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“Unjust Laws Do Not Bind in Conscience”: Archbishop Lucey, Catholic Social Thought, and Civil Rights

BY: THOMAS HARVELL-DEGOLIER

Introduction

Following the March on Selma, a pinnacle moment in the American civil rights struggle, the Archbishop of San Antonio, Robert E. Lucey, penned a letter to the Reverend Claude William Black, of San Antonio's Mt. Zion Baptist Church. In his letter, the Archbishop conveyed a sense of indignation concerning the actions of the government towards the peaceful protesters, writing "in Selma, the State troopers instead of protecting the rights of the colored marchers attacked them and wounded them.... any citizen has a right to walk peacefully in defense of justice."¹ Furthermore, the irate Archbishop lacerated the logic of the people who based their opposition to the march on its supposed lack of legality, stating that while "religion [protected] the civil authority against treason," it also protected the individual from the predations of unjust laws.²

Moreover, Lucey asserted that inherently unjust laws did not bind the affected citizens. Lucey's belief that "unjust laws [did] not bind in conscience" mirrored Catholic social teachings.³ In particular, it reflected ideas in Pope Leo XIII's 1891 encyclical, *Rerum Novarum*, which argued the only laws that bound men's consciences followed the "eternal law of God."⁴ Alabama's response to Selma, and the injustices of the Jim Crow South were violent and oppressive and, following Leo XIII's logic, compelled the marchers to "join associations among themselves [and] courageously shake off the yoke of an unjust and intolerable oppression."⁵ As such, Lucey's declaration that the people have the right to protest and oppose laws which

¹ Robert Lucey, "Letter from Robert E. Lucey to Claude W. Black," letter, March 12, 1965, Series 8, Scrapbooks, Claude and Zernona Black Papers, Trinity University Special Collections.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Leo XII, "Rerum Novarum: The Conditions of Labor," in *Catholic Social Thought: A Documentary History*, ed. David J. O'Brien and Thomas A. Shannon, Expanded Edition (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2010), 34.

⁵ Ibid, 35.

oppressed them followed alongside an intellectual Catholic social tradition established by Pope Leo XIII. Indeed, Lucey's statement that religion "protects the citizen against tyranny" and "in Alabama there [was] tyranny and colored citizens [had] an obligation to stand up and defend their rights" built itself on this argument.⁶ Moreover, this categorization of Alabama as an unjust tyranny that abrogated the rights of African-American citizens led Lucey to implicitly invoke the ideas of *Rerum Novarum*, which asserted that "rights must be religiously respected wherever they are found and it [was] the duty of the public authority to prevent and punish injury, and to protect each one in the possession of his own."⁷ While this encyclical initially argued a middle path between capitalism and socialism, Robert Lucey easily transferred its message of human dignity to the civil rights struggle. Lucey did this because he viewed these issues as interconnected

This letter from Lucey To Claude Black revealed ecumenical cooperation and support for the civil rights movement from the Catholic Church in San Antonio.⁸ This multi-faith coalition was the product of organizational pressures and government pressures to decrease inter-faith discrimination between Catholics, Jews, and Protestants, an effort whose language and rhetoric were easily shifted over to issues of racial injustice.⁹ Lucey's correspondence with Claude Black, in this letter, and his frequent correspondence with Rabbi David Jacobson of Beth-El San Antonio, placed Lucey within this multi-faith coalition.¹⁰

⁶ Lucey, "Letter from Robert E. Lucey to Claude W. Black."

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ John Moreland Moreland, *Lunch-Counter Desegregation in Corpus Christi, Galveston, and San Antonio* (Atlanta, GA: Southern Regional Council, 1960).60.Frederic Bruton, "Desegregation in San Antonio" (Trinity University, 1969); Robert Goldberg, "Racial Change on the Southern Periphery: The Case of San Antonio, Texas, 1960-1965," *The Journal of Southern Histor* 49, no. 3 (1983): 349-74.

⁹ Kevin Schultz, *Tri-Faith America: How Catholics and Jews Held Postwar America to Its Protestant Promise* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2011) 179-197.

¹⁰ 3/27/2018 8:24:00 PM David Jacobson, "David Jacobson to Robert E. Lucey, August 20, 1965," August 20, 1965, Robert E. Lucey Papers, AASA; Robert Lucey, "Letter from Robert E. Lucey to David Jacobson, October 22nd,

However, while Lucey often involved himself with other religious leaders, his intellectual heritage in Catholic social teachings influenced his advocacy and informed his personal support for racial and economic justice. This intellectual legacy led Lucey to support civil rights in Texas from the 1930s onward and turned him into a staunch advocate for the equality of African Americans and Spanish-speaking Americans when most of the Southern Catholic hierarchy comfortably participated in the south's more oppressive culture.¹¹

The paper will explore the emergence of Catholic social thought in America paired with Lucey's implementation of these ideas as a young priest in Los Angeles. It will examine the intersection of race and Catholicism in the American South and how white supremacist ties, in part, overcame religious difference and acculturated American southern Catholicism into the Southern racial hierarchy. The paper then discusses Lucey's tenure as the bishop of Amarillo, specifically his interaction with Latinos and migrant farmworkers; it also looks at how the exploitation of Spanish Catholics interacted with the New Deal ethos and Lucey's conception of Catholic social teachings. The third part will examine the Catholic Church and the racial hierarchy in San Antonio and contrast the paternalistic views that Archbishop Droessarts, of San Antonio, held towards Hispanic Catholics with Lucey's view of Hispanic Catholic agency. A final section will look at Lucey's arrival and reception in San Antonio. After this, it will discuss Lucey's rhetorical denunciations of inaction on the moral issues of Jim Crow and discrimination and discusses Lucey's general rhetorical opposition to white supremacy. This will show that

1957," letter, October 22, 1957, Robert E. Lucey Papers, AASA; Robert Lucey, "Letter from Robert E Lucey to David Jacobson, August 23, 1965," letter, August 23, 1965, Robert E. Lucey Papers, AASA.

¹¹In advancing the argument that Lucey's engagement with civil rights spanned from the 1930s-1950s, this paper also rejects the claim Brian Behnken makes that Lucey only involved himself in the civil rights movement in the 1960s. See Brian Behnken, *Fighting Their Own Battles: Mexican Americans, African Americans, and the Struggle for Civil Rights* (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 2011), 102.

Catholic opposition to Jim Crow originated before the 1960s and found influence in Catholic social teachings.

Emergence of Catholic Social Teachings in America

While societal pressures and racial attitudes in the south kept Catholics either silent about, or complicit in, Southern racial and economic inequalities, a strain of Catholic thought existed that stressed economic and racial justice in the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The economic justice movement originated from the streams of Catholic social justice traditions began in Leo XIII's *Rerum Novarum*, and Pius XI's *Quadregesimo Anno*. This tradition inspired Catholic bishops, such as Robert E. Lucey, to vociferously defend FDR's New Deal as well as other programs that helped the poor and benighted members of society, despite pushback from inside and outside the Church.

