

CHAPTER THREE

EUROPEAN HISTORY AND CATHOLIC SOCIAL TEACHING

Introduction

The preconiliar interpretation of Catholic social teaching outlined in the previous chapter certainly influenced the attitude of Australian Catholic authorities to Labor's national health insurance proposals of the 1940s and the 1970s. But it was not the only influence. Indeed the 'philosophies of liberalism and socialism, which often wanted to shape a new world without the moral or social constraints of the Church' (Duncan, 1991: 1) were also important. Following the French Revolution and prior to the reign of Leo XIII, the Church might reasonably be described as having adopted an authoritarian, dogmatic, and aggressive demeanour that aimed to preserve the political and ecclesiastical arrangements typical of the *ancien régime*, when order was exalted over liberty. That is, the Church rejected the world. Leo XIII's papacy moderated that rejection, but concerned about the inroads of first liberalism and then socialism into life on the continent, the Church adopted a strategy of competition with the world for the souls of Catholics. It looked inwards, rather than towards engagement with the world, an attitude compounded by the adoption of the classicist, personalist and organicist interpretation of the Gospels and social teachings outlined in the preceding chapter. This strategy, however, was eventually overturned by Vatican II, which looked to partnership with, and openness to, the world (Moody, 1953; McSweeney, 1980). The two periods of Australian welfare history that are the focus of this thesis, however, were marked by the competitive strategy, a strategy that was very much influenced by European concerns. Certainly local conditions and circumstances modified the continental influences, but the response of Australian Catholic authorities to Labor's proposals was not immune to their influence. Consequently there is a need to look, albeit briefly, at the engagement of the Catholic Church with European society. This is in order to try to disentangle the strands of Australian Church resistance to Labor's two national health insurance schemes. The task of this chapter, then, is to explore the European influences that shaped the Church's political response to the world. The following chapter will investigate the Australian influences. Of necessity the exploration in both chapters is couched in historical terms as any response is part of a process informed by the social, political, cultural,

economic, and in this case, religious context (McSweeney, 1980: xi-xv). Thus the chapter begins with an explanation of the concerns voiced by the Church in regards to first liberalism, and then socialism, before proceeding to an examination of the European political concerns.

Liberalism

Throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries the Church regarded liberalism as a doctrinaire ideology espoused by agnostics and scientific materialists many of whom were anti-clerical, anti-Christian, and prepared to use repression as a means of oppressing the Church (Gleason, 1994: 46). Drawing upon the principles articulated in Chapter Two the Church voiced several concerns. First liberalism drew upon the idea of pre-social, individual rights that were protected by creation of a social contract, which enabled the potentially social to be made actually social (Lecler, 1952: 161-162; Duprè, 1994: 180-181). This view contradicted the Church's understanding of the social nature of the person whose rights exist firstly in the common good of society (Dupré, 1994: 177-183). They

do not belong to isolated individuals, pre-political monads, for whom society is a later, man-made artifact. Rights adhere to persons living in communities. Strictly speaking, a monad has no rights, for there is no one to respect them. Embodiment in society is precisely the origin of rights, and this embodiment is prior to and explains the construction of a political order to secure them (Komonchak, 1994: 90).

Fullness of life then can only be achieved in community, and this may require the suppression or restriction of choice in the interests of achieving fullness. In order to achieve this outcome civil society must assist the church and intermediary bodies such as the family (Dupré, 1994: 183-185; 188; 191-192). Liberalism denied those things that ground and guide a society, in that it privileged rights and eroded the 'ties of reciprocal obligation or mutual obligation and ... the traditional bases of personal identity and authority in families and civil society alike' (Elshtain, 1994: 155). Moreover, it obscured the idea that the common good may legitimately transcend and restrict unlimited choice in the interests of the community, and the interests of the individual in the community. Taken to its logical conclusion, liberal thinking proposed maximum fulfilment of the individual over the good of the community, which ultimately undermines society, as the state will only intervene in order to

protect the autonomy of the individual. The original sin of liberal ideology as conceived by the Church, then, was its atomistic and possessive individualism. This would disentangle the networks that bound society together thereby creating a social and political power vacuum, which would open the way for the centralised state. Liberalism denied the basic relationship between political structures and religious and moral principles, which ground the spiritual substance of human society (Komonchak, 1994: 90-95). Moreover, it made paramount the notion of freedom of choice that enabled individuals, not the Church, to determine values and how one should act. This was compounded by liberalism's advocacy of separation of church and state, an argument based upon the sovereignty of the individual endowed with natural rights, which entitled him to decide the rightness, or not, of any act by virtue of reason and not reference to God.

