of the Pilgrim Fathers and the pioneers and in the great days of the Declaration of Independence and the Revolutionary War.

"Summoning all men to the pursuit of such happiness, if only we place it high enough and know the price it will cost, means undertaking the greatest of all temporal revolutions. And this has no meaning unless the call to the pursuit of happiness is indistinct from a call to heroism."*

We might spend a long time speculating upon these final words: that "the call to the pursuit of happiness is indistinct from a call to heroism." Perhaps this is the real internal threat to democracy in times of internal peace -- too few heroes, too few at least who have an heroic commitment to the great moral and spiritual principles that underlie the dignity of man and his democratic institutions - so needful to all men in their pursuit of happiness.

* J. Maritain, Christianity and Democracy, pp. 94-95