

# Catholic Social Teaching

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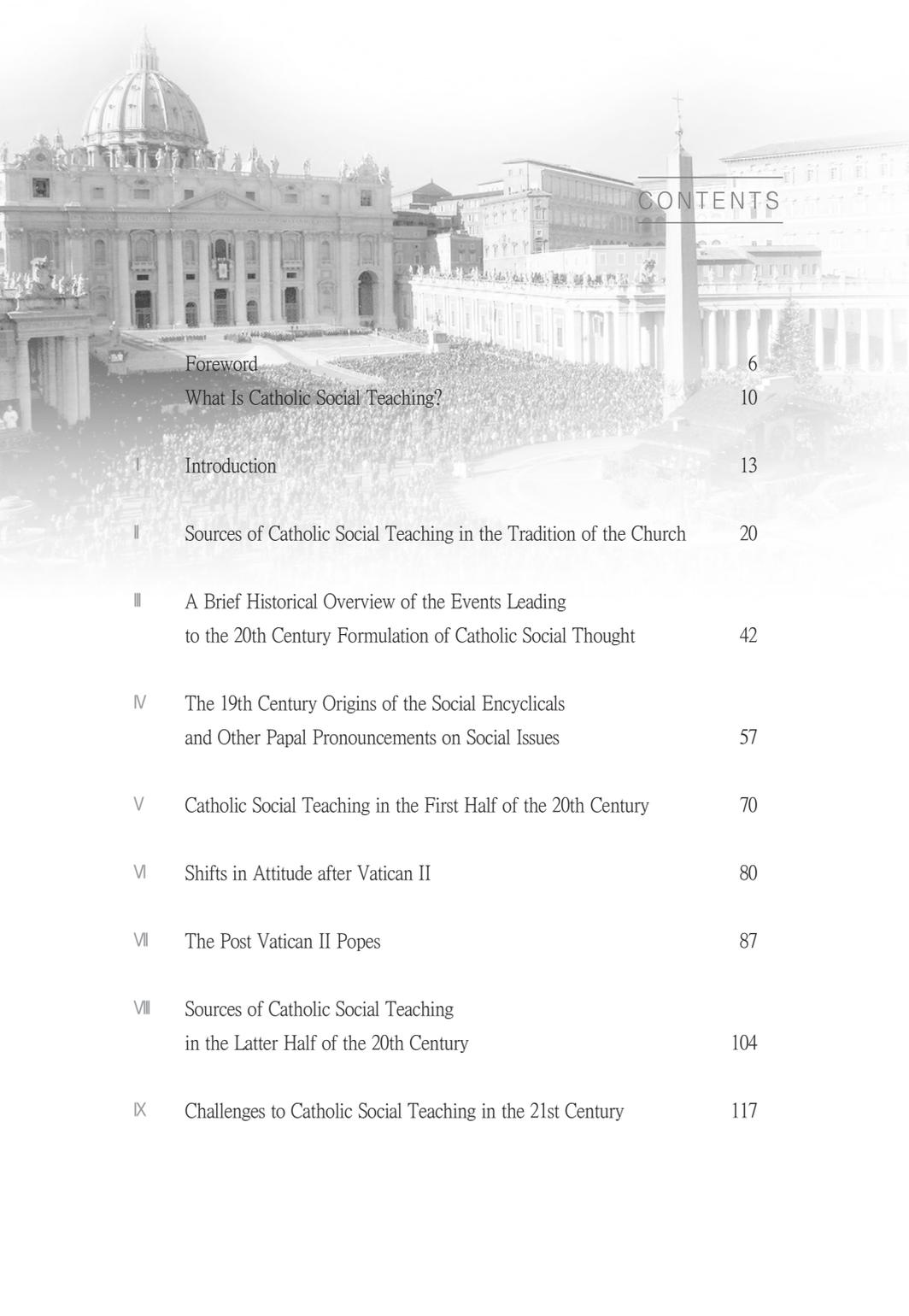
Father Jack Trisolini

Catholic Social Teaching



The Popes who had proclaimed the Catholic Social Teaching





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## | Foreword

Father John Trisolini, SDB came to Korea in 1959. Since his arrival in Korea, he was involved in various pastoral works in many areas for 51 years. He regarded education and formation of young people as most important. For many years he has been teaching Social Doctrine with all his energy and zeal. He started teaching the social doctrine of the Church from 1990. In those days, there were no text books published in the Korean language. Even now it is still the same. In order to teach, Father Trisolini had to summarize related Church Documents according to their themes and had to add his own interpretation coming from his own experience.

While he was teaching many years, students increased. Not only the number of students increased but different kind of people came to learn from him. Therefore he had to continue to extend and synthesize his teaching material. He did this until the moment of his death. We, the Labor Pastoral Commission of

the Archdiocese of Seoul, planned to publish Fr. John Trisolini's commentary on Social Doctrine in order to commemorate the 40 year anniversary of foundation of the Labor Pastoral Commission of the Archdiocese of Seoul. Fr. Trisolini died while he was writing on the issues of bioethics, which are currently causing many problems in the society in many ways. He died while writing on these issues. When we found him dead, he was sitting in front of his computer and the computer was on. He could not complete his writing. Although he could not finish this work, we want to publish as much as he has written.

Fr. Trisolini is not the original writer of the content of this book. He tried to help people to understand the social teaching of the Church as much as possible. In order to help, he summarized the historical development of the social doctrine of the Church and tried to explain the teaching and position of the Church on the issues which cause sharp controversies and conflicts in the society. Whenever any issue cause conflict, he explained it in a very easy way to understand. Some people will be satisfied, and some people will not be satisfied with this book

according to each person's viewpoint. But we know that there are not many books on the social doctrines of the Church which are easy to understand. Therefore, we decided to publish this book.

Archbishop Choi Chang Moo who oversaw this book told us to publish it in two languages within one book, English and Korean, in order to avoid possible misunderstandings. Since Fr. Trisolini wrote the book in English, there could be misunderstandings and conflicts because of problems of language and cultural elements for those who study this book. By publishing this book in two languages, a clearer understanding can be provided. People who read this book can have a variety of views and opinions. But this book will surely help many Christians to understand the Church's social teaching properly and to accept it willingly. These Christians will contribute in making the society brighter and peaceful with the light and hope of the Lord.

I want to give thanks to those who in many ways helped Fr. Trisolini in writing this book during the past twenty years. I

am especially grateful to Archbishop Choi Chang Moo, who read the original English text and the translated manuscript. He pointed out some very important points and gave us valuable advice. With this help, we could use correct terminology. We tried to avoid possible misunderstanding and confusion.

On Labor Day, 2010

Fr. Yoon Jin Huh (Andrea)

Chairman of the Labor Pastoral Commission  
of the Archdiocese of Seoul

## What Is Catholic Social Teaching?

The Church's social doctrine is not a "third way" between liberal capitalism and Marxist collectivism, nor even a possible alternative to other solutions less radically opposed to one another: rather, it constitutes a category of its own. Nor is it an ideology, but rather the accurate formulation of the results of a careful reflection on the complex realities of human existence, in society and in the international order, in the light of faith and of the Church's tradition. Its main aim is to interpret these realities, determining their conformity with or divergence from the lines of the Gospel teaching on man and his vocation, a vocation which is at once earthly and transcendent; its aim is thus to guide Christian behavior. It therefore belongs to the field, not of ideology, but of theology and particularly of moral theology.

The teaching and spreading of her social doctrine are part of the Church's evangelizing mission. And since it is a doctrine

aimed at guiding people's behavior, it consequently gives rise to a "commitment to justice," according to each individual's role, vocation and circumstances.

The condemnation of evils and injustices is also part of that ministry of evangelization in the social field which is an aspect of the Church's prophetic role. But it should be made clear that proclamation is always more important than condemnation, and the latter cannot ignore the former, which gives it true solidity and the force of higher motivation.

*(Sollicitudo Rei Socialis #41)*



# Catholic Social Teaching



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**Introduction**

Some years ago Fr. Peter Henriot of the Center for Concern in Washington when speaking on the Church's Social Teaching referred to it as the church's best kept secret. His talk eventually became a widely diffused pamphlet using that catchy phrase as its title. Unfortunately for many years and until very recently we heard surprisingly very little about the Social Teaching of the Church. We hardly even touched on it in doctrine classes. Nevertheless this was not always so.

In the first part of the 20th century, Catholic social teaching inspired by Pope Leo's famous 1891 Encyclical, *Rerum Novarum*, was the object of intense interest and study in the industrialized countries of Europe and North America. The few social encyclicals then existing were printed in pamphlet form with study outlines and questionnaires for discussion circles and ardently studied. Catholic social teaching inspired some of the greatest minds of the first half of the 20th century to think and act for social change. In fact the social encyclicals were an essential element in the process for the changes in the church that led to Vatican II. The social encyclicals energized Catholics to work for societal change by founding and acting through Catholic Action of the Milieu movements (Cf. #s 13

and 14, *Apostolicam Actuositatem—On the Apostolate of the Laity*) and the cooperative movement.

How did Catholic social teaching lose its appeal? The reasons are multiple. An exhaustive or methodical research on this subject would be too academic for the purposes of this writing project. Without explaining in detail, the following seem to be the main reasons for the loss of appeal of Catholic social teaching.

Vatican II made such revolutionary and profound changes in the life of the Church that some people thought that encyclicals would go out of style. At the same time technology caused rapid changes in society and this coupled with a highly ideological atmosphere created by the tensions between capitalism and communism led to social upheaval in the 1960's and 70's. Many Catholics felt the carefully expressed tenets of the church's social teaching were out of tune with the times. Certainly the discontent over Paul VI's 1968 Encyclical *Humanae Vitae*, a social encyclical on birth control, contributed greatly in pushing the church's social teaching into the background. *Humanae Vitae* led many inside and outside the church to feel that Catholic social teaching was out of touch with contemporary reality. Moreover, the Church usually formulates its social teaching in

language that, at first sight, makes it seem inaccessible unless a person makes a commitment to read and try to understand it. Finally, Catholic social teaching is always an “a posteriori” reflection on social issues as they arise and for this very reason always gives the impression of being late on arrival.

## Catholic Social Teaching—What Is It? How does it come about?

The expression “encyclical letter” means a circular letter. The Church has used this formula of contacting various church communities since the early centuries. However since the middle of the 18th century encyclicals have taken on a fixed form and are now usually reserved among the numerous types of papal letters to the more solemn treatment of more important problems (Cf. *The Church and the Reconstruction of the Modern World*, Image Books, 1957, p 18).

The social encyclicals are the Church’s institutional response to the social problems of a given time period. Some refer to social encyclicals as practical or praxis theology. Others even

consider them as strategic theology (Cf. *Modern Catholic Social Teaching*, Joe Holland, Paulist Press, 2003). Encyclicals usually deal with the evolution of current problems of a given period of time in history.

The first such encyclical *Ubi Primum* was issued by Pope Benedict XIV in 1740. Encyclicals can be divided into 3 strategies:

- ① The Anti-Modern Papal Strategy: 1740-1878 (Against Liberalism)
- ② The Modern Papal Strategy: 1878-1958 (The Catholic Reform of Liberalism)
- ③ The Postmodern Papal Strategy 1958 (Meeting up with the challenges of the emerging “world church!”)

The social teaching of the church is a rich heritage of ethical reflections and insights on the social, economic and political questions of our contemporary world. In a sense these ethical reflections and insights actually begin on the grass roots level when we as Christians and members of the church experience what goes on around us. Expressed more simply, it’s the collective way we as Catholic Christians react morally to the interrelated events and situations that have

arisen due to industrialization and urbanization and more recently to globalization, the development of cyber space and Information Technology (IT). Eventually what people feel about the phenomena of industrialization and the ethical reflections they make are somehow processed and enter into discussions on moral issues. At a certain point when these social, economic and political issues become social problems affecting large groups of people, the Church then begins to speak out about them more broadly, more forcefully and in a more official way. Here it might be good to mention the fact that advances in medicine, biology and other sciences have also created new situations and problems calling for continued ethical reflections and moral judgments.

At times some people, even fervent Catholics, attack the Church claiming that church authorities are making statements on issues clearly outside their field and competence. When social, political and economic issues threaten the livelihood of large segments of people, not only does the Church have the obligation to speak out about these problems but the magisterium or the official teaching agency of the universal church gets involved. The Church's social teaching begins to be

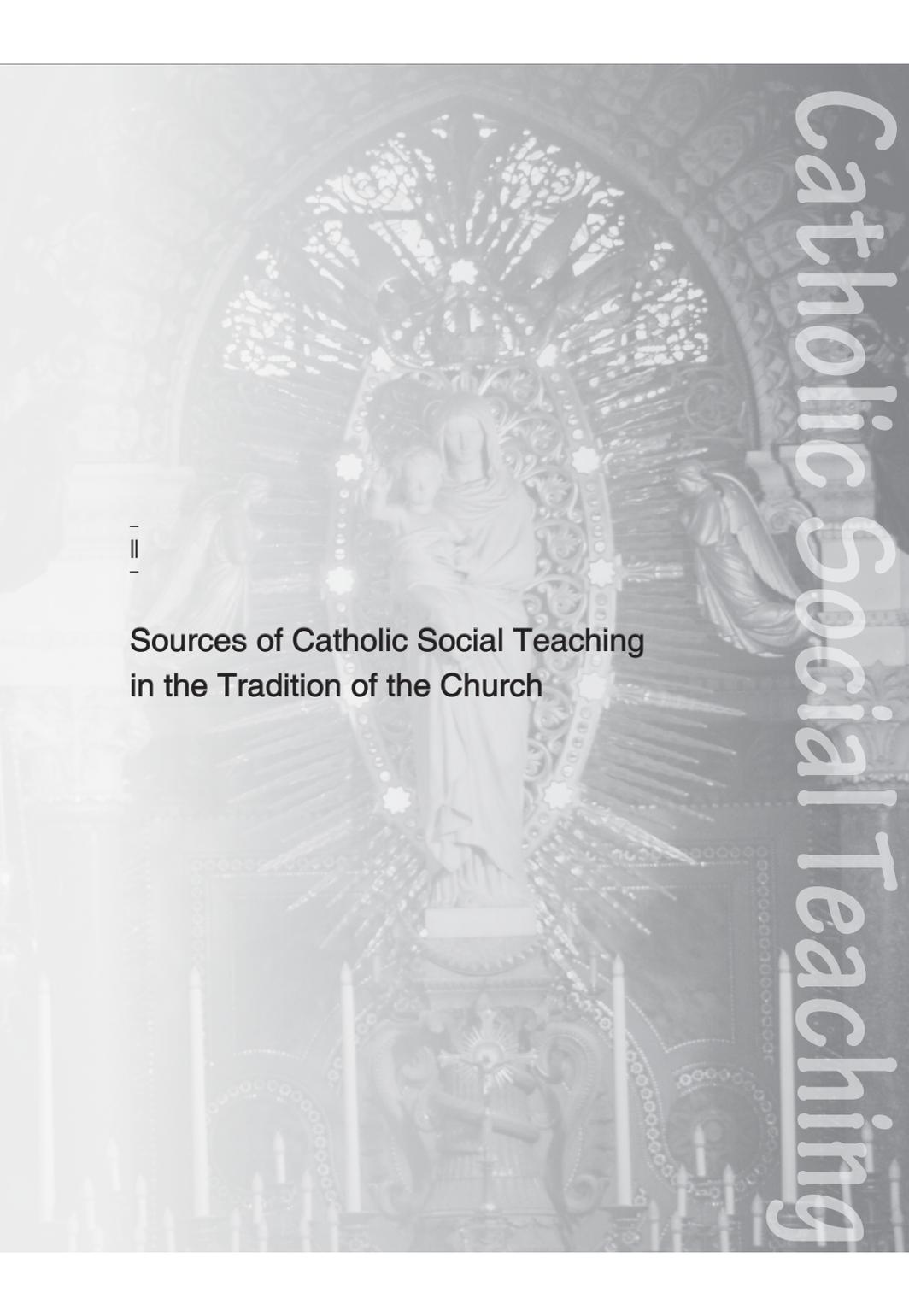
formulated in local church statements and documents and then gradually finds its way into the universal church's teaching in the form of encyclicals.

There is a long tradition in the Catholic Church of speaking out on and tackling social, economic and political issues. Paraphrasing John Paul II, we might say that Catholic social doctrine is based on a set of principles for reflection, criteria for judgment and directives for action proposed by the church's teaching. This is another way of saying that Catholic social doctrine uses the see, judge and act method to promote a better understanding of the problems people are facing and to search out the best solution for them (Cf. *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis*, No. 41.5). In fact John XXIII even insisted that young people especially try to grasp the sense of the see, judge, act method and put it into practice so that the knowledge they acquire not merely remains abstract but be turned into action (Cf. *Mater et Magistra*, Nos. 236-237).