Laicisation of the state

The Church perceived the separation of church and state as espoused by liberalism as support for an absolutist state (Courtney Murray, 1949, x (2) 186). It removed the sense of spiritual mission and challenged the very rationale for the Church's existence. The Church was not concerned, however, with the secular state as such, as Church doctrine acknowledges the autonomy and independence of the state, its secular origin derived from human needs, and its distinct temporal ends. What was of concern was the lengths to which secularisation might be taken by the state, a fear not helped by the anti-clerical and secularist tendencies evident in eighteenth and nineteenth century Europe. Consequently the Church, at least on the continent, resisted the proposal. This was not the case, however, in the Anglo-Saxon countries. Propelled by practical concerns, not the least of which was the need to maintain political unity and religious peace in countries comprised of different faiths, they reached an accommodation with liberalism. Ultimately, this experience demonstrated that liberalism was not necessarily antithetical to the interests of either the Church or society. Moreover, it revealed it was possible to draw a distinction between a broad liberal tradition compatible with Church beliefs and values, and a doctrinaire liberalism incompatible with those same beliefs and values. Influenced by the continental political reality, however, the papacy adopted and maintained an anti-liberal stance. Nevertheless, the liberal state gradually replaced traditional monarchies. Generally they affirmed the secular basis of individual civil rights, and

claimed competence over wide areas of the life formerly the province of the Church. The state was now the source of sovereignty, free to exercise its authority without interference from any other body or source, which the Church resisted by emphasising papal authority, hierarchy and tradition – an emphasis that earned it the label of ‘reactionary’ (Moody, 1953: 32-35; Hales, 1958: 79-85; 93-98; Duncan, 1991: 4, 6; Duffy, 1997: 215-220).

Socialism

Whilst the threat of liberalism occupied much of the Church’s time throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth century it was socialism, especially in its more radical form (communism), that most occupied it during the early and middle part of the twentieth century. In response to what was perceived as the excesses of the liberal state, the socialists proposed the abolition of private property, and its replacement by collective ownership administered by the state. Moreover, it advocated class warfare, and professed open hostility to both God and church. Thus its ‘fundamental principles ... do not accord with Christian belief (*Quadragesimo Anno* #111 cited in O’Brien & Shannon, 1992: 66). In particular the Church argued socialism failed to recognise both the dignity and rights of the individual, and their priority in relation to the state (Curran, 2002: 71). The right to private property was not something to be managed, but rather was grounded in natural law. The intent of socialism, then, was to deprive individuals of possessions, which they possessed as a right. Moreover, it gave too great a role to the state. Consequently the Church condemned socialism in both its radical or more moderate forms. Despite the oppression and repression of rampant capitalism, socialism was not the answer. In the eyes of the Church its fundamental principles were intrinsically evil. Rather any solution must insist on the dignity of individuals and their social nature realised in community, which led Pius XI to propose the corporatist organisation of society. The Church, then, rejected the materialism, atheism, determinism and subordination of the individual to the state, expounded by socialism. It became an implacable opponent of communism during the period covered by this thesis. Indeed opposition to communism became a defining feature of the Australian Church’s attitude to the world, and thus – as will later be seen – of the resistance of Catholic authorities to Labor’s national health insurance schemes in both the 1940s and the 1970s.

Setting the stage

Whilst the response of the Church to liberalism and socialism rested upon philosophical principles it was also informed by historical events and experiences that dated back to the French Revolution. Drawing on liberal ideas the French Revolution sought to ‘retailor the church to a revolutionary pattern and then, having fallen short in the effort, (attempted) to replace Christianity altogether’ (Steinfels, 1994: 19). The resultant secularism and anti-clericalism did not take long to move beyond France into the rest of Europe thereby creating in the eyes of the papacy a threat to the social order, and to religion. That is liberalism was perceived as a political threat. Eventually the policies and practices arising from the Revolution were moderated, but this did not stop the tide of anti-clericalism and secularisation. It became a symbol of persecution, and the breakdown of order, peace and stability. Thus the Church developed a not wholly unwarranted suspicion of liberalism that resulted in an authoritarian and conservative response to attempts to move away from the old established order (Moody, 1953: 26-27; Hales, 1958: 54-73; McSweeney, 1980: 28-30; Duncan, 1991:4; Steinfels, 1994: 21-22; Duffy, 1997: 202-214).

