

# 10

## Catholic Social Tradition: Teaching, Thought and Practice

MICHAEL NAUGHTON

### Introduction:

**C**ATHOLIC HEALTH CARE IS EMBEDDED IN A MORAL TRADITION that has been formed by a profound dynamic between word and deed, thought and action, theory and practice. Its words, thoughts and theories have been informed by a larger faith tradition encompassing the Scriptures, the official teachings of the Church, reflections and ideas of theologians, the insights of philosophers, economists, scientists, and others. Its deeds, actions and practices have been lived out by the sacrifices and witnesses of religious communities and the laity.

As leaders in Catholic health care, an important part of this tradition is what we call the Catholic social tradition. In particular, this tradition provides a vision about our work in terms of its meaning, how we organize it, what it does for the community and how we are affected by it. We are both receivers of and contributors to this tradition. As *receivers* of this tradition, we stand on the shoulders of those who have built this unique ministry to the world. We owe a debt of gratitude to those who have paved the way with their sacrifices and contributions. As *contributors* to this tradition, we need both to embrace these past contributions and to face with courage and creativity

## SESSION V : CONSIDERING VALUES, PRINCIPLES AND VIRTUES

the new and unique challenges of today and tomorrow. As leaders in Catholic health care we have a calling not only to understand the principles of human dignity, participation, subsidiarity, common good, universal destination of material goods, etc., but to live them in a way that these principles can come alive organizationally. Applied in this way, our tradition gives rise to a practical theology of institutions capable of informing the way we hold our organizations in trust.

To do this successfully, as leaders we need to familiarize ourselves with three important dimensions of the Catholic social tradition: teaching, thought and practice. It is the dynamic of these three dimensions that make the Catholic social tradition a rich and powerful reservoir for building strong communities of work and ministry in Catholic health care.

### **I. Catholic Social Teachings:**

Through encyclicals, pastoral letters and conciliar and other official documents, the social teachings of the Catholic Church seek to provide an “*accurate formulation* of the results of a careful reflection on the complex realities of human existence . . . in the light of faith and the Church’s tradition” (John Paul II, *Sollicitudo rei socialis*, 41). These teachings seek to clarify and deepen our commitment to the common good by rousing deliberation over both what we are called to do and how we are called to think. The social teachings draw upon the long and varied tradition of Catholicism as well as from “scientific studies promoted by members of the laity, from the work of Catholic movements and associations, and from the church’s practical achievements in the social field” (John Paul II, *Centesimus annus*, 4). While the social teachings of the Church serve as a basic orientation to the good informed by faith, they do not and cannot detail specific answers to every economic, organizational and political problems (see appendix for list of documents).

### **II. Catholic Social Thought:**

The Church’s social teachings inform and are informed by the various disciplines of knowledge. Theologians, philosophers, economists, political scientists, management theorists, educators, sociologists and others have throughout the years developed a tradition of thought, which extends the Church’s social teachings into the specifics of the economic, organizational and political worlds. This thought provides a vitality to Catholic social teaching by testing out its general orientation in the specifics and complexities of modern life. This is why Catholic education and in particular

## SESSION V : CONSIDERING VALUES, PRINCIPLES AND VIRTUES

Catholic universities are so important to Catholic social thought. The Catholic university is the place where, as Theodore Hesburgh pointed out, the Church does her thinking.

### III. Catholic Social Practice:

Catholic social teaching and thought will not develop without managers, peace activists, politicians, farmers, unionists and the various organizations of such practitioners (Catholic Health Care, Catholic Worker, UNIAPAC, Catholic Peace Fellowship, Thomas More Society, Catholic Charities, Catholic Relief Services, etc.). John Paul II has strongly pointed out that more than ever, “the Church is aware that her social message will gain credibility more immediately from the *witness of actions* than as a result of its internal logic and consistency.” Catholic social teaching and thought as messengers of the Gospel cannot be considered mere theory, “but above all else a basis and a motivation for action” (*Centesimus annus*, 57).