# Catholic Social Teaching

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**Sources of Catholic Social Teaching  
in the Tradition of the Church**



Catholic social teaching has become a very important part of the life of the church in modern times. At the onset we need to understand the sources of Catholic social teaching, see where it came from as well as how it evolved through historical situations over the centuries into the form we now know. To do this we should first of all make a kind of review or overview of the evolution of Catholic social teaching to situate its origins, put it into historical perspective and by so doing discover its sources. Probably the best way to do this will be by making a very brief trip through the scriptures and the history of the church in regard to social problems.

## 1. Scriptural Sources of Social Teaching

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### 1) The Old Testament

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Holy Scripture is the very first source of Catholic social teaching and the first place we discover human beings who believe in God becoming aware of and responding to social problems. Biblical revelation is very social. One of the most

central themes of the Old Testament is the covenant and how God related to the people of Israel. Israel was God's chosen people. A people, is an interrelated group. As the people related to each other they also began to function as a group and became a nation. As God's chosen people the Israelites also had to relate to God! God wanted the people of Israel to relate to each other in the way God related to them. In various ways the reality of just who God is, was gradually revealed to the people of Israel and they developed their understanding of God.

We might express their understanding of God as follows:

- God is the Creator of the universe and as such God is at the service of the people because God creates and sustains life!
- God is just!
- God is merciful!
- God loves the poor, the weak, the outcasts and the marginalized! Biblical revelation expresses this as caring for the poor, the foreigners, the widows, the orphans and those who suffer.
- God is a liberator of the oppressed!

The Old Testament prophets continually reminded the Jewish

People that as God's chosen people they were obliged to treat each other with justice and equality. They were to be ever ready to liberate the weak and the oppressed. The prophets wanted the People of Israel to have a particular care for the poor because that is how God related to them. God wanted the chosen people to demonstrate God's very own concern for the poor and the weak in the actions of their daily life. The prophets constantly reminded the People of Israel that respect for justice was a central concern of their religious faith. They were to construct a society with just political structures, economics and social relationships. The concepts of sabbatical years and jubilee years were in fact structures put in place periodically to assure that no person or group of persons would have a long term monopoly of material goods.

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## 2) The Gospels

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In the New Testament God makes a new covenant with all of mankind. All are invited to enter the reign of God proclaimed by Jesus—a kingdom in which we relate to each other as sisters and brothers because we are all daughters and sons of Abba, a

loving parent. Jesus calls us not only to relate to each other in justice, fairness and equality, but as his own sisters and brothers or members of the same family. Jesus calls us, his followers, to liberate those held as captives, the weak and the oppressed. As we follow Jesus into the Kingdom of God, we should concern ourselves with the plight of the poor, the weak, the destitute and the people who fall between the cracks of our society precisely because they are our sisters and brothers in the Lord.

The New Testament teaching of Jesus, especially the Sermon on the Mount, calls us not only to justice but to love and concern for one another, to purity of heart and intention. Purity of heart means we refuse to use people just for our personal pleasure, for economic gain or for “pecking order” gain. Jesus’ parables point out how we should relate to God and to each other. Jesus’ gospel is a veritable call to action. Jesus commands his followers to love God above all but to do so concretely by loving our neighbors. We all try to do this on an individual basis but we also have to do so collectively by working for justice or, as Dorothy Day expresses it, “...for a world in which it’s easier for people to do good.”

The gospels are full of social wisdom. From Chapter 19 of St.

Matthew's gospel onward, we discover the gentle and loving Jesus is also capable of getting very tough with the leaders of Israel. At the beginning of Chapter 19 Jesus leaves Galilee and goes to Judea and Jerusalem. Jesus somehow knows he will have to struggle with the Jewish leadership. The parable concerning the workers in the vineyard (Matthew 20, 1-16), the parable of the two sons (Matthew 21, 28-32) and the parable of the evil tenants (Matthew 21, 33-46) were all very open attacks on the incongruities and hypocrisy of the political and religious leaders of the Jewish people. The Jewish leaders did not hesitate to fight back. Their counterattacks on Jesus led to the tragedy of his passion and death—a tragedy that is ongoing all over the world. In fact, Jesus' death and resurrection proclaim justice and the need to build the Kingdom of God. Nevertheless, we must always bear in mind that although Jesus preached justice and equality, justice is always tempered by mercy, love and forgiveness. As one proponent of Christian values expressed it; absolute justice would leave us all toothless and sightless! (Cf. Matthew 5, 38-42)

In Matthew 22, 15-22, on paying taxes to Caesar, Jesus did something very important. He dethroned political power. Jesus

turns the situation upside down. He tells the Pharisees and the Herodians first of all to give God what belongs to God. The very first obligation of every human being and the Ten Commandments' first tenet is recognizing God's supremacy. Jesus in no way denies that politicians have power but he clearly demonstrates that that power comes ultimately from God, the Supreme Power and thus the source of all power.

As Christians we must all do our duty as citizens of the commonwealth. Each and every lowly citizen pays taxes but every large earner and big companies should pay their fair share of the tax burden as well. Contributing to civic life and the common good, respecting civil authority and observing the laws of the land are everyone's duty. Every follower of Jesus has the duty of working to transform unfair situations and change unjust laws to bring about God's Kingdom. Jesus takes the divinity out of political power (Cf. John 18, 32-40)! Jesus declares himself a king but not a political king. He is the king of truth, justice, love and mercy and the Church's Social Teaching deals with precisely those issues: truth, justice, love and mercy.

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### 3) The Epistles

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St. Paul's first letter to the Corinthians dates back to the years 55 or 56 but Paul probably arrived in Corinth for the first time in the years 50 to 52. Thus in 1 Corinthians Paul gives us the very first scriptural description of how the early Christian community gathered weekly in observance of God's command to worship by gathering to celebrate the Eucharist on Sundays as a remembrance of Jesus' sacrifice on the cross and his resurrection from the dead. Right from the beginning of the Church, the faithful believed the Holy Eucharist renders Jesus present in the body of the Church and in everyone who believed in him.

Nevertheless, in 1 Corinthians 11, 23-26 Paul describes the Eucharistic celebration in a Christian community marked by divisions; one that had drifted away from Jesus' teaching that all human beings are equal in the eyes of the Lord. Paul's description of the Corinthians as a community composed of sinners full of ambitions in which some even vaunt their social standing over others is blistering. Paul reminds the Corinthians and us that to be truly Christian we must make every effort to

remove what divides us and temper ambitions so that everyone has the necessary to live a human life. The Eucharist described by Paul is not only a spiritualized effort but must be a truly concrete sign of human solidarity that reaches even the weakest and humblest of our sisters and brothers.

The Epistle of St. James warns against the sin of partiality or judging people by their fine appearances and urges the faithful to love their neighbors as themselves. He encourages the faithful to not only profess their faith but to demonstrate it by living and acting as Jesus taught (Cf. James, 2).

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#### 4) The Acts of the Apostles

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Sharing possessions and food was one of the signs of the first Christian community (Cf. Acts of the Apostles 2, 42-47; 4, 32-37). The early church propagated the belief that all persons were sisters and brothers of the Lord Jesus and thus God's beloved and precious children. Dealing justly and mercifully with each other is a principal value of social relations in the Christian perspective. As Christianity spread, this idea of all persons as sisters and brothers of Jesus and children of God penetrated into

the structures of civil society. Right from its origins Christianity always tried to make society more just and more fraternal for all, but especially for the poorest and the weakest.

When we read through the Acts of the Apostles we sometimes get the impression that the first Christian communities lived in great harmony. We know from Paul's epistles that, in fact, various kinds of serious divisions and dissensions existed in the first non-Jewish Christian communities. Luke certainly knew this but he chose to show us an ideal way of how Christians should live together and work out their difficulties.

Luke's formula for being a good Christian insisted on thanking God for the gratuitous gift of salvation and on the need to pass this gift on to others. For Luke, attaching oneself to money or to the jealousy, maliciousness and deceitful behavior of those who persecuted Christians was out of place in a truly Christian community.

Luke presents us with a rather idealized portrait of Christian life in the first apostolic communities. There people gathered to pray, celebrate meals taken together and share their belongings with the poor. He introduces us to the fundamental elements of Christian community as lived in the early church—

teaching(didache and kerygma), the true sign of fellowship which meant giving to the poor(koinonia), breaking bread(eucharistia), and praying together. Nevertheless amidst all these signs and wonders, we read about Ananias and Saphira's deceit in selling land and pretending to give everything to the poor(Acts of the Apostles 5, 1-11) We also read about how the disputes concerning dividing up material help between the Hebrew and Hellenist widows threatened to divide this idealized community(Cf. Acts of the Apostles 6, 1-7).

The Acts of the Apostles relate that St. Paul was converted when he realized that by persecuting the believers of the Risen Christ, he was persecuting Jesus, the Son of God. In his epistle to the Romans St. Paul already reflected and touched on the delicate problem of the relationship of Christians with the state.

Stated very briefly, the Church's social teaching by striving first of all to communicate the basic messages and social teachings of the bible gets its inspiration and strength from scripture. God calls us to reveal to all peoples that as God's children each and every person is precious in God's sight and everyone has value and worth.

## 2. Social Teaching in the History of the Church

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### 1) The End of the Persecutions and the Fathers of the Church

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At the end of the persecutions the first Christians struggled with the problems of having to live in the Roman Empire that for so long adored the state as a god and enslaved conquered peoples. Christians in the first centuries of the first millennium dealt with many of the same issues that plague us today: the issues of riches and poverty, war and peace and social relationships lived out in a society devoid of Christian values. The bible faith of the early Christians taught respect for individuals, the dignity of the human person and the need to share the goods of the earth in the social atmosphere of the Roman Empire where the accumulation of wealth and the power of the strongest were the paramount and most sought after values.

The Fathers of the Church made the basic Christian message more explicit especially in regard to the morality of warfare and the ownership of property. In the western church St. Ambrose and St. Augustine were conspicuous for their preaching and

writing on behalf of the poor and the weak. St. Clement of Alexandria, St. Basil the Great, St. Gregory of Nyssa and other revered eastern church leaders also protected the poor and the oppressed by preaching and writing on their behalf. St. John Chrysostom made it quite clear to the rich people of his time that since the goods of this earth were meant for all, should they not use their riches to help the poor they would be guilty of robbery!

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## 2) The Patristic Age

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In his reflection on the Church, *Long Have I Loved You* (Orbis Books, Maryknoll, N.Y., 2000, Cf. especially Chapter Nine, pages 268-274) Fr. Walter J. Burghardt, a scholar in patristic theology claims “ the miraculous triumph of early Christianity was due in large measure to a radical sense of community.” The first Christians put into practice their conviction about the proper use of material possessions by their impressive and practical way of aiding the needy. Fr. Burghardt points out 5 themes of paramount importance to Christians in the patristic age.

① First, Christianity had to transform the values of the Greco-Roman world it inhabited—specifically, an attitude toward property, possessions. Listen to one early document, *the Didache*: “Do not turn away from the needy; rather, share everything with your brother, and do not say, ‘It is private property.’ If you are sharers in what is imperishable, how much more so in the things that perish!” (*Didache* 4.8) For the first Christians sharing was more important than possessing.

② Second, to attain that attitude, a conversion of the human heart is indispensable. To become genuine Christians, the rich must become detached from their riches. Particularly impressive in this regard is Clement of Alexandria, the head of the catechetical school in that cosmopolitan city about the year 200. His homily, *The Rich Man’s Salvation*, attempts to confront difficulties faced by the prosperous among the faithful in a narrow interpretation of such Gospel commands as “If you wish to be perfect, go, sell your possessions, and give the money to the poor” (Mt 19:21). He insists that the text cannot intend to exclude the wealthy from God’s kingdom. What, then does it mean? Simply, banish from your soul your “attachment” to

wealth, your “excessive desire for it,” your “diseased excitement over it.” “Wealth is an instrument....You can use it justly; then it will serve justice. If it is used unjustly, it will be the servant of injustice. So what is to be destroyed is not one’s possessions but the passions of the soul, which hinder the right use of one’s belongings....” (Clement of Alexandria, *The Rich Man’s Salvation* 11-17)

What can motivate men and women to be at once affluent and poor in spirit? Love of God, love of Christ, love of one’s sisters and brothers. Here a remarkably original thinker and writer, Origen, waxed passionate in his effort to liberate the rich from the acquisitiveness, the greed that the early Church regarded as a form of idolatry: “God...knows that what a man loves with all his heart and soul and might—this for him is God. Let each one of us now examine himself and silently in his own heart decide which is the flame of love that chiefly and above all else is afire within him, which is the passion that he finds he cherishes more keenly than all others.... Whatever it is that weighs the heaviest in the balance of your affection, that for you is God. But I fear that with very many the love of gold will turn the scale, that down will come the weight of covetousness lying heavy in the balance.” (Origen, *Homily on the Book of Judges* 2.3.)

③ Third, basic to the fresh Christian attitude is a traditional patristic belief: God created the material universe for all humankind; the rich are essentially earth's stewards. Listen to a remarkably pastoral fourth-century bishop, Ambrose of Milan: "God has ordered all things to be produced so that there should be food in common for all, and that the earth should be the common possession of all. Nature, therefore, has produced a common right for all, but greed has made it a right for the few." (Ambrose, *Duties of the Clergy* 1.132.) To Ambrose, the Old Testament tale of Ahab and Naboth (1 Kings 21: 1-29) is a human constant: "Ahab is not one person, someone born long ago; every day, alas, the world sees Ahabs reborn, never to die out.... Neither is Naboth one person, a poor man once murdered; every day some Naboth is done to death, every day the poor are murdered." (Ambrose, *Naboth 1*).

Significantly, the Fathers denied not the right to private property but its greedy misuse. In John Chrysostom's words, the rich they attacked "are not the rich as such, only those who misuse their wealth." (John Chrysostom, *The Fall of Eutropius* 2.3) Still, many of the fourth-century Church Fathers saw in private property a root of human dissension; in the struggle for

possessions they found a subversion of God’s original order. Listen to Chrysostom again: “When one attempts to possess himself of anything, to make it his own, then contention is introduced, as if nature herself were indignant, that when God brings us together in every way, we are eager to divide and separate ourselves by appropriating things, and by using those cold words ‘mine and thine.’” (John Chrysostom, Homily 12 on 1 Timothy4 Patrologia graeca [PG])

④ Fourth, an especially powerful motive: the presence of Christ in—Christ identified with—the impoverished and disadvantaged. Here Chrysostom and Augustine wed practical theology and impassioned rhetoric. Chrysostom declares that the poor are more venerable an altar than the altar of stone on which the Sacrifice is offered, on which the body of Christ rests. “The altar [of stone] becomes holy because it receives the body of Christ; the altar [of the poor] because it is the Body of Christ. Therefore it is more awesome than the altar near which you, a layperson, are standing.” (John Chrysostom, Homily 20 on 1 Corinthians 3). [PG 61, 450] Little wonder that Chrysostom urged his people to cover the naked Christ before they ornamented his table,

forbade them to make a golden cup for Christ while they were refusing him a cup of cold water. “Don’t neglect your brother in his distress while you decorate his house. Your brother is more truly his temple than any church building.” (John Chrysostom, Homily 50 on Matthew 4)

For Augustine, “love cannot be divided.” Love the children of God, and you love the Son of God; love the Son of God, and you love the Father. Conversely, you dare not say, you cannot say, that you love Christ if you love not the members of Christ—all his members, without discrimination. And lest we think he is limiting our love to orthodox believers, Augustine insists that the love of Catholics must be utterly catholic—offered, that is, as the grace of God is offered, to all. Even to our enemies—“not because they are your brothers, but that they may become your brothers.” (Augustine, Treatises on the First Letter of John 10.7) [*Patrologia Latina* 35, 2059] Some, Augustine sorrows, “would limit love to the land of Africa!” No, he protests. “Extend your love over the entire earth, if you would love Christ; for the members of Christ lie all over the earth.” (Augustine, Treatises on the First Letter of John 10.7) [*Patrologia Latina* 35, 2060]

⑤ Fifth, the Church of Christ is a community of support and sharing. It is not only the poor, the disadvantaged, the marginalized that benefit from the generosity of the materially fortunate. The orphan and the aged and the widow, wearing what Clement of Alexandria called “the uniform of love,” become “the spiritual bodyguard” of the rich—a return of love that could take many forms: nursing care, intercessory prayer, a kindly word of counsel, even a stinging word of protest. (See Clement’s homily on Mark 10: 17-31, *The Rich Man’s Salvation*)

The early Church as community made possible the gradual ethical, religious, and political transformation of the Roman Empire by integrating Christian culture with Greco-Roman culture’s more admirable elements. This was not only and primarily an effort made by the Church’s clergy, bishops and priests, pastors and teachers but the effort and response of the entire early Christian community. The role the laity played can hardly be exaggerated. Four ways laypersons gave life to the early Church and helped transform the temporal order were martyrdom, political power, monasticism and theology.

Martyrs: In every province of the Roman Empire men,

women and children were put to death or died in prison. Even high-ranking officials of the Roman Senate and knights were threatened with loss of rank and possessions if they refused to sacrifice to the emperor as a god figure.

**Political Power:** At times Christians held influential positions under some emperors and made known their convictions.

