

CONGREGATION FOR CATHOLIC EDUCATION

---

GUIDELINES  
FOR THE STUDY AND TEACHING  
OF THE CHURCH'S SOCIAL DOCTRINE  
IN THE FORMATION OF PRIESTS

ROME 1988

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## PREMISE

1. During the last decades, the Congregation for Catholic Education, attentive to the emerging needs of Conciliar renewal, has on numerous occasions offered Seminaries and various Institutes of theological study appropriate directives for the different areas of priestly formation.<sup>1</sup> At this time, it believes it is useful to address itself once again to Bishops, educators in seminaries and professors in order to propose some guidelines for the study and teaching of the social doctrine of the Church.

In taking this initiative, it is aware of responding to a real need, which is strongly felt everywhere today, to make the human family benefit from the wealth contained in the Church's social doctrine through the ministry of priests who are well prepared and aware of the numerous tasks awaiting them. Today, at a time so rich in deepening understanding and studies on this topic, as also appears, among other things, from John Paul II's recent Encyclical *Sollicitudo rei socialis*, it is very important for candidates for the priesthood to acquire a clear idea about the nature, ends and basic components of this doctrine, in order to be capable of applying it in pastoral activity in its entirety, as formulated and presented by the Magisterium of the Church.<sup>2</sup> The situation in this field is in fact one that requires an appropriate clarification of the different concepts, as will be seen in the various chapters of these "Guidelines".

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *Ratio fundamentalis institutionis sacerdotalis* (January 6, 1970; new edition: March 19, 1985); Circular Letter on *The Teaching of Philosophy in Seminaries* (January 20, 1972); *Educational Guidelines for Formation in Priestly Celibacy* (April 11, 1974); Circular Letter on the *Teaching of Canon Law for those aspiring to the Priesthood* (April 2, 1975); Document on *The Theological Formation of Future Priests* (February 22, 1976); *Instruction on Liturgical Formation in Seminaries* (June 3, 1979); *Circular Letter on Some More Urgent Aspects of Spiritual Formation in Seminaries* (June 6, 1980); *Guidelines for the Formation of Future Priests concerning the Instruments of Social Communication* (March 19, 1986).

<sup>2</sup> JOHN PAUL II, Encyclical Letter *Sollicitudo rei socialis* (December 30, 1987), n. 41: A.A.S. 80 (1988), page 571.

First of all, it must be noted that two terms are used interchangeably: "social doctrine" and "social teaching" of the Church. The nuances implied by each of them are not overlooked; "doctrine", in fact, stresses more the theoretical aspect of the problem, and "teaching" the historical and practical aspect, but both stand for the same reality. Their alternate use in the Church's social Magisterium, both in the solemn Magisterium and the ordinary papal and episcopal Magisterium, indicates their reciprocal equivalency.

Over and above any conflicts about words and expressions, the reality indicated by social doctrine or social teaching constitutes a "rich heritage" which the Church has progressively acquired by drawing from the Word of God, and being attentive to the changeable situations of peoples throughout the different historical eras.

It is a heritage which must be preserved with fidelity and developed by responding gradually to the new emerging needs of human co-existence.

2. Today social doctrine is called upon with increasingly greater urgency to make its own specific contribution to evangelization, to dialogue with the world, to the Christian interpretation of reality, and to guidelines for pastoral action in order to enlighten the various initiatives on the temporal plane with sound principles. Indeed economic, social, political and cultural structures are experiencing profound and rapid transformations which put the very future of human society at stake and thus they need a sure orientation. It is a matter of promoting real social progress which, in order to effectively ensure the common good of all men, requires a just organization of these structures. If this is not done, there will be a return of great multitudes toward that situation of a "quasi-servile yoke", which Leo XIII spoke about in *Rerum novarum*.<sup>3</sup>

Therefore, it is obvious that the "grave drama" of the contemporary world caused by the numerous threats that often accompany human progress, "cannot leave anyone indifferent".<sup>4</sup> For this reason, the

<sup>3</sup> LEO XIII, Encyclical Letter *Rerum novarum* (May 15, 1891): *Acta Leonis XIII* (1891), page 99.

<sup>4</sup> JOHN PAUL II, Encyclical Letter *Redemptor hominis* (March 4, 1979), n. 16: *A.A.S.* 71 (1979), page 293.

irreplaceable evangelizing presence of the Church is becoming more urgent and decisive in the complex world of temporal realities which condition the destiny of mankind.

Nevertheless, although the Church enters into this field, she is aware of her own limits. She does not pretend to provide a solution to all the problems present in the dramatic situation of the contemporary world and, all the more so, because great differences in development exist between nations, and between the situations in which Christians<sup>5</sup> are engaged. On the other hand, she can and must, in the "light which comes to her from the Gospel",<sup>6</sup> provide the principles and necessary guidelines for the correct organization of social life for the dignity of the human person and for the common good. The Magisterium, in fact, continues to intervene often in this field with a doctrine that all the faithful are called upon to know, teach and apply. For this reason, a special place must be ensured, in harmony with philosophical and theological studies, for the teaching of this doctrine in the formation of future priests, as John XXIII<sup>7</sup> clearly stated in this regard, and as is reiterated once again in these "Guidelines". They have been studied in collaboration with the Pontifical Commission "Iustitia et Pax", and approved by the plenary Assembly of the Congregation for Catholic Education.

The document contains six chapters. The first five refer to the nature of the Church's social doctrine; its historical, theoretical and practical dimensions in the three elements comprising it; that is, permanent principles, criteria for judgment, directives for action. The sixth chapter gives some indications on how to ensure an adequate formation in social doctrine for candidates for the priesthood.

<sup>5</sup> PAUL VI, Encyclical Letter *Octogesima adveniens* (May 14, 1971): *A.A.S.* 63 (1971), nn. 3-4, pages 402 ff.

<sup>6</sup> VATICAN COUNCIL II, Pastoral Constitution *Gaudium et spes*, n. 3.

<sup>7</sup> JOHN XXIII, Encyclical Letter *Mater et magistra* (May 15, 1961): *A.A.S.* 53 (1961), pages 453-454.

# I

## NATURE OF SOCIAL DOCTRINE

### 3. *Constitutive elements of social doctrine*

The uncertainties which come up at times concerning usage of the term "social doctrine" of the Church, but also with regard to its very nature, require a clarification of the epistemological problem which is at the root of these misunderstandings. Although this document does not pretend to deal "ex professo" or indeed to resolve all the epistemological aspects related to social doctrine, it is still hoped that an in-depth reflection on the constitutive elements that express its nature will aid better understanding of the terms in which the problem is raised. In any case, it must be kept in mind that it is proposed here to specify those constitutive elements as they are directly taken from magisterial pronouncements, and not as formulated by various scholars. In fact, a distinction must always be made between the official "social doctrine" of the Church and the various positions of schools which have systematically explained, developed and ordered the social thinking contained in papal documents.<sup>8</sup>

The essential documents describing and defining the nature of social doctrine are presented in this way:<sup>9</sup> the social teaching of the Church draws its origin from the encounter of the evangelical message and its ethical requirements with the problems that arise in the life of society. The needs that emerge from this encounter become the subject of moral reflection which matures in the Church through scientific research, but also through the experience of the Christian community which must

<sup>8</sup> Pius XII, Allocution *Animus noster*, to the Academic Senate and students of the Pontifical Gregorian University of Rome (October 17, 1953): *A.A.S.* 45 (1953), page 687.

<sup>9</sup> CONGREGATION FOR THE DOCTRINE OF THE FAITH, Instruction *Libertatis conscientia* on Christian freedom and liberation (March 22, 1986), n. 72: *A.A.S.* 79 (1987), pages 585 ff.

measure itself every day against the various situations of misery and, above all, with the problems created by the appearance and development of the phenomenon of industrialization and the socio-economic systems related to it.

This doctrine is formed through the use of theology and philosophy, which give it a foundation, and to the human and social sciences which complete it. It is projected onto the ethical aspects of life, without neglecting the technical aspects of the problems, in order to judge them with moral criteria. By basing itself "on principles which are always valid", it implies "contingent judgments" since it develops in relation to the changeable circumstances of history, and is directed essentially toward "Christian action or practice".

#### 4. *Autonomy of social doctrine*

Although this social doctrine was formed during the nineteenth century as a complement to the treatise on morality dedicated to the virtue of justice, it soon acquired a notable autonomy due to the on-going organic and systematic development of the Church's moral reflection on the new and complex social problems. Thus it can be stated that social doctrine has an identity of its own with a well-defined theological profile.

