

## REPLY TO THE *MESSAGER*

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Henri-Dominique Lacordaire, OP

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Yesterday evening, *Le Messager des Chambres* [The Messenger of the Houses] attempted to place us in contradiction with ourselves concerning our article about Romagna [a province of Italy - Trans.]. In that article, we blamed the Ministry for its diplomatic intervention in the matters of the Holy See, repeating what we had already said twenty times about the freedom of Italy. First of all, the newspaper declared itself frequently astonished to find us among the number of *the most strained partisans of freedom*. For our part, we know of no excessive partisan of freedom in France, we know of only three parties eager for power: the first lost it and regrets it, the second obtained it and wants to hold on, the third never had it but wants it. Alongside them are new men who do not miss the first, support the second, and do not wish for the third, given that they grieve over, desire and cherish only freedom. What to do they understand by that word? Just this: the inviolability of the person and of *the home*, the establishment of domestic independence *by the emancipation of instruction*, the destruction of rule by appointed agents through the *liberation of townships*, a national representation that is not that of a *caste*, freedom of cults which is not that of violating their mysteries and their altars. And why do these newcomers claim all that? Because this has been promised to them for forty years, and they wish to avoid the yoke of the three parties that have tormented us for those forty years — the party that lost power, the one that conquered it, and the one that would like to have it in its turn. If these newcomers speak a language that is fiery and severe, it is because, after three or four republics, four or five monarchies, ten or twelve constitutions, now and then we get tired of always being led by would-be liberals who repeat to us, with a caution passed from office to office up to our time: “Sirs, you need to know how to wait. Patience is the first virtue of the citizen!” If that be true, then France has the first citizens of the world; unfortunately, we have the misfortune of not being a citizen, but our exaggeration is easy to forgive. It is that of men bound hand and foot since birth and who have the audacity to open their mouths because they were told: “March!” For example, around their cage they

heard the cries: Freedom of instruction! Abolition of the Monopoly! Deliverance of minds! Independence of opinions! And having heard all that, they were speaking only about grammar to a few small children, when their lips were sealed because of their impatience. Indeed, there is no reason to be angry at them.

“But,” observes the *Messenger*, “you are reproaching the government for pressing the Holy See to become more liberal; is that not contradicting yourself boldly?” We need to warn you, first of all, that we do not believe in your liberal propaganda at all. If you were so strongly in favor of freedom, other than that your country claims it, it would have been better not to let the freedom of Poland drown in blood and not injure that of Belgium in your English conferences. We have the right to repel an intervention twice dishonored and to call despicable annoyances your so-called good efforts to obtain the freedom of Rome. When we will have seen from you an ambassador to Warsaw, your intentions will be better respected. Until then, allow me to say that we do not trust you; we believe you are more in service to fear than to freedom. Leave Rome in peace; enough people slated for death accuse you of their troubles; do not drive the Eternal City to hate you.

Besides, if it were true that the Ministry desires the freedom of the Roman States, we detect a significant difference in their position and ours — on that point, a difference that *L’Avenir* has explained many times. It is evident that, by all accounts, France has had forty years of revolution, that it suffered ordeals which nurtured it for genuine freedom. If there is any country in the world prepared to receive it, it is undoubtedly ours. Ours, where there are no more convents, no more clerical proprietors, no more territorial nobility, nothing left to pillage other than the people themselves. Ours, which knows from experience all the despotisms begotten by anarchy: the despotism of the scaffold, that of glory and of mediocrity; accustomed even to the excesses of the press — ours that was able to uphold for one year, in the face of this unchained press, a monarchy that arose from a disturbance against three kings. To be sure, there are certain countries where one can cry aloud for freedom, to ask for it by bluster, if desired; but that was elsewhere and at other times, even though they had as standard the same sun at the same place in the sky. Indeed the only freedom we want is the one that the people bring about and that comes from the world naturally. If some superior minds precede the spirit of their nations by several centuries, they must enlighten those nations by their writings, and not by the light of pyres, as has been said somewhere. Every man who plots for freedom other than in the open air is a disreputable citizen; every country that has this kind of conspirator is menaced by even

greater evils than a society can bear. The Christians, at their origin, had more to suffer in the pagan world than the *carbonari* in their country. They hid themselves, they also died, and for three hundred years, they were treated like wild beasts, even though they had been sent by God. Outlaws of the world, and its future liberators, they did not hatch plots. In fact, there is no freedom except that which is wanted by the people. As long as the people do not want it, or seek another, any plot to give them freedom is a crime. And when they want freedom, all conspiracy is useless; they take it. Up to that point, the only role for superior minds is to write and to die; this is a rather admirable role.

Perhaps these principles will explain to the *Messenger* why we are so keen when we demand freedom for Italy. In this, there is neither contradiction nor ambiguity. We blame what appears to us as evil, we approve of what appears to us as good, with no regard for person or political party. We have spoken for all the world and against all the world, and against the edicts of the Cardinal Pro-Secretary of State. We intend to continue following with impartiality a route that no one before us has opened in newspapers: the road of justice, the road of faith united to freedom, the *Catholic* road. This definition will also explain to the *Messenger* why we hope for Catholic deputies, and *Catholic deputies only*. May it please God to grant us our wish! But France does not yet know us: pitiful soldiers we have appeared only one day ago under the banners of our illustrious country. If it upbraided us, we would be able to reply like a great orator to Caesar on the eve of the Pharsalia [a battle in Greece - Trans.]: *I did not arrive any later than glory*, but, rather, we could reply: *we did not arrive any later than freedom*.

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