### Conclusion:

The **Catholic Social Tradition**, then, is a comprehensive term that captures the dynamic between teaching, thought and practice. This dynamic tradition includes a rich history that helps us to see our social responsibilities in the world—scripture, the early church fathers, medieval experience, the various theologians, philosophers, economist and political thinkers and the countless witnesses through out the ages. Thus, we need to remind ourselves that the Catholic social tradition did not begin in 1891, but brings us back to the Old Testament and draws upon everything in the life and thought of the church. The social tradition, therefore, is broader and older than the social teachings of the church. It provides an intellectual framework and legacy informed by practice and experience from which the more recent (1891-present) social teachings draw.

This dynamic among the teachings, thoughts and practices of the tradition points to another important dynamic in the Church: *the different but complementary roles of its members*. While the popes and bishops reserve to themselves the teaching authority of their office (*magisterium*), they nonetheless look to others, and in particular to theologians and the laity, to bring social questions and problems to the fore, examine the social teachings, build upon them, develop their significance, and at times readjust them in light of changing circumstances. The laity especially are called to implement the church’s teaching and thought in the social structures in which they most

## SESSION V: CONSIDERING VALUES, PRINCIPLES AND VIRTUES

immediately participate. The social teachings of the popes, bishops and councils suppose appropriation by a laity whose faith-filled and imperfect engagement in the concrete, day-to-day complexities of human existence alone can turn the Gospel values into renewing action.

Finally, while we stand on the shoulders of a great tradition, it is not a perfect tradition, just as we are not a perfect people. The Catholic social tradition is a developing tradition that is always in need of renewal. But it is a tradition, and in particular, it is a living tradition, and what we do today will affect future generations. Catholic health care is an important part of the Catholic social tradition, since it is both an actor and a thinker in bringing forth God's kingdom. Our actions in the facilities we work in will not only affect those within the walls of those facilities, but will reverberate throughout the Church.

# Three Fold Organizational Model: Creating an Authentic Community of Work

*Caring for persons, the more able and the less able serving each other, is the rock upon which a good society is build. Whereas, until recently, caring was largely person to person, now most of it is mediated through institutions – often large, complex, powerful, impersonal; not always competent; sometimes corrupt. If a better society is to be built, one that is more just and more loving, one that provides greater creative opportunity for its people, then the most open course is to raise both the capacity to serve and the very performance as servant of existing major institutions by new regenerative forces operating within them.*

Robert Greenleaf

## **Introduction:**

Any Catholic organization worthy of its name must create an authentic community of work that allows it to see the whole of its organizational life. The very word “Catholic” means not only universal, but in the Greek *Katholikos* which means “through-the-whole” or **throughout**-the-whole (*kath* or *kata*, through or throughout, *holos*, whole). Especially through the eyes of faith, seeing things whole means more than managing the competing interests of diverse parties within the organization. Rather to “see things whole” means going beyond balancing the dynamic of contending interests to integrating the various parts of the organization into a community of work where those who are connected to that workplace flourish. Like our own personal fragmentation, this is never completely done, nor is it easy, but it is an important signature to the vocation of the leader in Catholic organizations.

## SESSION V : CONSIDERING VALUES, PRINCIPLES AND VIRTUES

One way to speak of the whole of the organization is to see it in terms of three areas, each with its own concerns, preoccupations and to some degree stakeholders. This threefold model of organizational life, which originally grew out of the Greenleaf Center, is described in the three interlocking and interdependent dimensions of *identity*, *mission* and *stewardship*.<sup>1</sup> These three areas of organizational life represent the core dimensions of an organization, and what we will see quite quickly is that a community of work will be brought about by the “holding together” of these three dimensions.<sup>2</sup>

1. **Identity:** In the area of *identity*, the primary focus is directed internally to those who work in the organization. It is how the organization arranges the character, culture and quality of its life. The identity of the organization is found in the interaction of the various *employees* which creates a unique culture or personality in the collective life of the organization. Its preoccupations include “how it creates an environment that reflects its core values, and how it draws members of its workforce toward their fullest potential. This would include how the organization designs its work spaces; how it recruits, hires, evaluates, rewards and dismisses its employees; how it disseminates information; how it distributes power and assigns accountability and how it models investment in and commitment to the values it professes” (Specht and Broholm). A crucial element to the identity of an organization is its ability to unite people. As John Paul II has written, the social function of an organization is its “power to build a community. In the final analysis, both those who work and those who manage [organizations] . . . must in some way be united in this community” (*Laborem exercens*, 20).
2. **Mission:** Whereas identity is internally focused, the area of *mission* is externally focused on whom the organization is serving. It is how the organization impacts the world around it, especially in terms of the patient/customer/client/guest/etc. The mission of the organization is revealed in how it produces or services a “good” that is needed or wanted by

---

<sup>1</sup> We realize that the terms *identity*, *mission* and *stewardship* are used differently among people and organizations. Our use of these terms are used as a “hinge” to foster middle level thinking by connecting the day-to-day organizational realities each of us finds ourselves in and the theological vision that informs our organizations.

