

CREATING A JUST SOCIETY IN AN ECONOMICALLY AND TECHNOLOGICALLY INTEGRATED WORLD: THE ROLE OF THE CHURCH IN SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC JUSTICE IN THE 21ST CENTURY

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Introduction

The genesis of this paper was an invitation to participate in the conference, “The Call to Justice: The legacy of *Gaudium et spes* 40 years later.” The authors have been deeply involved over a long period of time in issues of economic development and social justice. Their experience includes work with the United Nations (Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and the Global Compact), the Sullivan Principles, the Voluntary Principles for Security and Human Rights, the Extractive Industries Review, and independent work on apartheid in South Africa, work conditions in the apparel and toy industries and corporate social responsibility. It was the impression of the authors that ‘the church’ (referring to the Christian community made up of many denominations world-wide) and ‘the Church’ (referring to the Catholic Church) had limited presence among those most active in programs intended to alleviate poverty and create a world that is more just and equitable. That does not mean that church groups and individuals were not deeply involved in the quest for social justice, since the authors have come to know many Christians who, because of the faith and their commitment to their churches, acted with energy and courage to make the lives of many better. Among these are religious orders and ecumenical organizations, such as the Interfaith Center for Corporate Responsibility. But, the forceful presence of ‘the church’ (‘the Church’) was not experienced by the authors. That, at least, was the perception of the authors—however there was a need to bolster their impressions with some real scholarship.

Neither author had ever read *Gaudium et spes*; nor were they well versed in the other documents that established the tradition of modern Catholic social teaching. Hence, this paper became an attempt either to confirm the perception that the Church was neither fully engaged nor effective in the pursuit of social justice in the world or to overthrow the authors’ perceptions with some new data. Regrettably, it is the conclusion of the authors that the former is truer than the latter.

To make a fair study it was necessary to look in detail at the many documents, most of which are Papal Encyclicals, to determine the content and evolution of modern Catholic social thought, to assess its applicability to the challenges of the present time, and to

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understand the implementation strategies the Church had for making the world fairer for more people. Such a study has made this paper rather longer than the authors had originally intended it to be.

However, the detailed study made it evident to the authors that Pope Leo XIII's 1891 encyclical, *Rerum novarum*, which had set the standard for modern Catholic social thought and from which every subsequent document dealing with modern Catholic social thought emanated, including *Gaudium et spes*, had such a unique genesis (in the midst of a protracted dispute about the Papal 'temporal kingdom' in the form removal of the Papal States from the Church by Italy in 1870) that profoundly impacted the contents of the encyclical, was a difficult and troublesome foundation upon which to make a theory for Catholic social and economic justice. Since changes made to *Rerum novarum* over the years were 'gentle,' 'respectful' and 'conservative,' it is important to come to grips with *Rerum novarum* and successive documents prior to consideration of *Gaudium et spes*.

It had been the authors' original suspicion that the rapid changes in the economic and political realities of the world today had negatively affected the ability of the Church to deal with implementation of its social doctrine; unfortunately, the data does not suggest that such was the case. Even before the erosion of the power of the nation-state after the Second World War—in fact all the way back to end of the 19th century—it is clear that the Church had no effective plan of how to enforce its social doctrine within or outside the church, or to convince other actors, including the nation-states to effectively deal with issues of social and economic justice.

This has been caused partially by the unique circumstances that led to the development of modern Catholic social doctrine. As noted, in 1891 when Leo XIII issued *Rerum novarum*, the Pope was hold-up in the Vatican as a virtual prisoner. The conquest of the Rome by Italian troops in 1870 completed the destruction of the Pope's temporal kingdom. Pope Pius IX held out hope that some foreign power would intervene to restore the Papal States and the Church's temporal power. He was to be constantly disappointed. His successor, Leo XIII, after toying with some accommodation with the Italian government, concluded that there could be no peace with the Italian State until the traditional Papal lands were returned. He blamed capitalism, liberalism and, most especially, Marxism for hostility toward the Church and the Papal State. Leo, having come from wealthy landed interests, believed that a return to an earlier and simpler agrarian life would solve many of the Church's and societies problems.

Rerum novarum reflects all of the personal beliefs and anxieties of Leo XIII, the Vatican and much of the European Church. It attacked liberal institutions, excessive interest in wealth, alienation of property (especially at the hands of emerging Marxism) while counseling a return to agrarian life. Modern Catholic social doctrine has never full moved away from this Leonine vision of the world. Even as the political, economic and social structures of the world changed throughout the 20th century and into the beginning of the current century, Catholic social doctrine remained more wed to the 19th century than to the 20th and 21st centuries. New political, social and economic challenges and potentials were viewed through the lens of a long-past history.

On most of the decade anniversaries of *Rerum novarum*, Papal encyclicals and/or other Church documents were issued to recall and update Leo's encyclical. Most were reverential and where there were attempts to move forward with new ideas, they were offered carefully and conservatively. Long after the return to an agricultural economy was conceivable in Europe, Catholic social teaching held it up as an ideal. The end of colonialism and all the challenges and opportunities that those changes offered was noted, but not forcefully addressed. It seemed that the Church's social understanding was at least a decade behind the realities of social issues 'on the ground.'

Gaudium et spes, although a reflection of the laity and clergy of the Church sitting in ecumenical council, reflected the Catholic social doctrine that had been articulated by the successive Papal encyclicals that had been issued in recollection and refinement of *Rerum novarum*. Although there have been many laudatory statements about the Second Vatican Council as a definitive opening up of the Church to the modern world, it is hard to uphold that judgment with regard to social doctrine by a careful reading of *Gaudium et spes*. The Council and the Pastoral Constitution did, however, allow what had been Papal statements on matters of social and economic justice to become statements of the laity and clergy on the important matters of the relationship of the Church with the modern world; and that was good. It also impelled the Church to implement some programs to take Catholic social doctrine from the world of thought to the world of action; and that was good as well.

In the decades that followed the Second Vatican Council Papal encyclicals on social justice issues became more frequent; yet they did not become terribly more incisive, which is curious because Pope John Paul II was a very courageous and forceful critic of social injustice and champion of the poor and the dispossessed. In his homilies, his personal interactions and his conversations with world leaders, John Paul made social and economic justice a highest priority. However, his encyclicals never reached the level of passionate commitment that his personal Christian life exemplified. The authors believe that the Church can and should take the opportunity of Pope John Paul's death to memorialize his personal commitment to social and economic justice by reinvigorating Catholic social doctrine to reflect the opportunities to positively affect social justice in the early 21st century and to recognize that the social justice issues of the 19th and early 20th centuries have now been supplanted by new and equally daunting challenges. If the Church wishes to create a more active and engaging social doctrine, the question that needs to be addressed is how.

This paper attempts to address some ways in which the Church might wish to strengthen its commitment to social and economic justice. It looks at the documents that have been foundational in establishing modern Catholic social doctrine and thought, with special emphasis on *Rerum novarum* and *Gaudium et spes*. In considering social doctrine the authors have been as interested in implementation as in philosophy and theology, since the best of thought is worth little without a strategy to make thought effective as an engine for change. Finally, the authors have tried to set out some ideas for what they

think a ‘post-modern’ Catholic social doctrine might look like and how it might be made effective in the social, political and economic realities of the 21st century.

From *Rerum novarum* to *Gaudium et spes* and Beyond: Modern Catholic Social Thought in Theory and Action

In *Rerum novarum*, Pope Leo XIII’s opined on the state of the social and economic world at the end of the 19th century. In his view the world was afflicted by social, economic and political sinfulness and sickness. The health that was exhibited in the agrarian world of previous centuries, had been replaced by social, political and economic systems that were bankrupt. Only a return to a Christian view of life could restore the glory that God intended for man.¹ What Leo wanted can be outlined as follows:

1. Man’s dignity was a gift from God and the Church must defend that dignity;
2. Man’s dignity is deeply dependent on his work and his treatment in the workplace;
3. Although the greatest attack upon the dignity of man (especially in the workplace) comes from the socialists, the unfairness of free-market capitalism is also a creator of attacks on the rights and dignities of man;
4. The agrarian world was more inherently fair than the emerging industrial world;
5. Wages should sustain the reasonable needs of a ‘frugal’ man.
6. Private ownership is essential for the dignity of man; therefore all men should have that right, not just the most wealthy and powerful;
7. Government does not have the right to control labor and ownership of land and other property;
8. Wealth does not always (or often?) bring happiness—happiness has to do with the integrity of the whole human being;
9. The Church has special interest in the welfare of the poor and is willing to intervene for the poor, especially through works of charity; and
10. Workers have the right to organize in associations and unions, but their activity must be for the common good, not individual gain and Catholics should avoid associations and unions that threaten their adherence to Catholic teachings.

To understand better *Rerum novarum* and the evolution of modern Catholic social doctrine, it may be helpful to recall the situation in Europe generally, in a united Italy more specifically and most pointedly in Rome and the Vatican in the period after the mid-1860s. Throughout the 19th century indigenous Italians were seeking to shake off the control that foreign governments had over the Italian states. The French, the Austrians and the Catholic Church in the Papal States were seen as the greatest enemies of Italian nationalism and unification. In the 1860s the French abandoned Italy because of the war that Prussia waged on France. At about the same time the Austrians were forced out of Lombardy by the Italian army. By the late 1860s major inroads had been made into the Papal States, but it was not until 1870 that Italian forces were able to march

into Rome and take control of the city. Papal control of the Papal States was reduced to Vatican City itself. Pope Pius IX, ever desirous to regain his temporal kingdom, counted on intervention by either the French or the Austrians to return to the papacy control of Rome and the Papal States. He was to be disappointed.

Many inside and outside the Church counseled the Pope to compromise with the newly constituted Italian monarchy to provide for financial and religious protections for the Church while accepting the realities of a united Italy. Pius IX refused to consider any such agreement with those whom he considered to be robbers and thieves. He made himself and the Vatican virtual prisoners of the Italian government. The Pope distrusted the 'liberalism' of the emerging Europe and especially the attacks upon the European monarchs and agrarian interests by Marxist and socialist radicals.

Twenty years after Rome fell to the Italian army, Leo XIII issued his encyclical on the Church and in the modern world. On one level it is a statement about the relationship of Catholic Christianity and the rapidly changing world of European politics and economics; on another level it is a poignant lament on the loss of temporal power and glory of the Church—and in a sense a lament over the world Leo and his family had lost. Hence, *Rerum novarum* is a more complex document than a first reading might suggest.²

Leo came from landed aristocracy. He was comfortable with the 'old world' of the land owner and farmer who had a paternalistic relationship with his farm workers. The new, industrial world encompassed very different values. Patrician landowners were replaced by middle class factory owners. Wealth was rapidly being redistributed. Workers were exploited and work conditions were often unacceptable. Women and children were all-too-often abused. Change was seen everywhere—nowhere more dramatically than in the former Papal States and in the rapid changes seen in Rome under the Italians.³ Leo would have liked to make the case that the people within Rome and the Papal States longed to return to Papal rule. However, the evidence does not support such a view. The Popes were not good 'temporal' rulers; Rome fared especially poorly in the later 19th century under papal rule.

Reforming industrialism and capitalism gone array was not only the hope of Leo XIII, it was also being championed by 'secular socialists' who were advancing the ideas of Marx and Engles. Although the Pope and the Marxists identified the same problems, they each had very different solutions to offer. The Pope believed the right solution to the problem capitalism and industrialization gone wrong was a renewal of moral behavior on behalf of both industrialist employers and workers—that is, make the industrial workplace more like the agrarian workplace. For the Marxists, no simple moral solution existed. They wished to attack the very structure of private property. This concept was even more unacceptable to Leo than was industrialization and capitalism, which at least accepted—actually embraced—private ownership. For Leo the defense of property was both personal and ecclesiastical. His family and his Church had property that the Socialists wished to appropriate. Hence, Leo was forced to throw his support behind "generous industrialists, careful workers and supportive governments."⁴ Yet the issue is not just political and economic, it is Biblical and theological. "The fact that God has given the

earth for the use and enjoyment of the whole human race can in no way be a bar to the owning of private property.”⁵ With such evidence in hand, Leo XIII is fully ready to dismiss any thought of socialism.⁶

With socialism in all its forms dismissed, the Pope Leo XIII then turns to the creation of a more just industrial, free-market society. Although Leo was no outright supporter of industrialism and capitalism, he believed there was nothing between the business owners and workers that could not be worked out through mutual respect and understanding.⁷ But if industrial leaders were only looking out for their own financial aggrandizement, problems would come in two forms: first, there would be social unrest within the workforce and in society in general, and second, the very salvation of the souls of the industrial capitalists would be put in jeopardy.⁸

This introduces the important issue of charity over against structural change. The Marxists believed that the charity being given to the poor, including workers, represented the Church’s attempt to mollify the poor and keep them from demanding real changes. Leo disagreed. He saw in the ‘secularists’ criticism of the Church’s charity a bold attempt to remove from the Church an essential part of its Christian mission.⁹ However, it must be noted that there is a truth in the criticism that the Marxists made of the Church—the Church had and continued to support societal structures that were inherently unjust.