**Monasticism:** When the church was being persecuted the martyr was the perfect imitator of Christ, the genuine disciple; martyrdom was the palpable proof of love. As persecution slackened, martyrdom of blood became a specialized vocation reserved for a few. In the search for perfection, the emphasis shifted from a sacrifice of life to a life of sacrifice, a spiritual, day-to-day martyrdom where one renounced not life but the world, fought not beasts but the flesh, defied not an emperor but the devil. Monks became a protest to a culture that extolled having over being, possessing over sharing.

**Theology:** Many of the Fathers of the Church were priests and bishops but some were lay people. Women, now called “Mothers of the Church” also played an important role in showing how to live the Christian life. They formed early monastic and other types of communities for women and also wrote unique

documents on Christian living.

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### 3) Middle Ages

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Medieval schoolmen debated on the morality of charging interest for loans. St. Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274), probably the most famous medieval scholar, formulated a systematic moral theology in his great work the *Summa Theologica* in which he discussed the problems of justice and law. His example inspired other religious, especially Dominicans and Franciscans to elaborate a moral theology that could be applied to social and political life.

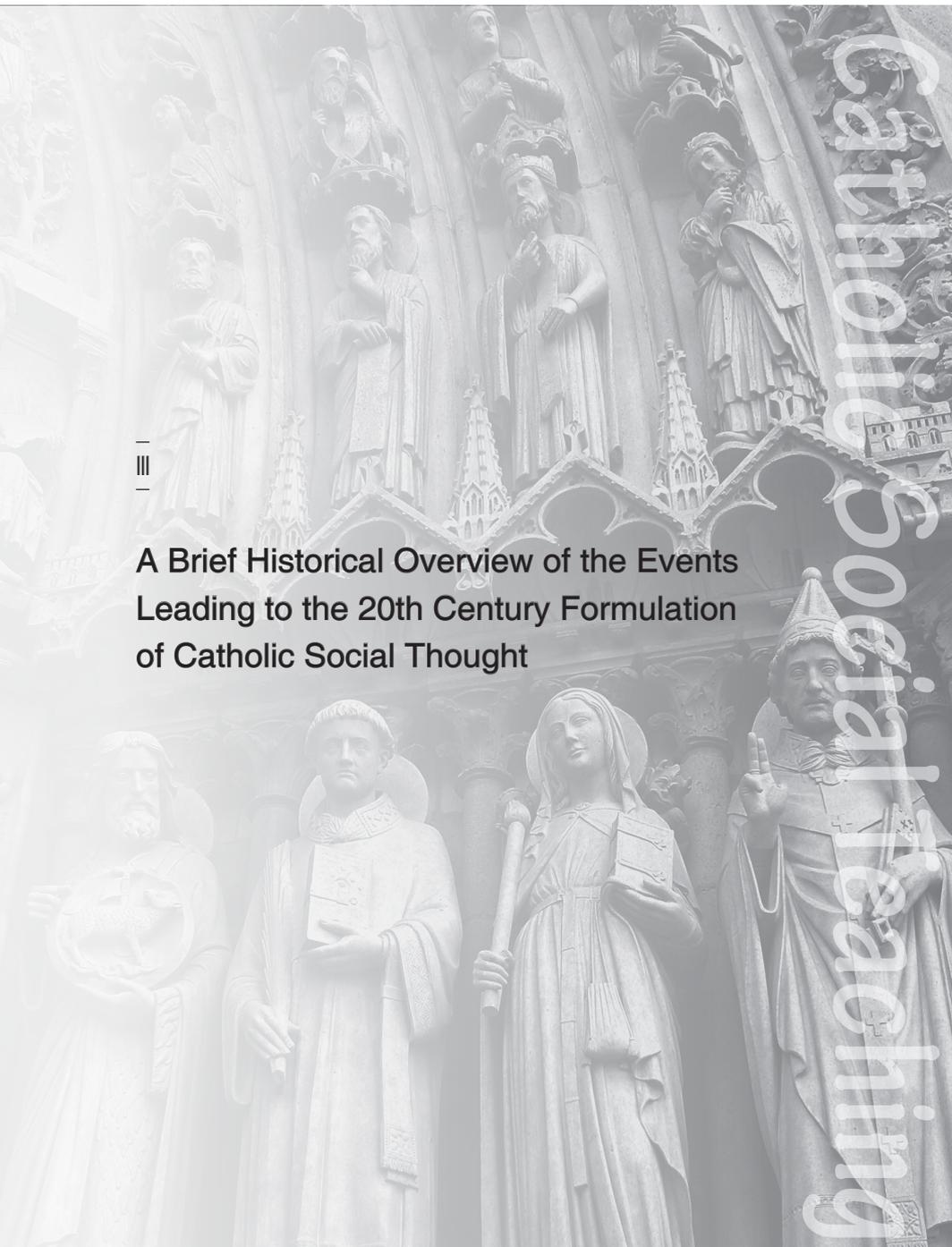
Probably because of the crusades, by the end of the Middle Ages Byzantine and Saracenic culture made its influence felt in Western Europe. Europeans became more and more attracted to the teachings of the ancient Greeks and Romans that had found their way into the monastic schools, as a result of contact with Arabic culture. Gradually they became less attracted to the ascetic and otherworldly atmosphere preached by the friars. Humanism, optimism, hedonism and individualism came into vogue and contrasted with the collectivism of the Middle Ages

that submerged individuals in the guild, in the church and in the social order to which they belonged. This cultural change made way for a rabid egoism that glorified every form of self-assertiveness. Human pride was no longer a cardinal sin but a virtue. Nevertheless the medieval universities that rose up as a result of monastic schools and the study of scholastic philosophy and theology prepared the way for this evolution.

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III  
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**A Brief Historical Overview of the Events  
Leading to the 20th Century Formulation  
of Catholic Social Thought**

Catholic Social Teaching



# 1. The Commercial Revolution and the Fifteenth Sixteenth Centuries

The economic changes marking the transition from the semi-static, localized, non-profit economy of the late Middle-Ages in Europe to a dynamic, world-wide capitalistic regime are referred to as the Commercial Revolution (1400-1700). At this point in European history Italian cities like Venice and Genoa monopolized trade in the Mediterranean Sea. The Italians and the Hanseatic League in Northern Europe gradually set up a very profitable commerce among themselves. These commercial ties necessitated using a common currency. The ducat from Venice and florins from Florence were widely circulated and used. This led to an accumulation of surplus capital from trading, shipping and mining. European monarchs encouraged commerce in order to levy taxes and gather war materials to strengthen their regimes.

In addition better knowledge of geography and the introduction of the compass and the astrolabe from the Moslem world permitted mariners to courageously venture further out to sea and open trade routes from Europe to the Far

East. Europeans were willing to pay high prices for oriental silk and spices. Columbus discovered the New World when he was trying to find a new route to India and the Far East. Trading, shipping and mining not only created new wealth but new social problems as well. Despite the desire of the Spaniards to evangelize newly discovered nations, the Spanish “conquistadores” were mostly motivated by greed. In fact, many in the so-called Christian nations of Europe also began practicing slavery and stealing from indigenous peoples. This new situation pushed the popes to publish social documents on slavery (e.g. Pius II in 1462) and the treatment of native peoples (e.g. Paul III in 1537). The Spanish Dominicans, Bartolome’ de las Casas and Francisco Vitoria, wrote vigorously about the problems of colonization. They strongly denounced the treatment of indigenous peoples in territories conquered by Spain.

Just a few years after the beginning of the Protestant Reformation in 1534, St. Ignatius of Loyola recruited a small band of men in Paris. Compared to the religious of medieval times, Loyola’s Jesuits were not monastic. They lived more closely with the people, especially the young and developed a more contemporary life style. Their spirituality and the education

methods they devised for their schools insisted on a sense of service, a desire to discover new knowledge and openness to the spirit of enterprise of the times. Jesuit spirituality and methods of education made a great contribution to the modernization of culture in Europe. Later on in the Seventeenth Century Great preachers like Bossuet and St. Vincent de Paul had a very strong influence on the social behavior of their times.

## 2. The Intellectual Revolution and the Enlightenment

When the decentralized feudal regime of the Middle-Ages broke down, it was replaced by dynastic states with governments holding absolute power. The Commercial Revolution and the founding of colonial empires reinforced the power of absolute monarchs. Commerce between Europe and the Far East and between the mother countries in Europe and their colonies had to be defended against pirates and brigands. Infant industries needed to be protected. The absolute monarchs and the nation state provided this protection. The Protestant Revolution broke

the unity of the Christian church, abolished papal over-lordship over secular rulers, fostered nationalism and reinforced the growth of royal omnipotence.

The Intellectual Revolution came about because the middle and lower classes enjoyed increased prosperity and the discovery of new knowledge from distant lands and hitherto unknown peoples created an atmosphere in which people yearned to know more. The achievements in science and philosophy upset former and more static ways of thinking. The Enlightenment followed the Intellectual Revolution of the 17th and 18th centuries. The basic concepts underlying the Enlightenment seem to be the following:

- ① Reason is the unique guide to obtaining wisdom.
- ② Inflexible laws guide the universe.
- ③ Natural society is the best.
- ④ There is no such thing as original sin. Humanity is basically good.

In France the Enlightenment gave birth to the Encyclopedists who tried to make a complete summation of all philosophic and scientific knowledge.

Religious persecutions, wars of religion, the Church's

condemnation of Galileo in 1633, church bureaucracy, fundamentalism, authoritarianism and other short-sighted church policies alienated the newly arising scientists and thinkers of the Enlightenment and this in turn led to the French Revolution. The revolutionaries in France replaced the Christian God with deism, agnosticism or atheism that shocked the church establishment at the end of the 18th century. This gathering and storing of knowledge led to the Industrial Revolution.

### 3. The Industrial Revolution

Most historians divide the Industrial Revolution into two phases: Phase I from 1760 to 1860; and Phase II from 1860 to 1950. The main characteristics of the Industrial Revolution were:

- ① The mechanization of industry and agriculture;
- ② The application of power to industry;
- ③ The development of the factory system;
- ④ The speeding up of transportation and communication;
- ⑤ The increase of capitalistic control over economic

activities.

Strangely enough the Industrial Revolution began in Britain, probably the poorest nation in Europe. Perhaps it was because Britain's government was comparatively free from corruption; taxes were collected efficiently; the military establishment cost less than that of the French and trading in securities was organized as a legitimate business. Moreover Britain had the best banking system in Europe and business leaders carried on their activities unhindered by fear of national bankruptcy or ruinous inflation.

## 4. Adam Smith

In addition, Adam Smith, the greatest economist of the age of Enlightenment was a native of Scotland. In 1776 he published his Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of *the Wealth of Nations*, one of the most influential treatises on economics ever written. Smith believed labor, rather than agriculture or the bounty of nature is the real source of wealth. Individuals should pursue their own interests. Nevertheless Smith believed the state should

intervene to prevent injustice and oppression, advance education and protect public health and to establish and maintain necessary enterprises that could never be established by private capital. Although Smith's very broad principles put limitations on laissez faire economics, the bourgeoisie used his theories to propose absolute economic freedom. The initial stage of the Industrial Revolution (1760-1860) saw a phenomenal development of the application of machinery to industry that laid down the foundations for a mechanical civilization.

## 5. The Marxist Socialists

Karl Marx (1818-1883), the son of a Jewish lawyer who had turned Christian for professional reasons, was born at Trier (Treves) nearby Coblenz in Germany's Rhineland. Marx attended the University of Bonn to become a lawyer in accordance to his father's wishes but preferred studying philosophy and history. At the University of Berlin he was influenced by a group of Hegel's disciples who were much more radical than their master. Marx became a doctor of philosophy at the University of Jena in 1841

but his critical views prevented him from becoming a professor. He became a journalist, editing various radical periodicals and contributing articles to others. He was arrested in 1848 of high treason for participating in the revolutionary movement in Prussia. He was acquitted but expelled from the country.

Marx formed an intimate friendship with Friedrich Engels (1820-95). Engels was Marx's lifelong disciple. Together they issued the *Communist Manifesto*, the birth cry of modern socialism in 1848. From then on till his death in 1883 Marx lived and worked in London. He spent most of his time writing the first volume of his famous work *Das Kapital*. Marx's teachings owed much to Hegel and to the French socialist, Louis Blanc (1811-82) and probably to David Ricardo as well. However, Marx brilliantly formed their ideas into a comprehensive system and gave them meaning as a possible explanation of the facts of political economy.

The fundamental points of Marx's theory are as follows:

① The economic interpretation of history: All the great political, social and intellectual movements of history have been determined by the economic environment from which they arose. Marx did not insist that the economic motive is

the sole explanation of human behavior, but he did maintain that every fundamental historical development, regardless of its character on the surface, has been the result of alterations in methods of producing and exchanging goods. Thus the Protestant Revolution was essentially an economic movement; the disagreements over religious belief were mere “ideological veils” concealing the actual causes.

② Dialectical materialism: Every distinct economic system, based upon a definite pattern of production and exchange grows to a point of maximum efficiency, then, develops contradictions or weaknesses within it which produce its rapid decay. Meanwhile the foundations of an opposing system are being gradually laid, and eventually this new system displaces the old, at the same time absorbing its most valuable elements. This dynamic process of historical evolution will continue by a series of victories of the new over the old, until the perfect goal of communism has been attained. After that there will doubtless still be change, but it will be change within the limits of communism itself.

③ The class struggle: All history as been made up of struggles between classes. In ancient times it was a struggle between

masters and slaves and between patricians and plebeians; in the Middle Ages it was a conflict between the guild masters and journeymen and between lords and serfs; now it has been narrowed down to a struggle between the class of capitalists and the proletariat. The former includes those who derive their chief income from owning the means of production and from exploiting the labor of others. The proletariat includes those who are dependent for their living primarily upon a wage, who must sell their labor power in order to exist.

④ The doctrine of surplus value: All wealth is created by the worker. Capital creates nothing, but is itself created by labor. The value of all commodities is determined by the quantity of labor power necessary to produce them. But the worker does not receive the full value which his labor creates; instead he receives a wage, which ordinarily is just enough to enable him to subsist and reproduce his kind. The difference between the value the worker produces and what he receives is surplus value, which goes to the capitalist. In general, it consists of three different elements; interest, rent, and profits. Since the capitalist creates none of these things, it follows that he is a robber, who appropriates the fruits of the laborer's toil.

⑤ The theory of socialist evolution: After capitalism has received its death blow at the hands of the workers, it will be followed by the stage of socialism. This will have three characteristics: the dictatorship of the proletariat; payment in accordance with work performed; and ownership and operation by the state of all means of production, distribution, and exchange. But socialism is intended to be merely a transition to something higher. In time it will be succeeded by communism, the perfect goal of historical evolution. Communism will mean, first of all, the classless society. No one will live by owning, but all men solely by working. The state will now disappear; it will be relegated to the museum of antiquities “along with the bronze ax and the spinning wheel.” Nothing will replace it except voluntary associations to operate the means of production and provide for social necessities. But the essence of communism is payment in accordance with needs. The wage system will be completely abolished. Each citizen will be expected to work in accordance with his faculties and will be entitled to receive from the total fund of wealth produced an amount in proportion to his needs. This is the acme of justice according to the Marxist conception. (Cf. *Western Civilization*, pp.668-670).

The second phase of the Industrial Revolution is distinguished from the first phase not only by technological advances but by the development of new forms of capitalistic organization. Finance capitalism replaced industrial capitalism. The organization of industrial capitalism was marked by partnership. A number of people formed partnerships to conduct business on a large scale. Capital made from profits was reinvested into the business. Owners usually actively managed their companies. Companies from the industrial capitalism era did business in manufacturing, mining or transportation.

The second phase of the Industrial Revolution is the era of Finance capitalism. Finance capitalism has four outstanding characteristics:

- ① the domination of industry by investment banks and insurance companies;
- ② the formation of huge aggregations of capital;
- ③ the separation of ownership from management;
- ④ the growth of holding companies (Cf. *Western Civilizations* p.651).

The Industrial Revolution created the proletariat because it concentrated large numbers of workers in the cities. At the

beginning of the 19th century cities with a population of 100,000 inhabitants or more accounted for only 2% of the population of Europe. By the beginning of the 20th century cities of 100,000 or more accounted for 15% of Europe's population. During the 19th century the population of London, Paris and Vienna multiplied by four and during this same period Berlin's population multiplied eight times! This mass of workers suffered similar abuses that welded them into the worker class, a group of people conscious of their situation and identity. Gradually this mass of workers became infused with a high degree of solidarity that led to the beginnings of a worker movement to fight against the abuses of bad air, suffocating heat, lack of sanitation in the work place and long working hours.