On the other hand, the Catholic movement towards interracialism and racial justice began following the end of the First World War with Pius XI's *Rerum Ecclesiae*, which implied that viewing non-Anglos as inferior was a "grievous mistake and bemoaned the lack of 'indigenous clergy.'"¹² This reflected Pius and the Church's growing concern with the wellbeing and representation of minorities in the Catholic Church. Moreover, Pius XI generally viewed ideas of racial superiority to be incompatible with faith.¹³ As such, he provided an intellectual background against racial discrimination that would back up the action of John LaFarge and his American Catholic Interracialism movement, which rooted their ideas in the biblical belief that all men were created equal in God's image.¹⁴ Moreover, this revolution in thought, according to

¹²John T. McGreevy, *Parish Boundries: The Catholic Encounter with Race in the Twentieth-Century Urban North* (Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press, 1996), 9.

¹³ *Ibid*, 50-51.

¹⁴McGreevy, 38-47; R. Bentley Anderson, *Black, White, and Catholic: New Orleans Interracialism, 1947-1956* (Nashville, TN: Vanderbilt University Press, 2005), 1.

John T. McGreevy, linked itself with a Thomistic philosophy encouraged by Leo XIII that focused on a unity and wholeness of the Catholic Church.¹⁵ This belief system made racial discrimination and segregation incompatible with the church, because it ruined the wholeness of God's people and, as such "Jim Crowism in the Mystical Body of Christ [was] a disgraceful anomaly."¹⁶ This idea of Jim Crow as a disgrace, the conception of all people being linked in the Family of God, and Pius XI's call for "Valiant soldiers of Christ, who [strained] every thew and sinew to preserve the human family," and Pius' call to train lay Apostles opposing "unjust claims and unjust Actions," laid the groundwork for Catholic support of the civil rights movement¹⁷ Influenced, or soon to be influenced, by these traditions of economic and racial justice, a young priest in the Los Angeles Archdiocese named Robert E. Lucey worked in the Catholic Archdiocese of Los Angeles, where he absorbed these teachings.

A Priest in Los Angeles

Before his appointment in Amarillo, Lucey had made a name for himself as a champion of social justice, and directed the Los Angeles branch of Catholic Charities, which, under his direction, moved from focusing on the symptoms of societal inequalities to the causes.¹⁸ Influenced by Father John Ryan, whose interpretation of Leo XIII's *Rerum Novarum* demanded that Workers were paid a living wage, Lucey decried labor rights in Los Angeles, a very anti-union town, and called for the implementation of a living wage.¹⁹ Following the collapse of the stock market in 1929, Pius XI, in 1931, released *Quadrogesimo Anno*, a new papal encyclical

¹⁵McGreevy, *Parish Boundries.*, 41-43

¹⁶Ibid, 41-45.

¹⁷ Pius XI, "Quadrogesimo Anno: After Forty Years," in *Catholic Social Thought: A Documentary Heritage*, ed. David J. O'Brien and Thomas A. Shannon (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2010),78-79.

¹⁸ Saul Bronder, *Social Justice and Church Authority: The Public Life of Archbishop Robert E. Lucey* (Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press, 1982), 24-26.

¹⁹ Ibid; Robert Lucey, Oral Memoirs of The Most Reverend Robert E. Lucey, interview by H. Wayne Pipkin and Thomas L. Charlton, 72 1971, Baylor Oral History Institute, Baylor University,1971-72.

restating themes of *Rerum Novarum*. Lucey, influenced by this encyclical, advocated for increased government involvement in the economy, a strengthening of unions and a general reordering of society's structure.²⁰ *Quadrogesimo Anno* decried the greed of corporations, the lack of regulations to keep them in check, and as such endorsed "insistence on the moral law, enforced with vigor by civil authority... [to dispel]...these enormous evils."²¹ This, in Lucey's mind, justified calls to reform society into one that would serve the poor and mistreated.

Moreover, Lucey followed another dictate of the Pius's message and fervently urged the Clergy to "establish study clubs [...] to learn through informal discussion the meaning of Catholic social teaching."²² This emphasis on educating priests and laity to spread Catholic social teachings remained with Lucey throughout his episcopal tenure. This focus on spreading Catholic Social teachings, which provided an intellectual basis for the Catholic Church to oppose racism and support labor and anti-poverty issues, animated Lucey and he consistently stressed spreading these teachings. This caught the eye of the Catholic hierarchy who recommended Lucey ascend to the Bishopric of Amarillo.²³ Catholic attitudes towards the Church's social teachings, and the nature of Catholicism in the South tied itself to the racial and Jim crow atmosphere of the South, making it less hospitable to Lucey's brand of Catholicism.

Catholicism in The South and Texas:

Catholicism existed in the American South since the Spanish colonization of Florida and Texas and thus had a long history there.²⁴ By the antebellum period, Catholics made up a "relatively small minority" and were significant as a population in the south's larger cities such

²⁰ Bronder, *Social Justice and Church Authority: The Public Life of Archbishop Robert E. Lucey*.33-38.

²¹Pius XI, "Catholic Social Thought," 74-75.

²²Ibid, 75-76; N.C.W.C. News Service, "Labor Encyclical's Teachings Studied at Priest's Session," *N.C.W.C. News Service*, May 22, 1935, The Catholic News Archive.

²³"Labor Encyclical's Teachings Studied at Priest's Session," 39. [Just give an abbreviated title after a full citation]

²⁴ Paul Harvey, *Christianity and Race in the American South: A History* (Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press, 2016).9.

as New Orleans, Charleston, Louisville and Mobile.²⁵ In these areas, Catholics aligned themselves with a southern conservative culture that upheld the perceived morality of slavery and adapted their morals and teachings with the antebellum contexts.²⁶ Indeed, adopting the rhetoric of anti-abolitionists and defenders of slavery, conservative Catholic leaders, in the South, railed against abolitionists decrying them as “fanatical zealots,” declared that slavery followed God’s divine will, and argued that slaves would not be able to handle freedom.²⁷ Essentially, Southern Catholicism grafted itself onto existing social structures and members of the Catholic hierarchy in the American South maintained close relationship with rich slave-owning confederates.²⁸ This reflected that, in the American South, racial prejudices could overcome religious tensions between Catholics and protestants. As such, white Catholics, much like their Protestant brethren still discriminated against African-Americans.

Following the end of the Civil War and Reconstruction, despite America’s “new birth of freedom,” the establishment of Jim Crow began and the Catholic hierarchy followed suit.²⁹ This showed how Southern Catholicism subsumed itself into the broader racial image of the American South.³⁰ Essentially, while the Catholic Church tried to promote itself as “one Church that did not discriminate,” the Catholic Church did, in fact, discriminate.³¹

Despite its attempts to fit within the racial hierarchy of the South, many southern evangelical Protestants remained distrustful of Catholic intentions.³² Indeed, despite the second

²⁵ Ibid, 82.