The Church did go so far as to counsel fair and open negotiations about wages and realistic expectations by workers.¹⁰ However, in an unequal power relationship, where industrialists have more power than workers have, the Church recognized that something had to be done to create a ‘level playing field.’ Hence, the Church supported the establishment of associations of workers. However, the Church wanted to make certain that worker associations were mindful of their ‘Christianity’ and do not fall into the grasp of the socialists.¹¹

Pope Leo XIII’s encyclical was written with Italy, Europe, the European Church and European workers singularly in mind. Therefore it turned a blind eye on one of the cancerous injustices of the late 19th century: the rapacious behavior of Christian Europe toward its ‘colonial world,’ especially during the “scramble for Africa,” which was happening during the time *Rerum novarum* was being issued. As the 19th century was coming to an end and the Church was struggling with matters ‘Italian,’ along the Congo River the Catholic King Belgium was carrying out a reign of terror in the quest for wealth and prestige; and in southern Africa Dutch and British settlers, while battling each other, carried out atrocities on their African neighbors. On these and other international matters, *Rerum novarum* was silent.

In the decades that followed *Rerum novarum*, there were regular encyclicals that recalled and celebrated the social and economic declaration made by Pope Leo XIII. Most important among those that came prior to the Second Vatican Council and which were part of background for *Gaudium et spes* were *Quadragesimo Anno* (issued by Pope Pius XI in 1931) and *Mater et Magistra* (issued by Pope John XXIII in 1961). Each will be

looked at briefly for areas in which the carried forward, rather than reiterated, the arguments in *Rerum novarum*.

In *Quadragesimo Anno* several of the basic concepts of proper relationships between business owners and their workers that were set out in *Rerum novarum* are carried forward to their next logical step. Not only should there be fair wages for workers established by recognition of work rendered, but also “wage-earners and other employees [should] participate in the ownership or the management, or in some way share in the profits.”¹²

In addition, by 1931, probably in recognition of the realities of the First World War and the shaky truce that followed the end of that war, as well as the Russian Revolution, there was a less Eurocentric stance about economic and social justice. Hence Pius XI would state the following the future structure of the world must develop national and, more importantly international, organizations that will seek to support economic growth while protecting the common good as well as individual gain.¹³

This, along with some kind, but general words of support for the newly-established International Labor Organization, showed the first indications the Europe and the European Catholic Church could not singularly define the future of social and economic systems. Most importantly, however, Pius XI is remembered for his “principle of subsidiary function.”¹⁴ In this principle decisions should be made locally wherever possible. The original intention of this principle was for the Church to stand against the Communist’s quest for central state control in economic and social planning. It also has implications for the governance of the Church—a point that has not gone unnoticed by critics of an increasingly centrally governed Catholic Church. Of late, the principle of subsidiary function has been used by religious and ethnic minorities as well as indigenous peoples to gain measures of independence from and with state systems.

By 1961, when John XXIII issued the encyclical *Mater et Magistra* on Christianity and social progress, the issues and the perspectives had changed from those that seemed so pressing in 1931. A second World War, the immanent end of colonialism, nuclear weaponry and a very dangerous Cold War vexed the world and the Church. Pope John XXIII saw the great need for the Church to sharpen her perspective on social and economic issues and the pressing need for a world free from the dangers of war. Human rights and liberties, as well as labor issues, had come to have their day. The United Nations, with its formative Charter and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, had moved the issue of social and economic justice to a new level. Pope John XXIII was the right leader to move the Church forward on these important issues. While employment remained important, it could not stand alone as an issue any longer. Personal rights and dignities, in a world that was recognized as being diverse and increasingly interconnected, had come to be seen as of equal importance to economic fairness.¹⁵

These clearly were no longer European issues; they were increasingly the issues of an interconnected and interdependent world. Hence, John XXIII furthered his appeal to cover not only Europe and the developed world, but also for the people throughout the world who suffered from poverty, malnutrition and illness, while others in the same lands

lived in luxury.¹⁶ Probably the greatest difference in emphasis between the encyclicals that were issued after the Second World War and those that preceded the War is the recognition of the larger and more diverse community with which the Church had to address. John XXIII recognized that poverty and injustice was not only a religious issue, it was also an issue of global political will. Even if the corruption that was seen to be endemic in the developing world could be extirpated, the financial and moral support of the developed world was necessary for injustice to be ended.¹⁷

The plight of the poor in the developing parts of the world and the necessity that the more developed nations aid them in their development is not the only challenge that the wealthier developed world needs to face; they also must address their own issues with their wealth and the affect that has on their lives. John XXIII saw this as a good confrontation and one that will lead to more sound values among the more developed nations and the wealthier people.¹⁸

With recognition that increasingly large business enterprises, many of which were global in both manufacturing and sales, John XXIII expressed his concern for both the integrity of small enterprises and the value of low-wage workers in large, industrial enterprises. Hence, he asserts that “workers should be allocated shares in firms for which they work, especially when they are paid no more than a minimum wage.” Quoting Pius XII, John XXIII adds his concern for the integrity of small, artisanal businesses and the need for individuals and small business ventures to band together in co-operative ventures to retain market share and influence in the market place.¹⁹

Mater et Magistra is equally strong with regard to the defense of private property. Private property is not just about wealth and investment for the future. It is, rather, a “guarantee of the essential freedom of the individual, and at the same time an indispensable element in true social order.”²⁰

However, John XXIII, like Pius XI before him, strongly believed that the ownership of property has responsibilities and dangers attached to it, as well as personal and social benefit. Therefore, when property is more than one needs, it is socially and spiritually better to share one’s wealth with the poor than to seek only to all that one has.²¹

Clearly, *Mater et Magistra* moved Catholic social teaching to a new level. While remaining faithful to the traditions of *Rerum novarum* it refocused on the merging issues of an economically and politically interconnected world. It say poverty not just as a workers rights issue as defined by the move from and agrarian Europe to an industrial Europe, but rather as an economic, social and political issue of the post-colonial world. As difficult as were the problems of Europe at the end of the 19th century, those paled before the challenges of the globalizing world in the midst of the Cold War in the mid-20th century. It is in the milieu that John XXIII called together the Church at the Second Vatican Council, the event from which *Gaudium et spes* came and to which this paper will turn its attention. However, one further short detour is called for.

In 1963, when the Second Vatican Council was already in session, Pope John XXIII issued what is probably his most important encyclical, *Pacem in Terris*. Although not

per se a document that deals with social and economic justice, it does say much about those topics and its statements clearly influenced the deliberations of the Second Vatican Council and the contents of *Gaudium et spes*.

Pacem in Terris is primarily directed toward nations and leaders of nations. It strongly urges nation leaders to set up system that will create a world which will be peaceful, fair and equitable. To bring this about relationships within the nation-state must be as well ordered as relations between nation-states.²² This that only when inequalities within nations and between nations are brought to some kind of rational order will human rights and dignities of all people be enhanced and protected. However, well ordered nation-states can only be a beginning. Even when nations have ordered their internal lives well, in the modern world they need to deal effectively with other nations so that external affairs do not negatively affect the rational pursuit of internal governance.²³

Finally—and importantly—John XXIII addresses for the first time the issue of ethnic and religious minorities and indigenous peoples. With the end of the Second World War, the end of colonialism and the emergence of independent nations in Africa and Asia from colonial empires, people who had been subjected through colonialism to enforced conformity sought restoration of rights and in many cases independence. Even in Europe, the issue of the rights of religious and ethnic minorities remained in question. In many cases demands for minority rights gave way to desires for political autonomy and the formation of new nation-states. Since the break-up of the Soviet Union, such demands have become more widespread.²⁴

All of these social justice encyclicals were the background for the consideration of the social justice component of the Second Vatican Council. It was the task of the Council to make those Papal statements a more integrated part of the life of the Catholic Church. As becomes apparent in reading *Gaudium et spes*, there is little in the Pastoral Constitution that is original; all has been seen previously and much has been seen in writings that are both more insightful and more incisive.

Gaudium et spes starts by noting how much economic life has changed since the end of the Second World War. The growth of the economy has made “the economy an instrument capable of better meeting the intensified needs of the human family.” However, there are problems, nonetheless. The growth of the global economy has brought about two signal dangers: first, people are being dominated by the acquisition of wealth and are increasingly “ruled by economics;” second, economic growth has in some cases exacerbated, rather than mitigated “social inequalities.”²⁵

The Church is, quite rightly, concerned about what economic growth is doing to a fragile and changing world. But what does the Church propose to do about this situation? It ends up that the Church plans to do very little.²⁶

The guidelines appear to be nothing more than a re-statement of the Church’s common theme that the economy and its growth must be done “in the service of man, and indeed of the whole man with regard to the full range of his material needs and the demands of

his intellectual, moral, spiritual and religious life.” With regard to ‘strengthening these principles,’ there is little evidence renewed strength in evidence.²⁷

How is this to be accomplished? Who is going to take responsibility for this to be done? On such matters *Gaudium et spes* is silent.

The theme that the economy is for man and not man for the economy is further developed in the second half of *Gaudium et spes*’ section on the economy. The theme is set-out in the following terms: “The entire process of productive work, therefore, must be adopted to the needs of the person and to his way of life, above all to his domestic life, especially in respect to mothers of families, always with due regard to sex and age.” Further, society must be ready to come to the aid of those in great economic and other distress. “If one is in extreme necessity, he has the right to procure for himself what he needs out of the riches of others. Since there are so many people prostrate with hunger in the world, this sacred council *urges* [emphasis added] all, both individuals and governments, to remember the aphorism of the Fathers, ‘Feed the man dying of hunger, because if you have not fed him you have killed him.’” Finally, it is asserted that an important goal within a growing economy is that every man should have a right to enjoy private ownership of goods.²⁸

Gaudium et spes reminds Christians that in the midst of their enjoyment (in many cases) of the fruits of economic growth and global prosperity they must also be mindful that they can and should be forces for justice, equity and the “prosperity of mankind and the peace of the world.” In addition, socio-economic development cannot be for Christians an end unto itself; rather it must be part of a holistic spiritual life that is “permeated with the spirit of the beatitudes, notably with the spirit of poverty.”²⁹

Without mentioning the growing global preference for democracy, *Gaudium et spes* makes the case for the rule by the many rather than by the privileged few. This includes not only political sensitivity to ethnic, racial and religious minorities, but also full participation of those whose political participation had been limited throughout modern history. Full, open and transparent participation in the political process by all citizens fosters, in the words of the Pastoral Constitution, “an inward sense of justice and kindness, and of service to the common good.”³⁰ But such public service in the political realm is not always the case in the real political world.³¹ Where governments did not act to protect the common good, citizens should take all reasonable actions to correct and reprove the government, but they should keep within “the boundaries of natural law and the Gospels.”³²

How this balancing of upholding the common good while citizens are being oppressed by an unjust government is not explained; it is merely asserted. Clearly there are times when to only remedy for an unjust and oppressive government is the withholding by citizens of the very support of the common good that gives legitimacy for the government. In a sense this is the type of ‘status quo’ sentiment with regard to social change that permeates *Gaudium et spes* and the other documents that are part of modern Catholic thought. There is a hint that it is better for a Christian to suffer wrong than to rebel and demand

that righteousness prevail. This will be discussed in more detail in the section of this paper that deals with implementation of the substance of *Gaudium et spes*.