## 6. Christian Socialists

Christian socialism was much less radical in its criticism of capitalist economics. Many historians look on Robert de Lamennais (1782-1854), a French Catholic priest, as the founder of Christian socialism but actually he only carried on a long

tradition of Christian socialism. Robert de Lamennais wanted the Christian religion to be an aid in reforming society and bringing about social justice. Count Henri de Saint-Simon (1760-1825) expressed similar ideas. From France this movement spread to England and was adopted by many Protestant intellectuals. Christian socialism carried on the tradition of applying Jesus' teachings to the problems created by the Industrial Revolution. Initially Rome discouraged the work of the Christian socialists. Early 19th century Christian socialism was an important current that prepared the way for Pope Leo XIII's *Rerum Novarum*. During the 19th and 20th centuries the Catholic parties that issued from Christian socialism in combination with more moderate socialists played an active role in furthering social legislation in many European countries.

Je suis la vérité  
et la vie  
Chemin de vie

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IV  
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The 19th Century Origins  
of the Social Encyclicals  
and Other Papal Pronouncements  
on Social Issues

From the 19th century onwards the problems caused by the Industrial Revolution pushed the Popes to speak out periodically on social problems. We usually refer to the more important of these papal documents as encyclicals. “Encyclical letter means a circular letter. It has been used since the early centuries but since the middle of the eighteenth century has taken on a certain fixed form and is reserved among the numerous types of papal letters to the more solemn treatment of the more important problems.” (Cf. *The Church and the Reconstruction of the Modern World*, Image Books, September 1957, Introduction, page 18)

Most commentators consider Pope Leo XIII’s epoch making encyclical, *Rerum Novarum* as the first important social encyclical. The social encyclicals usually deal with what is referred to as the “social question.” The term “social question” will appear frequently when studying Catholic social teaching. The term “social question” means the ensemble of interrelated problems that have arisen in relation to industrialization and urbanization. The social question deals with how an industrial and urbanized society should structure and organize itself. When industrialization has not occurred, the questions of social justice remain at a very individual level. When society industrializes,

its problems become social problems on a massive scale.

However, Pope Leo's predecessors who governed the church for the greatest part of the 19th century and set the stage for the 20th century were Gregory XVI (1831-46) and Pius IX (1846-78). Both were hardworking, morally upright, and of strong character. They rejected many of the social, economic, and political movements of the time and were unfriendly to those Catholic intellectuals, especially the so-called Christian socialists, who were open to new scientific and historical developments. They spoke out negatively on the issues of liberalism and denied civil rights

One of the main reasons why the 19th century popes took on this attitude was because they felt traditional Catholic teaching highlighted the integration of the individual and society. According to their view of Catholic teaching, the private good of the individual is subordinate to the common good. The task of the government was to enhance the common good. Gregory XVI and Pius IX complained that 19th century liberal political philosophy elevated the individual to such great heights it undermined the common good and destroyed the traditional order of society. Classical liberalism claimed government should govern as little as possible and allow maximum liberty

in all spheres of activity such as industrial production and trade, religion, thought, speech, press, assembly, and so on.

The 19th century popes wanted Catholicism to be the religion of the state wherever possible because otherwise, they felt people would fall into indifferentism. By so doing they related political liberalism to economic liberalism and argued that in an unbridled free market system the rich could suppress the poor! (Cf. *The Catholic Tradition*, by Timothy G. McCarthy, Loyola Press, 1998, page 40) The historical impression made by these two popes is one of authoritarianism. Despite a seeming unconcern with the social condition of working people, their denunciation of liberalism nevertheless demonstrates that in many ways the Christian instincts of these popes were correct. Pope Leo XIII at the end of the 19th century would in many ways affirm the best aspects of his predecessors' teaching, discard other aspects, and move social teaching ahead.

## 1. A Brief Survey of the Origins of *Rerum Novarum*

Pope Leo XIII's Encyclical *Rerum Novarum* published in

1891 is a very important document and milestone in the history of the social teaching of the church. Leo XIII's landmark encyclical should not have been a very revolutionary document. After all 1860 years had passed since Jesus Christ had reminded us all that our reactions to poverty will ultimately determine whether we are saved or damned (Cf. *Christian Socialism*, by John Cort, Orbis Books, p 284). However *Rerum Novarum* had an explosive impact not only on the church but the way society in large would look on the so-called "social question." *Rerum Novarum* came forty-three years after the publication of Karl Marx's 1848 Communist Manifesto which was an important document but "which itself certainly did not represent the full development of either the idea or the fact of European socialism" (ibid. Cort page 284).

*Rerum Novarum* was the result of a long process of thought and debate within the 19th century Catholic Church. Already in 1848 Fr. Wilhelm Von Ketteler, (1811-1877), then a parish priest in Berlin, delivered six Advent sermons on behalf of workers in the Mainz Cathedral that rocked the conscience of German Catholicism. Years later on September 5, 1869 Von Ketteler had become the Bishop of Mainz and during the assembly of

German bishops he spoke out clearly for the prohibition rights of child labor in factories, and against low wages, long work hours, inadequate time for rest and vacation, the question of working women, the obligation to care for workers who are temporarily or permanently disabled, and the appointment by the state of factory inspectors. (Cf. *Catholic Social Teaching And Movements* by Marvin L. Krier Mich, Twenty-Third Publications, 1998, pages 6-8)

Kettler's solution pointed out "the dangers in both the unlimited competition of liberal capitalism and the exaggerated state control of the socialists. He defended the right of state intervention against the liberal capitalists and the right of private property against the totalitarian tendencies of the socialists. (ibid. Bokenkotter, p.335). During an 1869 trip to Germany Marx wrote a letter to Engels in which he made mention of the activity of Bishop Von Kettler and other socially active priests labeling it, according to his mentality as reactionary. (Cf. K. Marx Brief an F. Engels vom 29.9.1869 in *MEGA* 3. Abt. N. 227.) However Kettler's approach impacted German social legislation far more than Marx's radical approach.

On October 18, 1884 Prince Karl von Lowenstein and Count Franz Kuefstein of Austria, along with Rene de la Tour du

Pin and Louis Milcent of France first met in the residence of Bishop Gaspard Mermillod of Lausanne, Switzerland. They organized the Fribourg Union and considered Bishop Ketteler as their spiritual father but Bishop Mermillod was their guiding force. The Fribourg Union, a predominantly lay group of 20 to 32 persons that included theologians, political leaders and aristocrats, met every October from 1885 to 1891. This theological and social think tank of concerned laity and clergy worked out their ideas in small groups and presented their findings to the full body. Although the group reported their findings to Pope Leo XIII every year, because of their conflicts with “laissez-faire liberal economic theorists, Bishop Mermillod suggested they work in secret until they could present a well-formed body of doctrine to the Pope.

The members of the Fribourg Union realized that:

- ① charity was not enough to solve the social problems of society;
- ② just wages must be paid to the workers who should not be considered a mere commodity;
- ③ social Catholics believed that state intervention was

necessary when free contracts on wages were oppressive to the worker and correct abuses so that workers would receive what is necessary for their subsistence. The Fribourg Union emphasized the right of each person to subsist and this right limited and tempered

- ④ the right to private property.
- ⑤ The Fribourg Union members also wanted a corporatively organized society or an organic model of society in which people would be organized according to their common interests and common social function

Unfortunately in the first part of the 20th century, Fascism used this concept of a corporately organized society to defend totalitarianism.

In England Henry Edward Cardinal Manning, a convert from Anglicanism, successfully identified the English Roman Catholic Church with the cause of labor. In an 1874 lecture, “The Rights and Dignity of Labour”, Manning forcefully defended the right of the worker to organize, called for laws to regulate the hours of work, and made a plea for people to look into the

horrible abuses associated with child labor. The 1889 London dock strike was a big turning point in the history of the English labor movement. The 82 year-old Manning took the lead in forming an arbitration committee and brought about a settlement satisfactory to the workers. They showed their gratitude by organizing a huge cortege at his funeral which, according to some, even rivaled the funeral of Queen Victoria.

Manning also helped the American Cardinal Gibbons of Baltimore save the most influential American labor union of the time, the Knights of Labor, from a Roman condemnation because they had organized themselves as a secret society. They did this to avoid the infiltration of elements hostile to labor. Cardinal Gibbons persuaded the Knights of Labor to drop the secrecy of their organization. Two thirds of the Knights of Labor, including the president, Terence Powderly, were Catholics. England's Cardinal Manning provided Gibbons with valuable information about curia politics. The success of the Catholic Church in the United States in maintaining the loyalty of the working class was a major influence on Pope Leo's decision to issue an encyclical. While the Europeans were a powerful theoretical influence in

shaping the first social encyclical, the practical success of the American church with labor also exerted a very practical and positive influence.

In Italy the Opera dei Congressi, a union of Italian Catholic organizations having as its scope to study and resolve the Roman question, had a very developed section dealing with social matters. At first they focused their attention on Italy's rural problems and in the North developed the *casse rurali*. Gradually they began to discuss the issues facing groups in other countries like the question of individual or family wages, state intervention in social affairs and whether workers organizations should be composed only of workers or as groups with employers and managers. Italians attended the 1889 Fribourg meetings and Msgr. Talamo, a very intelligent and talented social thinker who was very much aware of social issues in Italy founded the Catholic Union for Social Studies in Italy to further the social activity already undertaken within the Opera dei Congressi.

## 2. The Essential Teaching of Pope Leo XIII's 1891 Encyclical *Rerum Novarum*

Pope Leo's encyclical calls attention to the suffering of workers. He condemns the socialist solution to the poverty of the workers because, among other reasons, it denies the right to private property. Leo insists the state has a role to play by intervening when necessary to protect the weak and reform unjust institutions. He insists on a living wage for workers and their families. He also teaches that workers have the natural and God-given right to organize and that the state must protect the right of people to create organizations because that natural right of human beings to organize themselves for their mutual profit is the very basis of the state itself (Cf. *Rerum Novarum* #50)!

Pope Leo XIII wrote his encyclical *Rerum Novarum* as a response to the new problems caused by the abuses that came to the surface during the 19th century industrial revolution. Pope Leo saw the newly evolving work environment as dehumanizing. Materialistic capitalism was spreading in Europe and North America. Pope Leo felt that this form of capitalism made human labor just one more commodity to be bought

and sold on the market. As a result human labor had become commercialized according to the laws of supply and demand. This robbed the working man and woman of their dignity. It lowered work to something that could merely be bought and sold according to the needs of supply and demand.

Such a situation also put worker families in peril. If work simply became one more material element in the industrial process, it was then just a part of the material process. In so doing materialistic capitalism risked making work only one more part of the process of production. That meant the destruction of the social dimension of human work. Workers no longer contributed to the common good. They were simply just one more step in the manufacturing process.

The needs of a free market should not and could not be the only gauge to the value of work. Workers needed a living wage to live decent human lives and raise their families. They needed what was necessary to feed, clothe, house and educate their families. Employers had no right to higher profits if their workers did not have what was necessary for their safety on the job and everyday livelihood. Nevertheless Pope Leo knew wages could vary from nation to nation and might not be the

same everywhere.

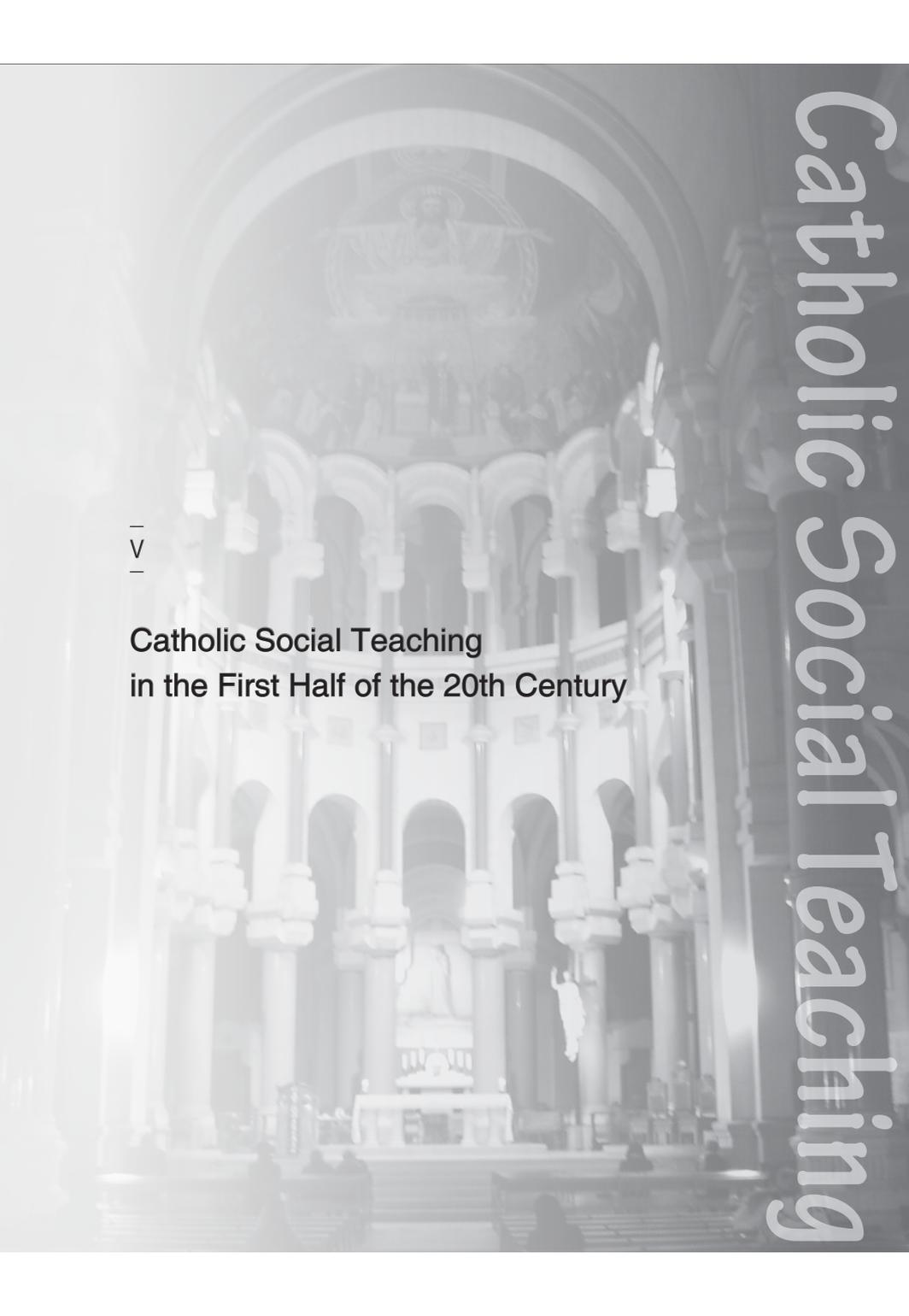
Pope Leo wanted to imbue a social sense of community and not a warlike struggle between employers and workers. He believed that unions and workers organizations were necessary to obtain a living wage so that families would not only survive but thrive. Pope Leo, therefore, insisted on the workers' natural and God-given right to form unions and other associations to protect the dignity of the worker. Mutual cooperation between labor and capitalists was necessary to humanize the worker environment.

Leo's encyclical, very much a product of its times and the people who wrote it, has its strengths and weaknesses and as such demonstrates that the church's social teaching is a dynamic living tradition that is constantly developing. Was *Rerum Novarum* too timid or too bold? It all depends on the point of view. Conservatives saw it as breaking with tradition. More radically minded people then and now look on *Rerum Novarum* as too little too late. The encyclical certainly gave strong impetus to the labor union movement and gave Catholics a fairly coherent body of moral and social teachings to guide social activism.

# Catholic Social Teaching

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**Catholic Social Teaching  
in the First Half of the 20th Century**



## 1. Pius X (1903-1914) and Benedict XV (1914-1922)

When Pope Leo died in 1903 Pope Pius X succeeded him. Pius X, a canonized saint, was mainly interested in the reform of the institutional life of the church—frequent communion, reform of canon law, restoration of Gregorian chant and the formation of priests. He was adamant about ecclesiastical discipline and led the battle against modernist scholars. For progressive minds this humble and holy churchman seemed like a step backward in time.

Pius X's death on August 20 1914 coincided with the outbreak of World War I. Benedict XV, a former Vatican diplomat and undersecretary of state, became Pope in September 1914. He maintained absolute neutrality during the war and was accused by all sides of favoring their respective proponents. The situation at the time of his pontificate was such that he had to deal mainly with the problems caused by the war and its aftermath. Moreover since the Roman question, or the problem of relations between Italy and the Vatican after the Kingdom of Savoy seized the Papal States 1870 and annexed them to make a united Italy, remain unresolved, the Vatican suffered diplomatic

isolation.

## 2. Pius XI and Reconstructing the Social Order

(1922-1939)

Pius XI's papacy coincided with the rise of dictators to power in many European states. Pius XI did his best to come to terms with these dictators in order to further the work of the church. With Mussolini he signed the Lateran Concordat in which the Pope surrendered all claims to Italian territory in return for complete sovereignty over Vatican City and a privileged status for the Catholic religion in Italy. Nevertheless Pius XI eventually condemned Fascist ideology and his encyclical *Non Habbiamo Bisgno* made Mussolini back down after the dictator tried to suppress Italian Catholic Action.