In order to have a complete idea about social doctrine, reference must be made to its sources, its foundation and object, its subject and content, its ends and method. All of these elements make it a particular and autonomous discipline, which is both theoretical and practical, in the broad and complex field of the science of moral theology, in close connection with social morality.<sup>10</sup>

The sources of social doctrine are Sacred Scripture, the teaching of the Fathers and great theologians of the Church and the Magisterium itself. Its foundation and primary object are the dignity of the human person with its inalienable rights which form the nucleus of the "truth about man".<sup>11</sup> The subject is the whole Christian community in harmony with, and under the guidance of its legitimate pastors, of whom lay persons, with their Christian experience, are active

<sup>10</sup> JOHN PAUL II, Encyclical Letter *Laborem exercens* (September 14, 1981), n. 3: *A.A.S.* 80 (1988), page 571.

<sup>11</sup> JOHN PAUL II, Allocution *Esta hora* to the Third General Conference of the Latin American Episcopate in Puebla (January 28, 1979), Part I, n. 9: *A.A.S.* 71 (1979), page 195.

collaborators. Its content, in summarizing the view about man, humanity and society,<sup>12</sup> reflects the whole man, social man, as particular subject and fundamental reality of Christian anthropology.

#### 5. *Theological nature*

As an "integral part of the Christian concept of life",<sup>13</sup> the social doctrine of the Church has a highly theological character. Between the Gospel and real life, in fact, there is a reciprocal interpellation which, on the practical level of evangelization and human promotion, is made concrete in strong bonds of an anthropological, theological and spiritual nature such that charity, justice and peace are inseparable in Christian promotion of the human person.<sup>14</sup>

This theological nature of social doctrine is expressed as well in its pastoral objective of service to the world aimed at encouraging integral human promotion through the practice of Christian liberation in its earthly and transcendent perspective.<sup>15</sup> It is not a matter of communicating only "pure knowledge", but theoretical-practical knowledge with pastoral importance and projection coherent with the evangelizing mission of the Church. It is the correct knowledge about real man and his destiny<sup>16</sup> which the Church can offer as her contribution to the solution of human problems. It can be said that in every age and in every situation, the Church follows this path and carries out a three-fold task in society: announcement of the truth about human dignity and rights; denouncement of unjust situations; and contribution to positive changes in society and real human progress.<sup>17</sup>

#### 6. *Three-fold dimension of social doctrine*

Social doctrine includes a three-fold dimension; theoretical, historical and practical. These dimensions make up its basic structure and are inter-related and inseparable.

<sup>12</sup> PAUL VI, Encyclical Letter *Populorum progressio* (March 26, 1967), n. 13: *A.A.S.* 59 (1967), page 263.

<sup>13</sup> JOHN XXIII, Encyclical Letter *Mater et magistra* (May 15, 1961): *A.A.S.* 53 (1961), page 453.

<sup>14</sup> PAUL VI, Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii nuntiandi* (December 8, 1975), nn. 29, 31: *A.A.S.* 68 (1976), pages 25, 26.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, n. 31: *A.A.S.* 68 (1976), page 26.

<sup>16</sup> VATICAN COUNCIL II, Pastoral Constitution *Gaudium et spes*, nn. 12 ff.

<sup>17</sup> JOHN PAUL II, Encyclical Letter *Laborem exercens* (September 14, 1981), n. 1: *A.A.S.* 73 (1981), page 580.

First of all, there is "a theoretical dimension" because the Magisterium of the Church has explicitly formulated an organic and systematic reflection in its social documents. The Magisterium indicates the sure path for building relations of co-existence in a new social order according to universal criteria which can be accepted by all.<sup>18</sup> These are permanent ethical principles, not changeable historical judgments or "technical matters, for which (the Magisterium) has neither the equipment nor the mission".<sup>19</sup>

Next, there is a "historical dimension" in the social doctrine of the Church because, in it the use of principles is framed in a real view of society and inspired by an awareness of its problems.

Lastly, there is a "practical dimension" because social doctrine does not end only with a statement of permanent principles for reflection, or with the mere interpretation of the historical conditions of society. It also proposes the effective application of these principles in practice by translating them concretely into the ways and to the extent that circumstances permit or require it.<sup>20</sup>

#### 7. Methodology of social doctrine

This three-fold dimension aids understanding the dynamic inductive-deductive process of the methodology which, although already followed in the earlier documents in a general way, is better specified in the Encyclical *Mater et magistra*, and taken on decisively in the Pastoral Constitution *Gaudium et spes* and in subsequent documents. This method is developed in three phases; seeing judging and acting.

Seeing is perception and study of real problems and their causes, the analysis of which, however, belongs to the human and social sciences.

Judging is interpretation of that same reality in the light of the sources of social doctrine which determine the judgment pronounced with regard to social phenomena and their ethical implications. In this intermediate phase is found the function proper to the Magisterium of the Church which consists precisely in interpreting reality from the

<sup>18</sup> JOHN XXIII, Encyclical Letter *Mater et magistra* (May 15, 1961): A.A.S. 53 (1961), page 453.

<sup>19</sup> PIUS XI, Encyclical Letter *Quadragesimo anno* (May 15, 1931): A.A.S. 23 (1931), page 190.

<sup>20</sup> JOHN XXIII, Encyclical Letter *Mater et magistra* (May 15, 1961): A.A.S. 53 (1961), page 453.

viewpoint of faith and offering "what it has of its own; a global view about man and humanity".<sup>21</sup> Obviously in seeing and judging reality, the Church is not and cannot be neutral because she cannot help but adapt to the scale of values enunciated in the Gospel. If, hypothetically speaking, she were to conform to other scales of values, her teaching would not be what it in fact is, but would be reduced to a biased philosophy or ideology.

Action is aimed at implementing these choices. It requires a real conversion, that inner transformation which is availability, openness and transparency to the purifying light of God.

By inviting the faithful to make concrete choices and to act according to the principles and judgments expressed in its social doctrine, the Magisterium offers the fruit of much reflection and pastoral experience matured under the particular assistance promised by Christ to his Church. It is up to the real Christian to follow this doctrine and to make it "the foundation of his wisdom and of his experience in order to translate it concretely into forms of action, participation and commitment".<sup>22</sup>

#### 8. The method of discernment

Ethical principles and guidelines cannot be put into practice without an adequate discernment that leads the entire Christian community and each one in particular to scrutinize "the signs of the times" and to interpret reality in the light of the evangelical message.<sup>23</sup> Although it is not up to the Church to scientifically analyze social reality,<sup>24</sup> Christian discernment as a search for, and evaluation of, truth leads to investigating the real causes of social ills, and especially of injustice, and to accepting the certain results, not the ideologized ones, of the human sciences. The goal is to arrive, in the light of permanent principles, at an objective judgment about social reality and, according to the possibilities and opportunities offered by the circumstances, to make concrete the most appropriate choices which may eliminate injustices

<sup>21</sup> PAUL VI, Encyclical Letter *Populorum progressio* (March 26, 1967), n. 13: A.A.S. 59 (1967), page 264.

<sup>22</sup> PAUL VI, Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii nuntiandi* (December 8, 1975), n. 38: A.A.S. 68 (1976), pages 29 ff.; VATICAN COUNCIL II, Dogmatic Constitution *Lumen gentium*, n. 25.

<sup>23</sup> VATICAN COUNCIL II, Pastoral Constitution *Gaudium et spes*, n. 4.

<sup>24</sup> JOHN PAUL II, Encyclical Letter *Laborem exercens* (September 14, 1981), n. 1: A.A.S. 73 (1981), page 580.



and favor the political, economic and cultural transformations needed in individual cases.<sup>25</sup>

In this perspective, Christian discernment does not only help clarify local, regional or world situations; it also, and principally, helps discover God's plan of salvation, realized in Jesus Christ, for his children in the different periods of history. It is obvious that this must be placed in an attitude of fidelity not only to the evangelical sources, but also to the Magisterium of the Church and her legitimate pastors.