Conservative Ultramontanism

The retreat into authoritarianism and conservatism was assisted by the teachings of conservative ultramontanism, which drew on the writings of Count Joseph de Maistre who argued that the papacy was essential for the maintenance of a conservative political order that would protect Christian Europe against what was perceived as the dangers of the philosophy of liberalism (Cwiekowski in Komonchak et.al., 1990: 1064; Duncan, 1991: 12; Duffy, 1997: 216). Its sympathy lay not with democratic freedoms but with traditionalism exemplified in the restoration of the monarchy, the hierarchical organisation of society and the centrality of the papacy (Duncan, 1991: 12; Duffy, 1997: 216). Thus it fostered the development of highly centralised and bureaucratised structures and processes to ‘insure that Catholics would primarily associate with one another, and, thus (be) immunized from the contagion of liberalism ... (and) be equipped to undertake the battle to restore Christ’s rights’ (Komonchak, 1994: 77). Informed by this thinking the papacy condemned freedom of conscience, religion, the press, education, and speech, as ‘absurd, and supremely injurious for the church’ (*Mirari Vos*). It also condemned separation of church and state. Only a strengthened papacy could serve the interests of the Church and save it ‘from being

undermined by subservience to the State' (Hales, 1958: 95). This view locked the Church into 'an attitude of suspicious repudiation of modern political developments, and the current of ideas which underlay them' (Duffy, 1997: 20). It created a 'state of siege' (Ward cited in Moody, 1953: 14), which isolated the Church from the influence of secular thought and politics and forced it onto the defensive (Duncan, 1991: 13). This approach can be partly explained by the fact that the democratic principles espoused by liberalism – its anti-clericalism, and its secularism – threatened the temporal power of the papacy. The Popes deemed this essential for their independence and thus their spiritual authority. Failure to support the spiritual authority and pre-eminence of the Church, then, was perceived in take it or leave it terms. Consequently the papacy opted for condemnation of liberalism and the liberal state, an attitude that filtered through into the period covered by this thesis (Hales, 1958: 64, 106-113; McSweeney, 1980: 35; Duncan, 1991: 13-14; Steinfels, 1994: 37-38; Duffy, 1997: 222).

The Syllabus of Errors

The reactionary nature of Catholicism following on from the French Revolution was exacerbated by the release of the *Syllabus of Errors*, a series of propositions attached to the 1864 encyclical *Quanta Cura*. It condemned what was deemed a series of theological errors concluding with the infamous Proposition 80, a denouncement of the belief that 'the Roman Pontiff can and should reconcile himself with, and accommodate himself, to progress, liberalism and modern civilization' (Hales, 1958: 131). Its apparent opposition to all forms of modern, democratic liberties and tolerance, and its assertion of the superiority of the Church over the state, marked a tension between liberalism and authoritarianism which had far reaching consequences for social, political and economic debates in and beyond Rome. In particular it universalised not only condemnations of progress, liberalism, and modern civilisation, but also freedom of speech, freedom of the press, the removal of Church authority over matters spiritual, and the disestablishment of the Church. Hence the *Syllabus*, especially Proposition 80, clearly identified the Church with anti-liberal forces, and cemented that alignment in the minds of liberals. Moreover, the increased centralisation of power in Rome, a move influenced by conservative ultramontanism, confirmed the view of the Church as authoritarian, hierarchical and conservative. Furthermore it caused scandal in parts of Europe and in the Anglo-Saxon countries

where the Church had reached some accommodation with those condemned liberties (Hales, 1958: 64, 131-132; McSweeney, 1980: 22-23).