After a section on the avoidance of war, *Gaudium et spes* addresses the need for an vibrant international community. As far back as Immanuel Kant and his extended essay *Eternal Peace* (1795), the idea that interconnectedness, economically and intellectually, creates a platform for peace. This is at least as true at the present time as it was in 1965 and 1795. The relationship between the developed world and the developing nations is especially crucial, since true peace can only come when fairness and justice rules.³³

All of this is good and welcome advice. Unfortunately, the history of the economically interconnected world makes it clear that the Church's counsel needs to go further. In the developing world, corruption and inept leadership has caused not only a lack of effective economic growth, but also has caused many nations to slide backwards. Even nations with vast natural resources, have found themselves economically disadvantaged. In some cases rulers and ruling classes have become wealthy while most of the people live in poverty. In many of those countries and especially in the Sub-Saharan countries, Christianity is strong and the Catholic Church influential. Equally, the developed world has clearly failed to play an effective role in helping the developing countries move forward and exploitation of the poor and disadvantaged by the rich and powerful has remained problematic. Finally, multinational corporations, many of which come from the developed world and in which much of the leadership is Christian, have been at least as culpable for making the plight of developing nations worse than they have been agents for sustainable growth and economic and social development in developing nations. There is much work for all to do to make this situation better—and the Church hopes some organization will be set up to take upon itself that task.³⁴

The authors of *Gaudium et spes* do not totally neglect the need for the Church to take action on these important issues of developing nations and their people. The authors of *Gaudium et spes* ask the Church to establish an organization that will be the voice of the Church for peace and justice.³⁵

Gratefully, such an organism has been established. It is called the Commission for Justice and Peace and it exists more on national and diocesan level than internationally. Obviously, some of the local units are stronger and work more effectively than others. One could argue that a more centralized organization would allow the Church to have a greater and more robust impact on social justice. However, it is better to have an official presence within the Church in the areas of peace and justice, than no presence at all.

What is one to make of the contribution of *Gaudium et spes* to the development of modern Catholic social thought? The analysis of the encyclicals that stretch from *Rerum novarum* to *Pacem in Terris* makes clear that *Gaudium et spes* breaks no new ground. It is a safe document that appears to want to add the approval of the broader church to the Papal proclamations on social and economic issues. That in itself is important. *Gaudium et spes* cannot be judged fairly against conditions in the world that post-date it nor can it be judged against the insights of the Church documents on similar issues that have been issued after the Second Vatican Council. Nonetheless, it is instructive to briefly look at

three Papal encyclicals that have been issued since *Gaudium et spes* and which speak to issues raised in that document.

Populorum Progressio was issued by Paul VI in 1967, less than two years after the Pastoral Constitution, *Gaudium et spes*. It reflected Paul VI personal and papal reflections on the work of the Second Vatican Council. As noted earlier in this study, the Church in general and Popes more specifically, tend to be reverential to predecessors and the work of their predecessors. That was true of *Gaudium et spes* and it is equally true of *Populorum Progressio*. Hence it is no surprise that Paul VI starts his reflections on social and economic justice by praising the work of the second Vatican Council and its call to the Church to establish the Commission for Justice and Peace.³⁶

Further, Paul VI notes that the Church has never failed to “foster the human progress of the nations to which she brings faith in Christ.” However, the activities of the past (building hospitals, schools etc.) are no longer enough. Therefore, “the world situation requires the concerted effort of everyone, a thorough examination of every problem—social, economic, cultural and spiritual.”

Populorum Progressio focuses mainly on the last element—that is the spiritual. Paul VI states that the world needs a new humanism and a sense of abiding values. For the world to make true progress toward the “new humanism,” there must be a real improvement in conditions that will lead to “the rise from poverty to the acquisition of life’s necessities; the elimination of social ills; broadening of horizons of knowledge; acquiring refinement and culture.” Beyond those basic tenants of humanism, humanity can move toward an understanding of the needs of others and a desire for the common good. Finally, true humanity can approach the highest values of god himself, which includes faith and unity of love in Christ.³⁷

There are many problems in the world that the Church recognizes in the ‘real world’ that make this true development difficult. They include, among others, corruption and avarice. To move, forward, everyone must cooperate.³⁸

Paul VI sees that any real action to alleviate poverty and create a more just world must come from the nations themselves. The wealthier nations have three duties:

- 1) mutual solidarity—the aid that the richer nations must give to developing nations; 2) social justice—rectification of trade relations between strong and weak nations; 3) universal charity—the effort to build a more humane world community, where all can give and receive, and where the progress of some is not bought at the expense of others. The matter is urgent, for on it depends the future of world civilization.³⁹

To affect this Paul VI suggests that a ‘World Fund’ be established to alleviate poverty, which would be funded by funds from a part of the funds being used for armaments.⁴⁰ Unfortunately no such fund was ever set up. It is also interesting to note that the Church did not offer any of its wealth to help ‘jump start’ the establishment of such a fund.

Paul VI then turns his attention to world trade. This is one of the advances that *Populorum Progressio* offers to the concept of social and economic development. He notes, quite correctly, that ‘free trade’ is freer and more beneficial for the developed world than it is for the developing world. He sees the need to go beyond ‘mutual consent’ in international trade. “When nations involved [in trade] are far from equal, [then] market prices that are agreed upon can turn out to be most unfair.” The establishment of balance in trade between nations is essential. In theory the world has done much of this in the establishment of the World Trade Association and the various international and regional trade agreements.⁴¹

Paul VI’s contribution to the development of modern Catholic social thought ended with *Populorum Progressio*. Fourteen years later, in 1981, on the 90th anniversary of *Rerum Novarum*, Pope John Paul II added his thoughts to the tradition of modern Catholic social thought in the encyclical *Laborem exercens* (1981). One suspects Pope John Paul II was influenced in his analysis by the situation in Eastern Europe and especially in Poland as he wrote the encyclical. After a lengthy history of work (taking up nearly half of the encyclical), the issue of fair labor practices is raised. In the world of the early 1990s, the State in the Soviet Union and the Eastern Block set standards for business and, by implication, for the well-being of workers; in the rest of the world large multi-national corporations had control over prices and wages. Both the state and multinational corporations had more vested interests in taking care of themselves than in taking care of workers.⁴² In either case, the workers were the victims.⁴³ It is the view of Pope John Paul that this cannot be allowed to happen. Society and the state must rather create an atmosphere in which workers are treated fairly and with respect for their needs for stability.

One could hardly argue with such sentiments. However, the challenge is in finding a way in which to create such a ‘worker friendly’ system in the world of free markets, which while creating over a long period fair price and wage structures, often, over a short period, create oppressive and terribly unfair and exploitative conditions for workers. This was not only the problem for workers in 1981, it also is the condition that vexes workers and those who care about economic justice in 2005.

The suggestion in *Laborem exercens* is that international organizations, such as the United Nations and their arm of the United Nations, the International Labor Organization, are best positioned to represent on the international front the interests of labor. But, on the local front the Pope turns back to labor unions, constituted nationally, to represent the workers, both in terms of a living wage and in the creation of jobs for the unemployed. “[Unions] are indeed a mouthpiece for the struggle for social justice, for the just right of the working people in accordance with their individual professions.” This certainly has not worked in the real, globalized and economically interconnected world. Work goes where the workforce is affordable and skilled; it avoids places where it is too expensive or where skilled workers are unavailable. Clearly this is not always fair, and many workers and regions around the world have suffered. States can intervene in this process through education, but where resources are few, education can come at a

high price with respect to gross domestic product, so the answer to work availability and State intervention for the worker is not a simple matter.

The best situation is where everyone can care for his family through the confluence of job skills with wage justice. A ‘safety-net’ can help those who cannot work on the level necessary to earn sufficient wages to support their families, but excessive costs for a safety net negatively affects overall economic production and must not burden the economic system.

Beyond the basic right to work and a just wage, *Laborem exercens* urges that social benefits be provided for all workers. These include medical assistance, the right to rest (at least on Sunday—an issue that goes back to *Rerum novarum*) and the right to apension and insurance for old age. Lastly, “among these rights there should never be overlooked the right to a working environment and to manufacturing processes that are not harmful to the workers’ physical health or to their moral integrity.”

Laborem exercens closes with a lengthy exhortation on the spirituality of work which, while eloquent, does not add much to the argument for justice for workers.

In 1987, Pope John Paul used the twenty-year anniversary of Paul VI’s *Populorum Progressio* to issue another encyclical about social and economic issues. *Sollicitudo rei socialis* notes that *Populorum progressio* was an attempt by Paul VI to recognize the work of the Second Vatican Council on issues of social and economic justice and a vehicle to put into effect some of the concepts of catholic social thought and action as set out by the Council in the Pastoral Constitution *Gaudium et spes*. This is how John Paul II described the outline of the effort of Paul VI to affect the vision of the Second Vatican Council.⁴⁴

John Paul saw that one of the most important aspects of *Populorum progressio* was the concept that Paul VI put forward of the “duty of solidarity” toward the poor and those in the developing world and the concept that “development is the new name for peace.”

When looking at the realities of the world of 1987, John Paul notes that the ‘gap’ between the rich and the poor and the fragmentation of the world into ‘economic worlds’ is a great threat to peace and justice. He is especially concerned with the way in which international debt had come, by 1987, to saddle many developing nations with economic burdens which, rather than spurring economic growth and development, were strangling it. The last 17 years has proven how true that statement was.⁴⁵

Beyond the reality that was being realized in 1987 that investment of capital, especially in the form of loans, was not a panacea for development, there was also a recognition that economic development often came with a negative environmental component.⁴⁶ Finally, *Populorum progression* notes that there is the sense of solidarity of the poor that was growing in the late-1980s. This parallels the sense of solidarity among workers that was seen in the late 19th century when Leo XIII wrote *Rerum novarum*. It is also evidence of the development of what we might call ‘transnational civil society’ today.

Finally, we are at the end of our journey through the texts that make up the body of modern Catholic social thought. In 1991, on the hundredth anniversary of *Rerum novarum*, John Paul II wrote again about social justice in the Encyclical *Centesimus annus*. Clearly, the encyclical is most attuned to the issues that have come to the forefront after end of the Cold War period and there is much that is admirable in it.

Not unexpectedly, the document, as was the case for its predecessors, remains deeply tied to *Rerum novarum*. With communism defeated, the issue of free-market capitalism and the issues of social justice and economic equity that it raises are addressed much more directly. In addition, with totalitarianism discredited as a political system and with democracy being established in many of the Eastern Bloc countries, the issue of the Church and democracy needed to be addressed.

Centesimus annus also notes that the encyclical comes at the time when colonialism has finally come to an effective end. However, John Paul II notes that the end of empire does not bring to an end of the domination of many countries' economies by foreign entities because multinational corporations, many of which had their origins during colonial domination, remain in the newly freed colonies. How the former colonies would deal with new political, social and economic realities of the post-colonial world is expressed to be of great importance and of concern to the Church. Finally, the encyclical takes special note that after the Second World War international organizations, led by the United Nations, have come to accept special roles in the areas of economic development and especially in the area of human rights. The Church supports and commends this effort. The Church also notes that a number of tribal and ethnic groups have not been full amalgamated into the nation-states in which they reside. This is seen as a problem to be addressed. Not noted, but of equal importance, or possibly of greater importance in light of the ethnic conflicts and outright acts of genocide that have vexed the world over the last 15 years, is the reality that many religious, ethnic and tribal groups that were forcibly integrated into nation-states had come to want their independence.

Although the issue of human rights goes back to goes back at least to 1948 and the United Nation Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the clearest statement in Catholic social doctrine on human rights came in *Centesimus annus*. It focuses on the Church's "commitment to defend and promote human rights for all people irrespective of "his or her personal convictions."⁴⁷ However, the same encyclical also seems to see human rights as protection for the Church to preach the Gospel freely and openly, stating that an end of human rights "to discover and freely accept Jesus Christ, who is man's true good."⁴⁸

Religious and human rights cut both ways. Although one can hope that this statement implies that Christians will respect the religious and human rights of those who neither know Christ nor want to know Christ, the statement itself seems to imply only that non-Christians should respect the right of Christians to worship and to proselytize, but not the other way around. Believing one has the truth makes it difficult to accept the rights of 'the other.'

