*Osservatore Romano,* Nov. 14-15, 1938, page one

Headline: Concerning a Newly Decreed Law

Text: The very recent legislative provisions about marriages of Italian citizens of the Aryan race with persons of other races require an explanation to highlight what is, on a point of such importance, the doctrine of the Church and what is the attitude of the Holy See, especially in relation to the wound inflicted on the Lateran Concordat, which establishes in Art. 34: “The Italian State…recognizes the sacrament of matrimony, regulated according to Canon Law, as having civil effects.”

Everyone knows that the Church of Jesus Christ is catholic, that is, universal. According to the divine precept, the proclamation of the Gospel was carried to all peoples: “go and teach all nations.” Everyone, of whatever race, is called to be sons of God, living members of the living Christ, citizens of the kingdom of the Divine Redeemer on earth, that is his Church. Twenty centuries of history stand witness to this great and wonderful universality. Thus race has never been a discriminating factor among the Catholic faithful. The Church addresses itself to persons of any race: it has instructed them if ignorant; it has educated them if savage; it has perfected them if they are already civilized. And with a slow labor that is sometimes dangerous and difficult, the Church has always sought to break down the barriers that separated humanity spiritually and to create and develop in everyone sentiments of fraternity and love.

But, at the same time, as teacher and custodian of the true faith, the Church has always been preoccupied to keep the faithful away from the danger of losing this inestimable gift. And since one of the gravest dangers for those who believe is precisely marriage to a person who does not profess the Catholic faith, here the Church stands ready to impede such dangerous unions with her wise legislation. In fact there have been canonical impediments for centuries to oppose such. One of them prohibits marriages between Catholics and non-baptized persons (Jews, pagans, etc.). The other prohibits marriage between Catholics and non-Catholic baptized persons (heretics, schismatics). From these impediments, the Church grants dispensations only when serious reasons intervene, when there are guarantees that the Catholic spouse will not encounter obstacles to his faith, and when all children, without exception, will be baptized and raised Catholic.

The Decreed Law approved by the Council of Ministers in the session of the 10th of this month prohibits and declares null and void all marriages between Italians of the Aryan race and persons of other races. No exceptions are allowed; there is no provision for dispensations. Thus the contrast between the recent Italian law and the Canon Law is clear.