Papal Infallibility

The authoritarian and reactionary impression of the Church confirmed by the *Syllabus* was not helped by the 1870 proclamation of the primacy and infallibility of the Pope, which the Church perceived as a counterbalance against the growing omniscience of the state. Many liberals, however, saw the definition as yet another indication of the papacy's willingness to side with the old, discredited order, and its unwillingness to accommodate the new principles of democracy and liberalism (Hales, 1958: 151; Duffy, 1997: 233), a view confirmed by the stridency of papal condemnation of the secular world. 'The result was a suffocating churchiness, narrow, fearful and exclusive' (Duffy, 1997: 228) – a Church alienated not only from the state but also from the world. Whilst the press of the 'social question' forced the Church to moderate its resistance the attitude of resistance evident in papal condemnations set the tone of the Church's engagement with the world. Moreover, it informed the attitude of the Australian Catholic Church towards Labor's national, universal health insurance schemes in the 1940s and the 1970s, an attitude that will be examined in Chapters Seven and Nine.

Competing for the souls of Catholics

Leo XIII's pontificate marked a turning point in relations between the Church, the state, and the world, but he did not overturn the teachings of his predecessors. Rather, Leo restated the teachings in a more palatable form in order to restore the Christian social order, namely 'an organic hierarchic society united by common values and common faith under the temporal kingship of secular rulers and under the ultimate authority of the Pope' (McSweeney, 1980: 68). It was not his intention to introduce a liberal political order. Instead Leo XIII adopted the philosophy and theology of St. Thomas Aquinas, which argued knowledge and the ability to know was compromised by sin, a situation that can only be reversed through the assistance of revelation from God, the guardian of which is the *magisterium* of the Church. Put another way, the guidance of a Church free from sin is needed in order to promote the common good (Moody, 1953: 66-67; McSweeney, 1980: 69-74; Duffy, 1997: 238-244). The political order, then, was hierarchical.

Leo XIII's political agenda also shaped his response to the 'social question'. The fact that the liberal state was serving the interests of the elite to the detriment of the rest of the population was attributable to its denial that God was the source of authority. Hence the liberal state rejected God's law. This amounted to a denial of freedom because right choice is dependent on enlightenment that comes from the law given by God (Moody, 1953: 68-70). Furthermore, the liberal state allowed exploitation of the poor because it claimed that the welfare of individuals was the concern not of the state, but of the individuals themselves. The state was neutral in regard to the protection of the common good. This was specious because elites may capture the state, and use it to protect their interests. Indeed this was the situation that had given rise to the problem of 'the condition of labour' noted by social commentators and activists. The solution, however, did not depend upon recourse to the 'godless creed' of socialism, but on recourse to Catholic principles, a programme outlined in the influential encyclical *Rerum Novarum*. Published in 1891 it argued that the state must ensure the common good mindful of the rights of the individual, the family, the Church or other social groups, which comprise society. Because they exist within the state, men and women have a natural right to belong to such associations. They have functions and rights, which the state must protect and preserve, but not absorb or destroy, although the state may forbid or dissolve them if they are opposed to the public good (*Rerum Novarum* #37, #38 in O'Brien & Shannon, 1992: 33). *Rerum Novarum's* condemnation of economic liberalism and socialism attracted strong interest, but in fact he simply restated the Church's traditional social teaching in the context of changed industrial circumstances and urbanisation. The impact of these conditions upon Catholic social teaching is clearly revealed in the work of Duncan (1991), Molony (1991) and Matthews (1999).

The curse of Modernism

The relaxation of antagonism towards the modern world initiated by Leo XIII was significantly undermined by Pius X's response to what was labelled the threat of Modernism. Whilst difficult to define Modernism was understood as an attempt to demonstrate that Church dogmas were historically relative, i.e. they were neither absolute nor timeless (Daly, 1990: 668-669). Integralists, who argued 'no part of the Neo-scholastic theological structure could be touched without endangering the whole'

(Daly, 1990: 668), understood this as an attack upon the authority of the Church. Certainly Catholic tradition develops, but guided by the Holy Spirit, not conditioned by an historical time (Hales, 1958: 189-192; Daly, 1990: 669; Duncan, 1991: 94). Thus advocates of historical conditioning were perceived as undermining the whole structure of the Church, especially as many operated from within the Church.

