

# Father Coughlin's Concluding Saturday

## "As For the Future ---- ?"

Saturday

November 7, 1936

THE opportunity of presenting the following thoughts to the radio audience of America has been long anticipated and is highly welcomed. As a result of what I am about to say, a few hearts will be saddened, many thousands of others will be elated and the vast majority, I presume, will remain totally indifferent, not even speculating as to what the outcome will mean for America, in general, or for the Catholic Church in particular.

Before entering into my subject too seriously, permit me to reveal my personal, post-mortem views on the recent presidential election, insofar as these views have, at least, an indirect bearing on the main body of this address.

The recent election gave birth to a new political slogan for America which reads: "As Maine goes, so goes—Vermont!" Only two meagerly populated states failed to cast their electoral ballots for Mr. Roosevelt. As a result, a one-party form of government has been established in America. The Republican party and its philosophy of rugged individualism have gone forever. A new party composed partly of Democrats, of Socialists, of Communists, of Progressives and of Farmer-Laborites has been established under the banner of the New Deal.

When we consider that more than 85 per cent of our newspapers were opposed to the re-election of Mr. Roosevelt, it is also apparent that the editorial influence of newspapers suffered a tremendous deflation.

It is not difficult to analyze the results of the presidential election. In one respect it was a vote against Mr. Landon, together with his colorless personality, his platitudinous philosophy and his awkward presentation and appeal. In another respect it was a vote against the omniscient Literary Digest, whose pre-election prophecy not only startled millions of Americans, but decided them, at all costs, to vote against a return of the Old Deal.

More importantly, it was a vote for Mr. Roosevelt, whose pleasant personality and masterful presentation of stimulating promises magnetized millions of voters. Three million men who were under the thumb of a man who was now working for the New Deal government demonstrated their gratitude at the ballot box. So did three million other laborers who had found their way back to factories, to mills and to industrial pursuits of every kind. So did several million other citizens who were either directly or indirectly recipients of government dole which the Old Deal had refused to dispense. These beneficiaries of the New Deal established the most positive reason why an 11-million plurality was pyramided for the re-election of the president.

This is not a full analysis of the sweeping victory gained by the New Dealocrats. Nevertheless, it satisfies all the curiosity which I have at the present moment to spend upon the subject.

II

What will be the outcome of this election? To me it appears that Mr. Roosevelt has been given the power of a dictator if he wishes to be one. The 300 or more congressmen who rode to victory with him should be humble enough to realize that they are only flies on the chariot wheel. That the people did not vote for them

is manifest. Ballots were marked for the Democratic party, generally speaking, and for Mr. Roosevelt specifically speaking.

As an evidence of this, may I cite one instance which occurred in the city of Detroit in reference to a candidate for an office other than that of congressman. This candidate was a proven member of the Black Legion. Because he was running on the Democratic ticket he was swept to victory on a wave of Catholic, Negro and Jewish votes!

In a hundred other instances too numerous to relate, it is ascertainable that the citizens were voting for Mr. Roosevelt and not for the thousand and one barnacles who attached themselves to the keel of his boat. It was a purely Roosevelt vote whereby the citizens of the United States, either intentionally or unintentionally, created a potential dictator.

If the last Congress was recognized as a "rubber stamp" Congress, the same description will apply more correctly to the present Congress. Once more the unelected "brain trust" will draw up the laws. Once more the president will submit these laws to Congress and need not even trouble himself to designate them as pieces of "must" legislation. Both the House of Representatives and the Senate need not fear castigation from the press of the nation because a mandate has been given to Mr. Roosevelt by the people to carry on all the activities which characterized the first administration.

Thus, despite all the noisy opposition coming from the discredited newspapers and from other sources, I foresee the revival of the NRA and the AAA. I envision America's entrance into the World Court either directly or indirectly. I foretell an amendment to the Constitution as drafted by the New Deal administration.

I prophecy that the people of the United States will stand squarely behind Mr. Roosevelt as long as he stands squarely behind the promises which he has made. He is the hero of the hour. His program of attacking the economic royalists evidently has attracted many millions of followers who are willing to follow him along the highway of romance as today he stands before the world as a new St. George, prepared to slay the dragon.

Ah! But the poetry which surrounds a St. George oftentimes melts into gibberish prose before the noonday light of reality! Ah! But the people are oftentimes found to be fickle.

My final observation on the effects of the presidential election will suffer no contradiction, I believe. Consciously or unconsciously, the American people have suspended the old pattern of their democratic form of government. Today, our citizens are following the trend so well marked in other nations insofar as they care less and less for a government of law and more and more for a government by a strong leader.

Constitutions, congresses, parliaments, traditions, hoary heroes and ancient institutions—all these belong entirely to yesterday. America has decided to live in the sunshine of today, careless of the storms which will rumble tomorrow. The one-party government which the voters have created is definitely in the hands of one man, the president of the United States.

Whether or not I am correct in the above observation remains to be seen. I close my re-

marks on this subject by stating that Mr. Roosevelt cannot remain as Mr. Roosevelt recognizing Congress as the Constitution created it, he permits Congress to fulfil its functions untrammelled and unobstructed.