In front of Hitler's belligerence toward the church, Pius XI met the challenge with a decisiveness that astonished the world. His encyclical *Mit brennender Sorge* was the first official public document to dare confront and criticize Nazism. (Cf. *A Concise History of the Catholic Church* by Thomas Bokenkotter, Image Books, 1977, pp 401-405) *Secret messengers distributed Mit brennender Sorge,*

dated March 14, 1937 (Passion Sunday) in Germany only a few hours before its reading in all churches. Just five days after Pius XI published the encyclical on the situation in Germany, he also promulgated an encyclical On Atheistic Communism on March 19, 1937. Then nine days later on March 28, 1937 he issued another encyclical, *Firmissimam, on the religious situation in Mexico* (*Nos Es Muy Conocida*). Pius also issued encyclicals on education and Christian marriage. His most important contribution to Catholic Social Teaching was his longest encyclical, *Quadragesimo Anno*, published on May 15, 1931 on the 40th Anniversary of *Rerum Novarum*.

Unfortunately, it took forty years after *Rerum Novarum* and a major worldwide financial and economic crisis for this major pronouncement on workers and the conditions under which they worked to see the light of day. Pius XI made an assessment of what Pope Leo's *Rerum Novarum* had done to change the worker situation. Pius XI and other popes as well, usually did a "re-reading" of *Rerum Novarum*, when writing social encyclicals. Pius XI again addressed the mistake of considering the worker as a commodity of production. What workers did in the workplace had more than just a monetary value. Pius XI's

encyclical tried to underline the spiritual and social value of work.

Pius XI insisted on the need for private property but also pointed out that God gave the goods of the earth to all peoples and only secondarily to private individuals (Cf. #s 54 and 56). He pointed out that a just division of private property was always a social goal (Cf. *Q.A.* #s 27 and 28 concerning the principle of just retribution or distributive justice). Pius XI lamented the fact that “...dead matter comes forth from the factory ennobled while ‘men’ <sic> there are corrupted and degraded.” (Cf. *Q.A.* # 55 last sentence) He also insisted that “...the first and immediate apostles to the workers ought to be workers!” (Cf. *Q.A.* # 141)

### 3. Pius XII's Radio Addresses

Pius XII ascended to the papal throne in 1939 while Europe was engulfed in the beginnings of World War II. Pius XII used Christmas radio addresses in 1941, 1942 and 1944 to make strong statements on labor, the conditions for peace, and international cooperation. These radio addresses were truly well-

thought out and expressed “mini” encyclicals. In the 1942 radio address Pius XII insisted on the dignity and rights of human beings, the necessity of protecting the family and enhancing the dignity and prerogatives of labor by providing a just wage not only for the worker and the worker’s family but also to promote the social order and education.

In his 1944 radio address Pius XII called for the construction of a social order in which peace would be possible. He wanted a society based on peace and a social order that respected human dignity by striving for the solidarity of the human family. Pius XII’s desire was that the new international structures that would be put in place at the end of the war should advance the unity of the human race and the family of nations. These structures should be real and effective but also recognize the sovereignty of each state. Wars of aggression should be outlawed and proscribed.

## 4. Pope John XXIII—A Time of Transition

Pope John was elected in 1958 a month before his seventy-

seventh birthday. Since he was already a very old man, most commentators inside and outside the church had a tendency to dismiss him as a transition Pope who would do very little and leave no lasting mark. How mistaken they were! Pope John XXIII's style was direct, familiar, positive and realistic—a marked departure from that of his predecessors. Good Pope John was the pope with the common touch and an extraordinary sense of humor!

Nevertheless, Pope John XXIII's pontificate was a time of transition. It marked a turning point between two distinct stages of development in Catholic social teaching. In the first stage the church was confronted with the process of industrialization and the social and economic problems that accompanied this process. In the second stage the church centers its concerns much more on authentic human development and the participation of all peoples in this development. After World War II tremendous changes took place around the globe. New countries emerging from colonialism wanted to develop their own national economies in their own way. The way modern people lived in society, the complex relationships that now existed in governments and between governments and how

government institutions related to people called for new ideas were all new problems that needed new answers. Pope John, well aware of the “signs of the times,” decided to convoke Vatican II.

Like Pius XI, John XXIII insisted on the principle of subsidiarity (Cf. *Quadragesimo Anno* # 35 and *Mater et Magistra* #152). He warned that if an organization destroys the individual’s sense of responsibility or squashes contributions to the common good, worker dignity and the principle of subsidiarity are denied.

In *Mater et Magistra* John XXIII used the word “socialization” (or *socializatio* in Latin) This upset many commentators. This word has a variety of meanings but for American and British economists it is synonymous with nationalization or the public control and ownership of production and distribution of goods and services. In psychology and sociology it refers to the process by which a child gradually learns to live in society. John XXIII noted that one of the principal characteristics of our age made living more complex and demanded an increase in social relationships or socialization (Cf. *Mater et Magistra* # 59) To balance this trend, companies must give workers more education and a way to participate in establishing the work process (Cf. # 75).

Later on, however, Vatican II's *In the Pastoral on the Church in the Modern World*(*Gaudium et Spes*) clearly defined what Pope John had already expressed in *Mater et Magistra* when it declared: "Among those social ties which man needs for his development some, like the family and the political community, relate with greater immediacy to his innermost nature. Others originate from his free decision. In our era, for various reasons, reciprocal ties and mutual dependencies increase day by day and give rise to a variety of associations and organizations, both public and private. This development, which is called socialization, while certainly not without its dangers, brings with it many advantages with respect to consolidating and increasing the qualities of the human person, and safeguarding his rights (*Mater et Magistra* #25)."

John XXIII pushed for workers to become owners of the means of production by, for example, receiving a part of their salary in the form of company stocks (Cf. *Mater et Magistra* # 82). Pope John also insisted on the SEE-JUDGE-ACT method employed by the YCW in their meetings as a way for young people to be balanced in their approach to work and life issues (Cf. *Mater et Magistra* #'s 236 and 237).

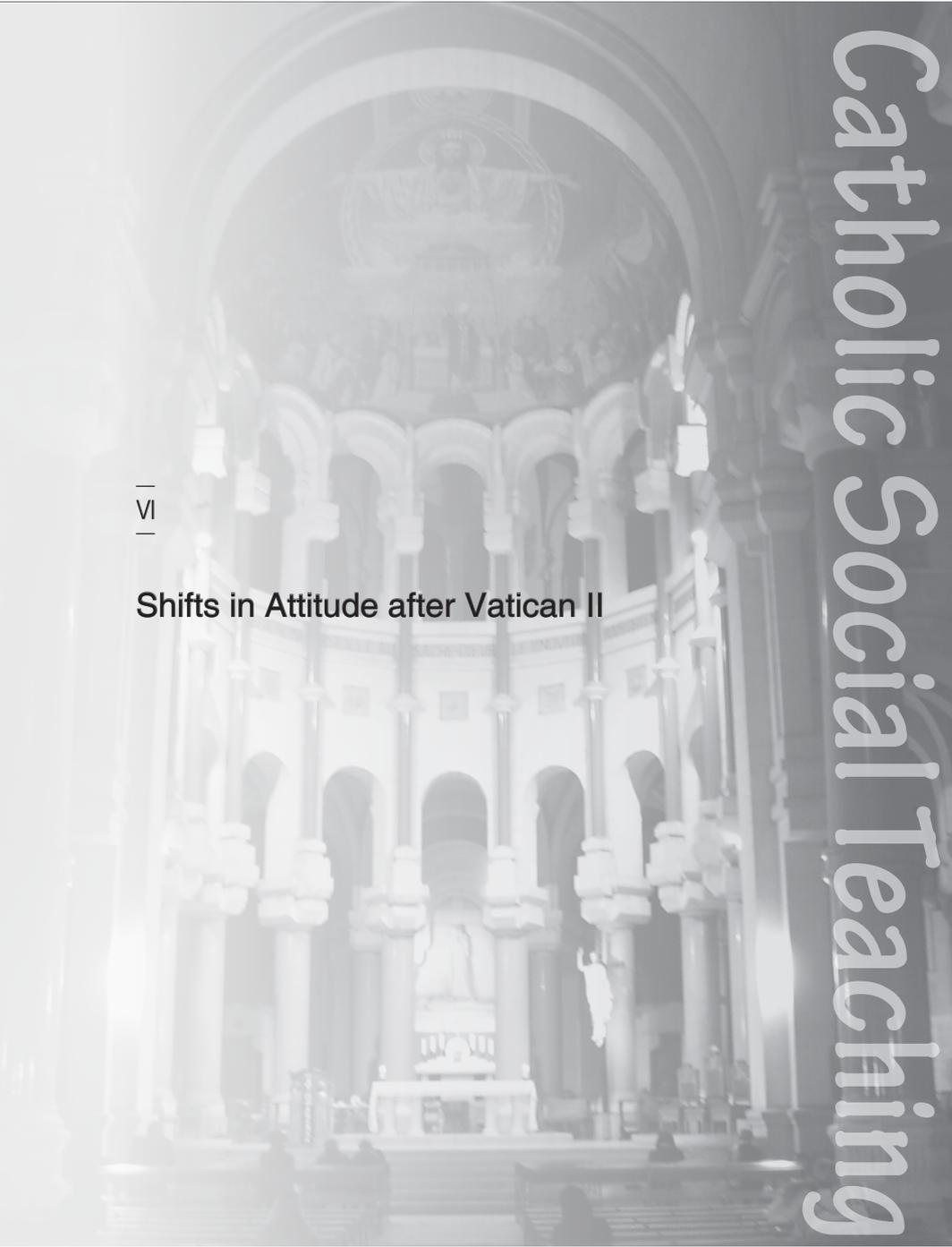
John XXIII's pontificate is truly a time of transition between two stages of Catholic social teaching—the stage leading up to Vatican II and the stage following Vatican II. In the first stage the point of reference is that of societies in the process of industrialization. In this first stage Catholic social teaching depended mainly on natural law and scholastic philosophy. In the second stage following Vatican II, Christian inspiration in the form of quotes from scripture and the Church fathers is far more evident.

In the first stage, until and including the pontificate of Pius XII, there is a very strong insistence on maintaining uniform doctrine. In the second stage this dogmatic tendency gives way to greater concern for action on social questions and for developing authentic Christian attitudes. We might say that there has been a shift in attitude and a shift in methodology.

# Catholic Social Teaching

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VI  
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**Shifts in Attitude after Vatican II**



After Vatican II we discover a new attitude in the Church toward the world and its problems.

## **1. First of all, there is a rediscovery of a sense of the public character of the Christian faith.**

Many Church leaders, theologians and even friendly critics of the Church question how the Church remained largely silent and passive in face of the atrocities committed during World War II. A very partial answer is that the Church and religion in general were mainly confined to private life. The Vatican II Council Fathers recognized that Christian faith has important consequences for public life, and that the Church shares responsibility for secular as well as religious history.

## **2. Secondly, there is recognition of the rightful autonomy and value of secular activity.**

The Church came to the realization that human beings through

their appropriate secular activity participate in God's continuing work of creation and contribute to the carrying out in history of God's salvific plan for the world (Cf. Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World #36).

### **3. Thirdly, we see renewed commitment to world justice.**

The Church began to call for justice at all levels of society, but especially between rich and powerful nations and nations that are poor and weak. Catholic Christians became more and more aware that the doing of justice is a constitutive element of preaching and announcing the gospel message.

### **4. Fourthly, the Church made a preferential option for the poor.**

The Church always knew that Christ identifies with the poor and oppressed. In modern times the Church has realized

concretely that identifying with Christ means giving priority to the needs of the poor and oppressed not only in her theological reflection but also in her socio-pastoral action on their behalf (Cf. *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis* #39 and *Centesimus Annus* #57).

## 5. Shifts in methodology

The above changes in attitude have been accompanied by changes in methodology.

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1) There is a much broader vision of the Church.

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Vatican II emphasized the Church as the “People of God.” This image has important implications not only for ecclesiology but also for the Church’s approach to social problems. The Church as “People of God” in a sense encompasses all human beings of good will. The Catholic Christian faithful as the core of this “People of God” must cooperate actively with fellow Christians and all human beings of good will in seeking out solutions to the pressing social problems of their environment,

of their times and of the whole world.

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2) The Church became more attentive to the “signs of the times”!

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Vatican II reaffirmed the basic Christian belief that God continues to speak in and through human history. Thus the Church has the duty of examining the signs of the times and of interpreting them in the light of the gospel. This emphasis and attentiveness to the “signs of the times” led to the development of new methods of doing theology. Now Catholics are called to look at the world and discover God’s presence, activity and designs in human history. Theology thus goes beyond deduction and speculation and now begins to inductively learn from the data of human experience.

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3) Social-ethical decision making moved away from a narrow adherence to natural law morality and toward a more holistic approach.

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A holistic and interdisciplinary search for the truth, to the extent that human beings can know the truth, has replaced the permanent absolutes of an earlier understanding of natural law.

We can no longer look for truth only with our heads. Human decision making now requires an ongoing effort to adequately grasp the human reality upon which we are called to act. We have to make broader efforts to correctly grasp what God calls us to do in the midst of the reality in which we live.

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4) Official church documents make greater use of the Christian sources of social-ethical wisdom.

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This shift means we make efforts to return to the basic elements that Christians of earlier ages used in making ethical decisions. We do so by making greater use of scripture, especially the New Testament and in particular the gospels, to provide the basic meanings and values underpinning authentic Christian ethical decision making.

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5) The primacy of love

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For centuries and practically till the beginning of Vatican II, reason played a large role in shaping Catholic social teaching. From Vatican II onward the primacy of love has taken an

increasingly important role in shaping Catholic social teaching. Now we see love as being at the heart of the virtue of justice; love as being the motivation for working for justice and the fundamental option of love as the source of moral action.

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6) An orientation toward pastoral planning and action (praxis)

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The emerging methodology of the church's social teaching is oriented toward action. Action is the result of reflection and leads back to reflection. In the context of Christian social ethics, action is the end result of an option made to struggle vigorously but lovingly for justice. Correct action (orthopraxis) completes and authenticates correct doctrine (orthodoxy or orthodoxy). In an earlier era the methodology of Catholic Christian social teaching was highly deductive and speculative. Then very often it led to social idealism. Pastoral and social reflection must always begin from the actions, needs and hopes of people. (Adapted from excerpts of the notes by Fr. Romeo J. Intengan, SJ, 10 January 1989 entitled Meaning and Historical Background of the Terms “*Social Teaching of the Church*” or “*Social Doctrine of the Church*” as printed in the September-October 1991 Issue of the FABC's *Info on Human Development*.)



## The Post Vatican II Popes

# 1. Paul VI

Paul VI was probably one of the most cultured and consequential personalities of the 20th century Church. He became pope at a critical moment in the history of the Church and presided over Vatican II at a moment when it could have failed. Instead he brought the Council to a happy conclusion.

Paul VI's first encyclical (*Ecclesiam Suam*, August 6, 1964) was not a social encyclical but a document laying out the plan for his pontificate. If the key word for John XXIII's pontificate was "aggiornamento," the key word for Paul VI's pontificate was "dialog." Section III of *Ecclesiam Suam* deals with dialog and the word dialog appears over 60 times in this document. Paul VI was a believer in dialog. He believed that only by dialog could there be any kind of tranquility in church life.

In article # 81 of *Ecclesiam Suam* Pope Paul states that dialog should have four qualities: clarity, meekness, trust and pedagogical prudence. In his *National Catholic Reporter* column "All Things Catholic," (August 8, 2008) John Allen makes a synthesis of this article as follows:

- ① Clarity: every angle of one's language should be reviewed

to ensure that it's understandable, acceptable and well-chosen.

- ② Meekness: “Dialog is not proud, it is not bitter, it is not offensive. Its authority is intrinsic to the truth it explains, to the charity it communicates, to the example it proposes; it is not a command, it is not an imposition. It is peaceful; it avoids violent methods; it is patient; it is generous.”
- ③ Trust: One should have confidence “not only in the power of one’s words, but also in an attitude of welcoming the trust of the interlocutor. Trust promotes confidence and friendship. It binds hearts in mutual adherence to the good which excludes all self-seeking.”
- ④ Pedagogical prudence: “Prudence strives to learn the sensitivities of the hearer and requires that we adapt ourselves and the manner of our presentation in a reasonable way, lest we be displeasing and incomprehensible.”

Building on John XXIII’s theme of the international common good, in 1967 Paul VI took on the daunting task of addressing worldwide underdevelopment and poverty and wrote *Populorum Progressio*. In this ground-breaking encyclical he established the

Justice and Peace Commission (Cf. *PP* # 5) as an agency to assist in promoting the common good throughout the Catholic world. Although Paul VI saw all the injustices in the world he also believed that there very positive changes for the better.

Paul VI also created the synod structure in 1969 to give the bishops a regular voice in the governance of the universal church. Episcopal conferences, the Roman Curia, some representatives from religious congregations and people directly appointed by the pope attend these synods.

In a 1971 (Four years later in an) Apostolic Letter entitled “*Octagesimo Adveniens*” marking the 80th anniversary of *Rerum Novarum*, Paul VI moved the church’s emphasis from the national level to the international level. Multinational corporations had emerged on the world scene and problems such as debt, the environment, population and hunger made international relationships among nations more complicated.