<sup>2</sup> There are all sorts of organizational models that try to explain how organizations work and should be understood. We are not attempting to provide here the most sophisticated organizational model, but we have found that this three-fold division is a simple and intuitive way which is very consistent with the Catholic social tradition. The model does not explain everything, but we believe that it is helpful to see the whole organization.

## SESSION V : CONSIDERING VALUES, PRINCIPLES AND VIRTUES

others. In order for an organization to identify and deliver a patient's need, a high degree of insight, coordination, effort and on-going development marshaled on a sustained basis toward patient satisfaction is necessary. An organizational mission that has the capacity to create a community of work (identity) will be one where its product or service meets the "needs in the world around it." A community of work is only authentic when it *serves* the needs of those outside it, which is the basis of *developing* those within it.

3. **Stewardship:** In the area of *stewardship*, the focus is about how the organization secures and utilizes its resources (human, financial and material) in order for it to fulfill its mission and develop its identity. A crucial dimension to this stewardship, although certainly not its only one, is how profits are managed. Does the organization have adequate profit margins? Does it carefully monitor its resources with a commitment to its sustained viability, such as current cash and investment balances, cash flow from future operations, additional borrowing and fund raising, etc. Another important and related dimension to stewardship is the efficiency, effectiveness and productivity of the organization's processes? Is it efficient and effective in its use of resources? Does it continually seek to improve the quality of its service? Is it creative in doing more with less? Does it reduce waste? While profit and efficiency are necessary conditions for good stewardship, they are not sufficient. Stewardship at its heart is concerned with using and allocating human, material and financial resources in ways that promote equity, respect basic human rights and foster the common good.

**What does this threefold model tell us about organizational life?** First, an organization has multiple dimensions that are often in *tension* with each other. We cannot define success in the organization by the performance of a single organizational dimension. Precisely because of these multiple dimensions, and their various corresponding accountabilities, organizational life will always be met with some degree of tension among the three.

Second, while these organizational dimensions are often in tension with each other, the temptation of leaders will be to overvalue one or two of the dimensions at the expense of the third.

Three examples of how we *disorder* our purpose can help illuminate the issues:

## SESSION V : CONSIDERING VALUES, PRINCIPLES AND VIRTUES

- An organizational *identity* that has the capacity to create a community of work will be one where its conditions foster the growth of employees in such a way they serve those outside the organization. Yet, some companies will define their purpose in terms of identity and become preoccupied with employee benefits and concerns creating entitlement cultures that lose sight of serving anything but the employee (careerism/entitlements). Development of employees must not be done at the expense of sound fiscal management nor authentic care of the patient.
- An organizational *mission* that has the capacity to create a community of work will be one where its product or service meets the “needs in the world around it” in such a way that those within the organization grow as persons. Yet, some companies will define their purpose in terms of mission and treat their patients as kings, and in the process will often exhaust their employees (consumerism). Quality medical care cannot be done at the expense of the poor or the medical staff giving the care.
- An organizational *stewardship* that has the capacity to create a community of work will be one where the resources, especially profits, are used to serve the mission and identity of the firm in such a way that replenish themselves for the future. Yet, some organizations will define their purpose in terms of stewardship and maximize their resources to generate as much wealth as possible, but in the process lose their identity. John Paul II has written about this as a problem of economism (see *Laborem exercens*, 13).