### 9. *Theology and Philosophy*

Since the social doctrine of the Church draws from Revelation truths, elements for evaluation and discernment, and claims for itself the "character of application of the Word of God to the life of men and society",<sup>26</sup> it needs a solid philosophical-theological framework. At its basis, in fact, there is an anthropology drawn from the Gospel which contains, as its "primordial assertion", the idea of man "as image of God, who is not reducible to a mere particle of nature or to an anonymous element of the human city".<sup>27</sup> This fundamental assertion is expressed in numerous doctrinal formulations, such as, for example, the doctrine of charity, of being children of God, of new brotherhood in Christ, the freedom of the children of God, personal dignity and each man's eternal vocation. These acquire their full meaning and value only in the context of supernatural anthropology and the entire Catholic dogma.

Together with these facts derived from Revelation, social doctrine also takes on, recalls and explains various fundamental ethical principles of a rational nature by showing the coherency between the data revealed and the principles of right reason which regulate human acts in the field of social and political life. Therefore, the need follows from this to turn to philosophical reflection in order to deepen such concepts (as, for instance, the objectivity of truth, reality, the value of the human person, norms of action and criteria of truth), and to illustrate them in the light

<sup>25</sup> JOHN PAUL II, Message *A vous tous* for the 1980 World Day of Peace (December 8, 1979): *A.A.S.* 71 (1979), pages 1572 ff.; PAUL VI, Apostolic Letter *Octogesima adveniens* (May 14, 1971), n. 4: *A.A.S.* 63 (1971), page 403.

<sup>26</sup> JOHN PAUL II, Encyclical Letter *Sollicitudo rei socialis* (December 30, 1987), n. 8: *A.A.S.* 80 (1986), page 520.

<sup>27</sup> JOHN PAUL II, Allocution *Esta hora* to the Third General Conference of the Latin American Episcopate in Puebla (January 28, 1979), Part I, n. 9: *A.A.S.* 71 (1979), pages 195, 196.

of ultimate causes. Indeed, the Church teaches that the social encyclicals make an appeal also to "right reason" in order to find the objective norms of human morality which govern not only individual life, but social and international life as well.<sup>28</sup> In this viewpoint it becomes evident how a solid philosophical-theological foundation will aid professors and students in avoiding subjective interpretations of concrete social situations, and also in protecting themselves from any possible instrumentalization by them for ideological ends and interests.

### 10. *Positive Sciences*

Social doctrine also makes use of data from the positive sciences and, particularly, from the social sciences which make up an important instrument, although not an exclusive one, for understanding reality. Recourse to these sciences requires careful discernment, on the basis also of an appropriate philosophical mediation since there can be a risk of twisting them to the pressure of certain ideologies contrary to right reason, to the Christian faith and, in concrete, to the very facts of historical experience and scientific research. In any case, a "fruitful dialogue"<sup>29</sup> between Christian social ethics (theological and philosophical) and the human sciences is not only possible but necessary for understanding social reality. The clear distinction between the competency of the Church, on the one hand, and that of the positive sciences on the other, does not constitute any obstacle to this dialogue but aids it. Therefore, it is in line with the social doctrine of the Church to accept and harmonize appropriately the data offered by the sources mentioned above, and those provided by the positive sciences. Obviously, as principal point of reference, it will always have the word and example of Christ and Christian tradition considered in relation to the evangelizing mission of the Church.

### 11. *Evolution of Social Doctrine*

As has already been stated, due to its character of mediation between the Gospel and the concrete reality of man and society, the social doctrine of the Church needs to be continuously updated and made

<sup>28</sup> VATICAN COUNCIL II, Pastoral Constitution *Gaudium et spes*, n. 63.

<sup>29</sup> PAUL VI, Apostolic Letter *Octogesima adveniens* (May 14, 1971), n. 40: *A.A.S.* 63 (1971), page 429.

responsive to the new situations of the world and history.<sup>30</sup> In fact, decade after decade, it has had a notable evolution. The initial object of this doctrine was the so-called "social question", or the whole series of socio-economic problems which arose in certain areas of the European and American world subsequent to the "industrial revolution". Today the "social question" is no longer limited to particular geographic areas. It has a worldwide dimension<sup>31</sup> and includes many aspects, including political ones, linked to the relationship between classes and the transformation of society which has already taken place and is still in progress. In any case, "social question" and "social doctrine" continue being co-related terms.

What is important to stress in the development of social doctrine is that, while it preserves a substantial identity as a doctrinal "corpus" with great coherency, it has not been reduced to a closed system, but has shown itself attentive to evolving situations, and capable of responding to new problems, or to their new ways of being raised. This appears evident from an objective analysis of the documents of the Papacies from Leo XIII to John Paul II, and it becomes even more apparent from Vatican Council II onward.

## 12. *Continuity and development*

The differences in formulation, methodological procedure and style seen in the documents, however, do not compromise the substantial identity and unity of the social doctrine of the Church.

Rightly, therefore, the term "continuity" is used to express the relationship between the documents, even if each one responds in a specific way to the problems of its times. As an example, the "poor", which some recent documents deal with, are not the "proletarians" Leo XIII refers to in the Encyclical *Rerum novarum*, nor the "unemployed" who were at the center of Pius XI's attention in the Encyclical *Quadragesimo anno*. Today they appear immensely greater in number and include those in rich societies who are excluded from benefiting from the goods of the earth with freedom, dignity and security. The problem is all the more serious because in some parts of the world, and

<sup>30</sup> PAUL VI, Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii nuntiandi* (December 8, 1975), n. 29: A.A.S. 66 (1979), page 25.

<sup>31</sup> PAUL VI, Encyclical Letter *Populorum progressio* (March 26, 1967), n. 3: A.A.S. 59 (1967), page 258; JOHN PAUL II, Encyclical Letter *Laborem exercens* (September 14, 1981), n. 2: A.A.S. 73 (1981), page 582; Encyclical Letter *Sollicitudo rei socialis* (December 30, 1987), n. 9: A.A.S. 80 (1988), pages 520-523.

especially the Third World, it has become systematic and almost institutionalized.

Furthermore, the problem no longer concerns only the unjust differences between classes, but also enormous imbalances between rich and poor nations.

## 13. *The task and right to teach*

With regard to the political community, in respect for, and affirmation of reciprocal autonomy in each one's field, since both are at the service of the individual and social vocation of human persons, the Church asserts her own competency and right to teach social doctrine concerning the good and salvation of men. For this purpose, she uses all the means at her disposal according to different situations and times.<sup>32</sup>

By considering man "in the full truth of his existence, of his personal being and also of his community and social being",<sup>33</sup> the Church is well aware that the destiny of humanity is linked closely and indisputably to Christ. She is convinced of the irreplaceable need for the help he offers man and so she can not abandon him. As John Paul II stated in this regard, the Church participates intimately in the happenings of all humanity, making man the first and fundamental route in the fulfilment of her mission, "the way that leads invariably through the mystery of the Incarnation and the Redemption".<sup>34</sup> In this way she continues the redeeming mission of Christ, and obeys his mandate to preach the Gospel to all peoples,<sup>35</sup> and to serve all who are in need, whether as individuals or as groups and social classes, and those who strongly feel the need for transformations and reforms in order to improve living conditions.

In fidelity to her spiritual mission, the Church faces these problems under the moral and pastoral aspect which is proper to her. In the Encyclical, *Sollicitudo rei socialis*, John Paul II refers explicitly to this aspect with regard to development problems, and affirms that it thus falls rightfully within the mission of the Church. She therefore "cannot

<sup>32</sup> VATICAN COUNCIL II, Pastoral Constitution *Gaudium et spes*, n. 76.

<sup>33</sup> JOHN PAUL II, Encyclical Letter *Redemptor hominis* (March 4, 1979), n. 14: A.A.S. 71 (1979), page 284.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, pages 284-285.

<sup>35</sup> *Matthew* 28:19.

be accused of going outside her own specific field of competence and, still less, outside the mandate received from the Lord".<sup>36</sup>

Beyond the circle of the faithful, the Church offers her social doctrine to all men of good will and asserts that its fundamental principles are "demanded by right reason",<sup>37</sup> illuminated and perfected by the Gospel.

<sup>36</sup> JOHN PAUL II, Encyclical Letter *Sollicitudo rei socialis* (December 30, 1987), n. 8: A.A.S. 80 (1988), page 520.

<sup>37</sup> VATICAN COUNCIL II, Pastoral Constitution *Gaudium et spes*, n. 63.