Development and poverty are also addressed from the perspective of the post-Cold War realities as well. The battle for economic and social justice was not won by the end of the Cold War; it was just moved from one sphere to another. Additionally the end of colonialism made clearer the need for countries, especially those in Europe, to provide aid for those in their former colonial possessions.⁴⁹

While all of this is true and perceptive, the problems of realizing such a utopian world have proven vexing. No sooner had the Cold War ended than the time of terrorism began. Although the Soviet Union stopped spending funds it never really had to keep up with American weaponry, and for a short time America was able to cut back on its military spending, of late America's military spending has risen sharply as it has engaged in a series of limited conflicts in various parts of the world to quell terrorism and establish democracies. One could argue that in the long-run these activities will foster poverty reduction, but for the short-run it has just redirected macro-weaponry for micro-weaponry with little left for the 'peaceful poor. It is difficult to know when this situation might change. Even beyond the more global and political issues that make development difficult, there are the more mundane issues of education and experience that hold back individuals, societies and countries. Educated and trained work-forces cannot evolve overnight and the world hardly ever waits for them to catch-up.

The other great hope for justice and development at the present time and at the period in which *Centessimus annus* was written is the expansion of democracy. A consideration of the role of democracy as the dominant political system was new to Catholic social thought in the 1990s, probably because the Church wanted to stay somewhat neutral on the issue of political systems even while attacking Marxist economic systems head-on. While supportive of democracy, the Church also counsels democracies to be responsible for protecting higher values of life and the rights of all people.⁵⁰

The final issue that *Centessimus annus* addresses is the social justice in the new economic realities of a world that is singularly dominated by free-market capitalism. *Rerum novarum* was a document that attacked Godless Marxism and all that that ideology stood for. Therefore it defended free enterprise, the making of profits and private ownership. It did warn industrialists against the mistreatment of workers, especially to the extent that such mistreatment drove workers into the Marxist camp. However, with Marxist ideology virtually defeated, John Paul II turned more serious attention to the potential for and the dangers to social justice as a result of market-driven capitalism. He notes that in the past economies were driven by land and then by capital. Although land and capital are still essential for economies, in today's economic world it is the person that is essential.⁵¹ Therefore, education and training have become to be of greatest importance—and an act of discrimination against people is the refusal to permit the training necessary for full employment.

Finally, *Centessimus annus* touches upon the field that has come to be known as corporate social responsibility. It notes that profit cannot be the only goal that business has. Rather, business should be mindful of their responsibilities to the broader social community, including their workers and the environment.⁵² Although corporate social

responsibility has gained in popularity as a concept for proper corporate behavior, it is not without its critics. Milton Friedman, the American conservative economist, would certainly not agree with the encyclical on such matters of business having responsibility for community social values, rather than just paying fair wages and returning value to shareholders, but other economists and those who work on the ethical structure of business would heartily endorse the sentiments of the encyclical.

What, then, should we make of modern Catholic social teachings of which the Pastoral Constitution *Gaudium et spes* was a part? It is clear that *Rerum novarum* set the standard for Catholic social thought in the 20th century. Reading all the major documents that have played a role in the development of modern Catholic social doctrine, reminds the reader of several truths: (1) *Rerum Novarum* defined the issues that would dominate modern social thought in the Catholic Church; and (2) Reverence for the writings and pronouncements of previous Popes limited the desire of successors to the Chair of Peter to make any radical restatement of the themes of Catholic social doctrine. *Rerum novarum* was a Eurocentric document that addressed primarily the perceived danger to the Church and to society posed by Marxist socialism. The stated social danger was the desire of the socialists to control private property through enhanced governments. *Rerum novarum* and its successors, well into the late 20th century, continued to defend private property against all potential socialist attacks. In addition, the Church's social teaching remained Euro-centric at least until the middle of the 20th century. Leo XIII recognized that a major reason why European workers would follow Marxist-socialist ideology is that industrialists had treated their workers poorly. Therefore, to protect the Church and society, the Church needed to urge governments and industrialists to protect workers with decent working conditions and fair salaries.

What is striking as one reads through the encyclicals that followed *Rerum novarum* is how the same themes came up again and again, gently and reverently repackaged for new circumstances. There was movement forward on issues and new issues were addressed, but the movement toward new issues and new thoughts was slow at best. It was only with *Centesimus annus* in 1991 that the Papal Encyclicals were able to break (somewhat) from the substance and structure of *Rerum novarum* and to address the very changing world at the end of the 20th century.

It is also striking what was not noted in the social and economically oriented encyclicals until the latter half of the 20th century: colonialism and the ills of Europe's scramble for colonies in Africa; the plight of indigenous peoples and religious minorities; corruption and its effects on social and economic development; the emergence of multinational corporations as an increasingly important social and economic part the developed and developing world and, most importantly, what effective and pro-active role the Church could play in the whole process of social and economic justice. This is as true of *Gaudium et spes* as it was of prior and even some of the later encyclicals.

What then is the importance of *Gaudium et spes*? It was certainly not that the Pastoral Constitution opened up new areas of consideration or action for the Church's social ministry. The Second Vatican Council did not feel that it had permission to go beyond

the doctrine handed down by the Popes on such matters. The important thing the Second Vatican Council and *Gaudium et spes* did was to allow the ‘Church,’ in addition to Papacy, to speak on social and economic justice issues—and that was an important thing for the ‘Church’ to do.

Implementing Programs for Economic and Social Justice: A challenge for the Church—and for others

It goes without saying that the world of 2005 is vastly different from the world of 1965. Most obviously, the world of 1965 was the world of the Cold War. On the surface the most important aspect of that age was the ideological and political battle between the capitalist and democratic West and the communist and totalitarian East. But, 1965 was also the middle point of the ‘Indian Summer’ of the nation-state and the nation-state system. With the globe divided between two super powers, both of which were suspected to have had the power to obliterate the world through nuclear attacks, the nation-state system, which by all rights should have yielded to an economically and technologically interconnected world that emerged fully after the Second World War, received an artificial ‘second wind’ as a defense against potential nuclear holocaust. Both the West and the East had to control the nation-states under their influence and needed to try to invite new emerging states into their camp, because failure to exert such control could lead to conflicts that could rapidly escalate to uncontrollable levels. It was also a time when traditional institutions, such as the church, in conjunction with or in opposition to nation-states, appeared to be regaining influence over moral and political issues. Finally, 1965 was in the midst of the period when the last of the European colonies were receiving their independence and heading off on their own political and developmental paths. This was the ‘reality of 1965, when *Gaudium et spes* was being created.

By 1991, when Pope John Paul II was issuing a hundredth anniversary remembrance of Pope Leo XIII’s seminal encyclical for modern Catholic social thought, *Rerum novarum*, the world was a very different place. The Cold War had ended; globalization, economic and technological, had become the major social and economic issue of the day; the nation-state, while not yet disappearing, had lost its prominent place in the ordering of the affairs of the world; and something called ‘trans-national civil society’ had become an important factor in the post-modern world, part of which was made-up of ‘old institutions,’ including religious groups (Christian and non-Christian) and part was made-up of new institutions, including multi-lateral organizations (the United Nations and the World Bank, for example), non-governmental organizations, such as human rights and environmental groups, and, possibly most importantly of all, multinational corporations. Finally, and most importantly for this paper, the church, including the Catholic Church in the developed North, had lost membership and influence. Not long after 1991, the only countries in Europe with a majority who worshipped regularly were Poland, Ireland and Malta. Although church attendance and adherence remained stronger in North America, it was waning as well. Where the church was growing, however, was in the developing countries in Africa and Asia, where differing histories and value systems made Christianity look very different than in the developed European and North American

countries. As importantly, few who worshipped on Sundays in the developed world say that their faith had much to do with their lives throughout the ‘work-week.’ These trends have continued in the early 21st century. Therefore, it should not be a great surprise to discover that the Catholic Church has found it difficult to enforce her social policy on a vastly changed and rapidly changing world. Equally, with a diminution in the number and the commitment of the faithful, it should not be unexpected that the ability of the Church to establish ethical norms has been compromised.

In 2005, as the conference “Call to Justice: The legacy of *Gaudium et spes* Forty Years Later” meets, the world has continued to change and the issues of social and economic justice have become more complex and more prominent. At present global terrorism, the rise of religious and ethic conflicts, the further enhancement of multinational corporations, the spread of AIDS, especially in Sub-Saharan Africa, but increasingly in Asia as well, the emergence of the United States as the single global-power and the further growing phenomenon of the ‘failed-state’ make the importance of the Church giving voice to its vision of economic and social justice more urgent, while making it more difficult for the Church to make its voice heard. Hence, the challenges the Church has and the need for the Church to act in these areas are equally great.

The church has always had a struggle with its role in the areas of social and economic justice, since those areas have been part of the primary role that governments (nation-states) have played since the late 16th century. The Church has been more concerned with the salvation of the souls’ of the faithful and morality measured more individually than collectively. Hence the Church has actively pursued charity more than social change. In the areas of social and economic justice the Church prefers ‘social thought’ to ‘social action and social change.’

The issue that the Church, and by implication the conference “Call to Justice,” might wish to address is, in consideration of the changes in the power of the nation-state and the development of an increasingly powerful civil society, what role the Church could play effectively in the world today? Should the Church become more active in concerted efforts to change the structure of societies and what new issues should the Church be addressing in its quest to articulate a Christian vision for the 21st century? The encyclical *Rerum novarum* of Pope Leo XIII (1891) set the standard for modern Catholic social teaching. In virtually every decade thereafter the Church has reverentially revisited and gently revised *Rerum novarum*. *Gaudium et spes* is very much part of that tradition. Has the time come to move beyond *Rerum novarum*? In what the authors hope is a gentle and constructive manner, they wish to make some suggestions about how the Church might more effectively help the world address the world and its challenges.

What has not been dealt with in the discussion of modern Catholic social doctrine is the implementation strategy for the teaching so laboriously developed over the past century. In a sense asking such a question is something that is relatively new. Over the past two decades questions have been increasingly asked of everyone from governments, governmental agencies, Non-governmental organizations and multinational corporations about whether they really do what they say they are doing. The issue is two fold: one is

about the success of performance about things really tried; the other is about statements made about things to be done that were never attempted—and in some cases were never intended to be attempted. A few examples may help make the issue clear. If a company says it is going to improve its environmental performance and it puts into place programs to make air and water cleaner, spends operating and capital funds to accomplish this and then fails to make the improvements attempted (or promised), that is a failure, but it is an honest one. Another example is a company that promises in an expensive advertising campaign to clean up the environment and then walks away from its commitment. We would probably have some admiration for the former company for a good try even though there was no success; we would most probably only have derision for the latter company.

A third example that might be given is more complex. A company with operations in a developing country makes a commitment to work to improve the health of workers and the general public in the area in which they work. However, they quickly discover that the company can directly affect the provision of health care and health education for their employees and possibly for the families of the employees, but for those who live around the company's operations there are very few things the company can do to make certain that their commitment is fulfilled because the company cannot really control what happens outside of its operation with regard to public policy. In such a case the company might well need to confront the local and national government to try to get their commitment fulfilled; to do so may be difficult, and in some cases may even be a potential threat to the operations of the company.

The question with which a fair-minded must grapple is which of the scenarios best describes the position of the Church with respect to implementing its social doctrine. Does the Church really have the ability to change the way in which the world is run? And, even if it does have such power, is the Church willing to spend the 'capital' it has to effect structural social change?

None of the modern Catholic social doctrine documents addresses these issues directly, but they do hint at an answer, nonetheless. It appears that the Church is willing to comment on issues such as social and economic justice, the best routes for human development and the structure of the political economy, but not willing to enter actively into the fray when it comes to attempting to enforce structural social change. In addition, it appears that the Church is more comfortable with charity than it is with political action. A look at some of the texts from the encyclicals and the Pastoral Constitution will help in evaluating these impressions.