Third, to avoid this disorder and to properly order the identity, mission and stewardship of an organization, leaders may need to place less emphasis on a particular strategic plan with various scorekeeping goals, and more emphasis on building and maintaining a rich, engaging and transcendent purpose. In Catholic health care, this purpose is defined as a “ministry of the church continuing Jesus’ mission of love and healing today” (*A Shared Statement of Identity for the Catholic Health Ministry*). It is this purpose that must be witnessed in highly principled and effective leaders of the organization who can “foster respect and a shared sense of higher purpose among the people who join them in the ministry.” Leaders must themselves be witnesses of a *purpose* greater than themselves.

To properly understand the purpose of Catholic health care, we must engage in a broader conversation of the *social principles* which gives greater form to what it means to be a “ministry of the church continuing Jesus’ mission of love and healing today.” The next section will begin to

## SESSION V: CONSIDERING VALUES, PRINCIPLES AND VIRTUES

formulate how the principles in the Catholic social tradition can help to imbue this purpose of ministry in the three dimensions of the organization.

### **Source for the Three-Fold Model:**

David Specht and Dick Broholm, “The Threefold Model of Organizational Life,” <http://www.seeingthingswhole.org/images/3-foldofficewithcopyright.pdf> (while we have adopted the model from this source we have slightly changed the language).

## Catholic Social Principles at Work in Catholic Health Care and its Leaders

Highly principled leaders witness to their constituents the ability to lead not on impulse or self-interest, but on the enduring principles that create authentic communities of work. These principles help leaders to articulate what the organization looks like when it is at its best. By providing a common language, moral principles—and the religious and spiritual realities that inform them—help to create for the organization a rich purpose of action. These principles draw attention to unacceptable behaviors in the organization, they give general guidance about how problems should be remedied, and they challenge all actors in the organization to greater degrees of integrity. Such leaders realize that without moral principles, they and the organizations that they lead will instrumentalize human relationships to such an extent that they will treat each other like objects of commerce rather than persons endowed with intrinsic human dignity.

So what are the key social principles of the Catholic health care organization? What principles inform its unique character and purpose? Drawing upon the Catholic tradition, and in particular the Catholic social tradition, the two master principles that must animate organizational life are *human dignity* and the *common good*. These two moral principles in many respects summarize the Catholic understanding of the purpose of all organizations. The Catholic tradition also provides for us finer principles of action that can help us to understand how human dignity and the common good can be best expressed in the three areas of the organization—identity, mission and stewardship.

Finally, before explaining these principles within the Catholic social tradition, we need to note that these principles are not an exhaustive list for Catholic health care organizations. Each organization will bring a unique expression based on its geographical location, history, people, founders, etc.; but the absence of any of these principles found within the social tradition of the Church would place in doubt the unique Catholicity of such an organization.

## I. Master Principles: Human Dignity and the Common Good

The two overarching principles within the Catholic social tradition are human dignity and the common good. Rather than being understood as two opposing principles, they represent two dimensions of the same reality. *Human dignity* emphasizes the personal character of human existence. Because organizations have a powerful formative effect on people, everything within the organizational realm must be judged in light of whether it protects or undermines human dignity. While few people would deny the dignity or value of the person, such a principle has become so banal that it rarely evokes the transcendent mystery in which this dignity is grounded, namely, that the person is created in the image of God and destined for fulfillment in the Kingdom. Because of the origin and destiny of each person, his or her life is intrinsically valuable and sacred, and hence ought never be treated as *merely* a means to some organizational plan. It is on the basis of this understanding of the human person that people have priority over things, labor over capital, persons over technology, etc. In CHA’s “Shared Statement of Identity,” we proclaim that “every person is a treasure, every life a sacred gift, every human being a unity of body, mind, and spirit.” It precisely because of this dignity that leaders of organizations must seek the *development* of people associated with the organization.

The *common good* emphasizes that we are social beings by nature, and our dignity and our fulfillment is intrinsically connected to our relationship to others in community. How we arrange our common life together in organizations affect whether we live and work under “structures of the common good” or in contrast, under what John Paul II has called “structures of sin.” The Catholic understanding of the common good is not “the greatest good for the greatest number.” Rather, as John XXIII stated, the common good is “the sum total of those conditions of social living, whereby men are enabled more fully and more readily to achieve their own perfection” (*Mater et magistra* , 65). The common good is always asking us to expand and enlarge our notion of the goods within the organization, to go beyond “my particular good” and to see our good as related to the good of others. As Thomas Aquinas put it: “[A] man’s will is not right in willing a particular good, unless he refer it to the common as an end” (*Summa Theologica*, I-II q. 19, a. 10, Reply). When we begin to order our particular goods to a common life of desire and action, we begin to establish relationships that are real communions and not merely contracts or mutually self-serving exchanges.