²⁶ Ibid, 82-84

²⁷ Ibid, 82-84, 96. 103.

²⁸ Harvey, *Christianity, and Race*, 82-84.

²⁹ Ibid, 114-115, 124-125; James B. Bennet, *Religion, and the Rise of Jim Crow in New Orleans* (Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press, 2005), 160-192.

³⁰ Harvey, *Christianity and Race in the American South: A History*, 124.

³¹ Ibid, 125.

³² Andrew Moore, *The South’s Tolerable Alien: Roman Catholics in Alabama and Georgia 1945-1970* (Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University Press, 2007), 32.

incarnation of the KKK being thought of today as a broadly anti-black institution, it directed its ire towards Catholics, the Knights of Columbus and the Jesuits as entities of a foreign land that were disloyal to America in the 1920s.³³ The perception that Catholics were disloyal and subservient to a foreign king was prominent in American life, and Protestants often accused Catholics “of not supporting freedom of religion, and of being anti-democratic, mysterious and secretive, and opposed to the Bible.”³⁴ The conception of Catholic disloyalty remained persistent, meaning Catholics needed to prove their loyalty.

Indeed, despite the work of the NCCJ to rein in religious discrimination, in 1959 a retired Army Brigadier General, Herbert C. Holdridge, wrote a letter to president Eisenhower concerning the Jesuits, which he copied to various other figures, including Lyndon Baines Johnson, the Senate Majority Leader at the time.³⁵ In this letter, Holdridge described the Jesuit order as “Shock troops” that subverted “schools, [the] press, [the] radio,” and who infiltrated “public office and [...] the armed forces.”³⁶ Holdridge’s solution to the problem involved arresting every Jesuit, dissolving all Catholic orders, isolating the Vatican, closing Catholic schools, and revoking the citizenship of Catholics who “[refused] to recant on loyalties to the Jesuits.”³⁷ This did not happen.

However, prominent Catholics knew they needed to refute the idea that Catholics opposed the American democratic experiment. In 1948, Archbishop Robert E. Lucey wrote in *Christianity and Crisis* that “no responsible Catholic [desired] any change in the formula worked

³³ Ibid; For more on the KKK’s anti-Catholic nature see: Kelly J. Baker, *The Gospel According to the Klan: The KKK’s Appeal to Protestant America, 1915-1930* (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 2011).

³⁴ Moore, *The South’s Tolerable Alien.*, 35.

³⁵ Moore.; Herbert Holdridge, “Herbert C. Holdridge to Dwight Eisenhower Concerning the Pope’s Commandos,” Letter, January 18, 1959, LBJ Senate Papers 1947-1961, Office Files of George Reedy, Box 427, Reedy: Hate Sheets, Lyndon Baines Johnson Presidential Library, and Archives.

³⁶ Holdridge, “Herbert C. Holdridge to Dwight Eisenhower Concerning the Pope’s Commandos.”

³⁷ Ibid.

out by the founding fathers of our country to regulate relations between church and state” and that “under circumstances existing in our country [Catholics desired] exactly what [they had] and [Catholics] demand that no change be made.”³⁸ This argued that Catholics and the Catholic Church were compatible with, and not hostile towards, the American democratic ideal. Likewise, when John F. Kennedy ran for president he stated that, as a Catholic and American he was “wholly opposed to the state being used by any religious group, Catholic or Protestant, to compel, prohibit, or persecute the free exercise of any other religion.”³⁹ This speech emphasized that Catholics embraced America’s Religious freedom and did not threaten freedom of conscience or the independence of the American government. Moreover, the continuing pressure to prove they’re inherently American despite their Catholicism authentically American in the south and along with their racism helped keep the Southern Catholic hierarchy silent on racial issues in the American South until the 1950s and 1960s.⁴⁰

The New Dealing Bishop on the Llano Estacado

During his time as the Bishop of Amarillo, a position he assumed in 1934, Lucey obtained a reputation as an authoritarian who wanted to control “ne’er-do-well [priests] who [seemed] to take pleasure in opposing their bishop.”⁴¹ This desire to maintain absolute authority within the Church remained one of Lucey’s primary characteristics, and, as such, he insisted on maintaining episcopal authority over both the parishioners in his episcopacy and the priests under him. Lucey used this authoritarianism to spread Catholic social teachings and support F.D.R.’s New Deal. Indeed, Lucey, during his time in Amarillo, gained a reputation as a New

³⁸Ibid.

³⁹ John F. Kennedy, “September 12, 1960: Address to the Greater Houston Ministerial Association,” available from: <https://millercenter.org/the-presidency/presidential-speeches/september-12-1960-address-greater-houston-ministerial>. (accessed: 9 December 2017).

⁴⁰ Moore.

⁴¹ As an aside, when Lucey was assigned to be the Bishop of Amarillo he asked himself “Where is Amarillo?”; Bronder, *Social Justice and Church Authority: The Public Life of Archbishop Robert E. Lucey*, 46.

Dealing Bishop.⁴² This stemmed from his support for the CIO, despite the hostility most Catholic clergy held toward this labor organization, and Roosevelt's Court packing scheme, which of the Catholic hierarchy, in America, also opposed. Lucey's support for F.D.R and his New Deal based itself on Lucey's staunch advocacy of the Catholic social teachings in *Rerum Novarum* and *Quadrogesimo Anno*.⁴³ Accordingly, at the end of his tenure as the Bishop of Amarillo, Lucey was known as "the most socially conscious New Dealer in the Roman Catholic hierarchy."⁴⁴ The presence of this New Dealing Bishop in Texas was, to say the least incongruous. Texas, despite supporting Franklin Delano Roosevelt and the New Deal, was, according to historian Robert Wuthnow, relatively wary of government intrusion into labor and business affairs, due to the state's religiously influenced belief in self-sufficiency.⁴⁵

As Bishop of Amarillo, Lucey noticed hispanic Catholic poverty and viewed their poverty as evidence they were "the victims of an atrocious economic system," unlike one of his fellow bishops who stated Hispanics "[did] not look upon [themselves] as belonging to an inferior race."⁴⁶ This showed that, unlike many of his peers, Lucey did not view minorities as backwards or uncivilized, rather, he saw them the victims of an unjust discriminatory system.⁴⁷ By blaming the plight of these Mexican Laborers on an economic injustice, Lucey revealed that he viewed the cause the oppression of working-poor whites, and Mexicans, as both being products of an unjust economic system. Indeed, Lucey, unlike his fellow Irish Catholics noted

⁴² Bronder.

⁴³ *ibid*, 53-60.