Populorum progressio (1967) suggests that the problems of economic growth and the fair distribution of wealth is so vexing that many different parties are required to make certain that the problems of the poor are adequately addressed. However, it is clear that the Church has some qualms about its active participation. The encyclical notes the Church "has no desire to be involved in the political activities of any nation" and that the Church was "founded to build the kingdom of heaven on earth rather than to acquire temporal

power,” and therefore “sharing the noblest aspirations of men and suffering when she sees these aspirations not satisfied, she wishes to help them attain their full realization.”⁵³

John XXIII builds on the same theme in *Sollicitudo rei solialis*. The Church does not have technical solutions for the problems of the world today. It does not prefer one political or economic system over another, provided that a system respects human dignity. Rather the Church brings to any and all political and economic systems her “expertise in humanity” and she brings primarily “religious mission” to all men and women.⁵⁴ Hence, the Church, while interested in development, is only active in the field because it is a part of the broader issue of human dignity. However, its participation in this area is contingent on that activity permitting the Church “the room she needs to exercise her ministry in the world.”

It is out of the separation of the Church from the world of secular politics that led the Church to prefer charity to the promotion of social change. This can be seen often throughout the encyclicals and the Pastoral Constitution, but it is made most clear in *Centisimus annus*. Recalling the example of the early Church, the acts of charity of the early church are presented as an example of proper Christian action. For John Paul XXIII the “social message of the Gospel must not be considered a theory,” but a genuine call to action. This action centered on acts of charity for the poor, the sick and the homeless.⁵⁵

As a model for the present time, however, this model of charity is problematic. With the Church stating its antipathy toward involvement in the world of temporal social and political systems and its preference toward charity over social change, the ability of the Church to be an active player in making the world more just and equitable is limited.

At the conclusion of *Gaudium et spes*, the council makes one of its very few calls for direct action:

Considering the immensity of the hardships which still afflict the greater part of mankind today, [the council] regards it as most opportune that an organism of the universal Church be set up in order that both the justice and love of Christ toward the poor might be developed everywhere. The role of such an organism would be to stimulate [emphasis added] the Catholic community to promote progress in needy regions and in international justice.⁵⁶

As noted earlier, the Papal Commission on Justice and peace was set up and it has, in many places, done fine work, but it has hardly had a profound effect on international justice and peace—that level of Church action still awaits its time.

Another way in which to see the reluctance of the Church to become too directly involved with the active promotion of social change is the choice of words with which the Church sets out its social doctrine. A few random examples from *Gaudium et spes* will suffice (emphases added in italics):

“*Let* those who teach theology in seminaries and universities *strive to collaborate* with men versed in the other sciences.”⁵⁷

“To satisfy the demands of justice and equity, *strenuous efforts must be made*, without disregarding the rights or the natural qualities of each country.”⁵⁸

“Since there are so many prostrate with hunger in the world, this sacred council *urges* all, both individuals and governments.....”⁵⁹

“Christians who take an active part in present-day socio-economic development and fight for justice and charity *should be convinced* that they can make a great contribution to the prosperity of mankind and to the peace of the world. In these activities *let them*, either as individuals or as members of groups, *give a shining example*. Having acquired the absolutely necessary skill and experience, they *should observe the right order* in their earthly activities in faithfulness to Christ and his Gospel. Thus their whole life, both individual and social, will be permeated with the spirit of the beatitudes, notably with a spirit of poverty.”⁶⁰

The texts that have been considered, with respect to content and language make it clear that the Church wishes to comment more on social justice and economic fairness than to fight for it. That the Church’s social doctrine is basically sound, though far from groundbreaking, cannot be denied. If the Church had been able over the past century to assure the implementation of even half of its social doctrine, the world would be a fairer and more just place. But that has not happened. Hence, the world needs to hope that the Church of the present will learn from the lack of success of the Church of the recent past in implementing social change and will try to put in place stronger programs to implement its vision of social doctrine.

Gaudium et spes in 2005: A New Vision Catholic Social Doctrine

The Pastoral Constitution *Gaudium et spes* begins as follows: “The joys and the hopes, the griefs and anxieties of men of this age, especially those who are poor and any way afflicted. These are the joys and hopes, the griefs and anxieties of the followers of Christ.” That was certainly true in 1965. The joys and hopes came in large measure from the economic growth that followed the end of the Second World War and the closing out of the era of European colonialism. Free nations and peoples saw for the first time opportunity for political freedom and economic development. There were also griefs and anxieties in 1965. At that time the Cold War which divided peoples into two camps, one capitalist and democratic and the other communist and totalitarian was at its height. The specter of global nuclear war was never far from the minds of people in 1965.

The year 2005 can be characterized in much the same way, but for very different reasons. Joys and hopes do abound; so also do griefs and anxieties. Our joys and hopes also have to do with economic growth. Global economic development, although not evenly distributed, has continued and even accelerated. The remarkable technological advances over the past forty years have the potential to make the lives of many people in the world today substantially better. The Cold War has ended and, although rogue nuclear nations continue to create anxiety, there is not widespread fear of nuclear holocaust any longer. New anxiety and griefs, however, cloud the brightness of joys and hopes. Terrorism has

become a source of great anxiety, and in all too many parts of the world, religious and ethnic wars make life most uncertain. The genocide, which most people believed had come to an end at the completion of the Second World War, has reappeared in many parts of the world. AIDS has decimated major portions of sub-Saharan Africa and now is moving through the Indian sub-continent and into portions of Southeast Asia.

The Church and religious communities in general have also changed greatly since 1965. Churches in the Northern Hemisphere have lost many members. Europe has been especially hard hit by “religious defections” to secularism and new-age religions. Only three European nations, Ireland, Poland and Malta, number more than half of their population as practicing Christians. In parts of Europe, and certainly within America, many Christians have embraced conservative fundamentalism. Although it is good that some who have not be part of the faith community have embraced the Christian faith, there are aspects of the belief systems of the conservative fundamentalists that are distressing with regards to traditional Christian social justice and modern Catholic social doctrine.

South of the equator the situation is very different. Christianity has grown greatly in membership and influence throughout Africa, parts of Asia. Although, many of the Christians south of the equator belong to mainstream churches, including the Catholic Church, their understanding of the Christian faith differs substantially from Christians north of the equator. Parallel to this growth of Christianity south of the equator there has been an equal growth of Islam. Many countries in Africa and Asia now find strong and sometimes violent confrontations over the proselytizing activities of Christians and Muslims. The conflicts between Christianity and Islam world-wide have become difficult and dangerous over the past two decades and they often stand in the way of economic development and social justice. Religious conflict on a global scale has become a major part of the griefs and anxieties of our age and most probably for the age to come.

In the midst of all of these opportunities and challenges, the authors of this paper believe that the very governing principles of our world are all undergoing decisive change. The nation-state system, which has ordered Western political and economic relations for four hundred years, is changing and in some senses eroding. Although it is probably not going away, at least at the present time, the nation-states are now sharing power and influence with some new players. The transformation of basic political structures is an opportunity for good and a source for anxiety. The authors will suggest that it is a special opportunity for the Church to revitalize its social mission.

A short review of the history of the nation-state may be helpful. The nation-state system evolved as a result of religious wars that swept Europe in the 16th and 17th centuries. To get some control over religious violence, it was decided to establish the religion in a geographic region on the religion of the ruler of the territory. Over a relatively short period of time, the religious units became economic and cultural units, with national interests, national identities and national economies. The Catholic Church continued to play a role in the governance of many of the emerging nation-states (Spain, France,

Portugal, Italy and major portions of the Germanic states for example), while Protestant and Reformed Churches played a similar role in other European nation-states (England, Scotland, the Netherlands, and parts of Switzerland) from the 16th century through the late 18th century. During that period clergy (whether Catholic or Protestant/Reformed) played an important role in the life of the 'secular' state. However, by the end of the eighteenth century, the relationship between church and state was increasingly troubled. In early 18th century England, the Church of England was systematically excluded from political affairs, replaced by an increasingly active Parliament and developing political parties. Later that century, England's American colonies established in a constitution the separation of church and state. More momentous, however, was the fall of the Bourbon monarchy in France and the overthrow of the Church in France as the partner of the monarchy. This was an important prologue to the development of constitutional states under girded by democratic beliefs.

The implications of these revolutionary changes in the relationship of church and state were great for both parties. The state became increasingly secular and the church (Church) had to find new ways in which to have influence over society. It is in this context of church and state that modern Catholic social thought and doctrine evolved. The church could not 'control' the state, even on the moral issues that traditionally belonged to the religious realm. *Rerum novarum* and the encyclicals of the late 19th and 20th centuries, including the Pastoral Constitution *Gaudium et spes*, that were issued on economic and social justice themes reflected the real division between church and state and the tentativeness of implementation of those documents confirms the realities of 19th and 20th century church-state relations.

In the late 20th and early 21st centuries the nation-state system appears to be losing some of its grip on global governance. It is not going away any time soon, but the nation-state now shares governance with a number of other groups; some of which are old and others are new. Religion is now back as a partner in governance within the nation-state. In some countries, especially those in the Middle East, religion has become a dominant actor in governance. Also emerging are other players in what is being called 'trans-national civil society,' including multi-lateral organizations (the United Nations and the World Bank), non-governmental organizations (representing human rights, environmental, economic development, women's and other issues) and of great importance, multinational corporations. The way in which these groups interact is constantly changing and will undoubtedly continue to do so.

The authors wish to suggest that this is a time when the Church has unique opportunities to become more effectively involved in promoting economic development, economic equity and social justice throughout the world. Further the authors believe that this is an opportunity that should not be missed.

Using this as background the authors wish to conclude with the following program for the Church in the Twenty-First Century. Even more important than rethinking Modern Catholic Social Teaching, into what one might call Post-Modern Catholic Social Teaching, is the necessity for the Church to take the chance on being a major partner in

implementing global social policy for economic development, economic equity and social justice. As the authors had pointed out they see the greatest weakness in Modern Catholic Social Thought, not in the ideas set out by the Church, but in the failure to have an implementing strategy for those ideas. Just saying what the Church thinks no longer counts. It doesn't with parishioners, it doesn't count with leaders of nation-states and it doesn't count with global leaders. It is just one piece of a many layered series of pieces of information that are taken by the faithful and those who do not know the faith. In and of itself, the declaration, whether it be from a Church Council or from the Pope will not carry enough weight for the world to change. It is the contention of the authors that the Church has sufficient resources, financial, human and moral to help the move the world forward to be fairer and more equitable. The issue is whether the Church is willing to do so.

The second issue is the content of social teaching. As was noted in the long analysis of the documents that make up modern Catholic social thought, Pope Leo XIII thought that the enemies of the workers were both the European socialist movement and liberal capitalism. He longed for the social and economic simplicity of agrarian Europe. Although the writings of Leo's successors gently moved Catholic social thought forward, such movement was slow, conservative and reverential. Only in John Paul's 1991 encyclical was there real evidence that the paradigm of catholic social thought might move away from earlier models. The authors hope that the 40th anniversary of the Second Vatican Council and the Pastoral Constitution *Gaudium et spes* will see the Church's considered response to the needs of the world today.

If such an effort is undertaken by the Church, the authors wish to suggest the following considerations.

A. Content of Post-modern Catholic Social Teaching

1. First and foremost the Church needs to realize that it has substantial power, influence and wealth. Hence, it has far more responsibility (along with many others listed below) for making the fate of the world better than it has been willing to take up to the present. The Church has been part of the problem in the past as well as part of the cure. The Church needs to take responsibility of the past so to move forward with the future. That should be a major item in the 'New *Gaudium et spes*.'
2. The content of post-modern Catholic social thought must reflect the realities of the post-Cold War, post communist, globalized and interconnected world. It must also come to understand that globalization and interconnectedness suggests that Christians, Muslims, Hindus, Buddhists and Jews not only need to find a way to tolerate each other, but also a way to respect each other and to work together to alleviate hunger, poverty and injustice. While many of the statements within modern Catholic social thought continue to be valid and helpful, they need to be shorn of their connections to a world that no longer exists. The Christian message, while deeply rooted in eternal truths and the Church's unique history, must not miss either new historical realities or the stirring of the Holy Spirit in the world today and in the Church.