## SESSION V : CONSIDERING VALUES, PRINCIPLES AND VIRTUES

These two principles not only inform everything in organizational life, but they inform people of the *purpose* of the organization, since they order the organization to development of people as a community of work.

### II. Principles within the Three-fold Organizational Model

While the principles below are like a light that shines on all parts of the organization, we are going to focus and use the principles not in some general and generic fashion, but rather use the principles through the prism of the three-fold organizational model we articulated above. These principles we are about to discuss can be sources of inspiration throughout the whole organization, but in order for them to be applicable we need to do the hard work of making them operational to specific areas of the organization. Again, the principles we have articulated here do not exhaust the social tradition of the Church, but hopefully will begin to apply the principles to the specific areas of the organization.

#### i. Identity (Principles of Work) focus on the work of the organization

- **The Subjective Dimension of Work:** When we work we affect and change objects outside or beyond ourselves. Yet, the work of a person is not only an activity that terminates in objects. The worker, whether, doctor, manager, nurse or janitor changes not only the world, but she also changes herself as a *subject*. Because we are changing through our work, and because this change will either enhance or suppress our dignity, we must participate in the direction of our work. This is why John Paul II explains that “the (primary) purpose of any kind of work that man does is always man himself,” so that “man does not serve work, but work serves man.”
- **Subsidiarity:** It is on the basis of this subjective dimension of work that organizations should be structured in such a way so as to push control to the lowest level appropriate, giving primacy to individuals and smaller groups within the organization who are affected by particular decisions. Decisions that belong to a lower level should not be usurped by a higher level, thus ensuring that participation is robust and that people in the organization flourish as a result. Subsidiarity comes from the Latin *subsidium* which means to “help.” Organizations

## SESSION V : CONSIDERING VALUES, PRINCIPLES AND VIRTUES

should be structured in a way that helps people to develop. The workplace must be a truly *human community*, and workers should have an active role in making it so. They should have routine, structured opportunities to have a voice in their work, and to participate in decisions that affect their working conditions, in accord with this principle of subsidiarity. As an organizational principle, subsidiarity guides the level at which authority, responsibility and accountability best serves the organization. This guiding principle results in understanding decision making in a dual direction: *give as much individual responsibility and accountability to employees as possible and as much administrative help as necessary.*

**2. Mission (Principles of Service):** focus on the patient and the community.

- **The Full Development of the Patient/Person:** Underlying Catholic social teaching is a particular anthropological understanding of the human person as a multifaceted and dynamic entity who is at once physical and material, relational and social, creative and spiritual, morally free and responsible. According to this understanding of the human person, all of these dimensions are interwoven to form a complex synthesis that constitutes the human person integrally and adequately considered. Catholic healthcare organizations must attend to and care for the whole person, not just the physical or material dimension of human life. In turn, this requires that we acknowledge and respond to the need of persons and communities for healing in all the integral dimensions of human life. In particular, patients, in their care, should be attended to as whole persons in their spiritual, social, emotional and physical dimensions. The point is well articulated in the U.S. Bishops Directives when they say “Since a Catholic health care institution is a community of healing and compassion, the care offered is not limited to the treatment of a disease or bodily ailment but embraces the physical, psychological, social, and spiritual dimensions of the human person.”
- **Universal Access to Health Care, especially for those who are poor:** John Paul II has written that the first principle of the socio-economic order is “the universal destination of goods and the right to common use of them” (*Laborem exercens*, 14). God’s creation is intended for everyone. To deny access to the fruits of the earth is to disobey God’s command of dominion. Access to health care is an important right to each person. Because of this

## SESSION V : CONSIDERING VALUES, PRINCIPLES AND VIRTUES

principle, Catholic health facilities must do everything proportionate to their capacity to help people receive health care, especially those who are poor. In collaboration with the state, health care advocates and other institutions, Catholic health organizations must serve the poor in their work. The concept of “solidarity” as developed in the Catholic Social tradition is very active here. Solidarity means that we are interdependent members of our society. We share our fates with others. We are accountable for one another; we stand with one another. Universal access to healthcare is a logical result of this united caring for each other.