In 1907 the encyclical *Pascendi Dominici Gregis* isolated a body of related ideas and labelled them Modernism, the ‘poisonous juice of all heresies’. The encyclical argued Modernism contained two fundamental errors, namely the error of agnosticism that is ‘God is unknowable’ and the error of immanentism that is truth is ‘derived from the intrinsic needs of life i.e. subjective needs’ (Duncan, 1991: 94). These emphasised the subjective and romantic elements of religion and down played the rational. Moreover, Modernism deemed science, not the Church, as arbiter of religious truth, and denied the supernatural inspiration of Scripture and tradition. Committees of Vigilance were instituted to safeguard the integrity of the Faith. To be a real Catholic was to be an Integralist i.e. one who accepted everything that the Pope said as a package deal. In fact it ‘became a slogan to be applied to whatever was disliked in liberal Catholic thought, theology, literature, and politics’ (Heaney cited in Duncan, 1991: 95). Whilst in some eyes the anti-modernist campaign was successful, ultimately it threw suspicion on anyone who was engaged in progressive scholarship. It helped create an atmosphere of intellectual intimidation, and in the eyes of liberals, it confirmed the idea that the Church was authoritarian, hierarchical and possibly reactionary, but certainly conservative. Probably more importantly the gap widened between the Church, whose organisation was increasingly centralised in Rome, and the world. The growth of socialism and its infiltration of European politics during the pontificate of Pius X’s successor, however, once again softened, but did not remove, opposition to the liberal state. It now appeared as the lesser of two evils (Hales, 1958: 197-220; McSweeney, 1980: 82-83; Duncan, 1991: 94-97; Duffy, 1997: 251).

Pius XI

The commitment to *laissez-faire* economics and minimal state intervention condemned by papal teaching was severely tested by the aftermath of the First World War and the Depression. Emotional and political displacement combined with extensive unemployment and bankruptcies challenged the minimalist role of the state

and threatened representative government. Attacks from right and left assumed an anti-democratic flavour, which culminated in the breakdown of democratic governments in several of the European states and their replacement with socialist or fascist governments (Douglass, 1994: 103-108). The socialist solution, however, increasingly concerned the papacy. In 1931 Pius XI released the encyclical, *Quadragesimo Anno*, which condemned class warfare and argued not for ‘the chaotic injustice of capitalism or the regimented injustice of socialism’ (O’Brien & Shannon, 1992: 40), but for the establishment of vocational groups that would bring both workers and employers together to plan for industries as a whole. These groups would be governed by ‘the law of justice and infused with a sense of social responsibility and Christian charity ... (They would form the) Christian social order’ (O’Brien & Shannon, 1992: 40). Moreover, they would be directed by the principle of subsidiarity. That is,

one should not withdraw from individuals and commit to the community what they can accomplish by their own enterprise and industry. So, too, it is an injustice and at the same time a grave evil and a disturbance of right order to transfer to the larger and higher collectivity functions which can be performed and provided for by lesser and subordinate bodies. Inasmuch as every social activity should, by its very nature, prove a help to members of the body social, it should never destroy or absorb them (*Quadragesimo Anno* #79-#80 in O’Brien & Shannon, 1992: 60).

Relations between the individual and the state must be mediated by this principle, which meant that the role of the state, although important, is limited. In this way the Church sought to ensure its independence, and more importantly for this thesis, the independence of its institutions, including Catholic hospitals. The emphasis, however, was informed by European social and political conditions, especially the threat of communism, an emphasis that also underpinned the resistance of Australian Catholic authorities in the 1940s and the 1970s, albeit modified by local conditions.

Preservation of a Christian social order clearly concerned the papacy. Consequently, Pius XI sought to highlight the elements of a Christian social order based upon the dignity of the individual and their social nature. The order includes the state, which has both the right and duty to interfere in the economic process if the interests of individuals, groups or society as whole, i.e. the common good, are threatened by the operation of the economy. This does not, however, extend to collective ownership of

property, an inversion of right order. Generally speaking, then, nationalisation was not acceptable. Rather the state, in the interests of the common good, may regulate private property, but not so that it overrides the legitimate authority of the family and associations. In other words the role of the state is limited by the principle of subsidiarity. This of course has crucial implications for how the Catholic Church perceives government health and welfare policies. *Quadragesimo Anno*, however, also recognised the legitimacy of the socialist critique of the unbridled individualism of *laissez-faire* capitalism that concentrated wealth and power in the hands of a few (*Quadragesimo Anno* #107-#109 in O'Brien & Shannon, 1992: 65-66). Unregulated free competition and economic domination exploited people. Therefore the state, so long as it does not exceed its competence, must contain their operations. Nevertheless, it was preferable that a remedy be found in the mutual cooperation of capital and labour, as all are members of the same family bound together through the practice of mutual aid in times of need. To that end Pius XI advocated a corporatist solution, the establishment of voluntary associations governed by the laws of commutative justice and supported by Christian charity.