## II

### HISTORICAL DIMENSION OF SOCIAL DOCTRINE

14. Before the attempt by some to sow "doubts and diffidence" concerning the efficacy of social doctrine because it is considered abstract, deductive, static and lacking in critical strength, John Paul II has recalled many times the urgent need for social action that takes advantage of the "rich and complex heritage" called "social doctrine or social teaching of the Church".<sup>38</sup> His predecessors, John XXIII and Paul VI had done the same, as well the Fathers of the Second Vatican Council.<sup>39</sup> From the thinking of the Popes and the Council, there appears the intention to bring about, through Christian social action, the Church's presence in history that will reflect Christ's presence which transforms men's hearts and the unjust structures created by men.

This aspect is particularly felt in the cultural and social conditions of our times. Therefore, the current Magisterium of the Church has stamped a new dynamism on social doctrine which explains the greater attitude of hostility on the part of some, at times assumed acritically, and shows the serious responsibility of those who refuse an instrument so appropriate for the dialogue of the Church with the world, and so effective for solving contemporary social problems.

<sup>38</sup> JOHN PAUL II, Allocution *Esta hora* to the Third General Conference of the Latin American Episcopate at Puebla (January 28, 1979), Part III, n. 7: A.A.S. 71 (1979), page 203.

<sup>39</sup> JOHN XXIII, Encyclical Letter *Mater et magistra* (May 15, 1961): A.A.S. 53 (1961), pages 453 ff.; PAUL VI, Apostolic Letter *Octogesima adveniens* (May 14, 1971), n. 4: A.A.S. 63 (1971), page 403; Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii nuntiandi* (December 8, 1975), n. 38: A.A.S. 68 (1976), page 30; VATICAN COUNCIL II, Pastoral Constitution *Gaudium et spes*, nn. 63, 76.

## Social dimension of the primitive Christian message

### 15. *History of salvation*

Social doctrine plunges its roots into the History of Salvation, and finds its origin in the very saving and liberating mission of Jesus Christ and the Church. It is connected with the experience of faith in the salvation and integral liberation of the people of God described first in Genesis, Exodus, the Prophets and the Psalms, and then in the life of Jesus and in the Apostolic Letters.<sup>40</sup>

### 16. *The Mission of Jesus*

The mission of Jesus and his life witness have made it obvious that man's true dignity is found in a spirit liberated from evil and renewed by Christ's redeeming grace. Nevertheless, the Gospel shows in an abundance of texts that Jesus was not indifferent or extraneous to the problem of the dignity and rights of the human person, nor to the needs of the weakest, the neediest and the victims of injustice. At all times he stressed a real solidarity with the poorest and lowliest.<sup>41</sup> He fought against injustice, hypocrisy, abuses of power, the greed for profit of the rich who were indifferent to the sufferings of the poor, and vividly reminded all of the final account to be made when he will return in glory to judge the living and the dead.

Several fundamental truths, which have profoundly influenced the social thought of the Church in her journey through the centuries, are clearly contained in the Gospel. Thus for example, Jesus affirms and proclaims an essential equality of dignity among all human beings, men and women, whatever their ethnic origin, nation or race, culture, political membership or social condition. Furthermore, his message contains a conception of the whole person as a social being by virtue of his very nature when he affirmed the dignity of marriage which constitutes the primary form of communication among persons. From the fundamental equality of dignity among all men and women and from their intrinsic social nature there arises the need that relationships

<sup>40</sup> JOHN PAUL II, Encyclical Letter *Laborem exercens* (September 14, 1981), n. 3: A.A.S. 73 (1981), page 553; CONGREGATION FOR THE DOCTRINE OF THE FAITH, Instruction *Libertatis conscientia* on Christian freedom and liberation (March 22, 1986), nn. 44-51: A.A.S. 79 (1987), pages 571-575.

<sup>41</sup> *Matthew* 11:28-30.

in social life be established according to the criteria of an operative and humane solidarity, that is, according to criteria of justice, vivified and integrated by love.

As well as these values contained in the Gospel there are many others of no less importance and of no less bearing on the social order, such as, for example, the values attendant on the institution of the united and indissoluble family, source of life; the values concerning the origin and nature of authority, which are conceived and exercised as a service to the common good of the social group in which it is directly expressed and on which it operates, in harmony with the universal good of the whole human Family.

### 17. *The Mission of the Church*

The Church nourishes herself on the very mystery of Christ, the Gospel incarnate, in order to announce, like Him, the Good News of the Kingdom of God and call men to conversion and salvation.<sup>42</sup> This evangelizing mission of the Church, received from Christ, constitutes her deepest identity. And yet, precisely from this, tasks, guidelines and strength spring which can contribute toward building and consolidating the community of men according to divine law.<sup>43</sup>

In teaching and in social practice, the Church in the early centuries and in the Middle Ages did none other than apply and develop the principles and guidelines contained in the Gospel. Moving within the structures of civil society, she sought to humanize them in a spirit of justice and charity, linking the work of evangelization to appropriate charitable-social initiatives. The Fathers of the Church are noted not only as intrepid defenders of the poor and oppressed, but also as promoters of helping institutions (hospitals, orphanages, hospices for pilgrims and strangers) and of socio-cultural conceptions which inaugurated the era of a new humanism rooted in Christ. These were mostly works to supplement the inadequacies and lacunae in the organization of civil society, which shows how capable are souls permeated by the spirit of the Gospel of great sacrifices and great creativity. Thanks to the efforts of the Church, there was recognised the

<sup>42</sup> *Mark* 1:15.

<sup>43</sup> VATICAN COUNCIL II, Pastoral Constitution *Gaudium et spes*, nn. 42-44; PAUL VI, Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii nuntiandi* (December 8, 1975), n. 31: A.A.S. 66 (1976), page 26; CONGREGATION FOR THE DOCTRINE OF THE FAITH, Instruction *Libertatis conscientia* on Christian freedom and liberation (March 22, 1986), nn. 63-65: A.A.S. 79 (1987), pages 581 ff.

inviolability of human life, the sanctity and indissolubility of marriage, the dignity of women, the value of human work and of every person, thus contributing to the abolition of slavery which was a normal part of the economic and social system of the ancient world. The progressive development of theological activity, firstly in the monasteries and then in universities, made possible the scientific elaboration of the basic principles which regulate human coexistence. In this regard, of perennial value is the thought of Saint Thomas Aquinas, Francis Suarez, Francis de Vitoria and many others. These, together with various famous philosophers and canonists, prepared the presuppositions and necessary instruments for the working out of a true and proper social doctrine, such as was introduced under the Supreme Pontiff Leo XIII and continued by his successors.

The affirmation of this social dimension of Christianity is becoming more urgent every day due to the increasingly vast and profound changes which are taking place in society.<sup>44</sup> In the face of social problems, which have always been present in the different historical periods, but which, in our times, have become much more complex and widespread on a worldwide scale, the Church cannot neglect her ethical and pastoral reflection - in a field which belongs to her - in order to enlighten and guide peoples' efforts and hopes with her social teaching so that even the radical changes required by situations of misery and injustice may be brought about in such a way that favors men's real good.<sup>45</sup>

## 2

### Formation of the historical heritage

#### 18. Socio-cultural Environment

In every era, social doctrine, with its principles of reflection, its criteria for judgment and norms of action, has had no other orientation than that of enlightening in a particular way, starting from the faith and tradition of the Church, the real situation of society, especially when human dignity was offended in it.

<sup>44</sup> PAUL VI, Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii nuntiandi* (December 8, 1975), n. 14: A.A.S. 65 (1976), page 13.

<sup>45</sup> CONGREGATION FOR THE DOCTRINE OF THE FAITH, Instruction *Libertatis conscientia* on Christian freedom and liberation (March 22, 1986), n. 72: A.A.S. 79 (1987), page 586.

In this perspective, which is both dynamic and historical, it appears that the real character of social doctrine comes from the conformity of its directives regarding problems of a given historical situation, with the ethical requirements of the evangelical message, that calls for an in-depth transformation of the person and groups in order to achieve an authentic and integral liberation.<sup>46</sup>

Nonetheless, in order to understand the historical development of social doctrine, the socio-cultural context of each document must be penetrated, and the economic, social, political and cultural conditions in which it was issued, must be understood. Then, in the various pronouncements the pastoral intention of the Church can be better understood in relation to the situation of the society being examined and the scope of the social problem.

Both the basic principles, directly derived from the Christian concept of the person and human society, and the moral judgments about particular social situations, institutions and structures, enable the meaning of the historical presence of the Church in the world to be grasped. It can be said that every social document is an example and proof of this.

