



Focus on Religious Freedom

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10 Popes Have Explicitly Condemned Socialism

Socialism was strongly condemned by Pope Leo XIII in 1891 in his encyclical, Rerum Novarum:

“It is clear that the main tenet of socialism, community of goods, must be utterly rejected, since it only injures those whom it would seem meant to benefit, is directly contrary to the natural rights of mankind and would introduce confusion and disorder into the commonweal.”

Summary of Pope Leo XIII’s condemnation of socialism:

1. Socialism promotes envy between classes. “Thou shalt not covet thy neighbors goods.”
2. The transfer of private property to community property is against nature and justice.
3. Socialism hurts the working man first and foremost.
4. A person has the right to improve his social condition through labor. His social condition should not be taken away from him.
5. The Pope recognizes that not every human has equal aptitude in this life for wage-earning.
6. Labor is good and not evil. Socialism wrongly presumes that work is always an exploitation of one class serving another class.
7. It is evident in these quotes, that those who have acquired private property should share their goods with those who are in need. This is the call to almsgiving that Proverbs and Christ repeatedly exhort us to practice.

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