The emergence of a strong Russian communist state, and communist satellites in Europe and Asia after the Second World War, held particular fears for the Church. The materialism of communism outlined early in the chapter was antithetical to the Church's view of the individual and their relations with society. Nazism and fascism were indeed problematic but the main danger was perceived to be communism (Sigmund, 1994: 223-225). Moreover, Pius XII decreed that any Catholic who freely and consciously chose to belong to the communist party risked excommunication (Hales, 1958: 309). Anti-communism, then, combined with anti-modernism, to determine the Church's attitude to the world. This had the effect of throwing suspicion upon anyone who was considered unconventional. Not only did this ensure the silence of opponents, it also reaffirmed the reactionary nature of the Church (McSweeney, 1980: 86-91; Duffy, 1997: 265-268). In what follows it will be seen that Labor's proposals of the 1940s and 1970s deviated from the *status quo*. So in the light of the Church's European history, a history that shaped the Church's social teachings, which in turn informed the attitude of the Australian Church, it is perhaps not surprising that Australian Catholic authorities resisted their implementation.

The stage of partnership - Towards progress

By the 1950s memories of the Depression and two World Wars, liberal dissent, and the rise of communism, caused some political leaders to abandon their antipathy to collective provision of services and benefits. Buoyed by economic growth they replaced private provision with varying degrees of government provision thereby assuring citizens' freedom from want as a matter of right (Douglass, 1994: 107). This enabled the re-emergence of the liberal state, but not a *laissez-faire* state. Rather it was a welfare state, one that was liberal and democratic in character yet influenced by the socialist solution. It represented an accommodation between liberal individualism and state collectivism (Douglass, 1994: 103-108), an accommodation that appeared remarkably similar to the schemes proposed by Labor in the 1940s and the 1970s. Nevertheless the Church had yet to move from its preconiliar interpretation of Catholic social teaching. It was still united under the rule of an absolute monarch. 'The basis of that unity – then, as in the nineteenth century – was still the teaching of the Church. The beliefs that united Catholics could still be specified, contrasted with heresy, and successfully defended against public challenge within the Church' (McSweeney, 1980: 115). Nevertheless, the unity masked tensions. It was becoming increasingly clear that Catholics lived in two worlds, the spiritual and the secular, and the latter was influencing both the faithful and the Church.

The old and seemingly non-radical John XXIII became Pope in 1958, and almost immediately laid the 'foundation for new developments in Catholic social teaching' (O'Brien & Shannon, 1992: 83). His first encyclical *Mater et Magistra* highlighted the social dimension of property and reminded the world that it must be used for the common good. Individuals were reminded of their social responsibility to ensure the just distribution of goods, and the state was reminded that it had a duty to intervene in order to ensure property was used for the common good. It was, however, his encyclical *Pacem in Terris* that clearly signalled a change in papal thinking towards the modern world. Addressed to 'all men of goodwill' John welcomed

as characteristic of "our modern age" the progressive improvement of conditions for working people, the involvement of women in political life, and the decline of imperialism and growth of national "self-determination" ... He declared the right of every human being to the private and public profession of their religion ... (and) he abandoned the anti-communist rhetoric of the Cold War (Duffy, 1997: 270).

Moreover the encyclical included discussion of the rights of the individual and the common good. It was not enough, however, to recognise and observe an individual's rights and duties. Rather individuals were required to 'contribute generously to the establishment of a civic order in which rights and duties are more sincerely and effectively acknowledged and fulfilled' (*Pacem in Terris* #31 in O'Brien & Shannon, 1992: 135).