#### 19. Nineteenth century changes and contributions of Catholic thought

In particular one must remember the new situation which was created in the 1800's in Europe and, in part, in the Americas following the industrial revolution, liberalism, capitalism and socialism. In that situation, in line with the ethical and social requirements of the Word of God and the constant teaching of the Fathers of the Church, of the major theologians of the Middle Ages and, particularly, of St. Thomas Aquinas, many Catholics of various countries promoted the reawakening of the Christian conscience with regard to the serious injustices which emerged in that era. In this way a more modern and dynamic concept began to take shape of the form in which the Church must be present and exercise her influence in society. The importance of her presence in the world and the type of function required from her by the new times was better understood. The entire social doctrine of the Church from that time until the present rests on these

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, Chapter V: A.A.S. 79 (1987), pages 585 ff.

assumptions. It is therefore in this perspective that the documents of the social Magisterium are to be read and understood.

## 20. *Leo XIII*

Out of concern for the "workers' question" - that is, the problems deriving from the deplorable situation of the industrial proletariat, Leo XIII intervened with the Encyclical *Rerum novarum* (1891), a courageous and farsighted text which prepared the way for the developments of social doctrine made by the Magisterium in subsequent documents. In the Encyclical the Pontiff presents the doctrinal principles which can help cure the "social ill" latent in the "workers' condition".<sup>47</sup>

After having enumerated the errors which led to the "undeserved misery" of the proletariat, and after having excluded socialism in particular as the remedy for the "workers' question", *Rerum novarum* specifies and up-dates the Catholic doctrine on work, the right to property, the principle of collaboration instead of class struggle as the fundamental means for social change, the rights of the weak, the dignity of the poor and the obligations of the rich, the perfecting of justice through charity, on the right to form professional associations.

## 21. *Pius XI*

Forty years later, when the developments of industrial society had already led to an enormous and ever-growing concentration of strength and power in the economic-social world and inflamed a cruel class struggle, Pius XI felt the duty and the responsibility to promote a greater awareness, a more precise interpretation and an urgent application of the moral law<sup>48</sup> governing human relations in this field, with the intent of overcoming the conflict between classes and arriving at a new social order based on justice and charity. Given this attention to the new historical context, his Encyclical, *Quadragesimo anno*, offers some new elements. It gives an overall view of industrial society and production; it stresses the need for both capital and labor to contribute to production and economic organization; it sets up the conditions for

the re-establishment of the social order; it seeks a new focus on the emerging problems, in order to face the "great changes" brought by the new development of the economy and of socialism.<sup>49</sup> It does not hesitate to take a position with regard to the attempts made during those years to overcome social antinomies through the corporative system by showing itself favorable to the principles of solidarity and collaboration that inspire it, but warning that the failure to respect freedom of association and action could compromise its desired outcome.

## 22. *Pius XII*

During his long Papacy, Pius XII did not write any social encyclicals. However, in complete continuity with the doctrine of his predecessors, he intervened authoritatively on the social problems of his times with a wide series of discourses. Among these, his Radio Messages are particularly important in which he specified, formulated and vindicated the ethical-social principles aimed at promoting reconstruction following the debacle of World War II. Due to his sensitivity and intelligence in grasping the "signs of the times", Pius XII can be considered the immediate precursor of Vatican Council II and of the social teaching of the Popes who followed him. The following are the principal points on social doctrine which he best concretized and applied to the problems of his times: the universal destination and use of goods; the rights and duties of workers and employers; the State's function in economic activities; the need for international collaboration in order to bring about greater justice and guarantee peace; the restoration of law as the rule for relations between classes and peoples; the minimum income of the family.<sup>50</sup>

During the war and the post-war period, for many people of all continents and for millions of believers and nonbelievers, the social teaching of Pius XII represented the voice of the universal conscience, interpreted and proclaimed in close connection with the word of God. With his moral authority and prestige, Pius XII brought the light of Christian wisdom to countless men of every category and social level,

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*: A.A.S. 23 (1931), pages 209 ff.

<sup>50</sup> Pius XII, Discourse *The Solemnity of Pentecost* for the fiftieth anniversary of the Encyclical *Rerum novarum* (June 1, 1941): A.A.S. 33 (1941), pages 195 ff.; Christmas Radio Message: on peace and the international order of 1939, 1940, 1950, 1951, 1954; on democracy, 1944; Discourses on the dangers of the technological conception of social life and on the economic enterprise and order of June 3, 1950 and September 9, 1956.

<sup>47</sup> LEO XIII, Encyclical Letter *Rerum novarum* (May 15, 1891): *Acta Leonis XIII* 11 (1891), page 98.

<sup>48</sup> PIUS XI, Encyclical Letter *Quadragesimo anno* (May 15, 1931): A.A.S. 23 (1931), page 191.

to government leaders, men of culture, professionals, entrepreneurs, technical leaders and workers.

In wishing to give value to the tradition of *Rerum novarum*,<sup>51</sup> he aimed at the formation of an ethical and social conscience which would inspire the actions of peoples and States. Through him that breath of the regenerating Spirit passed into the Church which, as he said in reference to *Rerum novarum*, did not fail to extend itself beneficially to the whole of humanity.<sup>52</sup>

### 23. John XXIII

After World War II, the Church found herself in a new situation under many aspects; the "social question" which was initially limited to the working class, had undergone a process of universalization which involved all classes, all countries and international society itself in which the drama of the Third World was emerging increasingly. The "problem of the modern era" became the object of the Church's reflection and pastoral action and of her social Magisterium. In fact, the new Encyclical, *Mater et magistra* (1961) by Pope John XXIII, aims at up-dating the already known documents, and taking a further step forward in the process of involving the whole Christian community.<sup>53</sup> In tackling the more current and important aspects of the "social question",<sup>54</sup> the new document makes the existing inequalities stand out both among the various economic sectors and the different countries and regions, and it denounces the phenomena of overpopulation and underdevelopment which, due to a lack of understanding and solidarity among the nations, bring about unbearable situations especially in the Third World.

Vis-à-vis the dangers of a new, nuclear war, after having intervened with a memorable message to peoples and heads of State, at the most acute moment of the crisis, John XXIII himself issued the Encyclical *Pacem in terris* (1963) which is an urgent exhortation to build peace based on respect for the ethical requirements which must preside over relations between men and States.

<sup>51</sup> Pius XII, Discourse *The Solemnity of Pentecost* for the fiftieth anniversary of the Encyclical *Rerum novarum* (June 1, 1941): A.A.S. 33 (1941), page 204.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*: A.A.S. 33 (1941), page 197.

<sup>53</sup> John XXIII, Encyclical Letter *Mater et magistra* (May 15, 1961): A.A.S. 53 (1961), pages 412-413.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*: A.A.S. 53 (1961), pages 431-451.

The style and language of Pope John XXIII's Encyclicals confer on social doctrine a new capacity with regard to its approach and influence on the new situations without neglecting the law of continuity with the preceding tradition. Therefore, one cannot speak of an "epistemological shift". It is certain that the tendency surfaces of giving value to the empirical and the sociological aspects but, at the same time, the theological motivation in social doctrine is accentuated. This is all the more obvious if a comparison is made with the preceding documents in which philosophical reflection predominates and argumentation is based on the principles of natural law. The origin of John XXIII's social encyclicals are certainly derived from the radical transformations both within the States as well as in their reciprocal relations both "in the scientific, technical and economic field" and in the "social and political" one.<sup>55</sup>

During that period other major phenomena began to become urgent in a troubling way. First of all, there were the effects of economic development following post-war reconstruction. The optimism it generated impeded immediate awareness of the contradictions of a system based on the unequal development of the different countries of the world. Furthermore, at the end of that decade, while the process of decolonization of many countries of the Third World was taking place, another type of colonial domination was already observed of an economic nature, replacing the former political colonialism. This fact is decisive for a stand in conscience and for a counter movement, especially in Latin America where, in order to combat imbalances in development and the situation of new dependency, a ferment of liberation was unleashed in various ways and forms. This would subsequently generate the different currents of the "theology of liberation" about which the Holy See has made its position known.<sup>56</sup>

### 24. Vatican Council II

Four years after the publication of *Mater et magistra*, the Pastoral Constitution *Gaudium et spes* of the Second Vatican Council was issued on the Church in the contemporary world. If between the two documents an overly brief period of time had elapsed for there to be

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*: A.A.S. 53 (1961), pages 412-413.