⁴⁴ "New Dealing Archbishop," *Time*, April 7, 1941.

⁴⁵ Robert Wuthnow, *Rough Country: How Texas Became America's Most Powerful Bible-Belt State* (Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press, 2014).196.

⁴⁶ American Board of Catholic Missions report (hereafter referred to as ABCM), 1932-33, Report from the Archdiocese of San Antonio, quoted in Stephen A. Privett, *The U.S. Catholic Church and Its Hispanic Members: The Pastoral Vision of Archbishop Robert E. Lucey*, (San Antonio, TX: Trinity University Press, 1988); ABCM, 1928-29, Archdiocese of Denver Quoted in Privett "The U.S. Catholic Church and its Hispanic Members."

⁴⁷ Privett, "The U.S Catholic Church and its Hispanic Members" 11-12.

that, despite Irish claims that they maintained a superior form of Catholicism, Mexican Catholicism resided in the Americas before the Irish arrived and that an Irishman would likely not work hard if paid 40 cents an hour like many of the Mexican, and Mexican-american laborers.⁴⁸ This also showed that Lucey had begun applying the ideas of *Rerum Novarum* and *Quadregesimo Anno*, and connected labor and economic rights with civil rights. Lucey's belief in civil rights sprung from his faith; indeed, the archbishop attested that the Lord, by instructing his disciples to love one another, made love towards one's fellow man, regardless of race, a key requirement of being Christian.⁴⁹

Moreover, during Lucey's time as the Bishop of Amarillo, he connected his views on racial equality with the social teaching of the Catholic Church. During a speech to the American Federation of labor, "Lucey cited dog-eat-dog competition in business as defect of the economic system [... and]; urged that Negro and Mexican laborers be organized," and called for workers to band together and pressure the government to support labor friendly legislation.⁵⁰ This specific call for unions to organize black and Mexican laborers reflected a connection between the rights of minorities and the rights of labor. Essentially, Lucey argued that labor rights and civil rights were connected. Although he urged the organization of minority laborers with the qualifier that it prevented growers from using Mexicans and African-Americans as strikebreakers, he argued for them to be organized nonetheless; this idea helped both white union members, by preventing strikebreaking and could have permitted African and Mexican laborers to bargain for higher wages than they currently received. The emphasis on the ability, nay the right for the Mexican

⁴⁸ Robert Lucey, "Justice for Mexicans," *Commonweal*, November 12, 1948, 117. In Privett.

⁴⁹ Lucey, *Oral Memoirs of The Most Reverend Robert E. Lucey*. 4.

⁵⁰ N.C.W.C. News Service, "Bishop Lucey Wildly Applauded as He Addresses Labor Federation," *N.C.W.C. News Service*, May 7, 1940, The Catholic NewsArchive.

and African-Americans to bargain for invoked the encyclical argument they had the right to organize and throw off the yoke of oppression, much like white workers previously had done.

The dichotomy between Lucey and the existing Catholic hierarchy in Texas, at the time of his appointment, revealed the Church's social teachings influenced Lucey more than the other Texas bishops, who being more conservative and members of a generation that had adapted to the racism and status quo of the American South, and southwest, were less inclined to challenge this status quo. However, Lucey's belief that the "Catholic Church as the interpreter of natural law, [was] the defender of human rights," and that "God created the earth and its wealth for all his children" made this go-and-get-along mentality unconscionable and, as such, he failed to settle into the racial and labor status quo in Texas.⁵¹

Civil and Labor Rights in San Antonio Before Lucey's Arrival

San Antonio was established as a military post in 1689 and from its origins maintained a reputation as a racially mixed city.⁵² Before the Civil War, San Antonio's paternalistic racial structure created a tiered system with Anglos at the top, and Tejanos in the middle and African slaves at the bottom.⁵³ In the post-antebellum period, the traditional racial hierarchy reestablished itself and San Antonio segregated itself with different ethnicities and groups forced to form separate enclaves within the city.⁵⁴ Initially this law only included African-Americans. However, over time, it grew to include Mexican American residents of San Antonio.⁵⁵

⁵¹ N.C.W.C. News Service, "Church Defender of Human Rights Bishop Declares," *N.C.W.C. News Service*, December 9, 1940, The Catholic News Archive.

⁵² The actual founding date of San Antonio is disputed based on different events that could be considered its founding. Kenneth Mason, *African Americans and Race Relations in San Antonio, Texas, 1867-1937*. (New York, NY: Garland Publishing Inc., 1998), 3-14.

⁵³ *ibid.*

⁵⁴ *ibid.*, 23-43.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*; Cynthia Orozco, *No Mexicans, Women, or Dogs Allowed: The Rise of the Mexican American Civil Rights Movement* (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 2009) 29.

The continuing paternalistic nature of San Antonio, and the reluctance of Anglos to allow true economic freedom for their former slaves limited the job opportunities to “negro work” which was primarily menial labor for men and domestic labor for women.⁵⁶ Furthermore, by the 1920s, increased Mexican migration allowed businessmen and women to lower wages for both Mexican-American and African-American working classes by pitting them against each other to undercut their respective demands for higher wages.⁵⁷ Moreover, unions often proved little help because of the racism of their oftentimes white leadership.⁵⁸ However, eventually labor activists would come and attempt to make a difference in the late 1930s.⁵⁹

The Catholic Church in San Antonio neglected Catholic social teachings and failed to support policies that assisted the Mexican and African-American members of its parishes. The Archdiocese of San Antonio failed to oppose the segregation of San Antonio’s educational facilities and established segregated schools and congregations. As such, according to Kenneth Mason, San Antonio went along with, rather than challenged, the racist structure of San Antonio’s society.⁶⁰ Accordingly, the San Antonio Catholic hierarchy, before Lucey’s arrival, maintained attitudes like those held by Catholics throughout the south, ambivalent and enmeshed within an existing racial hierarchy.⁶¹ San Antonio was, essentially, a thoroughly Southern city on race issues, albeit with a strong triracial system, unlike most of the South which had a primarily biracial system.⁶²

⁵⁶Mason, *African Americans and Race Relations in San Antonio, Texas, 1867-1937.*, 51-53; Orozco, *No Mexicans, Women, or Dogs Allowed.* 23.

⁵⁷ Mason, 59-61.

⁵⁸ *ibid.*

⁵⁹Max Krochmal, *Blue Texas: The Making of a Multiracial Democratic Coalition in the Civil Rights Era* (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 2016). 1-2.3/27/2018 8:24:00 PM

⁶⁰Mason, *African Americans and Race Relations in San Antonio, Texas, 1867-1937.*, 142-150.

⁶¹ Harvey.

⁶² Bruton, “Desegregation in San Antonio,”4.