### 3. Stewardship (Principles of Managing Resources)

- **Well Ordered Means to Good Ends:** An effective use of resources through reasonable levels of revenue, profit, market share, productiveness, efficiencies, etc. are crucial to the long-term viability of the organization. Because they are the necessary means to organizational survival, they are worthy goals to the development of the organization. For example, profits indicate, as John Paul II has pointed out, “that productive factors have been properly employed and corresponding human needs have been duly satisfied.” Although profitability, productivity and efficiency are necessary conditions to organizational life, they are still only means to more important ends.
- **Entrusted Governance:** An important part of stewardship is holding in trust what has been given to us. Catholic health care has been entrusted to highly principled and effective leaders to carry on the healing ministry of Jesus. In its most robust sense, stewardship includes the governance of the organization, especially in terms of what leadership is entrusted to do by its founders.

### III. The Limits and Challenges to Highly Principled Leaders Within the Catholic Health Care Organization: Some Pitfalls to Watch for in using Principles

**Limits:** As important as principles are to organizational life, they have their limits. They cannot replace practically wise decision makers. These principles of action from the Catholic social tradition do not instruct us as to how they may be realized in the concrete situations of our daily work. They

## SESSION V : CONSIDERING VALUES, PRINCIPLES AND VIRTUES

point the direction, but they do not show the way. They cannot replace experience, nor can they mandate specifics. Principles do not provide blueprints or technical solutions. They do, nonetheless, provide guidelines and orientations, and if they are embraced, especially by leaders, principles create the ground for an authentic community of work.

**Challenge:** While many of us find ourselves attracted to speak of noble principles, we often find it difficult to connect these principles to specific activities, organizational routines, policies or measurable outcomes. As Andre Delbecq stated: “We seem to have a sense of what we yearn for, but behavioral specificity is thin.” This lack of concreteness tends to result in abstraction that leads to “death by slogan.” It is often found in the laundry list of generic values of respect, tolerance, honesty, etc. in mission statements, which often have little connection to the day to day life of the organization. We find ourselves speaking like abbots but acting like bureaucrats or moral freelancers. When pressed on the concreteness of such values or principles, we begin to turn them into *instruments* of policy rather than policy *sources* which help to generate a rich moral understanding of work and creative forms of renewed action.

What is needed to convert social principles into coherent patterns of actions? One way to overcome this disconnection is to focus on those kinds of activities which illuminate the principles of Catholic health care in the areas of firing/layoff practices, living wage and equity ratio policies, prayerful reflection in decision making, quality improvement programs, poverty outreach initiatives, etc. This translation of principle to action is dependent upon a history of actual attempts to act according to principles. While there is a danger here in focusing on practices and policies which may trivialize the nobility of the principle to one policy or action, there is also the danger that the principles are simply moralisms—high sounding platitudes that fail to land anywhere.

Finally, we have to realize that while principles are our attempt to universalize our experience when we are at our best, we too often are less than our best. This is not something for us to be proud of, but it is something for us to be honest about. In a leadership program Kenneth Goodpaster gives to senior leaders at Medtronic Corporation, he encourages them “to make friends with hypocrisy.” What he means by this is that too often we get in a defensive posture in justifying our responsibilities which too often rejects out of hand problem areas. Instead, we should be open to the fact that we have not quite arrived, that our rich purpose and high principles have not quite permeated specific activities, organizational routines, general policies or measurable outcomes of our unit. Here we need to take an honest look at how the social principles of Church animate our

## SESSION V : CONSIDERING VALUES, PRINCIPLES AND VIRTUES

training and development programs, job design philosophy, compensation and rewards structures, evaluation methods, programs for the poor and marginalized, billing and collection policies for the uninsured, special behaviors (friendliness, recycling, collaboration, team, etc.), accounting and financial practices, marketing and advertising practices and so forth. It is this type of engagement where the social principles begin to become owned rather than imposed, since they begin to inform one's experience in action. The social principles cannot be simply given, but must be engaged and developed in light of one's organizational life.