<sup>56</sup> CONGREGATION FOR THE DOCTRINE OF THE FAITH, Instruction *Libertatis nuntius* on some aspects of the "Theology of Liberation" (August 6, 1984): A.A.S. 76 (1984), pages 876-909; Instruction *Libertatis conscientia* on Christian freedom and liberation (March 22, 1986): A.A.S. 79 (1987), pages 534-599.-

significant changes in historical reality, nonetheless, with the new document the path covered by social doctrine was considerable. The Council in fact realized that the world was waiting for a new and stimulating message from the Church. It responded to that expectation with the Constitution in which, in harmony with ecclesiological renewal, a new concept of how to be a community of believers and people of God is reflected. It aroused new interest regarding the doctrine contained in the preceding documents on the witness and life of Christians, as authentic ways of making the presence of God in the world visible.

On the social level, the response of the Church gathered together in the Council became concrete in the presentation of a more dynamic concept of man and society and, in particular, of socio-economic life worked out on the basis of the requirements and correct interpretation of economic development.

According to the chapter of *Gaudium et spes* dedicated to this problem, the elimination of social and economic inequalities can in fact only be based on the correct understanding of development. This interpretation of social reality on a worldwide scale produced a fundamental shift in the evolving process of social doctrine. It does not allow itself to become absorbed by the socio-economic implications of the two major systems, capitalism and socialism. Instead it opens up to a new concept; the dual dimension or range of development. This concept, in fact, aims at promoting the good of the whole man, "in his totality, taking into account his material needs and the requirements of his intellectual, moral, spiritual and religious life", thereby overcoming the traditional counterpositions between producer and consumer, and the discriminations that offend the dignity of the great human family.<sup>57</sup>

In this perspective one discovers how, at the basis of what the Constitution says about economic and social life, there is an authentically humanistic development concept.

In *Gaudium et spes* the Church shows how deep her sensitivity is for the growing awareness of inequalities and injustices present in humanity, and especially for the problems of the Third World.

Thus in social doctrine, a personalist and community direction of the economy is strengthened, against all social and economic

<sup>57</sup> VATICAN COUNCIL II, Pastoral Constitution *Gaudium et spes*, nn. 64-65.

discrimination, in which man presides and is considered the end, subject and protagonist of development.

It was the first time that a document of the solemn Magisterium of the Church spoke so amply about the directly temporal aspects of Christian life. It must be recognized that the attention given by the Constitution to social, psychological, political, economic, moral and religious changes has increasingly stimulated over the past twenty years the Church's pastoral concern for men's problems and dialogue with the world.

## 25. Paul VI

A few years after the Council, the Church offered mankind a new and important reflection on social matters with the Encyclical *Populorum progressio* (1967) by Paul VI. It can be considered as a development of the chapter on economic and social life in *Gaudium et spes* while introducing some significant new elements.

In a short time, in fact, awareness had grown further of the inequalities which discriminated against and subjected many Third World countries to situations of injustice and marginalization. This problem was aggravated by particular circumstances; the growth of differences between rich and poor countries, demographic growth in the Third World.

In the poorest and most marginalized regions and peoples, the analysis of underdevelopment and its causes provoked scandal and made the struggle against injustice rage.

In the new historical context in which social conflicts had taken on worldwide dimensions,<sup>58</sup> the light of *Populorum progressio* is projected. It offers assistance in grasping all the dimensions of an integral human development and of a development in solidarity of humanity. These two topics are to be considered the axes around which the encyclical is structured. In wishing to convince its receivers of the urgent need for action in solidarity,<sup>59</sup> the Pope presents development as "the transition from less human conditions to those which are more human" and indicates its characteristics. Less human conditions are found when there are material and moral deficiencies and oppressive structures. Human

<sup>58</sup> PAUL VI, Encyclical Letter *Populorum progressio* (March 26, 1967), n. 9: A.A.S. 59 (1967), page 261.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, n. 61: A.A.S. 59 (1967), page 257.



conditions require having what is necessary, acquiring know-how and culture, respect for the dignity of others, recognition of supreme values and of God, and lastly, the Christian life of faith, hope and charity.<sup>60</sup> The "passage" from less human to more human conditions which, according to the Pope, is not limited to purely temporal dimensions, must inspire theological reflection on liberation from injustice and on authentic values without which a real development of society is not possible.

Social doctrine finds a door open here for an in-depth and renewed ethical reflection.

Only four years after the Encyclical *Populorum progressio*, Paul VI issued the Apostolic Letter *Octogesima adveniens* (1971). It was the eightieth anniversary of *Rerum novarum*, but the Pope was looking more to the present and future than to the past. In the Western world, new problems had arisen of the so-called "post-industrial society", and the social teaching of the Church had to be adapted to them. Therefore, *Octogesima adveniens* began a new reflection for understanding the political dimension of Christian existence and commitment, by stimulating on its part a critical sense with regard to the ideologies and utopias underlying the socio-economic systems in force.

## 26. John Paul II

Ten years later (1981) John Paul II intervened with the great Encyclical *Laborem exercens*. The decade which had transpired had left an imprint on the history of the world and of the Church. In the Pope's thinking it is not difficult to perceive the flux of new changes which had been produced. Whereas the 70's had begun with an increased awareness of underdevelopment and the injustices derived from it, towards the middle of that decade the first symptoms appeared of a much deeper crisis produced by the contradictions which the international monetary and economic system concealed, and characterized above all by the enormous rise in the price of oil. In this situation, before the whole of Western developed countries and those of the Eastern collectivist bloc, the Third World demanded new monetary and trade structures in which the rights of poorer peoples would be respected, as well as justice in economic relations. While the Third World's malaise was growing, some countries, in echoing their

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, nn. 20-21: A.A.S. 59 (1967), pages 267-268.

suffering, demanded greater justice in the distribution of world income. The entire system of the international division of labor and the structure of the world economy entered into a deep crisis. Consequently, a radical revision was required of the very structures which had led to such an unequal economic development.

Vis-à-vis these numerous and new problems, John Paul II wrote the Encyclical *Laborem exercens* on the ninetieth anniversary of *Rerum novarum*. It is in continuity with the previous Magisterium, but with an originality all its own<sup>61</sup> both with regard to its method and style, and for many aspects of its teaching which are dealt with in relation to the conditions of the time, but follow the main intuitions of Paul VI. The document unwinds in the form of a direct exhortation to all Christians for the purpose of involving them in the transformation of the existing socio-economic systems, and it provides precise guidelines based on the fundamental concern for the integral good of man. With it the "traditional heritage" of the social doctrine of the Church is expanded by pointing out that the "main key" to the entire "social question" is found in "human work",<sup>62</sup> the most appropriate point of reference for analyzing all social problems. By starting with work as a fundamental dimension of human existence, all the other aspects of socio-economic life are dealt with without omitting the cultural and technological aspect.<sup>63</sup>

*Laborem exercens* thus proposes a profound revision of the meaning of work which implies a more equitable redistribution not only of income and wealth, but also of work itself in such a way that there may be employment for all. For this purpose, society must be helped in order to re-discover the need for moderation in consumption, to re-acquire the virtues of sobriety and solidarity, and to make real sacrifices as well in order to come out of the current crisis. It is a great proposal which the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith has also repeated recently.<sup>64</sup> And, this is valid not only for each one of the individual peoples, but also for relations between nations.

The world situation requires respect for principles and basic values which are to be considered irreplaceable. Indeed, without a reassertion

<sup>61</sup> JOHN PAUL II, Encyclical Letter *Laborem exercens* (September 14, 1981), n. 3: A.A.S. 73 (1981), page 583.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, n. 3: A.A.S. 73 (1981), page 584.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*, n. 4: A.A.S. 73 (1981), page 584.

<sup>64</sup> CONGREGATION FOR THE DOCTRINE OF THE FAITH, Instruction *Libertatis conscientia* on Christian freedom and liberation (March 22, 1986), nn. 81-91: A.A.S. 79 (1987), pages 591-595.

of human dignity and rights as well as of solidarity among peoples, social justice and a new meaning of work, there will be no true human development nor any new order of social coexistence.

