

## THE D'ARCY LECTURES 2021: COMMON GOOD: Theological, Philosophical, and Political Aspects

### Lecture Three: Is Liberalism the Enemy?

#### Introduction: The Narrative

Judgment passed on Liberalism

The Irish Experience

#### How explain the change in the Church's stance with regard to the values of Liberalism

Note links condemnation of 'modernism' in theology; condemnation of 'liberalism' in politics

Role of Catholic lay people in countries of Europe exploring how to remain faithful in the context of secular modernity, while engaged in political life, publishing, organizing

Facing serious challenges – which path to follow? liberalism; fascism; socialism

Some significant Church documents, especially from Pope Pius XI:

*Ubi arcano Dei consilio* (1922) Reflections on Great War

*Quadragesimo anno* (1931) Critique of political and economic liberalism

*Dilectissima nobis* (1933) on Church in Republican Spain

*Divini redemptoris* (1937) against communism;

*Mit brennender Sorge* (1937) against Nazi Germany

Second Vatican Council: *Gaudium et spes*: Pastoral constitution on the Church in the World of Today; *Dignitatis humanae*: Declaration on Religious Liberty (1965)

1. Distinguish church and state, believer and citizen
2. Clear separation of church and state: church as 'sign and safeguard' of dignity of persons
3. Possible cooperation in service of the same persons

Does the Church now officially endorse liberalism?

#### Pope Benedict XVI: The Other Benedict Option

Emphasis on basis of agreement: common ground. Engagement, not withdrawal

Benedict before the United Nations in New York (2008)

Benedict in London in Westminster Hall (2010)

1. Ambiguity of 'common good', as referring both to ultimate ends of human individual and communal life, and to the means and conditions for achieving those ultimate ends
2. Benedict recognizes the assemblies that he addresses as partners with the Catholic Church in serving the interests of human persons in their various nationalities and societies
3. In highlighting the interests of persons Benedict concentrates on the promotion and protection of human rights, and pays particular attention to the right to religious liberty
4. Benedict always asks about the ethical grounding of human rights, and notes the limitation of a purely legal process in their promotion; faith and reason need each other
5. Benedict points to the failures, weaknesses and excesses of the institutions he addresses. But he signals an attitude of willingness to cooperate and help improve those institutions.

Patrick J. Deneen, *Why Liberalism Failed*. (New Haven, London: Yale University Press, 2018).

David Walsh, *The Priority of the Person: Political, Philosophical, and Historical Discoveries*. (Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 2020).

James Chappel, *Catholic Modern: The Challenge of Totalitarianism and the Remaking of the Church* (Harvard University Press, 2018)