The triracial system in San Antonio added the significant Catholic nature to the city, while allowing led the Catholic Church to be less supportive of the Mexican Americans who labored at the bottom of San Antonio society and ally themselves with those in power. This lack of concern towards the Diocese's Hispanic congregation in the 1930s, before Lucey's arrival, laid itself bare in Droessarts treatment of the 1938 Pecan-Sheller's strike. These workers were primarily young Mexican and Tejano women and were exposed to horrid conditions, and had under the leadership of Emma Tenayuca, organized to improve their conditions.⁶³ However, Droessarts was deeply anti-communist, and Tenayuca's communist sympathies led Droessarts to oppose the strike despite Catholic social teachings that supported labor organizing.⁶⁴ This opposition by Droessarts, while predicated on the assumed evils of communism, was influenced by his paternalistic belief that Mexican Catholics needed his help on everything and could not do work for themselves.⁶⁵ This racial paternalism led him to rail against Tenayuca and her movement and he failed to provide institutional support to a movement which mirrored the social teachings of the Church.⁶⁶ Droessarts tried to dominate and regulate his congregation's religious expression and did not concern himself with the material well-being of his flock. Lucey on the other hand would concern himself with both the spiritual and material wellbeing of his parishioners.

From Droessarts involvement, or lack of involvement, in the Pecan Sheller's strike it became apparent that Lucey's advocacy for Mexican Workers starkly contrasted with the attitudes of conservative Texas bishops who were stringently anti-union, anti-communist, and

⁶³ Arlene Sánchez-Walsh, "Emma Tenayuca, Religious Elites, and the 1938 Pecan Sheller's Strike," in *The Pew and the Picket Line: Christianity and the American Working Class* (Urbana, Chicago, and Springfield, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2016) 147.

⁶⁴ *ibid*, 164.

⁶⁵ Stephen Privett, "Robert E. Lucey: Evangelization and Catechist among Hispanic Catholics" (The Catholic University of America, 1985) 25.

⁶⁶ Arlene Sánchez-Walsh, "Emma Tenayuca, Religious Elites, and the 1938 Pecan Sheller's Strike," 154-160.

believed that child labor should be an issue left to states and not the federal government.⁶⁷ As such, Droessarts represented a conservative not-willing-to-rock-the-boat Catholic hierarchy, which bended to local pressures, whereas Lucey's views on child labor and other issues placed him firmly within the intellectual tradition of Catholic social teachings. Indeed, much like his other positions, Lucey's support for the banning of child labor based itself in the social encyclicals By Leo XIII and Pius XI.⁶⁸

Indeed, this differing concern with the purely spiritual wellbeing of Hispanic Catholics versus the holistic wellbeing of Hispanic Catholics showed how ideas of Catholic social teaching impacted Lucey, who realized that man's spiritual and physical needs necessitated the Clergy's worries. These differences became starkly apparent in differing positions Lucey and Droessarts took on a bill banning child labor. Lucey supported the banning of child labor, thus showing his concern with the holistic well-being of his Latino parishioners, whereas Droessarts' position that the state should be the final arbitrator revealed an indifference towards material well-being and a tendency to allow local prerogatives to override moral prerogatives.⁶⁹ The difference between these positions showed that Droessarts was more inclined to go along with prevailing social and political norms of Texas, whereas Lucey, likely drawing on his traditional of Catholic social action, bucked the conservative Texas consensus on labor rights. The dichotomy between these two bishops did not last long, however. In late 1940 Droessarts died, and Lucey replaced him as the Archbishop of San Antonio.⁷⁰

Lucey's Arrival in San Antonio

⁶⁷N.C.W.C. News Service, "Texas Prelate's Views on Child Labor," *N.C.W.C. News Service*, February 27, 1937, The Catholic News Archive.

⁶⁸ Leo XII, "Rerum Novarum," 31.

⁶⁹ N.C.W.C. News Service, "Texas Prelate's Views on Child Labor."

⁷⁰ Bronder, 65.

The arrival of Archbishop Lucey in San Antonio represented a sea change in the Archdiocese's policy towards racial and social rights. Indeed, while Droessarts did not expose his congregation to the Church's social teaching, Lucey provided an emphasis on the Church's social teachings and a sufficient advocacy for labor rights, where it would be reasonable to assume that he would supported Tenayuca and the Pecan-Sheller's strike, in the name of social justice.⁷¹ Indeed, after his appointment, Lucey came into contact with a young Congressman named Lyndon Johnson while advocating for the Pecan Sheller's to have an increase in pay.⁷² Johnson recalled his first impression of Lucey being that many Texans at the time thought he was Bolshevik, particularly because of Lucey's bold advocacy for social and economic justice for minorities.⁷³ This specific instance revealed that Lucey vigorously advocated for the holistic wellbeing of his Latino congregants no matter their socio-economic class and lobbied legislators on behalf of his parishioners.

Lucey's appointment was well received by liberal mayor Maury Maverick Sr., who wrote Lucey to tell him that "[his] appointment [was] the greatest single fortunate occurrence for San Antonio in a very, very long time."; furthermore, the San Antonio Express lavished praise on Lucey's record of social work.⁷⁴ Moreover, Lucey received a letter from Franklin Roosevelt that offered the president's personal congratulations at Lucey's installation as Archbishop of San

⁷¹ Arlene Sánchez-Walsh, "Emma Tenayuca, Religious Elites, and the 1938 Pecan Sheller's Strike," 164.

⁷² Robert Lucey, Robert Lucey Oral History, Interview I, interview by Dorothy Pierce, October 19, 1968, Oral History Collection, Lyndon Baines Johnson Library.

⁷³ Stephen Privett, "Robert E. Lucey: Evangelization and Catechesis among Hispanic Catholics" 45.

⁷⁴ N.C.W.C. News Service, "'San Antonio Paper Pays Glowing Tribute To Archbishop Lucey,'" *N.C.W.C. News Service*, February 3, 1941, The Catholic News Archive.; N.C.W.C. News Service, "City Auditorium Offered in Connection With The Archbishop's Installation," *N.C.W.C. News Service*, February 3, 1941, The Catholic News Archive

Antonio.⁷⁵ This showed that Lucey and Roosevelt were, at the least, cordial to each other and that Lucey's New Deal advocacy had impressed fellow New Dealers.

Accordingly, when appointed to the more populous and less dustbowl inflicted episcopacy of San Antonio, Lucey did not lose a new dealin' minute and stepped up to the plate to attack the inequities. Indeed, with his criticism of existing social injustices, one might proclaim that, on matters of social Justice, Lucey surpassed the New Deal, and adopted the civil rights cause of expanding the supremacy of human rights everywhere.⁷⁶ Lucey exemplified this when, only two weeks after the bombing of Pearl Harbor, he proclaimed:

In the richest country in the world one-third of our citizens live in poverty and squalor. Sometimes we pay wages not according to human needs and social justice but according to the color of a man's skin. And sometimes we despise the man whose color is brown or black even though he is a child of God and a good American. Can we continue to abuse the spirit of democracy and claim to be worthy of it?⁷⁷

Essentially, Lucey held that, despite American attempts to assume moral superiority against the axis powers, the continued racism and poverty of America's nonwhite citizens made this claim disingenuous. A country that discriminated against a child of god, who was a good American, could not claim to be morally superior. This criticism, coming two weeks after Japan's attack on Pearl Harbor thrust the United States into war, was striking. Despite following Roosevelt as a New Dealer, once the war broke out, Lucey used his position's authority to call out inequities of American society rather than just letting the sleeping dog of Jim Crow lie unchallenged.