III

I also owe to this audience an explanation of the attitude of the National Union towards this New Deal administration.

As is well known, the National Union which agrees with many of Mr. Roosevelt's policies and objectives, nevertheless differs basically with his financial and industrial philosophy. The National Union will continue to offer the president's method of obtaining money and with his outmoded policy of pay-what-you-workism for labor.

Nevertheless, the National Union has decided to refrain from expressing any opposition. Forthwith it is adopting a policy of silence towards this New Deal administration. It will neither praise nor condemn. It will neither criticize favorably or unfavorably. As far as the National Union is concerned, Mr. Roosevelt may go to the extreme left or to the extreme right and not one official word will be uttered by its spokesman.

The people have spoken definitely and precisely. It is our business as good Americans and as members of the National Union to abide by the will of the people even though the fate of America hangs in the balance, even though socialism or communism will be the result of this silence.

In a moment I shall explain the reason for this policy which we are adopting. But first let me express as clearly and as candidly as I possibly can this thought: If the members of the National Union, who have opposed Mr. Roosevelt so strenuously, are willing to hold their silence and refrain from criticism, is it not logical to expect the 25 million voters—the laborers, the farmers, the professional men, both lay and clerical, and the industrialists who have open supported Mr. Roosevelt to accept graciously whatsoever the future holds out for them under Mr. Roosevelt's administration?

And, now, for the motives which determined our policy of silence: The National Union, as a result of this presidential election is being openly discredited by the free of the market. Our role of confidence which Mr. Roosevelt obtained through our organization has ceased to be active. I do not mean that the charter is being withdrawn. I do not mean that its 16 principles are being abandoned. I do not mean that the Board of Trustees of the president, are attempting to deliver a death stroke. I simply mean that after it has borne the heats and the burdens of the day, it is high time for the National Union to retire to sleep.

Of the millions of members of the National Union who pledged to support our principles, I regret to announce that fewer than 10 per cent of the National Union members lived up to their promises.

Last November, if you recollect, I warned this radio audience that it was highly improbable that the majority of our members would remain loyal.

However, this is no time to shed tears which the inevitable and the expected has happened. The cold fact stands stark before us. Under pressure and when faced with a crucial test, the vast majority of the members of the National Union took advantage of their prerogative to desert. While I congratulate the faith-

# ay Night Radio Broadcast

ful few, I hold no bitterness whatsoever to the unfaithful many. I recognize that they have not deserted the 16 principles. I am humble enough to admit that their desertion has been a personal affair, insofar as they preferred to follow the leadership of someone who is more capable and competent to give them bread and butter, shelter and clothing, than am I.

Many times I have said that I am not important but that the principles which I uphold are important. Now that this statement is fully born out, I shall fulfill the promise which I made at the Cleveland convention. Thus, I am hereby withdrawing from all radio activity in the best interests of all the people. I am doing this without attempting to offer one alibi, thereby proving that my promise is better than my bond.

From a personal viewpoint, this procedure is for my own best interests. It never was a pleasurable thing to be a target for all the slings and arrows of calumny, of jealousy, of libel and vituperation which constantly were leveled at my person, especially by those who were unable to attack either the principles which I propounded or the facts which I made manifest. However, I ask you to believe me when I tell you that I hold not even a small degree of animosity towards any one individual of them.

I am sensible enough to understand how easily ill report is both circulated and believed. And I am priestly enough to recognize that if they have persecuted Christ and the saints who were blameless, I could not hope to escape who so often have been blame-worthy.

## IV

To complete the record, I hereby remind you of the four main objectives for which the National Union was established. They were, and still are, to preserve Christianity, to oppose communism, to purify modern capitalism and to safeguard democracy.

In pursuing these objectives I know that I stirred up the captains of industry against me; I succeeded in regimenting all politicians to oppose me. More than all that—and this will always remain as a mystery to me—I have so aroused the clergy and the well-to-do laity of my own church that they have attacked me, sometimes openly and sometimes secretly, thereby throwing into consternation the members of the Catholic Church.

Need I tell you the story of the Catholic clergy in Mexico—their former apathy and their former indolence? Need I rehearse for you the story of the clergy in Spain which gloried, perhaps, in traditions but which did not have courage to fight the very causes which emptied the churches? Oh, no! Rather than be responsible for a house being divided against itself, I prefer to permit my erstwhile clerical critics to pursue the objectives which I pursued and to accept the responsibility which formerly I was willing to share.

Fellow clergymen, may God bless everyone of you! May each one of you recognize that you can not kill communism by castigating communists. I still believe, as does the Head of our Church, that you must remove the causes which create communists—the exploitation of the poor, the concentration of wealth—those two things which Pius XI has termed “irresistible” unless first of all, says he, there shall pass out of existence the private control of money and of credit.

Oh, a priest's place is in the pulpit. But oftentimes he must leave the ninety and nine

and go after the one that is lost. Then a priest's place is in the brambles. Then a priest's place is with the poor. Then a priest's place is that of the good shepherd who goes forth to meet the wolves and destroy them lest they destroy his flock. Be it the pulpit or be it the brambles where you find yourselves, stand together, fearless of the criticism coming from the rich parishioners, fearless of the effect which your preachments will have upon your collection basket! These things I speak in a spirit of fraternal charity as I call to your minds the progress of communism.