# Catholic Social Teaching

## The Major Documents<sup>3</sup>

<http://www.osjspm.org/cst/doclist.htm>

<http://www.mcgill.pvt.k12.al.us/jerryd/cm/cst.htm>

### I. Leo XIII (1878-1903)

A. *Rerum novarum* (On the Condition of Labor) 1891: Often considered the first great social encyclical, *Rerum novarum* reacts to the detrimental effects of the Industrial Revolution, in particular, to the inhumane conditions of the worker and the growing option of socialism. In the encyclical, Leo XIII argues that with sub-living wages, poor working conditions and inadequate housing standards, the workers are the oppressed and exploited of Western society, upon which the rich has “laid a yoke almost of slavery.” For Leo XIII, the root cause of the workers’ plight is the owners’ treatment of labor as a commodity—just another factor of production determined by the laws of the free market. He perceived this treatment as a fundamental violation of the workers’ dignity. By treating workers as an extension of capital (that is, no different from the rest of creation), owners violate workers’ human nature.

### II. Pius XI (1922-1939)

A. *Quadragesimo anno* (On Reconstructing the Social Order) 1931: As Leo XIII responded to the abuses of the industrial revolution, Pius XI responded to its apparent demise in the Great Depression. Similar to Leo, Pius was still very concerned about the conditions of the worker; however, Pius went further to challenge the structures of the capitalist economic order. He proposed structures of economic self-government “modeled on the medieval guilds to overcome the chaotic injustice of capitalism and the regimented injustice of socialism.” One such structure was what he called vocational groups, which would bring workers, unions, managers, industry councils and the state to cooperate so as to create a socially just economy.

---

<sup>3</sup> This material is provided by the University of St. Thomas’ John A. Ryan Institute for Catholic Social Thought <http://www.stthomas.edu/cathstudies/cst/>.

## SESSION V : CONSIDERING VALUES, PRINCIPLES AND VIRTUES

### III. Pius XII (1939-1958)

A. “Fiftieth Anniversary of *Rerum novarum*” 1941: Pius XII communicated most of his social teachings through addresses to specific audiences, which ranged from beekeepers to bankers. Speaking out of the historical context of post World War II reconstruction, Pius XII addressed subjects such as unions, wages, codetermination, work as vocation and profession, unemployment, technology and so forth. One of Pius XII’s gravest concerns was the depersonalization of the people as a result of technological growth.

### IV. John XXIII (1959-1963)

A. *Mater et magistra* (Mother and Teacher) 1961: John XXIII responded to the increasing complex and interdependent nature of social relations and social institutions. In the 1950s and 60s, this was brought about by progress in technology, the increasing role of government, and the furthering education of the worker. He responded to these historical circumstances by expanding the concept of human dignity into a wage principle of “justice and equity” and a production process principle of “participation.”

B. *Pacem in terris* (Peace on Earth) 1963: Often considered the “rights” encyclical, John XXIII examines the problems of war, the arms race, state authority, political refugees and international relationships.

### V. Vatican II (1962-1965)

A. *Dignitatis humanae* (On Religious Liberty) 1965: Considered to be strongly influenced by the American Jesuit theologian John C. Murray, the “Council intends to develop the teaching of recent popes on the inviolable rights of the human person and on the constitutional order of society.”

B. *Gaudium et spes* (Church in the Modern World) 1965: This was the only document that was addressed to the whole world and not just the Church. It took 3 years of dialogue, debate and controversy to produce the document. It is probably the most comprehensive document the Church has in the social realm. If one wanted to get a good idea of what the Church taught on the social issues this would be a good place to start.

## SESSION V : CONSIDERING VALUES, PRINCIPLES AND VIRTUES

### VI. Paul VI (1963-1978)

A. *Populorum progressio* (On the Development of Peoples) 1967: Focused on the inequalities existing in developing countries. The encyclical “offers assistance in grasping all the dimensions of an integral human development and of a development in solidarity of humanity.”

B. *Octogesima adveniens* (Apostolic Letter on the 80th Anniversary of *Rerum novarum*) 1971: This document, like *Populorum progressio*, is more international in scope. Paul spent much of his time on the macro dimensions of economics.