⁷⁵ N.C.W.C. News Service, "4-Day Celebration at Installation of Archbishop Lucey," *N.C.W.C. News Service*, March 31, 1941, The Catholic News Archive.

⁷⁶ Harvell-DeGolier, Thomas *The Supremacy of Human Rights Everywhere: The Struggle against Jim Crow during World War II* (San Antonio TX: Trinity University, 2017).

⁷⁷ Robert Lucey, "Patriotic Meeting" (Memorial Stadium, Austin, TX, December 21, 1941), Robert E. Lucey Papers, AASA.

Indeed, one could say this reflected Lucey's views on racial equality, and his vision of America as a land of racial equality, was essential enough to come before his personal commitment to F.D.R. Indeed, Lucey's strongly pro-Roosevelt position, during his Amarillo tenure, made his willingness to rebuke American society during the Roosevelt administration striking. This shift from Lucey's rabid defense of Roosevelt's New Deal policies reflected Lucey's realization that effectively, despite the gains by many white workers during the great depression these benefits spread among the population unequally and the Mexican Americans, and African Americans did not get their fair shake in society.

Jeremiads against Jim Crow

With both Hispanic and African-Americans facing similar types of discrimination, Lucey's duty as the Archbishop involved improving their spiritual life and to do so, he needed to improve their material life. Indeed the widespread discrimination against African-Americans led Lucey to inquire, "where are the joy and gladness of a life clouded with discrimination, legal restrictions, and all the taboos and hatreds of racial injustice?"⁷⁸ Lucey's question revealed that he viewed Jim Crow as an immoral system that stripped the joy from life and left African-Americans bereft of spiritual comfort and "made a mockery of happiness."⁷⁹ This recentered Lucey's opposition to Jim Crow firmly within disgust at the harm these systems caused oppressed minorities. Essentially, Jim Crow for both Latinos and Mexicans was unconscionable, ungodly, and necessitated opposition on moral grounds because, essentially, to deprive someone of the joy of God's creation cruel and inherently immoral.

⁷⁸ Robert Lucey, "Excerpts from Lucey's Address to the Southwest Regional Conference of Catholic Women" October 4, 1949, Robert E. Lucey Papers, AASA.

⁷⁹ *ibid.*

This distaste towards bigotry and oppression manifested itself often throughout Lucey's early tenure. Lucey's speeches drew stylistically from the tradition of the jeremiad. The American Jeremiad, as defined by historian David Howard-Pitney, invoked both America's sacred nature and pride in its history, while also inveighing itself heavily against injustice within American society.⁸⁰ Lucey exhorted America's "Pioneer Statesman... Christians, holding the belief that all men are brothers in the fatherhood of God," whose descendants, by never completing the revolution of their fathers by pushing for universal equality, betrayed the true ideals of equality.⁸¹ Lucey thus invoked the founding fathers and contrasted their gleaming ideals with the actions of their descendants, which Lucey viewed as a betrayal of the founding ideals. As such, Lucey maintained that while America initially possessed God's divine favor, America's subsequent immoral actions, which prevented the true equality of all citizens, caused it to fall from that blessed status. In other words, America's sins had caused the once great nation to fall from grace.

Expanding upon this criticism, Lucey stated that, "many of [our] citizens still believe in the idea of the master race, they feel that the man whose skin is brown or black is... inferior... apparently, all men are created equal if their skin is white. As though Almighty God were concerned with pigmentation!"⁸² In this statement, Lucey reprimanded those that believed in white supremacy and its tenants and proclaimed that God is above the petty distinctions of skin tone. This fit along with Lucey's belief that all were brothers in God's eye because, quite simply, in this sermon he referenced everyone being children of god.⁸³

⁸⁰ David Howard-Pitney, *The African-American Jeremiad: Appeals for Justice in America* (Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press, 2005). 3-12.

⁸¹ Robert Lucey, "Sermon From Robert E. Lucey" March 18, 1943, Robert E. Lucey Papers, AASA.

⁸² *ibid.*

⁸³ *Ibid*

Moreover, Lucey later proclaimed that Christians who live “in the light of the sun” while ignoring their neighbors, followed not the path to salvation but to ruin.⁸⁴ Essentially, America’s discrimination not only caused the nation to fall from grace but the disinterest of many of any white citizens put themselves in personal danger. In a sense, despite the berating nature of the speech, it maintained the implicit message that one should repent and leave the path of white supremacy before it claims the immortal soul.

Lucey viewed his social justice advocacy as a crusade and, in his speeches and rhetoric, often stated that it was, “a time for high heroism and deep devotion.”⁸⁵ This crusading zeal and call to action mirrored *Quadrogesimo Anno*, which emphasized the need for Catholics to take upon “the good and peaceful fight of Christ, as far as talents, powers, and station allow” to spread Christ’s kingdom on earth.⁸⁶ This idea that Lucey and other prelates should use everything their position allows them to spread God’s kingdom required soldiers of like-minded nature flavored Lucey’s beliefs. As such, he willingly criticized and questioned the attitudes of the proponents of racism and the segregation of the white South. Specifically, Lucey criticized the endorsement of segregated schooling by Catholics.⁸⁷ Lucey called segregation a sin against both charity and justice while also pointing out that “in the divine plan of redemption” a child’s color made no difference.⁸⁸ Lucey painted segregation as antithetical to Christian belief and pointed out the inherent hypocrisies of people trying to prevent the integration or segregation of schools, while professing Catholic beliefs. Segregation and Catholicism, according to Lucey, were fundamentally incompatible.

⁸⁴ N.C.W.C. News Service, “A Real Christian Truly Is His Brother’s Keeper, Archbishop Tells Charity Meeting,” *N.C.W.C. News Service*, October 13, 1947, The Catholic News Archive.

⁸⁵ “Robert Lucey, “Excerpts from Sermon by Lucey in Observation of the 25th Anniversary of the Founding of Xavier University for Negro Youth” October 12, 1950, Robert E. Lucey Papers, AASA.

⁸⁶ Pius XI, 80.

⁸⁷ Lucey, “Excerpts from Lucey’s Address to the Southwest Regional Conference of Catholic Women.”