3. Although it appears that free-market capitalism offers the best current model for global economic growth, it has not proven, in the short-term at least, to be a good model for assuring that economic benefits flow through even vibrant and growing economies. The Church (and others) needs to work to make certain that workers are fairly treated and that as many people as possible have a living wage for the place where they live and work.
4. Although the nation-state is increasingly sharing control over social and economic issues with transnational civil society, the nation-state is still in a very powerful position to either make the fate of the people in the world much better or much worse. In the past the Church had 'dealt with the nation-state with kid-gloves.' It can no longer do so. There are many aspects of life in the post-modern nation-state that must be addressed for the world to become fairer and more just. The Church must press the nation-states for the changes in what they do and how they do it.
5. To assure that this happens, economic and political corruption must be rooted-out. Corruption single greatest barrier to economic justice, because it sucks real value out of the economy, most of which comes out of what workers need to participate in the developing economy. The nation-state should be the protector of its people; all too often it preys upon its people. Although the worst of corruption (but by no means all of corruption) has been extirpated from developed countries, the developed world must recognize that the developing world has been influenced in corruption by European colonialism.
6. Multinational corporations have become a huge economic and social force in the world today. Many multinational corporations are now larger than the countries in which they operate. The presumption that weak (and often corrupt) nation-states are going to effectively control and direct multinational corporations is fallacious. Multinational corporations can be an effective agent in creating social justice and economic equity. They can also be creators of injustice and poverty. The Church needs to engage multinational corporations to help them understand what they can do to help make the world more just and equitable. Equally, the Church needs to criticize multinational corporations when their behavior is unacceptable. In the manufacturing sectors multinationals must provide safe and clean workplaces, fair wages and training and advancement opportunities. They also need to see that leaving one low-wage paying country for a yet lower-wage paying location is fair to neither the country or to the workers. Multinational corporations in the extractive industries have an even more complex situation; they must deal with environmental degradation, indigenous rights and, in many areas where they operate, a history of human rights violations. A vibrant post-modern Catholic social doctrine must deal with all of these issues.

Even more important for the Church to have a real impact on making the world more just and fair is for post-modern Catholic social doctrine to be an active participant in

structural social change. As noted previously, pursuing such a strategy implies that the Church will take some risks that the Church has been unwilling to take in its recent past. The following are suggestions for an implementation plan:

1. The Church must be willing to put up some of its 'capital' (human and financial, as well as spiritual) to be a full participant rather than a commentator on poverty, economic equity and social justice. The major transnational civil society organizations that are players in these areas are already using their 'capital.' The United Nations, the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund provide financial and human resources; organizations such as Human Rights Watch, Amnesty International and International Center for Corporate Responsibility, lacking substantial financial resources, offer human resources and active moral leadership. The Church needs to put 'its treasure' in place so that her 'heart' may be there as well. Without doing so, the Church will never have the credibility that it needs to have a real impact.
2. The Church needs to take responsibility for its past actions with regard to the poor and social justice. In the recent past the Church has all too often turned a blind eye to the social structures that have institutionalized poverty and injustice while making available a modicum of charity. It has supported nation-states in some of their most unjust actions. As Pope John Paul has graciously made apologies for many actions of the Church in other areas, we would urge him to do so in the area of social justice as well—and then pledge the Church to full participation in building a world that is more just and fair as part of her response to the Gospel imperative.
3. Over the past years there has been a movement toward external monitoring of corporate social performance. One could make the argument that the Church should monitor her performance and should press for further performance audits in every area in which it works. As painful as these audits of performance may be, they have proven very helpful.
4. A number of small organizations with few resources except for a high commitment to a moral cause have made real progress in pushing for social and economic justice. The Interfaith Center for Corporate Responsibility (ICCR) is an example of a religious group that has helped multinational corporations re-think corporate social responsibility in spite of having few resources. With the resources the Church has, it is clear that, using the model of ICCR, the Church can actively help nation-states and corporations help build a better world. However, the Church cannot do so standing on the side-lines.

It is the hope of the authors that the Church will seriously at its history social thought and consider whether there is a better model for its future.

¹ For a general history of Catholic social thought see Michael Novak, *Freedom with Justice: Catholic Social Thought and Liberal Institutions* (San Francisco, 1984). For *Rerum novarum* and the origins of modern Catholic social thought see pp. 108-125. For a summary of documents pertaining to Catholic social doctrine, see *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church* (Vatican City, 2004).

² For a general history of this period in Italian history and the Vatican and the Papacy, see the following: David I. Kertzer, *Prisoner of the Vatican: The Pope's secret Plot to Capture Rome from the New Italian State* (Boston, 2004); Owen Chadwick, *A History of the Popes, 1830-1914* (Oxford, 1998), pp. 215-331.

³ *Rerum novarum* (English edition), p. 1. The elements of the conflict now raging are unmistakable; in the vast expansion of industrial pursuits and the marvelous discoveries of science; in the changed relations between masters and workmen; in the enormous fortunes of some few individuals, and the utter poverty of the masses; the increased self reliance and closer mutual combination of the working classes; as also, finally, in the prevailing moral degeneracy....

⁴ *Rerum novarum*, p. 3.Thus, if he [the worker] lives sparingly, saves money, and, for greater security, invests his savings in land, the land, in such case, is only his wages under another form; and, consequently, a working man's little estate thus purchased should be as completely at his full disposal as are the wages he receives for his labor. But it is precisely in such power of disposal that ownership obtains, whether the property consist of land or chattels. Socialists, therefore, by endeavoring to transfer the possessions of individuals to the community at large, strike at the interests of every wage earner, since they would deprive him of the liberty of disposing of his wages, and thereby of all hope and possibility of increasing his resources and of bettering his condition in life....

⁵ *Rerum novarum*, p. 4. With reason, then, the common opinion of mankind, little affected by the few dissentients who have contended for the opposite view, has found in the careful study of nature, and in the laws of nature, the foundations of the division of property, and the practice of all ages has consecrated the principle of private ownership, as being pre-eminently in conformity with human nature, and as conducting in the most unmistakable manner to the peace and tranquility of human existence.

⁶ *Rerum novarum*, p. 4. The contention, then, that the civil government should at its option intrude into and exercise intimate control over the family and the household is a great and pernicious error....Hence, it is clear that the main tenet of socialism, community of goods, must be utterly rejected, since it only injures those whom it would seem meant to benefit, is directly contrary to the natural rights of mankind, and would introduce confusion and disorder into the commonweal.

⁷ *Rerum novarum*, p.6.The great mistake made in regard to the matter now under consideration is to take up with the notion that class is naturally hostile to class, and that the wealthy and the working men are intended by nature to live in mutual conflict....Mutual agreement results in the beauty of good order, while perpetual conflict necessarily produces confusion and savage barbarity...Of these duties, the following bind the proletarian and the worker: fully and faithfully to perform the work which has been freely and equitably agreed upon; never to injure the property, nor to outrage the person, of an employer; never to resort to violence in defending their own cause, nor to engage in riot or disorder; and to have nothing to do with men of evil principles, who work upon the people with artful promises of great results, and excite foolish hopes which usually end in useless regrets and grievous loss. The following duties bind the wealthy owner and the employer: not to look upon their work people as their bondsmen, but to respect in every man his dignity as a person ennobled by Christian character. They are reminded that, according to natural reason and Christian philosophy, working for gain is creditable, not shameful, to a man, since it enables him to earn an honorable livelihood; but to misuse men as though they were things in the pursuit of gain, or to value them solely for their physical powers – that is truly shameful and inhuman.

⁸ *Rerum novarum*, p. 7. Therefore, those whom fortune favors are warned that riches do not bring freedom from sorrow and are of no avail for eternal happiness, but rather are obstacles (Matt. 19:23-24); that the rich should tremble at the threatenings of Jesus Christ – threatenings so unwonted in the mouth of our Lord (Luke 6:24-25) – and that a most strict account must be given to the Supreme Judge for all we possess....Neither must it be supposed that the solicitude of the Church is so preoccupied with the spiritual concerns of her children as to neglect their temporal and earthly interests. Her desire is that the poor, for example, should rise above poverty and wretchedness, and better their condition in life; and for this she makes a strong endeavor...The Church, moreover, intervenes directly in behalf of the poor, by setting on foot and maintaining many associations which she knows to be efficient for the relief of poverty.

⁹ *Rerum novarum*, p. 10....The common Mother of rich and poor has aroused everywhere the heroism of charity, and has established congregations of religious and many other useful institutions for help and mercy, so that hardly any kind of suffering could exist which was not afforded relief. At the present day many there are who, like the heathen of old, seek to blame and condemn the Church for such eminent charity. They would substitute in its stead a system of relief organized by the State.

¹⁰ *Rurum novarum*, p. 14. Let the working man and the employer make free agreements, and in particular let them agree freely as to the wages; nevertheless, there underlies a dictate of natural justice more imperious and ancient than any bargain between man and man, namely, that wages ought no to be insufficient to support a frugal and well-behaved wage-earner.

¹¹ *Rerum novarum*, p. 17. Christian working men must do one of two things: either join associations in which their religion will be exposed to peril, or form associations among themselves and unite their forces so as to shake off courageously the yoke of so unrighteous and intolerable an oppression.

¹² *Quadragesimo anno*, p. 5.

¹³ *Quadragesimo anno* p. 16. Christian working men must do one of two things: either join associations in which their religion will be exposed to peril, or form associations among themselves and unite their forces so as to shake off courageously the yoke of so unrighteous and intolerable an oppression. The second point which We consider basic in the encyclical is his teaching that man's aim must be to achieve in social justice a national and international juridical order, with its network of public and private institutions, in which all economic activity can be conducted not merely for private gain but also in the interests of the common good.

¹⁴ *Mater et Magistra*, p. 9. This is a fundamental principle of social philosophy, unshaken and unchangeable....Just as it is wrong to withdraw from the individual and commit to a community what private enterprise and industry can accomplish, so too it is an injustice, a grave evil and a disturbance of right order, for a larger and higher association to arrogate to itself functions which can be performed efficiently by smaller and lower societies. Of its very nature the true aim of all social activity should be to help members of the social body, but never to destroy or absorb them.

¹⁵ *Mater et Magistra* p. But however extensive and far-reaching the influence of the State on the economy may be, it must never be exerted to the extent of depriving the individual citizen of his freedom of action. It must rather augment his freedom while effectively guaranteeing the protection of his essential personal rights. Among these is a man's right and duty to be primarily responsible for his own upkeep and that of his family. Hence every economic system must permit and facilitate the free development of productive activity.

¹⁶ *Mater et Magistra*, pp. 11-12. We are filled with an overwhelming sadness when We contemplate the sorry spectacle of millions of workers in many lands and entire continents condemned through the inadequacy of their wages to live with their families in utterly sub-human conditions. This is probably due to the fact that the progress of industrialization in these countries is only in its initial stages, or is still not sufficiently developed.

Nevertheless, in some of these lands the enormous wealth, the unbridled luxury, of the privileged few stands in violent, offensive contrast to the utter poverty of the vast majority. In some parts of the world men are being subjected to inhuman privations so that the output of the national economy can be increased at a rate of acceleration beyond what would be possible if regard were had to social justice and equity. And in other countries a notable percentage of income is absorbed in building up and ill-conceived national prestige, and vast sums are spent on armaments.

In economically developed countries, relatively unimportant services, and services of doubtful value, frequently carry disproportionately high rate of remuneration, while the diligent and profitable work of whole classes of honest, hard-working men gets scant reward. Their rate of pay is quite inadequate to meet the basic needs of life. It in no way corresponds to the contribution they make to the good of the community, to the profits of the company for which they work, and to the general national economy. We therefore consider it Our duty to reaffirm that the remuneration of work is not something that can be left to the laws of the marketplace.

¹⁷ *Mater et Magistra*, p. 25-28. Probably the most difficult problem today concerns the relationship between political communities that are economically advanced and those in the process of development. Whereas the standard of living is high in the former, the latter are subject to extreme poverty. The solidarity which binds all men together as members of a common family makes it impossible for wealthy nations to look with indifference upon the hunger, misery and poverty of other nations whose citizens are unable to enjoy

even elementary human rights. The nations of the world are becoming more and more dependent on one another and it will not be possible to preserve a lasting peace so long as glaring economic and social imbalances persist.....It is therefore a great source of joy to Us to see those nations which enjoy a high degree of economic wealth helping the nations not so well provided, so that they may more effectively raise their standard of living. The developing nations, obviously, have certain unmistakable characteristics of their own, resulting from the nature of the particular region and the natural dispositions of their citizens, with their time-honored traditions and customs.....In helping these nations, therefore, the more advanced communities must recognize and respect this individuality. They must beware of making the assistance they give an excuse for forcing these people into their own national mold.....It pains Us, therefore, to observe the complete indifference to the true hierarchy of values shown by so many people in the economically developed countries. Spiritual values are ignored, forgotten or denied, while the progress of science, technology and economics is pursued for its own sake, as though material well-being were the be-all and end-all of life. This attitude is contagious, especially when it infects the work that is being done for the less developed countries, which have often preserved in their ancient traditions an acute and vital awareness of the more important human values, on which the moral order rests. It is a source of profound satisfaction to Us to see the prominent part which is being played by Catholic citizens of the less wealthy countries in the economic and social development of their own State.