On the 10th anniversary of the closing of Vatican II, Paul VI issued *Evangelii Nuntiandi*. Paul considered pre-evangelization to already be evangelization (Cf. *Evangelii Nuntiandi* # 51.1). We can summarize Paul VI’s attitude by saying that the church promotes the human by evangelizing, and the church evangelizes by

promoting the human.

By the end of his life Paul VI was being attacked by progressives as being too conservative and by conservatives as being too progressive. Some even called him the Hamlet pope because they thought him incapable of making clear cut and bold decisions. Pope Paul VI lived in a period of history when people were enamored with ideology and their own powerful opinions. He was a brave and well balanced person who refused to give simple answers to complex questions and history will certainly judge him with more equanimity than his contemporaries did.

## 2. John Paul II

John Paul II was the great Christian witness of the 20th century. He made enormous efforts to change the world and revitalize the Church. He firmly believed that Jesus Christ is the answer to the question of every human life. At his papal installation he called on the Church and every Catholic to “Be not afraid.” His epic pilgrimage to Poland in June 1979 changed

the course of world history because it marked the beginning of the end of communism in Eastern Europe. His two U.N. addresses; his showdowns with the Sandinistas in Nicaragua in 1983 and rioters in Chile in 1987 and his pilgrimage to the Holy Land during the Great Jubilee of 2000 were other milestones in a brilliant diplomatic career.

The great question for the Catholic Church at the end of the second millennium of its history was: Could the Church give a coherent, compelling, comprehensive account of its faith and its hope? Pope John Paul II tried to answer that question in the affirmative: through *The Catechism of the Catholic Church*, his own magisterium, and a remarkable capacity to make Catholic convictions “come alive” in history, e.g. the collapse of European Communism. George Weigel, John Paul II’s biographer, lists his three greatest accomplishments in renewing the Church and its impact on the world as, 1) *The Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 2) the June 1979 pilgrimage to Poland, and 3) the Great Jubilee of 2000.

Just before the Great Jubilee of 2000 John Paul II made his influence felt indirectly at the June 1999 G-8 summit of industrial democracies held that year in Cologne, Germany. Cologne was

full of supporters of Jubilee 2000, a campaign to forgive debts owed by the world's poorest countries and a movement pushed by Europe's churches. Jubilee 2000 had urged its adherents to push this issue on to the G-8's agenda. It was a special moment because for the first time, deeply believing lay people, Catholic nuns and clergy united with NGO representatives and punk rockers on this single issue. This was clear evidence of John Paul II's considerable clout on an important social issue!

Poland probably has the most intensely Catholic culture in the world and Polish culture had a marked impact on John Paul II's pontificate. Given its geography, history and suffering, probably no other country but Poland could have produced a John Paul II. Karol Wojtyla never learned the conventional story line of modernity—that religious conviction is withering away and that faith in the God of the Bible is a thing of the past. On the contrary, Karol Wojtyla learned from Polish history and Poland's witness under Nazi and Communist tyranny that, in its capacity to transform individual lives and change society, the Gospel is still the most potent proposal in history. In his 2001 Encyclical *Centesimus Annus*, John Paul II dedicated Chapter III entitled "The Year 1989" (Cf. *Centesimus Annus*, numbers 22 to 29)

to the earth shaking events connected to the rapid collapse of Marxism.

After the turmoil of the 1960s and 1970s, John Paul II tried to save Vatican II in his own way. Some Ecumenical Councils like the reform-minded efforts of the 15th century had relatively poor success records. Vatican II, unlike former Councils provided few interpretive “keys” to understanding its teaching. Other councils wrote creeds, legislated new laws, or even condemned heresies—all of which provided “keys” to understanding the Council in question. Vatican II didn’t do any of that. Consequently John Paul II felt the task of his pontificate was to provide those “keys”: by providing his own “magisterium,” and by completing the work of several synods of bishops.

John Paul II wrote an astounding 16 encyclicals and numerous apostolic exhortations. He gave us three social encyclicals: *Laborem Exercens* in 1981 (for the 90th anniversary of *Rerum Novarum*) and *Centesimus Annus* (for the 100th anniversary of *Rerum Novarum*) in 1991. In 1987 for the 20th anniversary of Paul VI’s *Populorum Progressio* on the gap between rich and poor nations he wrote *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis*.

John Paul II's three social encyclicals are pervaded with prophetic humanism. John Paul II thinks that human beings should be defined as workers whether or not their work is physical or intellectual because human labor builds society (Cf. *Laborem Exercens*, Introduction). Through work human beings determine their world and by so doing constitute themselves as persons. John Paul II considers human work as the essential key to the whole social question (Cf. *Laborem Exercens* # 3) and that labor must have priority over capital.

Although John Paul II made continued insistence on the need for the natural moral law in the world of work and economic activity, he adds a theological and spiritual dimension to the discussion. In *Laborem Exercens* (Cf. Part V #s 24 to 27) he makes specific mention of the spiritual significance of work and of work as a sharing in the creative activity of God. He introduces Jesus as the man of work and insists on "... person (s being) more precious for what (they) are than what they have."

John Paul II introduces "personalism" to Catholic Social Teaching by arguing that workers not only produce things as a cog in the work process for profit but to also work for oneself and express one's creative and personal ability (Cf. *Laborem*

*Exercens* # 15). He also introduces the concept of direct and indirect employers. Indirect employers are all those groups in society that influence contract arrangements between labor and capital: governments, banks, insurance and finance companies, churches, educational institutions and others (Cf. *Laborem Exercens* # 17).

When a Turk named Mehmet Ali Agca shot Pope John Paul II twice in a 1981 assassination attempt, Agca at first told the authorities he was acting for the Bulgarian intelligence service. The Bulgarians were known to do the bidding of the KGB. Agca later recanted that part of his confession but it mattered little to John Paul II who was behind the attempt. John Paul II visited Agca in his cell and forgave him. The astonished Agca said, “How is it that I could not kill you?” John Paul II always credited the Blessed Virgin with saving his life on May 18, 1981. His devotion to Mary affected his pontificate in many ways. He constantly proposed Our Lady as the pattern of all Christian discipleship—probably his most important Marian theme.

A final important highlight from John Paul II’s Catholic Social Teaching efforts would have to be his innovative ideas

on worker solidarity, not as a closed rank solidarity among themselves but as a means to dialog with and collaborate with other social groups (Cf. *L.E.* # 8 especially #8.4).

### 3. Benedict XVI

Benedict XVI's pontificate will have to continue the compelling proclamation of the Gospel to the masses of which John Paul II was a master. He will have to give the Church the opportunity to "digest" the rich magisterium of John Paul II's great pontificate. Pope Benedict will have to think very carefully about the challenge of Islamism and develop the capacity to distinguish between genuine Islam and radicalized, politicized Islamic forces; to devise new ways of relating the moral witness of the papacy to the diplomacy of the Holy See.

The financial crisis of October 2008 coincided with the opening of the 2008 Synod of Bishops on the Word of God in the Life and Mission of the Church. As Pope Benedict opened the Synod he mentioned in his meditation to those attending the synod that "now in the fall of great banks" we see "money

disappears; it is nothing—and in the same way, all things that lack a true reality to depend on are elements of a secondary order. The Word of God is the basis of everything, it is the true reality. And to be realists, we should count on this reality. We should change our idea that matter, solid things, things we touch, are the most solid and secure reality.....otherwise we are building on sand..... Apparently the solid things seem to be the true realities, but one day they will also pass away.”

In his second encyclical *Spe Salvi* (2007), Pope Benedict had already pointed out in a similar vein the materialistic limitations of Karl Marx’s philosophy in these words. “He thought that once the economy had been put right, everything would automatically be put right. His real error is materialism: man, in fact, is not merely the product of economic conditions, and it is not possible to redeem him purely from the outside by creating a favorable economic environment.” (Cf. *Spe Salvi* # 21—last sentence).

Along with a call to all Catholics for a renewed Catholic identity, Benedict XVI has announced a very strong environmental message. He probably feels that this is the best way to help recover respect for the natural law in Catholic Social Teaching. His reasoning seems to be that all people can

be convinced that nature comes with a set of rules we must observe. If we transgress these rules we risk causing serious problems and disruptions like climate change and pollution, etc. This might be an easier way of convincing people of good will that we should also be open to the natural law of individual personal morality and more just international relationships based on mutual solidarity as members of the human family.

On June 29, 2009 in the fifth year of his pontificate and after almost a two year delay because of the economic crisis that began erupting in mid-2007, Benedict XVI finally promulgated a 30,000 word social encyclical, *Caritas in Veritate* (*Charity in Truth*). Benedict commemorated the 40th anniversary of Paul VI's *Populorum Progressio* (*On the Progress of Peoples*) and dedicated numbers 8 to 20 to a “fresh reading” (Cf. #10) of Paul VI's groundbreaking Encyclical on development.

In the introduction to *Caritas in Veritate* Benedict linked “caritas” and “veritas,”—love and truth as two complementary themes. Love and truth are the driving force behind all authentic human development because they are so deeply rooted in the human person. Human beings are fundamentally inclined toward love “enlightened by truth” (Cf. #2). In *Caritas in Veritate*

Benedict XVI once again emphasized the importance of the natural law in Catholic Social Teaching and reached out to non-believers.

The basic instincts of all human beings are: 1) to preserve and develop their lives; 2) to reproduce and; 3) as rational beings to search out the truth and live in families and groups where love is cherished and cultivated. Human beings endowed with reason want to know the truth of things, enter into dialog with others and form social relationships. These are fundamental anthropological realities shared by all human beings whether or not they accept divine revelation (Cf. numbers 1 to 7).

By uniting truth and love, *Caritas in Veritate* has sought to re-unite some basic points necessary for an integral Catholic experience of life's realities. Benedict insists on personal conversion and a pro-life stance that overflows into social reform and tends toward the common good. In brief, he urges Catholics to be pro-life in order to work more effectively for justice and peace (Cf. #28). In fact, *Caritas in Veritate* might be considered as the most comprehensive papal effort yet to integrate the Church's pro-life stance with its justice and peace message. Horizontal spirituality or spirituality coming from

shared experiences and engagement with the world has to unite with vertical spirituality that comes down to us from divine revelation (Cf. #'s 54 to 56). This seems to reflect the “seamless garment” mentality as Cardinal Bernadin once phrased it.

Pope Benedict XVI calls on contemporary society to supersede the split between the financial and social spheres. Making the greatest profit and promoting self-interest cannot be the only goals of businesses. Business people have to be conscious and concerned about the repercussions their businesses make on the social sphere. The market economy, so loved by certain supporters of capitalism, is not just where wealth and income are generated but exists in a society where human solidarity has something to say about the fair distribution of income and wealth (Cf. #35). Businesses must pursue pro-social aims and serve the common good. Economic activity cannot and should not deny the centrality of the human person (Cf. #47), solidarity (Cf. #43), subsidiarity (Cf. #'s 57 and 58) and the common good. The primary capital to be safeguarded and valued is “man, the human person in his or her integrity” (Cf. #25).

The encyclical pleads for respect for life, warns against demographic control, the spread of the anti-birth mentality,

strong birth control measures, laws permitting euthanasia and society's move toward the denial and suppression of life as measures that ultimately deny the common good (Cf. #28). It also calls for a bio-ethic of human moral responsibility and not merely the supremacy of technology (Cf. # 74-77).

The pope insists on a need for efficiency and commercial logic in business affairs but efficiency is never an end in itself only a means to attain a goal. Competition should not be used to destroy or diminish social bonds or a place where the strong destroy the weak (#36). The Holy Father warns against “downsizing social security systems” (Cf. #25). Pope Benedict notes that “the world’s wealth is growing in absolute terms, but inequalities are on the increase” as well as “new forms of poverty” (Cf. #22).

The encyclical re-echoes *Rerum Novarum*'s call for robust government intervention in the economy (Cf. # 39). *Caritas in Veritate* reiterates the church's traditionally strong support of labor unions (Cf. #64) and criticizes governments' tendency for reasons of economic utility to limit the freedom and negotiating capacity of labor unions (Cf. #25). Benedict endorses and describes the ILO's definition of “decent work” (Cf.

#63). Benedict insists that the dignity of the individual and the demands of justice call for prioritizing access to steady employment for everyone (Cf. # 32). He also mentions the phenomenon of the large scale of the migration of peoples to which not enough attention has been given (Cf. #'s 21 and 62).

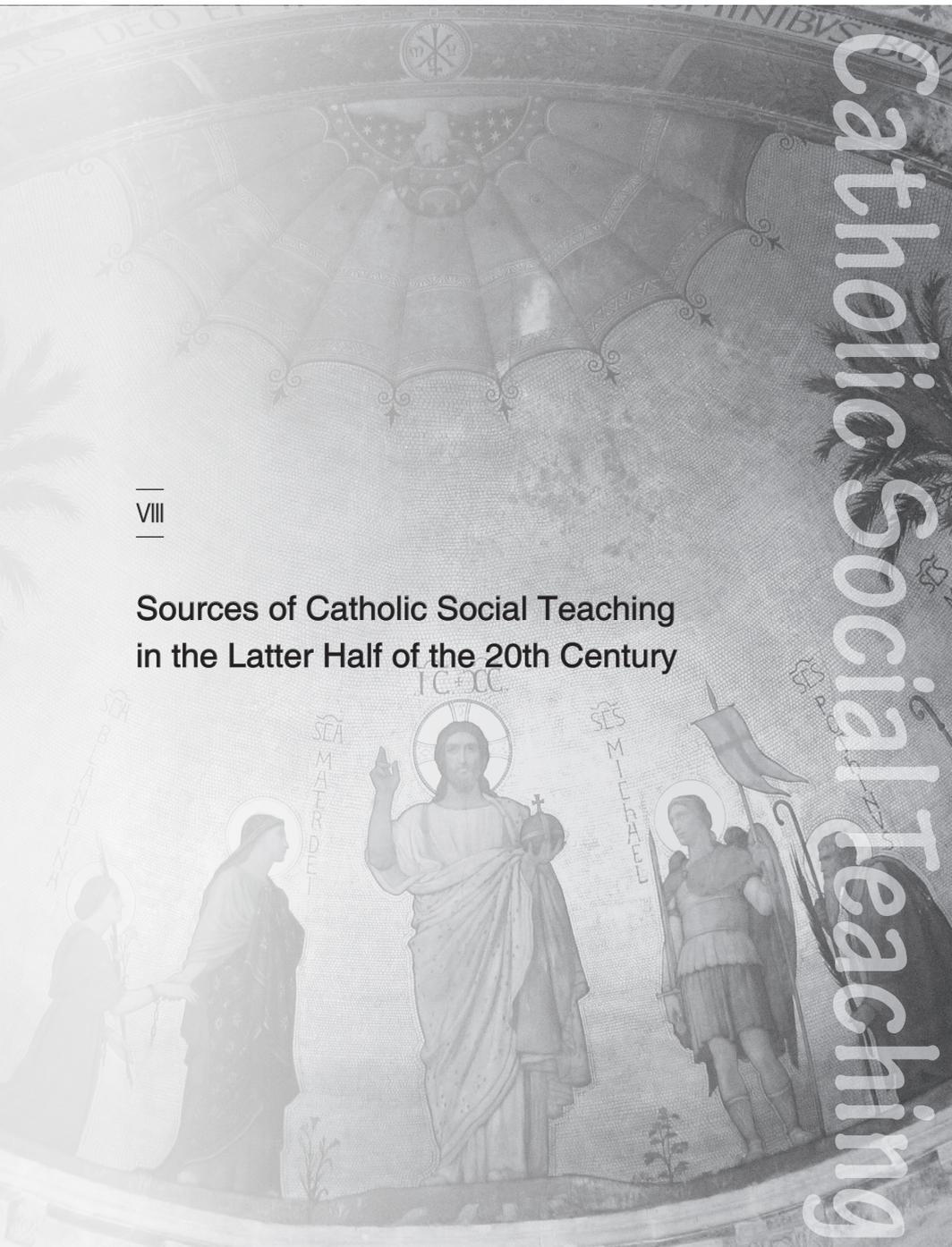
*Caritas in Veritate* once again reminds us of the need for gratuitousness and gift, even when these are not merited (Cf. # 34). It urges that a space be created within the market for economic activity “carried out by subjects who freely choose to act according to principles other than those of pure profit.” The profits of these activities are then given to the poor and needy (Cf. # 37). Benedict again shows he is the “green pope” by strongly endorsing “stewardship over nature and a keener ecological sensibility (Cf. #50 and 51)

Benedict cites the need for a reform of international agencies to make them less costly and give them more authority (Cf. #67). This idea has been around since John XXIII’s *Pacem in Terris* and been repeated by Paul VI and John Paul II. However the popes have not said or written concretely very much about how this might come about.