⁸⁸ *ibid.*

Expanding upon this, Lucey, addressing Xavier University, criticized ignorance or dismissal of Catholic social teachings among the white laity, who, despite their alleged Catholicism, had “ignored or never [known] the social teachings of their religion,” and, as such, did not deserve to be called Christian.⁸⁹ This specific criticism revealed that Lucey viewed Catholic social teachings as essential parts of the Catholic identity. Lucey criticized the Catholic Church, saying it “had been complacent” in fighting against the evils of the world, specifically, white supremacy and stated they, carrying “the armor of God,” Catholics would now stand up to the evil of white supremacy.⁹⁰ This concept, while rhetorically sound was not factually accurate; for example, Bishop Toolen, of Mobile Alabama, for instance, did not desegregate Alabama parochial schools until 1964.⁹¹ By making this promise at Xavier University, an institution initially founded to teach black Catholics, sent the implicit message that he stood with African-American Catholics against their fellow Anglo Catholics professed the “unchristian stupidity of... white supremacy.”⁹² This assured these young African-American Catholics that, in their struggle against the South’s racial hierarchy, part of the institutional church backed them.

Lucey’s decision to embrace oppressed racial groups existed alongside a conviction that the social justice aspects of Catholicism maintained equal importance to the religious aspects. As such, Lucey disdained those who professed to be Catholic while discriminating against people based on skin tone, or who were, in the words of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., the white moderate, who, while not opposed to greater rights for oppressed racial groups, did nothing to help them

⁸⁹ Lucey, “Excerpts from Sermon By Lucey in Observation of the 25th Anniversary of the Founding of Xavier University for Negro Youth.”

⁹⁰ *ibid.*

⁹¹ Moore, *The South’s Tolerable Alien*, 122.

⁹² Lucey, “Excerpts from Sermon By Lucey in Observation of the 25th Anniversary of the Founding of Xavier University for Negro Youth.”

achieve equality.⁹³ Lucey excoriated Catholics who wasted their time at “Bridge parties and afternoon teas” and only acted out their faith in the pews as part-time Christians, while ignoring the duties laid upon them by the social encyclicals and the necessary to help fight for decent wages and for everyone.⁹⁴ This attempted to lay forth both a path for redemption and direct the blame at an individual rather than a national level. In a sense, this offered a hope for redemption and a call to action for Catholics remaining on the sidelines to join the fray, stop playing bridge, and to engage themselves in redeeming the nation.

Lucey’s rhetorical strategy called out the evils of society, named the culprits and perpetrators of white supremacy and placed the Church, or, at least, the Archdiocese of San Antonio fully on the side of the poor and oppressed, and willing to fight for justice and protect the vulnerable. Lucey’s consistent message inspired many of the vulnerable people he fought for. For example, Gus Garcia, a prominent San Antonio Latino activist wrote Lucey to tell the archbishop that his defense of human rights had moved him.⁹⁵ Moreover, Garcia effusively praised Lucey comparing him to “F.D.R before political expediency and an overwhelming zest for power corrupted [F.D.R.]”⁹⁶ This effusive praise revealed that Lucey’s message had trickled down to the groups in the trenches of the battle for the rights and had achieved the ability to inspire and give them strength. As such, Lucey’s advocacy helped perpetuate and inspire future and current Civil rights leaders in Texas.

Furthermore, there was a practical element to Lucey’s support of Mexican Americans and African-Americans and other mistreated members of society. In 1942, a survey commissioned by

⁹³ Martin Luther King Jr, “Letter from a Birmingham Jail,” April 16, 1963. Accessed from: http://kingencyclopedia.stanford.edu/encyclopedia/documententry/annotated_letter_from_birmingham/. (Accessed on 31 March, 2017.

⁹⁴ N.C.W.C. News Service, “Bridge, Tea Parties Wasting Time of Catholics, Archbishop Tells Spanish Speaking Meeting,” *N.C.W.C. News Service*, August 25, 1947, The Catholic News Archive.

⁹⁵ Gus Garcia, “Gus Garcia To Robert E. Lucey,” Letter, February 3, 1957, Robert E. Lucey Papers, AASA.

⁹⁶ *ibid.*

the Archdiocese found that the episcopacy Lucey administered had a population of 232,975 Catholics, with the City of San Antonio having a population of 98,189 Catholics.⁹⁷ The city of San Antonio's Catholic population broke down as 65,865 Hispanic Catholics, 877 colored Catholics, and 31,388 Catholics of other origins. With border and rural Catholics in Texas often being of Hispanic descent, and the predominance of the exploitative southwestern agricultural system, Lucey likely advocated for many migrant mistreated farmworkers.⁹⁸ Indeed, Lucey, once installed as the Archbishop of San Antonio, wasted no time working to improve the lives of these parishioners. In fact, the Washington post called Lucey a "V-12 Engine in a model T chassis" and implied he was a "sparkplug of progress."⁹⁹ The characterization of Lucey steers rather close to the truth, as the man remained an expert on social justice issues, innovated modern religious education, and, was very good at making sure priests were giving out adequate religious instruction, whether they wanted to or not.¹⁰⁰

Lucey's organizational skills came in handy while combating the inequalities in San Antonio and Lucey engaged in holistic efforts to improve the lives of Mexican-Americans in San Antonio.¹⁰¹ The Archdiocese of San Antonio, under Lucey's direction, started a tuberculosis center, established a medical ward in a "Heavily Mexican Colonia," and helped the Bishop's Committee for the Spanish speaking, which wanted to help Latinos grow leadership abilities that would allow them to succeed.¹⁰²

⁹⁷ N.C.W.C. News Service, "Census Shows 232,975 Catholics in San Antonio See," *N.C.W.C. News Service*, January 19, 1942, The Catholic News Archive.

⁹⁸ Gina Marie Pitti, *A Ghastly International Racket: The Catholic Church and the Bracero Program in California, 1942-1964* (South Bend, IN: University of Notre Dame, 2001).

⁹⁹ Agnes Meyer, "Forceful Archbishop Crusades for Mexicans of San Antonio," *Washington Post*, April 28, 1946.

¹⁰⁰ Bronder, *Social Justice and Church Authority: The Public Life of Archbishop Robert E. Lucey.*; Stephen Privett, *The U.S. Catholic Church and Its Hispanic Members: The Pastoral Vision of Archbishop Robert E. Lucey* (San Antonio TX: Trinity University Press, 1988).

¹⁰¹ Privett, *The U.S Catholic Church and Its Hispanic Members.*

¹⁰² Meyer, "Forceful Archbishop Crusades for Mexicans of San Antonio."

Moreover, the *Washington Post* described Lucey as a man who “despised injustice, not because it immoral, but because it was stupid.”¹⁰³ This characterization emphasized both the disdain Lucey displayed in his rhetoric to the racists and those who did not face them, and his disgust at the crushing burden that Jim Crow and segregation put on African American’s and many Mexican Americans. This injustice towards Mexican Americans motivated Lucey and he identified with them and not Anglo Catholics.