¹⁸ *Mater et Magistra*, p. 33. Furthermore, the increasing sense of dissatisfaction with worldly goods which is making itself felt among citizens of the wealthier nations, is rapidly destroying the treasured illusion of an earthly paradise. Men, too, are becoming more and more conscious of their rights as human beings, rights which are universal and inviolable; and they are aspiring to more just and more human relations with their fellows. The effect of all this is to make the modern man more deeply aware of his own limitations, and to create in him a striving for spiritual values. All of which encourages Us in the hope that individuals and nations will one day learn to unite in a spirit of sincere understanding and profitable cooperation.

¹⁹ *Mater et Magistra*, p. 14. The small and average sized undertakings in agriculture, in the arts and crafts, in commerce and industry, should be safeguarded and fostered. Moreover, they should join together in cooperative associations to gain for themselves the benefits and advantages that usually that usually can be gained only from large organizations. In the large concerns themselves there should be the possibility of moderating the contract of work by one of partnership. (from Pius XII)

²⁰ *Mater et Magistra*, pp. 17-18. 'In defending the principle of private ownership the Church is striving after an important ethico-social end. She does not intend merely to uphold the present condition of things as if it were an expression of the divine Will, or to protect on principle the rich and plutocrats against the poor and indigent...The Church aims rather at securing that the institution of private property be such as it should be according to the plan of the divine Wisdom and the dispositions of Nature.' Hence private ownership must be considered as a guarantee of the essential freedom of the individual, and at the same time an indispensable element in true social order. (from Pius XII)

²¹ *Mater et Magistra*, pp. 19-20. We should notice at this point that the right of private ownership is clearly sanctioned by the Gospel. Yet at the same time, the divine Master frequently extends to the rich the insistent invitation to convert their material goods into spiritual ones by conferring them on the poor. 'Lay not up for yourselves treasures on earth; where moth and rust consume and thieves break through and steal. But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth consume, and where thieves do not break through and steal.

²² *Pacem in Terris* p. 10. The heads of States must make a positive contribution to the creation of an overall climate in which the individual can both safeguard his own rights and fulfill his duties, and can do so readily. For if there is one thing we have learned in the school of experience, it is surely this: that, in the modern world especially, political, economic and cultural inequities among citizens become more and more widespread when public authorities fail to take appropriate action in these spheres. And the consequence is that human rights and duties are thus rendered totally ineffective.

²³ *Pacem in Terris*, pp.13-14. With respect to States themselves, Our predecessors have constantly taught, and We wish to lend the weight of Our own authority to their teaching, that nations are the subjects of reciprocal rights and duties. Their relationships, therefore, must likewise be harmonized in accordance with the dictates of truth, justice, willing cooperation, and freedom. The same law of nature that governs the life and conduct of individuals must also regulate the relations of political communities with one another. The first point to be settled is that mutual ties between States must be governed by truth. So, too, on the international level: some nations may have attained to a superior degree of scientific, cultural and

economic development. But that does not entitle them to exert unjust political domination over other nations. It means that they have to make a greater contribution to the common cause of social progress. Relations between States must furthermore be regulated by justice. This necessitates both the recognition of their mutual rights, and, at the same time, the fulfillment of their respective duties. The prosperity and progress of any State is in part consequence, and in part cause, of the prosperity and progress of all other States.

²⁴ *Pacem in Terris*, p. 15. A special instance of this clash of interests is furnished by that political trend (which since the nineteenth century has become widespread throughout the world and has gained in strength) as a result of which men of similar ethnic background are anxious for political autonomy and unification into a single nation. For many reasons this cannot always be effected, and consequently minority peoples are often obliged to live within the territories of a nation of a different ethnic origin. This situation gives rise to serious problems. It is quite clear that any attempt to check the vitality and growth of these ethnic minorities is a flagrant violation of justice; the more so if such perverse efforts are aimed at their very extinction. . . . It is worth noting, however, that these minority groups, in reaction, perhaps, to the enforced hardships of their present situation, or to historical circumstances, frequently tend to magnify unduly characteristics proper to their own people. They even rate them above those human values which are common to all mankind, as though the good of the entire human family should subserve the interests of their own particular groups. A more reasonable attitude for such people to adopt would be to recognize the advantages, too, which accrue to them from their own special situation. They should realize that their constant association with a people steeped in a different civilization from their own has no small part to play in the development of their own particular genius and spirit. Little by little they can absorb into their very being those virtues which characterize the other nation. But for this to happen these minority groups must enter into some kind of association with the people in whose midst they are living, and learn to share their customs and way of life. It will never happen if they sow seeds of disaffection which can only produce a harvest of evils, stifling the political development of nations.

²⁵ *Gaudium et spes*, p. 37. At the very time when the development of economic life could mitigate social inequalities (provided that it be guided and coordinated in a reasonable and human way), it often made to embitter them; or, in some places, it even results in a decline of the social status of the underprivileged and in contempt for the poor. While an immense number of people still lack the absolute necessities of life, some, even in less advanced areas, live in luxury or squander wealth. Extravagance and wretchedness exist side by side.

²⁶ *Gaudium et spes*, p. 37. Hence, many reforms in the socio-economic realm and a change of mentality and attitude are required of all. For this reason the Church down through the centuries and in light of the Gospel has worked out principles of justice and equity demanded by right reason both for individual and social life and for international life, and she has proclaimed them especially in recent times. This sacred council intends to strengthen these principles according to the circumstances of this age and to set forth certain guidelines, especially with regard to the requirements of economic development.

²⁷ *Gaudium et spes*, p. 38. To satisfy the demands of justice and equity, *strenuous efforts must be made* [emphasis added], without disregarding the rights of persons or the natural qualities of each country, to remove as quickly as possible the immense economic inequalities, which now exist and in many cases are growing and which are connected with individual and social discrimination.

²⁸ *Gaudium et spes*, p. 41. Since property and other forms of private ownership of external goods contribute to the expression of the personality, and since, moreover, they furnish one occasion to exercise his function in society and in the economy, it is very important that the access of both individuals and communities to some ownership of external goods be fostered. . . . Private property or some ownership of external goods confers on everyone a sphere wholly necessary for the autonomy of the person and the family, and it should be regarded as an extension of human freedom.

²⁹ *Gaudium et spes*, p. 42. Christians who take an active part in present-day socio-economic development and fight for justice and charity should be convinced that they can make a great contribution to the prosperity of mankind and to the peace of the world. In these activities let them, either as individuals or as members of groups, give a shining example. Having acquired the absolutely necessary skill and experience, they should observe the right order in their earthly activities in faithfulness to Christ and his Gospel. Thus their whole life, both individual and social, will be permeated with the spirit of the beatitudes, notably with the spirit of poverty.

³⁰ *Gaudium et spes*, pp. 42-43. There is a growing desire among many people to play a greater part in organizing the life of the political community. In the conscience of many arises an increased concern that the rights of minorities be recognized, without any neglect for their duties toward the political community. In addition there is a steadily growing respect for men of other opinions and other religions. At the same time, there is wider cooperation to guarantee the actual exercise of personal rights to all citizens, and not only to a few privileged individuals. There is no better way to establish political life on a truly human basis than by fostering an inward sense of justice and kindness, and of service to the common good, and by strengthening basic convictions as to the true nature of political community and the aim, right exercise, and sphere of action of public authority.

³¹ *Gaudium et spes*, p. 43. However, those political systems, prevailing in some parties of the world are to be reprovved which hamper civic or religious freedom, victimize large numbers through avarice and political crimes, and divert the exercise of authority from the service of the common good to the interests of one or another faction or of the rulers themselves.

³² *Gaudium et spes*, p. 43. But where citizens are oppressed by a public authority overstepping its competence, they should not protest against things which are objectively required for the common good; but it is legitimate for them to defend their own rights and the rights of their fellow citizens against the abuse of this authority, while keeping within those limits drawn by the natural law and the Gospels.

³³ *Gaudium et spes*, P. 51. Developing nations should take great pains to seek as the object for progress to express and secure the total human fulfillment of their citizens. They should bear in mind that progress arises and grows above all out of the labor and genius of the nations themselves because it has to be based, not only on foreign aid, but especially on the full utilization of their own resources, and on the development of their own culture and traditions. Those who exert the greatest influence on others should be outstanding in this respect. On the other hand, it is a very important duty of the advanced nations to help the developing nations in discharging their above-mentioned responsibilities. They should therefore gladly carry out on their own home front those spiritual and material readjustments that are required for the realization of this universal cooperation. Consequently, in business dealings with weaker and poorer nations, they should be careful to respect their profit, for these countries need the income they receive on the sale of their homemade products to support themselves.

³⁴ *Gaudium et spes*, p. 52. Suitable organizations should be set up to foster and regulate international business affairs, particularly with the underdeveloped countries, and to compensate for losses resulting from an excessive inequality of power among the various nations. This type of organization, in unison with technical cultural and financial aid, should provide the help which developing nations need so that they can advantageously pursue their own economic advancement.

³⁵ *Gaudium et spes*, p. 54. The council, considering the immensity of the hardships which still afflict the greater part of mankind today, regards it as most opportune that an organism of the universal Church be set up in order that both the justice and love of Christ toward the poor might be developed everywhere. The role of such an organism would be to stimulate the Catholic community to promote progress in needy regions and international social justice.

³⁶ *Populorum Progressio*, p. 2. Even more recently, We sought to fulfill the wishes of the Council and to demonstrate the Holy See's concern for the developing nations. To do this, We felt it was necessary to add another pontifical commission to the Church's central administration. The purpose of this commission is "to awaken in the People of God full awareness of their mission today. In this way they can further the progress of poorer nations and international social justice, as well as help less developed nations to contribute to their own development. The name of this commission, Justice and Peace, aptly describes its program and its goal. We are sure that all men of good will want to join our fellow Catholics and fellow Christians in carrying out this program. So today We earnestly urge all men to pool their ideas and their activities for mans complete development and the development of mankind.

³⁷ *Populorum Progressio*, p. 6. If development calls for an ever-growing number of technical experts, even more necessary still is the deep thought and reflection of wise men in search of a new humanism, one that will enable our contemporaries to enjoy the higher values of love and friendship, of prayer and contemplation, and thus find themselves. This is what will guarantee man's authentic development—his transition from less than human conditions to truly human ones. What are less than human conditions? The material poverty of those who lack the bare necessities of life, the moral poverty of those who are crushed under the weight of their own self-love; oppressive political structures resulting from abuse of ownership or the improper exercise of power, from exploitation of the worker or unjust transactions. What

are truly human conditions? The rise from poverty to the acquisition of life's necessities; the elimination of social ills; broadening the horizons of knowledge; acquiring refinement and culture. From there one can go on to acquire a growing awareness of other people's dignity, a taste for the spirit of poverty, an active interest in the common good, and a desire for peace. Then man can acknowledge the highest values of God Himself, their author and end. Finally and above all, there is faith—God's gift to men of good will—and our loving unity in Christ, who calls all men to share God's life as sons of the living God, the Father of all men.

³⁸ *Populorum Progressio*, p. 9. The present state of affairs must be confronted boldly, and its concomitant injustices must be challenged and overcome. Continuing development calls for bold innovations that will work profound changes. The critical state of affairs must be corrected for the better without delay.

...Everyone must lend a ready hand to this task, particularly those who can do most by reason of their education, their office, or their authority. They should set a good example by contributing part of their own goods, as several of Our brother Bishops have done. In this way they will be responsive to men's longings and faithful to the Holy Spirit, because "the ferment of the Gospel, too, has aroused and continues to arouse in man's heart the irresistible requirements of his dignity."

³⁹ *Populorum Progressio*, p. 12.

