

A Policy Statement by His Apostolic Highness the Most Holy Prince-Bishop Radislav  
(Rutherford) I, Roman-Ruthenian Pope

In every generation, the Church must remind the world that our first allegiance is not to any flag, party, or political philosophy, but to the Kingdom of God. Nations rise and fall, parties change their colors and slogans, yet Christ alone is constant. When the Church forgets this, when she lets herself be caught in the nets of nationalism or ideology, she loses her prophetic voice and becomes merely an echo in the world's discordant symphony.

Clergy especially are called to shun party and partisan politics, for political parties merely seek to use the Church for their own ends. They try to convince the faithful that they alone are the right Christian path, but quickly turn when the Church disagrees, even often suggesting that the party or the nation or a political leader is the true litmus test of religious authority and legitimacy. It is, we must always remember, the Church that proclaims what is Christian, moral, and ethical — and that Church is One, Holy, Apostolic, Orthodox, and Catholic. In some countries, those not of the apostolic faith proclaim to speak for what is Christian, so often creating a bizarre blend of pseudo-Christianity, politics, and nationalism. Stranger still is that often those of the apostolic faith, seeking a Christian society, follow along, ceding their Apostolic birthright to others. This must be always and everywhere avoided, and we must be ever vigilant against it. This must be always and everywhere avoided, and we must be vigilant to keep the Bride of Christ free from worldly entanglements.

Now, it is not a sin to love one's homeland, whether it is the place you were born or a land of your ethnic heritage. Love of culture, land, and heritage can be holy in proper measure and when it reflects di-vine charity — in which case it stems from the Christian command to love one's neighbour. But when love becomes pride, and pride becomes contempt for others, then the nation itself has become an idol. We see it when leaders speak of power more than mercy, and when policy is made without compassion. We see it when people start to think ill on the other side of a border rather than seeing in them the face of Christ. The Gospel does not ask us to make the world in our own image. Rather, it asks us to see Christ in the stranger, the sick, the poor, and the immigrant — for "I was a stranger, and you welcomed me."

Too often, political life today has become a theater of anger, where winning is valued more than wisdom and cruelty is mistaken for strength. The Church must not imitate this spirit, and the faithful must not be drawn into such behavior. Moreover, the faithful must not consider such behavior to be the authentic Christian path. We are not to be the chaplains of any earthly empire, but the conscience of all

Our calling is to stand where others fear to stand: between ene-mies, among the suffering, within the storms that always arise. We do not speak with labels such as liberals or conservatives, right-

wing or left-wing, but as Christians — Apostolic, Orthodox, Catholic Christians. We are to love truth more than empty, worldly victory, mercy more than comfort, and God more than ever-fleeting nations.

The Church existed before any kingdom, empire, or republic, and will endure when all have passed away. So many rulers over time have pledged the destruction of the Church on earth, and yet here we stand. We have outlasted every single one of them and will continue to do so. The Church cannot be destroyed, and when it looks dire and the church stands at a precipice, Christ and His Holy Church will conquer. Therefore, let us live as citizens of heaven, faithful, compassionate, and unafraid. And let us pray for the conversion of all secular leaders and all people to the Holy Faith of Christ.