His exposure to the highly racialized culture of the south led Lucey to conclude, in matters of social, economic, and racial justice, that white men were often the oppressive forces in society, whereas minorities groups suffered:

The White problem in our country cannot be solved in any reasonable time without the aid of civil law. Many so-called white men hate and despise their fellow Americans whose skin is dark. It is not the men of color who ignore our Constitution, reject our Declaration of Independence, and perpetuate acts of racial bigotry. It is not the Mexican or the Negro who would deprive his fellow citizens of God-given natural rights, Only the white man does that.¹⁰⁴

Lucey wrote this missive to the senate while they debated passing the fair employment practices act. The insistence that congress pass laws to protect the individual reflected the essential idea in *Rerum Novarum*, namely that the government had a duty to protect the people from economic exploitation.¹⁰⁵ Indeed, Lucey’s realization that civil law was needed to truly enforce equality manifested itself later in his tenure, when he stated that, although he wished the Civil Rights Act of 1964 was unnecessary, without its passage, African Americans would not be given their rights.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰³ibid.

¹⁰⁴ Robert Lucey, “Fair Employment Practices Act,” Pub. L. No. 78 S. 2048, § Committee on Education and Labor, 81 (1944), <https://congressional.proquest.com/congressional/search/basic/basicsearch>.

¹⁰⁵ Leo XII, “Rerum Novarum,” 28-29.

¹⁰⁶ Robert Lucey, “Letter from Robert E. Lucey to Herbert G. Booth,” Letter, May 1964, Robert E. Lucey Papers, AASA.

Conclusion

Overall, the social encyclicals *Rerum Novarum* and *Quadrogesimo Anno* influenced Robert E. Lucey, inspiring him to speak out against the oppression in Texas. His unwavering commitment to the ideals of Catholic social action led him to take positions that, while popular with the *New York Times*, led the local press to pillory him.¹⁰⁷ This showed Lucey's belief that "priests and laity should not remain silent in the face of injustice," animated him to take positions that, while unpopular with many of the White elites in Texas, San Antonio, and the American South, were, in his mind, the morally correct.¹⁰⁸

Lucey's insistence on following the Church's social teaching led him to support the civil rights movement following his initial interactions with Jim Crow and, as Max Krochmal called, the system to oppress Mexican-Americans in Texas, Juan Crow.¹⁰⁹ When the civil rights movement started reaching its zeitgeist in the 1950s Lucey enthusiastically desegregated the Archdiocese's parochial schools:

In the field of Morality and particularly in the field of social justice and social charity Catholics should lead, not follow. If secular government, military leaders and private organizations can eliminate the sins of segregation and discrimination we can also so do.¹¹⁰

This letter reveals that, although Lucey enthusiastically advocated for desegregation and attacked the injustices of the Jim Crow era before the mid-1950s, public backlash proved too much of a danger to pursue integration during that . However, the gradual shift in racial attitudes allowed Lucey to finally integrate San Antonio's schools. Moreover, San Antonio became the first Catholic diocese in Texas to fully integrate all of its parochial

¹⁰⁷ Lucey, Oral Memoirs of The Most Reverend Robert E. Lucey.

¹⁰⁸ Robert Lucey, "Address to Industrial Conference" (Gunter Hotel, April 25, 1955), Robert E. Lucey Papers, AASA.

¹⁰⁹ Krochmal.

¹¹⁰ Robert Lucey, "Letter to Sister Superiors of Catholic Schools in the Parish," Letter, April 5, 1954, Robert E. Lucey Papers, AASA.

schools, and started the process of integrating San Antonio Catholic Schools a month before *Brown vs. Board* was decided.¹¹¹ Furthermore, Lucey's desegregation of Catholic Schools preceded the integration of San Antonio's public schools.¹¹²

Lucey's insistent stands for moral principles showed that Catholic social teachings, with its emphasis on social action to improve society for all its members, led Lucey to oppose the racially discriminatory and unjust system of Jim Crow. This influenced Lucey's allowance for his priests to march in Selma, despite the opposition of Bishop Toolen and criticism from local San Antonio papers.¹¹³ This reflected the fact that Lucey's commitment to social justice formed the very core of his faith and thus caused him to oppose Jim Crow back in the 1940s and 1950s, when the opposition to Jim Crow remained less mobilized.

Indeed, during his final public appearance, Lucey stated that "It has always been [his] firm belief that the Church [Should] stand counter to the injustices of any age...[and] comfort the challenges and ills of any culture," and, as such, follow "Christ, the first priest, [who] stood up boldly against the evils of his day."¹¹⁴ With Lucey believing the Church's duty was combating social justice, he opposed the prevailing discriminatory culture with ease in the 1940s and the 1950s and continually advocated for civil rights throughout his tenure, remaining to the doctrine of Catholic social action. This placed Lucey at the Catholic vanguard opposing discriminatory practices against both Mexican and African Americans and showed how Lucey used Catholic

¹¹¹ Ibid.; Privett, *The U.S Catholic Church and Its Hispanic Members*, 19.

¹¹² Bruton, "Desegregation in San Antonio," 18.

¹¹³ Privett, 19-21.; Ehlinger, "Letter From Mrs. Edmund L. Ehlinger To Robert E. Lucey," Letter, March 11, 1965, Robert E. Lucey Papers, AASA.; Robert Lucey, "Robert E. Lucey To Mrs. Ehlinger," Letter, March 15, 1965, Robert E. Lucey Papers, AASA.; Arthur Lehman, "Letter from Arthur Lehman to Robert E. Lucey," Letter, April 6, 1965, Robert E. Lucey Papers, AASA.; Robert Lucey, "Robert E. Lucey to Arthur Lehman," Letter, April 8, 1965, Robert E. Lucey Papers, AASA.

¹¹⁴ The National Conference of Catholic Bishops, *The Hispanic Presence: Challenge and Commitment* (Washington D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1984), no.4, Quoted in Stephen A. Privett, *The U.S. Catholic Church and Its Hispanic Members: The Pastoral Vision of Archbishop Robert E. Lucey*, (San Antonio, TX: Trinity University Press, 1988).

social teachings to intellectually justify and support civil rights movements. As such, Brian Behnken's claim that Lucey hopped on the bandwagon of civil rights in the 1960s is incorrect and his categorization of Lucey as a moderate falls apart when considering the combination of Lucey's pro-labor advocacy and early advocacy for racial justice.¹¹⁵ Lucey's devotion to Catholic social thought essentially allowed him to adopt a staunchly pro-civil rights position early on in his tenure and influenced his attacks on white supremacy's effects on the moral and economic wellbeing of oppressed groups.

¹¹⁵ Behnken, 102.

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