⁴⁰ *Populorum Progressio*, pp. 14-15. When we were in Bombay for the Eucharistic Congress, We asked world leaders to set aside part of their military expenditures for a world fund to relieve the needs of the impoverished peoples. What is true for the immediate war against poverty is also true of national development. Only a concerted effort on the part of all nations, embodied in and carried out by this world fund, will stop these senseless rivalries and promote fruitful, friendly dialogue between nations. In such circumstances, we cannot tolerate public and private expenditures of a wasteful nature; we cannot but condemn lavish displays of wealth by nations or individuals; we cannot approve a debilitating arms race. It is Our solemn duty to speak out against them. If only world leaders would listen to Us, before it is too late!

⁴¹ *Populorum Progressio*, pp. 16-17. Now, in this matter one standard should hold true for all. What applies to national economies and to highly developed nations must also apply to trade relations between rich and poor nations. Indeed, competition should not be eliminated from trade transactions; but it must be kept within limits so that it operates justly and fairly, and thus becomes a truly human endeavor. Now in trade relations between the developing and the highly developed economies there is a great disparity in their overall situation and in their freedom of action. In order that international trade be human and moral, social justice requires that it restore to the participants a certain equality of opportunity. To be sure, this equality will not be attained at once, but we must begin to work toward it now by injecting a certain amount of equality into discussions and price talks.

⁴² *Laborem exercens*, p. 21. For instance, the *highly industrialized countries*, and even more the businesses (the companies referred to as multinational or transnational) that direct on a large scale the means of industrial production fix the highest possible prices for their products while trying at the same time to fix the lowest possible prices for raw materials or semi-manufactured goods. This is one of the causes of an ever increasing disproportion between national incomes.

⁴³ *Laborem exercens*, p. 21. Finding himself in a system thus conditioned, the direct employer fixes working conditions below the objective requirements of the workers, especially if he himself wishes to obtain the highest possible profits from the business which he runs (or from the businesses which he runs, in the case of a situation of "socialized" ownership of the means of production. It is respect for the objective rights of the worker—every kind of worker; manual, or intellectual, industrial or intellectual, industrial or intellectual, ect.—that must constitute *the adequate and fundamental criterion* for shaping the whole economy, both on the level of the individual society and State and within the whole of the world economic policy and of the systems of international relationships that derive from it.

⁴⁴ *Sollicitudo rei socialis*, p. 3. With regard to the content and themes once again set forth by the Encyclical, the following should be emphasized. The awareness of the duty of the Church, an "expert in humanity," "to scrutinize the signs of the times and to interpret them in the light of the Gospel;" the awareness, equally profound, of her mission of 'service,' a mission distinct from the function of the State, even when she is concerned with people's concrete situation; the reference to the notorious inequalities in the situations of those same people; the confirmation of the Council's teaching, a faithful echo of the centuries—old tradition of the Church regarding the "universal purpose of goods;" the appreciation of the culture and technological civilization which contribute to human liberation, without failing to recognize their limits's (sic); finally, on the specific theme of development, which is precisely the theme of the

Encyclical, the insistence on the “most serious duty” incumbent on the more developed nations “to help the developing nations.” The same idea of development proposed by the Encyclical flows directly from the approach which the Pastoral Constitution takes to this problem.

⁴⁵ *Sollicitudo rei socialis*, p. 10. The reason which prompted the developing peoples to accept the offer of abundantly available capital was the hope of being able to invest it in development projects. Thus the availability of capital and the fact of accepting it as a loan can be considered a contribution to development, something desirable and legitimate in itself, even though perhaps imprudent and occasionally hasty. The third consideration refers directly to the consequences of a certain type of development on the quality of life in the industrial zones. We all know that the direct and indirect result of industrialization is, ever more frequently, the pollution of the environment, with serious consequences for the health of the population.

⁴⁶ *Sollicitudo rei socialis*, p. 22. Natural resources are limited; some are not, as it is said, renewable. Using them as if they were inexhaustible, with absolute dominion, seriously endangers their availability not only for the present generation but for all generations to come.

⁴⁷ *Centesimus annus*, p. 15. An important, even decisive, contribution was made by *the Church’s commitment to defend and promote human rights* [emphasis in the document]. In situations strongly influenced by ideology, in which polarization obscured the awareness of a human dignity common to all, the Church affirmed clearly and forcefully that every individual—whatever his or her personal convictions—bears the image of God and therefore deserves respect. Often the vast majority of people identified themselves with this kind of affirmation, and this led to a search for forms of protest and for political solutions more respectful of the dignity of the person.

⁴⁸ *Centesimus annus*, p. 20. Because in some countries new forms of religious fundamentalism are emerging which covertly, or even openly, deny to citizens of faiths other than that of the majority the full exercise of their civil and religious rights, preventing them from taking part in the cultural process, and restricting the Church’s right to preach the Gospel and the rights of those who hear this preaching to accept it and be converted to Christ. No authentic process is possible without respect for the natural and fundamental right to know the truth and live according to the truth. The exercise and development of this right includes the right to discover and freely accept Jesus Christ, who is man’s true good.

⁴⁹ *Centesimus annus*, p. 19. This need, however, must not lead to a slackening of efforts to sustain and assist the countries of the Third World, which often suffer even more serious conditions of poverty and want. What is called for is a special effort to mobilize resources, which are not lacking in the world as a whole, for the purpose of economic growth and common development, redefining the priorities and hierarchies of values on the basis of which economic and political choices are made. Enormous resources can be made available by disarming the huge military machines which were constructed for the conflict between East and West. These resources could become even more abundant if, in the place of war, reliable procedures for the resolution of conflicts could be set up, with the resulting spread of the principle of arms control and arms reduction, also in the countries of the Third World, through the adoption of appropriate measures against the arms trade. But it will be necessary above all to abandon a mentality in which the poor—as individuals and as peoples—are considered a burden, as irksome intruders trying to consume what others have produced. The poor ask for the right to share in enjoying material goods and to make use of their capacity for work, thus creating a world that is more just and prosperous for all. The advancement of the poor constitutes a great opportunity for the moral, cultural and even economic growth of all humanity.

⁵⁰ *Centesimus annus*, p. 31. The Church values the democratic system inasmuch as it ensures the participation of citizens in making political choices, guarantees to the governed the possibility both of electing and holding accountable those who govern them, and of replacing them through peaceful means when appropriate. Thus she cannot encourage the formation of narrow ruling groups which usurp the power of the State for individual interests or for ideological ends. . . . Authentic democracy is possible only in a State ruled by law, and on the basis of a correct conception of the human person. It requires that the necessary conditions be present for the advancement both of the individual through education and formation in true ideals, and of the “subjectivity” of society through education and creation of structures of participation and shared responsibility. Nowadays there is a tendency to claim that agnosticism and skeptical relativism are the philosophy and the basic attitude which correspond to democratic forms of political life. Those who are convinced that they know the truth and firmly adhere to it are considered unreliable from a democratic point of view, since they do not accept that truth is determined by the majority, or that it is subject to variation according to different political trends. It must be observed in this

regard that if there is no ultimate truth to guide and direct political activity, then convictions can easily be manipulated for reasons of power. As history demonstrates, a democracy without values easily turns into open or thinly disguised totalitarianism.

⁵¹ *Centessimus annus*, p. 22. The modern *business economy* has many positive aspects. Its basis is human freedom exercised in the economic field, just as it is exercised in many other fields. Economic activity is indeed but one sector in a great variety of human activities, and like every other sector, it includes the right to freedom, as well as the duty of making responsible use of freedom. But it is important to note that there are specific differences between the trends of modern society and those of the past, even the recent past. Whereas at one time the decisive factor of production was *the land*, and later capital—understood as a total complex factor of the instruments of production—today the decisive factor is increasingly *man himself* that is, his knowledge, especially his scientific knowledge, his capacity for interrelated and compact organization, as well as his ability to perceive the needs of others and to satisfy them. . . . However, the risks and problems connected with this type of process should be pointed out. The fact is that many people, perhaps the majority today, do not have the means which would enable them to take their place in an effective and humanly dignified way within a productive system in which work is truly central. They have no possibility of acquiring the basic knowledge which would enable them to express their creativity and develop their potential. They have no way of entering the network of knowledge and intercommunication which would enable them to see their qualities appreciated and utilized. Thus, if not actually exploited, they are to a great extent marginalized; economic development takes place over their heads, so to speak, when it does not actually reduce the already narrow scope of their old subsistence economies. They are unable to compete against the goods which are produced in ways which are new and which properly respond to needs, needs which they had previously been accustomed to meeting through traditional forms of organization. Allured by the dazzle of an opulence which is beyond their reach, and at the same time driven by necessity, these people crowd the cities of the Third World where they are often without cultural roots, and where they are exposed to situations of violent uncertainty, without the possibility of becoming integrated. Their dignity is not acknowledged in any real way, and sometimes there are even attempts to eliminate them from history through coercive forms of demographic control which are contrary to human dignity.

⁵² *Centessimus annus*, p. 24. The Church acknowledges the legitimate *role of profit* as an indication that a business is functioning well. When a firm makes a profit, this means that productive factors have been properly employed and corresponding human needs have been duly satisfied. But profitability is not the only indicator of a firm's condition. It is possible for the financial accounts to be in order, and yet for the people—who make up the firm's most valuable asset—to be humiliated and their dignity offended. Besides being morally inadmissible, this will eventually have negative repercussions on the firm's economic efficiency. In fact, the purpose of a business firm is not simply to make a profit, but is to be found in its very existence as a *community of persons* who in various ways are endeavoring to satisfy their basic needs, and who form a particular group at the service of the whole society. Profit is a regulator of the life of business, but it is not the only one; *other human and moral factors* must also be considered which, in the long term, are at least equally important for the life of a business.

⁵³ *Populorum progressio*, p. 4. In the present day, however, individual and group effort within these countries is no longer enough. The world situation requires the concerted effort of everyone, a thorough examination of every facet of the problem—social, economic, cultural and spiritual. The Church, which has long experience in human affairs *and has no desire to be involved in the political activities of any nation* (emphasis added), “seeks but one goal: to carry forward the work of Christ under the lead of the befriending Spirit. And Christ entered this world to give witness to the truth; to save, not to judge; to serve not to be served.” Founded to build the kingdom of heaven on earth rather than to acquire temporal power, the Church openly avows that two powers—Church and State—are distinct from one another; that each is supreme in its own sphere of competency. But since the Church does dwell among men, she has the “duty of scrutinizing the signs of the times and of interpreting them in the light of the Gospel. Sharing the noblest aspirations of men and suffering when she sees these aspirations not satisfied, she wishes *to help them attain* (emphasis added) their full realization. So she offers man her distinctive contribution; a global perspective on man and human realities.

⁵⁴ *Sollicitudi rei socialis*, p. 27. The Church does not have technical revolutions to offer for the problem of underdevelopment as such, as Pope Paul VI already affirmed in his Encyclical. For the Church does not propose economic and political systems or programs, nor does she show

preference for one or the other, provided that human dignity is properly respected and promoted, and provided she herself is allowed the room she needs to exercise her ministry in the world. But the Church is an “expert in humanity,” and this leads her necessarily to extend her religious mission to the various fields in which men and women expend their efforts in search of the always relative happiness which is possible in this world, in line with their dignity as persons.

⁵⁵ *Centessimus annus*, pp. 37-38. As far as the Church is concerned, the social message of the Gospel must not be considered a theory, but above all else a basis and a motivation for action. Inspired by this message, some of the first Christians distributed their goods to the poor, bearing witness to the fact that, despite different social origins, it was possible for people to live together in peace and harmony. Through the power of the Gospel, down the centuries monks tilled the land, men and women Religious founded hospitals and shelters for the poor, Confraternities as well as individual men and women of all states of life devoted themselves to the needy and to those on the margins of society, convinced as they were that Christ’s words “as you did it to one of the least of these my brethren, you did it to me” (Mt 25:40) were not intended to remain a pious wish, but were meant to become a concrete life commitment.

⁵⁶ *Gaudium et spes*, p. 54.

⁵⁷ *Gaudium et spes*, p. 36.

⁵⁸ *Gaudium et spes*, p. 38.

⁵⁹ *Gaudium et spes*, p. 40.

⁶⁰ *Gaudium et spes*, p. 42.