# Catholic Social Teaching

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VIII  
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## Sources of Catholic Social Teaching in the Latter Half of the 20th Century



The Church Fathers in Vatican II realized it was necessary to address the social issues posed by the modern world. In *the Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World*(*Gaudium et Spes*) they attempted to summarize the church's position on social issues and give greater impetus to dealing with social issues at the international, national and local levels. To promote collegiality between the pope and bishops, Vatican II's decree on the pastoral office of the bishops, *Christus Dominus*, recommended holding international synods periodically (Cf. *Christus Dominus* #5) Paul VI began this process by having synods on a three year cycle, beginning in 1967. At the 1971 Synod the bishops dealt with the issue of social justice and issued a document entitled *Justice in the World*(*Convenientes ex Universo*). The bishops succinctly stated that: "While the church is bound to give witness to justice, she recognizes that anyone who ventures to speak to people about justice must first be just in their eyes. Hence we must undertake an examination of the modes of acting, of the possessions and lifestyle found within the church herself" (Cf. 40).

## 1. CELAM

The Bishops' Conferences of Latin America (CELAM) had their first meeting in Rio de Janeiro in 1955 led by Bishops Larrain of Chile and Helder Camara of Brazil. Pius XII supported this pre-Vatican II very church centered initiative. The Latin American Bishops met after Vatican in Medellin (Colombia) in 1968, Puebla (Mexico) in 1979 and Santo Domingo (Dominican Republic) in 1992. They made very important and far reaching statements on the social issues affecting Latin American and these statements have had a huge impact on the universal church. In Asia the Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences sponsored a Colloquium on the Social Doctrine of the Church in the *Context of Asia* and published the contents of the colloquium.

## 2. U.S. Bishops' Conference Pastoral Letters

Two very masterful documents came from the U.S. Bishops' Conference during the 1980's. In 1983 the bishops issued its piercing document *The Challenge of Peace*, on the question

of war and peace. In 1986 the bishops issued *Economic Justice for All*, a document on the American economy. These two documents dealt with explosive issues like political responsibility, the economic order being imposed by capitalism, welfare reform, unemployment, racism, capital punishment, US world policy, gun control, strip mining and conscientious objection. The bishops asked Catholics to seriously consider the bishops' perspectives to form their own opinions in the light of the gospel.

### 3. The Common Good

In 1996 the Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales issued an important document entitled *The Common Good* and proposed its contents as a study guide on local and world social problems to parish communities and parish groups in England and Wales.

## 4. Basic Tenets or Principles of Catholic Social Teaching

At this point I will mention something about the basic tenets of Catholic social teaching. There are about ten major themes or catalysts around which Catholic social teaching is organized. (This is only a list of key emphases and certainly not an exhaustive one! It was prepared by the *Center of Concern* in Washington and reprinted in the FABC's *Info on Human Development*, May June 1988. I have made a few minor) changes in the text.

### ① The Link of Religious and Social Dimensions of Life

The “social” or the human construction of the world is not “secular” in the sense of being outside of God’s plan, but is intimately involved with the dynamic of the Reign of God. Therefore faith and justice are necessarily linked closely together. (Cf. *The Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World* paragraphs 2 and 72).

### ② The Dignity of the Human Person

Made in the image of God, women and men have a preeminent place in the social order, with inalienable rights, both political-

legal and social-economic. The fundamental question to ask about any and all social development is: What is happening to people? How does it affect people? (Cf. *Centesimus Annus* 61).

### ③ Option for the Poor

We should have a preferential love for the poor, because God gives special attention to their needs and rights. “Poor” is understood to refer to the economically disadvantaged who, as a consequence of their status, suffer oppression and powerlessness (Cf. *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis* 42, *Centesimus Annus* paragraphs 11 and 57).

### ④ Link of Love and Justice

Love of neighbor is an absolute demand for justice, because charity manifests itself in actions and structures which respect human dignity, protect human rights, and facilitate human development. To promote justice is to transform structures which block love (*Justice in the World* 34, *Dives in Misericordia* 12.2).

### ⑤ Promotion of the Common Good

The common good is the sum-total of all those conditions of social living—economic, political, cultural—which make it possible for women and men to readily achieve the perfection of their humanity. Individual rights are always experienced within the context of promotion of the common good (*Rerum Novarum* 34, *The Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World* 78, *Centesimus*

*Annus 11.1).*

#### ⑥ Political participation

Democratic participation in decision making is the best way to respect the dignity and liberty of people. The government is the instrument by which people cooperate together in order to achieve the common good (Pius XII, Christmas Message 1944, *Pacem in Terris* 26, *Octagesimo Adveniens* 22).

#### ⑦ Economic justice

The economy is for the people and the resources of the earth are to be equitably shared by all. Human work is the key to contemporary social questions. Labor takes precedence over both capital and technology in the production process (*Laborem Exercens* paragraphs 13 and 15). Just wages and the right of workers to organize are to be respected (*Laborem Exercens* 20).

#### ⑧ Stewardship

All property has a “social mortgage” (*Sollicitudo Rei Socialis* 42.6). All people should be respected and share in the resources of the earth. By our work we are co-creators in the on-going development of the earth (*Centesimus Annus* 37).

#### ⑨ Global Solidarity

We belong to one human family and as such have mutual

obligations to promote the development of all peoples across the world. In particular, the rich nations have responsibilities toward the poorer nations and the structures of international order must reflect justice (*Progressio Populorum* 44, *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis* 40.2).

#### ⑩ Promotion of Peace

Peace is the fruit of justice and is dependent upon right order among humans and among nations. The arms race must cease and progressive disarmament take place if the future is to be secure. In order to promote peace and the conditions of peace, an effective international authority is necessary (*Pacem in Terris* 137, 138, *Centesimus Annus* 5.2).

We can synthesize all this into seven basic principles:

- ① The Principle of Our Common Humanity: We always begin from the human.
- ② The Principle of Solidarity: To be human means to be in solidarity and never as an existence isolated from others.
- ③ The Principle of the Common Good: To be truly human also means working together for the common good of all.
- ④ The Principle of Subsidiarity: Human beings do this by mutually respecting each others talents, situations in life and

inherent possibilities. Being human means allowing others to develop their capacities and their creativity.

⑤ The Principle of Participation: They do this by allowing and urging everyone to involve themselves in the social dimensions of life—especially the political and economic dimensions.

⑥ The Universal Destination of Material Goods: All human beings have the right to share in the goods of the earth because God created the world for everyone and not just for the few.

⑦ The Preferential Option for the Poor: To be human we must always care for the weakest and the poorest of our sisters and brothers because taking care of the weak assures the survival of all. Taking care of the powerful means giving in to our animal instincts.

- In other words we always begin from the human because,
- Human beings are always in solidarity with one another.
- They are called to work together for the common good of all.
- They do this by respecting each others situations and promoting their abilities.
- They further this respect by participating in society and by urging and encouraging everyone else to do the same.
- All can and must share in the goods of the earth because

they are destined for the use of everyone.

— Nevertheless to foster life we must always be attentive to the poorest among us.

However, if people are less inclined to come together to discuss and reflect, how will we be able to formulate meaningful Catholic social teaching? Without the participation of many people this formulation risks becoming a “head trip” or the intellectual brain child of a few thinkers! Here we should refer back to the beginning of this text where we mentioned about how Catholic social teaching is formulated. Catholic social teaching, has to happen on the grass roots level where it will sensitize people to act on behalf of themselves and their sisters and brothers in the workplace, marketplace, neighborhoods and institutions of learning.

If reflection on social matters happens only in intellectual circles, it will remain a brain game and the domain of a few thinkers. Otherwise ordinary people, be they Catholics or not, will look on religious institutions as being in “ivory towers” desperately in need of dialog with the reality most people struggle with! If ordinary people are not reflecting on their everyday lives in the light of the gospel, social teaching will be

driven up an ivory tower and give the impression of descending from on high and having little to do with our everyday existences! (Cf. *Dialogue and Evangelization*, Jan Van Bragt, CICM, Japan Mission Journal, Summer 1998, p. 80)

Most Christians, even those working full time for justice issues, still have a hard time seeing the link between the religious and social dimensions of life. They still look on the “social” or the human construction of the world as “secular.” The world we live in is somehow either considered as outside God’s plan or not very much connected with God’s plan. Most Christian Catholics have yet to see human activity as something intimately involved with the dynamic of the kingdom of God.

Here allow me to briefly quote and abbreviate some key passages of Paul VI’s *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, “Christ first of all proclaims a kingdom, the kingdom of God; and this is so important that, by comparison, everything else becomes ‘the rest’ which is ‘given in addition’ (cf. Matt. 6,33). Only the kingdom is absolute, and it makes everything else relative” (cf. *Evangelii Nuntiandi* 8). “As the kernel and center of his good news, Christ proclaims salvation, this great gift of God which is liberation from everything that oppresses man (sic) but which is above

all liberation from sin and the evil one...” (cf. *Evangelii Nuntiandi* 9). “This kingdom and this salvation which are the key words of Jesus Christ’s evangelization, are available to every human being as grace and mercy, and yet at the same time each individual must gain them by force—they belong to the violent, says the Lord (cf. Matt: 11, 12 and Luke 16, 16), through toil and suffering, through a life lived according to the gospel, through abnegation and the cross, through the spirit of the beatitudes. But above all each individual gains them through a total interior renewal which the gospel calls metanoia—a radical conversion (cf. Matt. 4, 17), a profound change of mind and heart” (cf. *Evangelii Nuntiandi* 10).

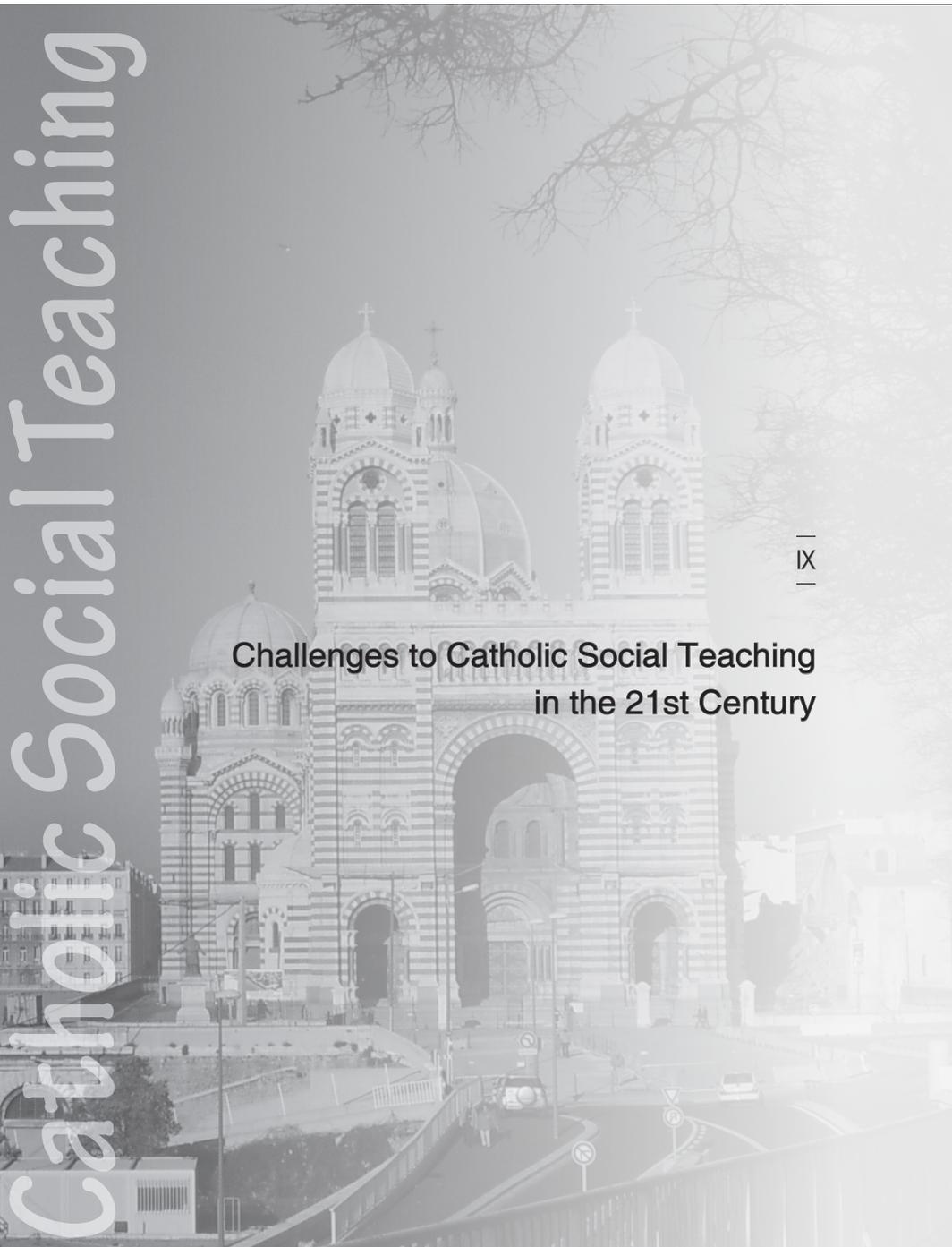
Even Christians actively at work for justice and peace in the world seem to be unable to link up their actions and their struggle for justice on behalf of ordinary people with the proclamation of the kingdom, conversion, and the liberating words of the gospel. And then from there they seem incapable of making the link with Catholic Social Teaching or the gospel reflection the Church makes on social issues. We seem to have two radically divergent attitudes. Many Christians consider faith life to be the profession of a very vague and often sicky-

sweet concept of love that moves no one to action and says nothing to the pragmatic contemporary scene. On the other side are those who take on an aggressive and self-righteous “I’m-mad-at-the-world” attitude. Perhaps that makes so many socially active Catholics and other Christians prone to searching out solutions that might lead to violence. Very often they are tempted to choose strategies that simply try to turn the present power structure on its head by making today’s weak elements tomorrow’s powerful elements. Paolo Freire warned us early on that people who have lived and been raised under dictatorships, even when they struggle for human rights and democratic change, often chose the dictatorial methods of the society that nurtured them.

# Catholic Social Teaching

## Challenges to Catholic Social Teaching in the 21st Century

— IX —



In the 19th century theologians and thinkers with competent backgrounds in philosophy and humanistic studies made major contributions to Catholic Social Teaching. The 20th century saw a continuation of the previous century's extreme nationalism that led to World War I but this time it was coupled with ideology clashes that led to World II, the cold war, numerous proxy wars and conflicts.

The 20th century also saw attempts to exterminate entire groups of people (Armenians, European Jewry). It witnessed the barbarity of Nazi concentration camps, the excesses of Japanese imperialism in Asia, the atomic bomb's destructive force that killed 220,000 innocent Japanese civilians in Hiroshima and Nagasaki and began the nuclear arms race, the internment and death of millions in the Soviet Gulag, the excesses of the Chinese Cultural Revolution and the massacre of millions in Cambodia and Rwanda. In the 20th century Catholic Social Teaching needed theologians adept in political science, sociology and economics to point to ways to avoid conflict, war and economic catastrophe.

In the “brave new world” of the 21st century, theological, philosophical, sociological backgrounds as well as studies in

political science and economics will not be enough to form the moral theologians of the future. Benedict XVI pointed out that today “the social question has become a radically anthropological question” (Cf. *Caritas in Veritate* no. 75). In other words moral theologians now need a basic knowledge of applied sciences, especially medical science, genetics and molecular biology. The overall term describing these fields is biotechnology. Biotechnology refers to the field of applied biology that involves the use or manipulation of living organisms to modify products or processes for some specific use.

The following is an apt quote from Benedict XVI’s *Caritas in Veritate*. “A particularly crucial battleground in today’s cultural struggle between the supremacy of technology and human moral responsibility is the field of bioethics, where the very possibility of integral human development is radically called into question. In this most delicate and critical area, the fundamental question asserts itself force-fully: is man the product of his own labors or does he depend on God? Scientific discoveries in this field and the possibilities of technological intervention seem so advanced as to force a choice between two types of reasoning: reason

open to transcendence or reason closed within immanence. We are presented with a clear either/ or. Yet the rationality of a self-centered use of technology proves to be irrational because it implies a decisive rejection of meaning and value.” (Cf. no. 74)

## 1. New Challenges to Catholic Social Teaching

“If there is a lack of respect for the right to life and to a natural death, if human conception, gestation and birth are made artificial, if human embryos are sacrificed to research, the conscience of society ends up losing the concept of human ecology and, along with it, that of environmental ecology. It is contradictory to insist that future generations respect the natural environment when our educational systems and laws do not help them to respect themselves.” (Cf. *Caritas in Veritate* no. 51)

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### 1) In Vitro Fertilization (IVF)

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In October 2010 the inventor of the “in vitro fertilization” method, the United Kingdom’s Dr. Robert Edwards won the Nobel Prize for Medicine. Dr. Edwards succeeded in fertilizing

and implanting an egg in the uterus of Louise Brown’s mother that resulted in Louise’s birth on July 25, 1978.