### VII. 1971 Synod of Bishops: Justice in the World

A. *Iustitia in mundo* (Justice in the World) Synod of Bishops (1971): “The representative bishops, gathered in synod, acknowledge that it is not their job to elaborate a profound analysis of the situation of the world (a. 3). The starting point of their treatment of justice and injustice is the tremendous paradox they see in the world: powerful forces are working to bring about a unified world society at the same time that forces of division and antagonism seem to be increasing in strength (a. 7-9).” “While the Church is bound to give witness to justice, she recognizes that everyone who ventures to speak to people about justice must first be just in their eyes. Hence we must undertake an examination of the modes of acting and of the possessions and lifestyle found within the Church itself.”

### VIII. John Paul II (1978-2005)

A. *Laborem exercens* (On Human Work) 1981 -- Certainly the most systematic exposition on the nature of work by any pope. For John Paul II, to understand work one must have a sound anthropology which originates from Genesis, namely, the person is the Image of God, who is called to subdue and till the earth. This doctrine of creation from Genesis provides the meaning of work, namely, that in work people remain true agents and that both the means of production and the fruit of labor are at the service of those who work (the person has a transcendent value). Because people are made in the image of God, every aspect of work is subject to their dignity.

B. *Sollicitudo rei socialis* (On Social Concern) 1987: Celebrates the 20th anniversary of *Populorum progressio* by revisiting the question of development. He argued that one major reason for lack of development in many countries was the Eastern (former Soviet Union) and Western (US) blocs’ manipulation of such countries.

C. *Centesimus annus* (The Hundredth Year) 1991: Whereas *Laborem exercens* is systematic, *Centesimus annus* is historical. In the area of work, John Paul II explains the increasing importance of

## SESSION V : CONSIDERING VALUES, PRINCIPLES AND VIRTUES

information regarding skills and technology and entrepreneurial virtues in the production process. His evaluation of the market economy is positive overall; however, he is concerned over the increasing phenomenon of consumerism, which he believes is a partial cause to the various social problems, in particularly environmental degradation.

D. *Evangelium vitae* (On the Gospel of Life) 1995: Because the heart of the social teachings is human dignity, any act that violates life disrupts the social order. Quoting *Guadium et spes*, John Paul II lists the many issues that assault human dignity. “Whatever is opposed to life itself, such as any type of murder, genocide, abortion, euthanasia or willful self-destruction, whatever violates the integrity of the human person, such as mutilation, torments inflicted on body or mind, attempts to coerce the will itself; whatever insults human dignity, such as subhuman living conditions, arbitrary imprisonment, deportation, slavery, prostitution, the selling of women and children; as well as disgraceful working conditions, where men are treated as mere tools for profit, rather than as free and responsible persons; all these things and others of their like are infamies indeed. They poison human society, but they do more harm to those who practice them than those who suffer from the injury. Moreover, they are a supreme dishonor to the Creator.”

### IX. U.S. Catholic Bishops Statements

A. *The Challenge of Peace* (1983): The Bishops examine the role of nuclear and conventional weaponry as part of U.S. defense policy.

B. *Program of Social Reconstruction* 1979 and *Economic Justice for All* 1986: The bishops of the U.S. attempted to apply the papal and conciliar teaching to the specific situation in the U.S. They also attempted to develop the tradition. Issues such as unemployment, poverty, plant closings, worker ownership and participation are examined in both documents. When the bishops wrote their recent pastoral letters, controversy ensued as to the role of the bishops in the public discourse on these social issues.

### X. The Catechism:

2420 “The Church makes a moral judgment about economic and social matters, ‘when the fundamental rights of the person or the salvation of souls requires it.’ In the moral order she bears a mission distinct from that of political authorities: the Church is concerned with the temporal aspects of the common good because they are ordered to the sovereign Good, our ultimate end. She strives to inspire right attitudes with respect to earthly goods and in socio-economic relationships.”

## SESSION V: CONSIDERING VALUES, PRINCIPLES AND VIRTUES

**2421** “The social doctrine of the Church developed in the nineteenth century when the Gospel encountered modern industrial society with its new structures for the production of consumer goods, its new concept of society, the state and authority, and its new forms of labor and ownership. The development of the doctrine of the Church on economic and social matters attests the permanent value of the Church’s teaching at the same time as it attests the true meaning of her Tradition, always living and active.