Three months after his accession John XXIII initiated moves for Vatican II. He confounded the Church by seeking not a redefinition of defiance and opposition to the world, but rather called for pastoral renewal and reconciliation with the world. John XXIII drew a 'distinction between the truths of faith and their mode of expression' (McSweeney, 1980: 137), which created quite a problem as Pius XII in *Humani Generis* had rejected the implied relativism. Errors in past understandings could not be acceded, but the task was to renew the Church in relation to itself and in relation to the world. 'The Church required a new epistemology, rooted in the contextuality of language and the relativity of thought' (McSweeney, 1980: 138). This formed the basis of the new theology authorised and endorsed by Vatican II. Faith and morality are open to interpretation according to time, culture and place rather than been subject to the formulations of Rome. They are the free responses of individuals informed by their conscience, a conscience framed within a social context that conditions that response (McSweeney, 1980: 140-147).

Vatican II marked a major turn in relations between the Church and the world. The juridical and hierarchical definition of John's predecessors was replaced by 'a sense of the church as taking its form and function from its relationship to the kingdom of God' (O'Brien & Shannon, 1992: 163). It also marked a change from opposition to liberal and democratic principles to an acceptance of human liberties and human rights. One of the Council's most significant documents, *Lumen Gentium*, placed the People of God at the centre of the Church's teaching, a view at odds with the hierarchical categories that dominated pre-Vatican II teaching. In addition to this *Lumen Gentium* acknowledged the imperfections of the Church and accepted her openness to reform. *Guadium et Spes*, another key document, completely overturned the ultramontane denunciations of the modern world. It sought to 'discern the signs of the times' by acknowledging the journey of humanity in time and in which it seeks

God. This is a religious pilgrimage, which seeks to understand men and women's common humanity in the world not against the world. In doing so the document acknowledged that this involves working with all men and women not just members of the Church.

Lumen Gentium and *Guadium et Spes* radically reshaped Catholic theology. Fear and condemnation had marked the years leading up to the Second Vatican Council. Catholics were now called to acknowledge that the 'Church could and should adapt to the needs of the world' (Duffy, 1997: 272), a change not readily acceded to by the Integralists. Nevertheless John XXIII's pontificate was a sign of reconciliation with the modern world. 'Catholicism was emerging into participation in the full human community ... The standard of Catholic life could never be simply the power and strength of the church, for the church itself would now be judged by the standards of truth, justice, charity, and freedom Pope John set forth' (O'Brien & Shannon, 1992: 130). There was now a pre- and postconciliar Church.

Conclusion

It is not suggested that the Australian Catholic Church imported – without any qualifications whatsoever – the dogmas and attitudes of mind of its European counterpart. Nonetheless, Roman authority, and its own inclinations, influenced the Australian Church to take a conservative stance. Spurred by conservative ultramontaniam, and concerned about the threat of secularism and anti-clericalism that was largely attributed to the rampage of liberalism in continental Europe, the Church in the eighteenth and nineteenth century opted for the establishment, and maintenance of a unified and centralised Church. Thus Rome condemned individual freedoms, and argued against democracy and the separation of Church and state. Instead it argued for the protection of the rights of the Church, and the establishment of a Christian social order. In the late nineteenth century and early to mid-twentieth century, the fear of communism emerged as the major threat to the life of the Church. Thus the Church moderated its attack on the liberal state and turned its attack instead against socialism and communism. Fear for the survival of the Church, then, was a significant influence upon the development of Catholic social teaching. Instead of engaging with the world, the Church opted first for rejection and then competition; strategies that saw it assume an authoritarian, hierarchical and reactionary attitude.

Consequently, the Church condemned the liberal state, and separation of Church and state, a position that required some modification in the face of the threat of the totalitarian socialist state. It opted, instead, for a corporatist state based upon a Christian social order, a state that Esping-Andersen, Castles, van Kersbergen and Smyth all later identified as conservative in its approach to social welfare. This chapter, however, revealed that the conservative response was not just a product of Catholic social teaching. It was also informed by historical circumstances and events. Moreover, the effect of the European experience of first liberalism, and then socialism, on the Church's attitude to the world was not confined to Europe. It also influenced the Church in the Anglo-Saxon countries, including Australia, which had reached a degree of accommodation with liberalism. Ultimately this impacted upon the attitude of the Australian Church to proposals such as national health insurance. The Australian political environment, however, also influenced this attitude. The task of the next chapter is to examine that local environment, in order to grasp more fully the attitudes of resistance that characterised the response to national health proposals in the 1940s and 1970s.