Msgr. Carrasco de Paula, head of the Vatican’s Pontifical Academy for Life immediately criticized the Nobel Foundation’s award to Dr. Edwards. Stephan Napier, an ethicist at the National Catholic Bioethics Center in Philadelphia, USA opined that “children should be the result of a loving act between a husband and wife. Instead the IVF industry has left us with thousands of frozen children—approximately 500,000 at last count.”

Yet some reform-minded Catholic theologians seem to have cautiously suggested a more positive position regarding IVF but only when eggs and sperm come from a married couple. Opposed to this would be eggs from a woman other than the wife of the man involved or sperm from a man other than the husband. Worse yet would be implanting the egg in the womb of a surrogate mother. Does this suggest that there will be further discussions among theologians regarding this point?

At any rate, regarding IVF, church teaching has clearly made the following objections:

- ① IVF separates the act of love-making from procreation.

- ② IVF involving third parties damages the family by separating the biological and emotional aspects of parenthood.
- ③ Embryos (considered the beginning of a human life) created in IVF are usually discarded or frozen and human life is destroyed in the process.
- ④ Masturbation is usually the way sperm is harvested.
- ⑤ Often fetal reduction or so-called “excess” embryos are done away with early in the pregnancy by injecting potassium chloride—a form of abortion.

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## 2) Human Cloning

Scottish scientist Ian Wilmut cloned “Dolly,” a sheep in 1997. Ever since, debate has erupted over the morality of whether or not to clone human beings. The Church has consistently objected to the cloning of a human being and upheld the right of human beings being the result of the natural sexual union between married couples. Another danger associated with cloning is the possibility of generating human beings as a source for providing body parts.

In the Korean context is the controversy surrounding Dr. Hwang Woo-suk, a veterinarian by training. Dr. Hwang seems to have rushed into cloning and published manuscripts that later were found to have fabricated data. Dr. Hwang's team at Seoul University became the first to clone human embryos capable of yielding viable stem cells. In 2004, Time Magazine declared him one among the "persons who mattered" during that year.

But, in 2005 Dr. Hwang's position suffered a setback when University of Pittsburgh Gerald Schatten, who had worked with Dr. Hwang for two years, made the surprise announcement that he had ceased his collaboration with Hwang. In an interview, Schatten commented that he made his decision "grounded solely on concerns regarding oocyte (egg) donations in Hwang's research reported in 2004."

An intense media probe followed and one of Hwang's close collaborators, Roh Sung-il, the director of MizMedi Women's Hospital in Seoul announced in a November 21, 2005 news conference that he had paid each woman \$1,400 for donating their eggs. Some of Hwang's female researchers were among these women. Hwang later admitted that he had lied about the source of the donated eggs to protect the privacy of his female

researchers. Hwang claimed he was not aware this constituted a breach of the Declaration of Helsinki which clearly enumerates his actions as a breach of ethical conduct. A Korean court found Hwang guilty in 2009 for ethical law violations linked to falsified stem cell research.

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### 3) Embryonic Stem Cell Research

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Embryonic stem cells (ES cells) are pluripotent stem cells derived from the inner cell mass of the blastocyst, an early-stage embryo. Human embryos reach the blastocyst stage 4-5 days past fertilization at which time they consist of 50-150 cells. Because isolating the embryoblast or inner cell mass results in the death of the fertilized human embryo, this process raises serious ethical issues.

Embryonic stem cells are pluripotent, that is, they are able to differentiate into all derivations of the 3 primary cell layers: ectoderm, endoderm and mesoderm. These include each of the more than 220 cell types in the adult body. So-called multipotent stem cells generate most but not all cell types in the adult body. Embryonic stem cells can generate and indefinitely

propagate all cell types in the body, while adult stem cells can only produce a limited number of cell types.

Many researchers believe embryonic stem cells will have the potential to cure neurological disorders such as Alzheimer's or Parkinson's or even restore function to victims of spinal cord disease. The danger is that embryos will be made, used and discarded (in other words killed) to cure disease.

In the future will scientists be able to produce stem cells without using embryos? If so, they might be able to bypass the moral morass that now surrounds a very promising field in medicine. Research on umbilical cord stem cells and the research being conducted at Children's Hospital Boston on so-called individual pluripotent stem cells or "iPs" cells seem to avoid ethical objections. Some researchers even think that "iPs" cells might, in some ways, even be superior to embryonic stem cells.

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#### 4) End of Life Issues

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Dignitas of Switzerland founded by Swiss lawyer, Ludwig E Minelli, is a so-called assisted dying group that provides

qualified doctors and nurses who aid and participate in euthanasia procedures for people with terminal clinical diseases and painful physical and mental diseases. However, a former employee accused the organization of running only for profit and manipulating people into euthanasia.

In the United States Doctor Jack Kevorkian, champions a terminal patient's right-to-die and claims to have assisted 130 terminally sick people die with his help as a physician. The right-to-die activist served eight years of a 25 year sentence for second degree murder. No longer permitted to help patients commit suicide, Dr. Kevorkian insists that present laws are archaic and advocates that assisted suicide be a "medical service."

Terry Schiavo died in the USA in 2005. Eluana Englara died in Italy in 2008. Both young women had entered a persistent vegetative state and were kept alive for years through artificial nutrition and hydration. Both became newsmakers because medical science is now capable of keeping people alive even if they are in severely diminished states. Yet some patients who have been in severely diminished states for as long as 30 years have revived.

This poses a serious ethical problem. Should severely diminished patients be deprived of nourishment and water and allowed to die? Pro-lifers feel this is one way of killing a life that has become inconvenient! Another line of thought says these people should be allowed to die and “extraordinary” means of care are not obligatory. Pope John Paul II leaned in favor of providing food and water to patients in a persistent vegetative state because, according to the Pontiff, that is always an “ordinary” means and as such is obligatory. Medical science is still learning about so-called vegetative states. And, as mentioned above, even after long years in that condition, patients have returned to consciousness.

Josefina Magno, a medical doctor from the Philippines immigrated to the USA with her family where her husband, also a medical doctor contracted and died of cancer. Dr. Magno’s life and work provide the elements of a Catholic response to some “end of life” issues. Josefina nursed her husband right up to his death. Three years later, she also contracted breast cancer and underwent a radical mastectomy and intensive chemotherapy. Her struggle with cancer persuaded her to return to medical school for retraining and she became an oncologist.

Dr. Magno then went to England and studied the hospice approach to “end of life” issues that combines pain management with psychological and spiritual counseling. Hospice care allows patients to die with a reasonable amount of comfort and dignity rather than simply prolonging human life with treatment often causing unbearable pain. In 1976 Dr. Magno piloted a hospice program at Georgetown and persuaded Blue Cross-Blue Shield to cover expenses for its insurance subscribers by pointing out fees would be half of what hospitals charged. The next year, she established the Hospice of Northern Virginia.

Dr. Magno effectively began the hospice movement in the USA and in 1980 became the National Hospice Organization’s first executive director. In three years in office, she persuaded the US Congress to pass legislation to include hospice care under Medicare. In 1984, she established the International Hospice Institute to train doctors in the United States and developing countries. Moving to Michigan, she founded the first hospice there and created the hospice service at Henry Ford Hospital in Detroit. In 1998, she returned to the Philippines, where she helped establish programs for the poor.

Dr. Magno joined Opus Dei in 1992. She died in the

Philippines in 2003. She did not establish the hospice movement but her influence in spreading the movement in the USA and worldwide is undeniable. Unfortunately the media has not made her name and the work she accomplished as famous as that of the proponents of euthanasia and the culture of death. In Korea, the Korean Catholic Hospice Association coordinates hospice programs countrywide. The Catholic University in Seoul operates a research institute on hospice and palliative care.

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5) Eugenics and Genetic Engineering

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In the future will human beings try to reproduce disease-free children with what they consider perfect character traits and “attractive” physical features? Anti-biotech activists fear a world of pre-programmed robots. Biotech proponents believe such programming will never do away with free will and see no need for undue concern.

However, what about the possibility of creating a baby through IVF whose cells would be used to save a pre-existing sibling with a fatal genetic flaw? Aside from the IVF method, would such a procedure infringe on the younger brother or

sister's rights and freedom as a person to donate cells or body parts?

Will genetic engineering be available only to the rich who can afford its costs and thus create even greater inequalities between the world's "haves" and "have-nots?"

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#### 6) Genetically Modified Organisms (GMOs)

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Hunger and famine still stalk the planet. Millions die of hunger and malnutrition every year. Science offers genetic modification by inserting or deleting genes as a solution. Producing a genetically modified organism (GMO) became possible with the discovery of DNA and the creation of the first recombinant bacteria in 1973.

The broadest and most controversial application of GMO technology is patent-protected food crops resistant to herbicides and which produce pesticidal proteins within the plant itself. The US firm Monsanto owns the largest share of GMO seeds producing crops planted globally. Scientists tout GMO crops as a solution to world hunger because they produce better and in greater volume as well as being environmental friendly because

they reduce the need for pesticides.

A genetically modified organism is created by means that overcome natural boundaries. Combining genes from different organisms is known as recombinant DNA technology. The resulting organism is said to be “genetically modified,” “genetically engineered” or “transgenic.” Genetically modified products include medicines and vaccines, foods and food ingredients, feeds and fibers.

Anti-GMO activists fear genetic engineering because it involves crossing species which could not cross in nature. For example, genes from a fish have been inserted into strawberries and tomatoes. Because the processes of genetic engineering and traditional breeding are different and lead to different risks, this has become a worry for some scientists as well.

Activist groups and some religious leaders suspect GMOs will only make agribusiness firms richer and in the process jeopardize food safety, human health, biodiversity and environmental well-being everywhere. European activists call GMO crops “Frankenfoods” (a play on the word Frankenstein, the famous movie monster). Anti-GMO activists fear GMOs will disrupt traditional farm practices and somehow seep into the ecosystem

and do untold damage. They wonder about hidden agents in the food that might eventually be harmful to human beings and animals. Do GMO products falsely promise to alleviate hunger thus allowing underlying causes such as poverty, unequal land distribution, lack of access to markets for poorer nations and the consumer life-style of rich countries to continue?

The fears surrounding GMOs have given new life to indigenous seed collecting movements worldwide. The modern movement of collecting food plant seeds probably began with Russian scientist Nikolai I. Vavilov, the founder of the All-Russian Scientific Research Institute of Plant Industry. Vavilov perished under Stalin in a Soviet prison in 1940.

The Millennium Seed Bank Project in England is probably the biggest institute of its kind. It collects all kinds of native plant seeds and similar movements, large and small, have arisen in various nations of the world. Traditional farmers and gardeners worry that hybrid seeds will take over and native plant species will die off.

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## 7) Chimeras

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A “chimera” is an organism that carries both human and animal genes. This is such a recent innovation that scientists and moral theologians have much to talk about before official church teaching can really develop.

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## 8) Health Care

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Pope John XXIII made a clear endorsement of universal health care as a basic human right in article 11 of his 1963 encyclical letter *Pacem in Terris*.

“Beginning our discussion of the rights of man, we see that every man has the right to life, to bodily integrity, and to the means which are suitable for the proper development of life; these are primarily food, clothing, shelter, rest, medical care, and finally the necessary social services. Therefore a human being also has the right to security in cases of sickness, inability to work, widowhood, old age, unemployment, or in any other case in which he is deprived of the means of subsistence through no fault of his own.”

Many lament the fact that recent biotech breakthroughs have not given enough attention to how resources are distributed in combating many diseases inflicting humanity especially the poor. World Health Organization (WHO) reports show that the diseases of poorer countries seldom grab the attention of most of humanity.

Health care efforts in Korea have practically abolished leprosy, yet this destructive disease still flourishes in many poor countries especially in Africa. Hookworm, leprosy, African sleeping sickness and trachoma cause a half-million deaths per year. Malaria decreases the GDP of developing countries and worsens poverty. AIDS and tuberculosis are still rampant in poor countries and among the poorer people in advanced countries because a sufficient supply of drugs at affordable prices is still unavailable to treat these diseases.

Advanced countries have siphoned off health care providers from less developed countries because they pay better salaries to doctors, nurses and medical technicians. In 2006 the public health system in the Philippines estimated it had lost 300,000 nurses who went abroad to work. Poor countries that export medical personnel to advanced countries feel this “brain drain”

impoverishes them and subsidizes the health sector of developed countries.

Too often pharmaceutical companies sponsor the pursuit of biotech breakthroughs merely for profits. Pope Benedict XVI pointed this out in his social encyclical “*Caritas in Veritate*” when he declared that rich countries assert “...the right to intellectual property, especially in the field of health care” (Cf. no. 22).

Further on and in the same vein he stated: “When technology is allowed to take over, the result is confusion between ends and means, such that the sole criterion for action in business is thought to be the maximization of profit, in politics the consolidation of power, and in science the findings of research. Often, underneath the intricacies of economic, financial and political interconnections, there remain misunderstandings, hardships and injustice. The flow of technological know-how increases, but it is those in possession of it who benefit, while the situation on the ground for the peoples who live in its shadow remains unchanged: for them there is little chance of emancipation” (*Caritas in Veritate*, no. 71).

## 2. Resolving Contemporary Clashes between Aspects of Social Doctrine

The 21st century has seen a strange contradiction among many ordinary Catholics. Many tend to support the teachings of Pope John Paul II and Benedict XVI when they embrace traditional views on family and sexuality. They tend to disregard or ignore the teaching of these popes when they point out that more and more people are falling into poverty and decry the slashing an already fraying social safety net. Pope Benedict XVI's 2009 social encyclical, *Caritas in Veritate* laments downsizing social security systems and weakening the solidarity associated with the traditional forms of the social state.

“Consequently, the market has prompted new forms of competition between States as they seek to attract foreign businesses to set up production centers, by means of a variety of instruments, including favorable fiscal regimes and deregulation of the labor market. These processes have led to a downsizing of social security systems as the price to be paid for seeking greater competitive advantage in the global market, with consequent grave danger for the rights of workers, for fundamental human

rights and for the solidarity associated with the traditional forms of the social State. Systems of social security can lose the capacity to carry out their task, both in emerging countries and in those that were among the earliest to develop, as well as in poor countries. Here budgetary policies, with cuts in social spending often made under pressure from international financial institutions, can leave citizens powerless in the face of old and new risks; such powerlessness is increased by the lack of effective protection on the part of workers' associations" (*Caritas in Veritate* no. 25).

Despite widespread economic collapses leading to recession and aggravated poverty for the already de-favored poor, free market fundamentalists in many countries have often expressed blind confidence in privatization, deregulation of companies and tax breaks for all including the super-wealthy. For the past 50 years, believers in the absolute and radical freedom of individualism and libertarian capitalistic ideology have railed against taxes and governance to the extent that the concept of legitimate state intervention into government has become highly suspect and even rejected (Cf. *Rerum Novarum* no. 33 and *Caritas in Veritate* no. 39). Governments need to be transparent and

accountable. Citizens should exercise their right to promote the common good, solidarity and fraternity (Cf. *Caritas in Veritate* no. 19 and 24) by regulating how public money is used and demonstrating willingness to participate more fully in the democratic process to create a more human society.

Jesus himself declared to his followers that they had a duty to render unto Caesar (or government) what was necessary to provide common services and civil security (Cf. Mt. 22, 17). He even instructed Peter to catch a fish and extract from its mouth a coin to pay the Temple tax. Paul urged every person to be subordinate to higher authorities because their authority came from God (Cf. Rom. 13, 1). For that reason, he urged Christians to pay taxes to those to whom taxes and tolls are due (Cf. Rom. 13, 5-7).

### 3. Conclusion

“It is not by isolation that man establishes his worth, but by placing himself in relation God and others.(Cf. *Caritas in Veritate* no. 53)

We are all the products of human procreation but firstly all beneficiaries of God's love. We cannot nor did not create ourselves. We have inherited the world we inhabit thanks to a bountiful Lord. Those who preceded us endowed us with the gifts of knowledge and a relatively structured universe. Thus we realize we are individuals but not isolated beings. We depend on family, community and country for a human existence. We relate to others as citizens of a country and members of the entire human family. Being interconnected and interdependent necessitates guidelines for living together in peace and harmony.

As individuals, when interdependence and connectedness give way to isolation, the result is unawareness, selfishness and self-absorption. When, as ethnic groups and nations, we cut ourselves off from other ethnic groups and nations, waging war and barbarity replace humanistic intercourse. When the strong overwhelm the weak to seek out their own advantage, the "culture of death" predominates.

At the beginning of this reflection we saw that Catholic Social Doctrine arises from the scriptural precept to relate to each other with justice and the interconnectedness that engenders love and mercy. To close this reflection on living together on this planet

according to the wisdom of the ages gathered by moralists into what we now know as the Social Doctrine of the Church, a few universally well known phrases from the Renaissance metaphysical poet, John Donne come to mind.

From John Donne's Meditation XVII (verses 13 to 15)

“No man is an island, entire of itself; every man is a piece of the continent, a part of the main. If a clod be washed away by the sea, Europe is the less, as well as if promontory were, as well as if a manor of thy friend's or of thine own were. Any man's death diminishes me, because I am involved in mankind; and therefore never send to know for whom the bell tolls; it tolls for thee.”