On December 30, 1987, on the twentieth anniversary of *Populorum progressio*, John Paul II published the Encyclical *Sollicitudo rei socialis*, the main axis of which is the notion of development as it was treated in the above mentioned document by Paul VI. In the light of the ever valid teaching of that Encyclical, the Supreme Pontiff wished to examine the world situation twenty years later under this aspect, for the purpose of up-dating and further deepening the idea of development so that it will respond to the urgent needs of the present moment and be truly human.

Among the causes of lack of development the following are mentioned: the persistent gap, and often even its increase, between North and South; the opposition between the Eastern and Western blocs with the resulting arms race, arms trade and the various obstacles of a political nature that impede decisions concerning cooperation and solidarity among nations. In this context, the demographic question is also mentioned. On the other hand, however, some advances achieved in the field of development are recognized although they are somewhat uncertain, limited and inadequate with respect to the real needs.

With regard to the second major topic of the Encyclical — the nature of real development — first of all, clarifications are offered regarding the difference between “undefined progress” and development. In this regard it is repeated that true development cannot be limited to the multiplication of goods and service - to what one possesses, but must contribute to the fullness of “being” of man. In this way the moral nature of real development is meant to be shown clearly. This important aspect is developed also in the light of Scriptural sources and of the Tradition of the Church. Proof of this moral dimension of development is the insistence in the document on the connection between faithful observance of all human rights (including the right to religious freedom) and the true development of man and peoples.

In the Encyclical, various obstacles to development of a moral nature are also analyzed (structures of sin; exclusive desire for profit; thirst for power) and the ways for hopefully overcoming them. In this regard recognition is urged of the inter-dependence between men and peoples and the resulting recognition of the obligation of solidarity, insisting on

its virtuous character, the duty of charity for Christians. All of this, however, requires a radical conversion of hearts.

At the end of the document some other specific ways are also indicated as to how to face the current situation that stress above all the importance of the social doctrine of the Church, its teaching and dissemination at the present time.

27. This brief overall history of the social doctrine of the Church aids in understanding its complexity, richness, dynamism and also its limits. Each document marks a new step forward in the Church's effort to respond to the problems of society in the various moments of history. In each one of them, one must especially see the pastoral concern to present to the entire Christian community and to all men of good will the fundamental principles, universal criteria and guidelines suitable for suggesting basic choices and coherent practice for every concrete situation. This teaching, therefore, is “not a ‘third way’ between liberal capitalism and Marxist collectivism, nor even a possible alternative to other solutions less radically opposed to one another”,<sup>65</sup> but a disinterested service which the Church offers according to the needs of the times and places. Observation of this historical dimension shows that the social doctrine of the Church, expressed clearly and coherently in its essential principles, is not an abstract system, closed and defined once and for all, but a concrete, dynamic and open one. Indeed attention to reality and evangelical inspiration place the Church in a position of being able to respond to the continuous changes to which the economic, social, political, technological and cultural processes are subjected. It is a task that is always under construction open to the needs of the new realities and new problems that emerge in these areas.

#### 28. *More recent documents*

The changes mentioned require an ethical view of the new problems and a more and more differentiated, up-dated and in-depth response. This is what occurred, for instance, with regard to the questions of private property, socialization, co-management, Third World underdevelopment, the growing gap between rich and poor countries, socio-economic development, the meaning of work, the international debt, the problem of the homeless, the present-day situation of the family, the

<sup>65</sup> JOHN PAUL II, Encyclical Letter *Sollicitudo rei socialis* (December 30, 1987), n. 41: A.A.S. 80 (1988), page 571.

dignity of women, respect for human life in its origins and procreation. The most recent documents of the Church point out her deep evangelical sensitivity with regard to the new social problems.<sup>66</sup>

In the spirit of Vatican Council II,<sup>67</sup> the social doctrine of the Church, composed of "permanent elements" and "contingent elements",<sup>68</sup> will continue along its historical path, becoming broadened and enriched through the contribution of all the members of the Church. Along this path the Magisterium will gather up the different voices in its official teaching, and reconcile attention to the historical dimension with the sacred duty to not weaken the stability and certainty of fundamental principles and norms and invite coherent action.

Throughout this long path, the Church will continue making the teachings and values of her social doctrine concrete by proposing principles for reflection and permanent values, criteria for judgment and directives for action.<sup>69</sup>

<sup>66</sup> CONGREGATION FOR THE DOCTRINE OF THE FAITH, Instruction *Libertatis conscientia* on Christian freedom and liberation (March 22, 1966): A.A.S. 79 (1987), pages 584-599; PONTIFICAL COMMISSION "IUSTITIA ET PAX", Document *At the Service of the Human Community: An Ethical Approach to the International Debt Question* (December 27, 1986): *L'Osservatore Romano* (January 29, 1987); Document *What Have You Done to Your Homeless Brother?* The Church and the Housing Problem (December 27, 1987): *L'Osservatore Romano* (February 3, 1988); JOHN PAUL II, Apostolic Exhortation *Familiaris consortio* (November 22, 1981): A.A.S. 74 (1982), pages 81-191; CONGREGATION FOR THE DOCTRINE OF THE FAITH, Instruction *The Gift of Life* on respect for life in its origins and the dignity of procreation (February 22, 1987): *L'Osservatore Romano* (March 11, 1987); JOHN PAUL II, Apostolic Letter *Mulieris dignitatem* (August 15, 1988): *L'Osservatore Romano* (October 1, 1988).

<sup>67</sup> VATICAN COUNCIL II, Pastoral Constitution *Gaudium et spes*, n. 91.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*, Proem, Note 1.

<sup>69</sup> Cf. JOHN XXIII, Encyclical Letter *Mater et magistra* (May 15, 1961): A.A.S. 53 (1961), page 454; PAUL VI, Apostolic Letter *Octogesima adveniens* (May 14, 1971), n. 4: A.A.S. 63 (1971), page 403; JOHN PAUL II, Allocution *Esta hora* to the Third General Conference of the Latin American Episcopate at Puebla (January 28, 1979), Part III, n. 7: A.A.S. 71 (1979), page 203; CONGREGATION FOR THE DOCTRINE OF THE FAITH, Instruction *Libertatis conscientia* on Christian freedom and liberation (March 22, 1986), n. 72: A.A.S. 79 (1987), page 586.

### III

## PERMANENT PRINCIPLES AND VALUES

29. In this chapter, the "permanent principles" and fundamental values will be briefly mentioned which must not be omitted in teaching the social doctrine of the Church. In an Appendix, an outline program of courses is offered which can be adapted to the concrete needs of the individual local Churches.

### 1

## Permanent principles of reflection

### 30. Premise

These principles have not been formulated by the Church organically in one single document, but throughout the entire span of the historical evolution of her social doctrine. They are drawn from the whole series of various documents which the Magisterium of the Church, with the collaboration of enlightened bishops,<sup>70</sup> priests and lay persons, has drawn up in tackling the various social problems as they gradually emerged.

It is obvious that the present document is not, and does not intend to be either a new synthesis nor a manual of these principles, but it is rather a body of simple guidelines considered useful for teaching.

It does not constitute a complete presentation of these principles, but simply an indication of those which are to be considered the more

<sup>70</sup> JOHN XXIII, Encyclical Letter *Mater et magistra* (May 15, 1961): A.A.S. 53 (1961), page 453.

important ones and therefore worthy of special attention in the formation of future priests.

Among these, the principles regarding persons, the common good, solidarity and participation are to be considered fundamental. The others are intimately connected and are derived from them.

### 31. *The human person*

The dignity of the person is based on the fact that he or she is created in the image and likeness of God and elevated to a supernatural destiny transcending earthly life. Man therefore as an intelligent and free being, subject of rights and of duties, is the primary principle and, one can say, the heart and soul of the social teaching of the Church.<sup>71</sup> "According to the almost unanimous opinion of believers and unbelievers alike, all things on earth should be related to man as their center and crown".<sup>72</sup> It is a principle that in its anthropological import constitutes the source of other principles which are part of the corpus of social doctrine, which in its structures, organization and function serves the creation and continuous adjustment of conditions both economic and cultural which allow the greatest possible number of people the development of the capacities and the satisfaction of their legitimate exigencies of perfection and happiness. For this reason the Church will never tire but will insist on the dignity of persons, against all slavery, exploitation and manipulation perpetrated to the harm of people, not only in the field of politics and economics, but also in the cultural, ideological and medical field.<sup>73</sup>

### 32. *Human rights*

Human rights derive by an intrinsic logic from the same dignity of the human person. The Church has become aware of the urgent need to protect and defend these rights and considers it as part of her own saving mission following Christ's example, who showed that he was always attentive to the needs of people, especially the poorest.