Tonight I see communism successful, especially in Catholic countries—Mexico, Spain, Socialistic France, Greek Catholic Russia. Tonight I am fearful for America even though Mr. Roosevelt has disavowed communists. The Browners and Dubinskys still continued to support him to the last because in his portfolio of policies they scented the radical propositions so dear to the heart of Moscow.

Thus, insofar as I have been impelled by a promise to withdraw from the airwaves, responsibility of removing the causes which are creating communists in America now rests especially upon the shoulders of my clerical critics both high and low. The church shall not be divided against herself.

## V

My fellow citizens, I do not wish to leave in your minds any incorrect impression. If I have fought the international bankers and their menial servants; if I have opposed the venal politicians, who have placed partyism above patriotism; if I have found fault with the subsidized press, which never in its history campaigned for an annual wage for labor; if I have criticized the cruel exploitation on the part of industry, I rejoice in having participated in all these activities. Not one charge do I recant.

I do not wish to leave the impression on my fellow members of the National Union that I am bitter towards you. I still love every one of you for the kindly feelings which you have held towards me. Some day, when your common appeal will demand it and when circumstances will permit; some day, when there is unanimity among the leaders of Christianity, then I will be glad to serve you in whatsoever capacity I can. It is better both for you and for me, for the country I serve and the church that I love, for me to be forgotten for the moment.

Lastly, I do not wish to leave the impression that either my own Bishop Gallagher or his superiors at Rome have had anything to do with the decision which I am making tonight. This afternoon, I told my Bishop what I am telling you now. His stout heart was saddened because of my decision. This decision will come as a shock, not only to Bishop Gallagher, but to every other clergyman, both here and abroad.

Thus, my conscience is clear: I have fought a fight as a soldier. As a soldier I was forced to use methods on the battle field in which not even a soldier would glory. The fight is not lost, even though the battle has not been gained. Some more capable, more eloquent and more efficient leader will rise up to inspire you and defend you and instruct you—one whom I trust you will not desert even when a crisis arises.

Personally, I have worked to the best of my ability. I believe that I can say before my God tonight that I expended my talents to the best of my ability, not wasting one of them.

Naturally my heart is joyous, especially because of that one thing. I remember the story of the sower who went out to sow. “Remember how some seed fell upon rocky ground, some

amongst the thorns and some on good soil. My heart is joyous because of the good soil and of the good seed which I sowed upon it.

Naturally my heart is somewhat heavy. A person infinitely greater than I once sat on a hillside overlooking Jerusalem and shed hot tears because the people of that city would not heed. If I shed a tear or two, it is not because of myself, because restful days are before me. It is because of your little children, your sons and daughters: I dread the prospect which the next 16 years hold forth for them.

The newspaper which I have established and which is known as “SOCIAL JUSTICE” I will continue to publish, thereby keeping contact with at least a few of you. In bidding farewell to the radio audience and to you, I repeat that the National Union is not dead. It merely sleeps. It will live as long as truth lives, because the 16 principles are immortal. My prayer today and tomorrow will include everyone of you as friend and foe alike. My hope is that bishops, priests, ministers and the lay citizens will find some common meeting ground to carry on the work which I so clumsily inaugurated.

This work will mean that many sacrifices must be made. This work will insist that some brave clerics, emulating John the Baptist of old, will have courage to confront publicly the Herods of power with the sins and misdeeds of which they are guilty—to confront them and assail them even though the clerics' heads be brought back on a silver platter!

O, my dear friends, please move just a little closer to Christ and His principles. Always remember what the gentle Master said: “What doth it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his soul?”

What doth it profit bishops, priests, ministers and laity if they gain political prestige or patronage for themselves or their friends and lose their souls in the gaining thereof?

Once I sought political patronage for one friend. I have lived to regret it. He, too, was a deserter!

In this battle, therefore, of Christianity against communism, of Christ against chaos, there must be only one banner under which we can stand—the banner of the cross. There must be only general whom we can follow, one policy which we can pursue, one technique which we can practice. A house divided against itself cannot stand.

For 16 long years I have been carrying on this work, always and constantly in the face of opposition, not from without but from within! It was always expected to come from the concentrators of wealth, from the industrialist, from the banker and from the press. It was always difficult to analyze why the most virulent and violent attacks came from within.

I am ceasing my broadcasting, not that I am a coward, not because I am surfeited with a mental suffering which my fellow clergymen and the thoughtless laity of my own church inflicted upon me, not because I lack the physical stamina to carry on. God's grace has always been sufficient. I repeat that I love my country and my church too much to become a stumbling block to those who have failed to understand.

My friends and my erstwhile opponents, be you clerical or otherwise, I would that I could shake your hand and kiss the hem of your garment. Whether you were for me, or against me, whether you were just coldly indifferent—it matters not. You are all my friends tonight.

Goodbye and God bless everyone of you.