<sup>71</sup> VATICAN COUNCIL II, Pastoral Constitution *Gaudium et spes*, n. 17.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*, n. 12. This affirmation of *Gaudium et spes* includes, for Christian faith, that the ordering of the world to the needs of man is valid only on the presupposition of the subordination of man to God, and thus man builds the world in obedience to the norms of God, not destroying it in the name of his egoism.

<sup>73</sup> CONGREGATION FOR THE DOCTRINE OF THE FAITH, Instruction *Libertatis conscientia* on the Christian freedom and liberation (March 22, 1986): *A.A.S.* 79 (1987), page 586.

The assertion of human rights arose in the Church more as a concrete service to humanity, than as a theoretical, organic and complete system. By reflecting on them, however, the Church recognized their philosophical and theological foundations and their juridical, social, political and ethical implications, as can be seen in the documents of her social teaching. She did so, though, not in the context of a revolutionary opposition of the rights of the person against traditional authority, but on the basis of the Law written into human nature by the Creator.

The insistence, especially in our times, with which the Church has made herself the promoter of the respect for and defense of human rights, whether personal or social ones, is explained not only by the fact that her intervention both today and yesterday is dictated by the Gospel,<sup>74</sup> but also because from the reflection on human rights a new theological and moral wisdom has developed for tackling the problems of the contemporary world.<sup>75</sup> In particular, the right to religious liberty, in as much as it touches the intimate sphere of the spirit, "reveals a point of reference and, in a certain sense, becomes the measure of the other fundamental rights".<sup>76</sup> Today, it is affirmed and defended by various public and private, national and international Organizations.

For her part, the Catholic Church shows herself to be in support in a special way of the many who are discriminated against or persecuted for their faith, and she is tenaciously committed so that such unjust situations may be overcome.

### 33. *Contributions of the Papal Magisterium to human rights*

Together with the Conciliar Magisterium, the Papal Magisterium has widely dealt with and developed the topic of the rights of the human person. Pius XII had already enunciated the principles based on the natural law of a social order in conformity with human dignity and made concrete in a sound democracy capable of best respecting the right to freedom, peace and material goods. Subsequently the Encyclical *Pacem in terris* by John XXIII was the first official Papal text explicitly dedicated to human rights. In fact, in reading the "signs of the times", the Church perceived the need to proclaim the "universal, inviolable

<sup>74</sup> VATICAN COUNCIL II, Pastoral Constitution *Gaudium et spes*, n. 41.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*, nn. 26, 73, 76.

<sup>76</sup> JOHN PAUL II, Message for the XXI World Day of Prayer for Peace (8 December 1987), n. 1: *Insegnamenti di Giovanni Paolo II*, X, 3, p. 1334.

and inalienable" rights of all men, against any discrimination and particularist conception. For this reason, in addition to basing human rights on the natural law inherent in Creation and ordained towards the Redemption, *Pacem in terris* corrects a certain individualistic aspect of the traditional concept of reciprocal rights and duties by placing rights in a context of solidarity and stressing the requirements of a community nature which solidarity implies.

In turn, in the Encyclical *Populorum progressio*, without separating human rights from the field of reason and continuing in the perspective followed above all by Vatican Council II, Paul VI highlights the Christian foundation of human rights and shows how faith transforms their very inner dynamics. Furthermore, it must be observed that if *Pacem in terris* is the charter of human rights, *Populorum progressio* constitutes the charter of the poor peoples' rights to development. Later, in deepening this reflection, John Paul II bases human rights simultaneously on the three dimensions of the complete truth about man: on the dignity of man as such; on man created in the image and likeness of God; on man inserted into the mystery of Christ. The saving mission of the Church is based on this dignity of man seen in the light of Christ's redeeming task. For this reason she cannot be silent when the inviolable rights of men and peoples are offended or endangered. From the Christian point of view, in fact, nations and native lands are a human reality with a positive and irreplaceable value at the basis of the inviolable rights within the different peoples and, in particular, the right of peoples to their own identity and development.<sup>77</sup>

#### 34. *The person-society relationship*

The human person is a social being by its nature - that is, by its innate need and its connatural inclination to communicate with others. This human sociality is the basis of all forms of society and of the ethical requirements which are inscribed in it. Man is not sufficient in himself to attain his full development; he needs others and society.

This principle of interdependence between the person and society, joined to that essentially of the dignity of the human person, relates to

<sup>77</sup> JOHN PAUL II, Encyclical Letter *Redemptor hominis* (March 4, 1979), n. 17: *A.A.S.* 71 (1979), pages 295 ff.; Message *L'Eglise catholique* to the civil authorities who signed the Helsinki Agreement (1975), on freedom of conscience and religion (September 1, 1980): *A.A.S.* 72 (1980), pages 1252 ff.; JOHN PAUL II, Allocution *I desire* to U.N. Representatives (October 2, 1979), n. 6: *A.A.S.* 71 (1979), pages 1146-7; Allocution *Uma cordialíssima saudação* to the Indios of Amazonia (July 10, 1980): *A.A.S.* 72 (1980), pages 960 ff.

the complex fibre of human social life which is governed by its own appropriate laws and perfected through Christian reflection.<sup>78</sup> Understanding the different aspects of social life today is not always easy given the rapid and profound changes which are taking place in all fields due to man's intelligence and creative activity. The changes, on their part, cause crises which are reflected both in man's inner imbalances, which increase his power all the more without always succeeding in channelling it to proper ends, and in social relations in the sense that a correct application of the laws governing social life is not always achieved.<sup>79</sup>

35. Human society is therefore the object of the social teaching of the Church since she is neither outside nor over and above socially united men, but exists exclusively in them and, therefore, for them. The Church insists on the "intrinsically social nature" of human beings.<sup>80</sup> It must be noted, however, that here "social" does not mean "collective" whereby the person is only a mere product. The strength and dynamism of this social condition is developed fully in society which thus sees relations in living together grow both on the national and international level.<sup>81</sup>

36. From the dignity, rights and sociality of the human person, the other permanent principles for reflection which guide and govern social life are derived. Among those which have been studied in depth by the Magisterium, the following are mentioned: the common good, solidarity, subsidiarity, participation, the organic concept of social life and the universal destination of goods.

#### 37. *The common good*

In speaking about the laws or principles governing social life, in the first place the "common good" must be kept in mind. Although in its essential and most profound aspects it cannot be conceived in doctrinal terms, or much less determined in its historical content,<sup>82</sup> it can still be

<sup>78</sup> VATICAN COUNCIL II, Pastoral Constitution *Gaudium et spes*, n. 25.

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*, n. 4.

<sup>80</sup> JOHN XXIII, Encyclical Letter *Mater et magistra* (May 15, 1961): *A.A.S.* 53 (1961), page 453.

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*: *A.A.S.* 53 (1961), pages 415 f.

<sup>82</sup> JOHN XXIII, Encyclical Letter *Pacem in terris* (April 11, 1961): *A.A.S.* 55 (1963), page 272.

described as "all those social conditions which favour the full development of human personality".<sup>83</sup>

Therefore, although the common good is higher than private interests, it is inseparable from the good of the human person and commits public authorities to recognize, respect, regulate, protect and promote human rights and facilitate the fulfilment of the respective duties. Consequently, implementation of the common good can be considered the very *raison d'être* of public authorities who are held to attain it to the advantage of all the citizens and of the whole man — considered in his earthly-temporal and transcendent dimension — while respecting a correct hierarchy of values and the postulates of historical circumstances.<sup>84</sup>

Thus, since the Church considers the common good as a value in the service and organization of social life and of the new order of human coexistence, she stresses its human meaning and ability to animate social structures in their globality and in their particular sectors, by encouraging in-depth transformations, according to the criterion of social justice.

### 38. *Solidarity and Subsidiarity*

Solidarity and subsidiarity are two other important principles governing social life. According to the principle of solidarity, each person, as a member of society, is indissolubly linked to the destiny of society itself and, by dint of the Gospel, to the destiny of all men's salvation. In his recent Encyclical, *Sollicitudo rei socialis*, the Pope has particularly underlined the importance of this principle, identifying it as a human and christian virtue.<sup>85</sup>

The ethical demands of this principle require all men, groups and local communities, associations and organizations, nations and continents, to participate in the management of all the activities of economic, political and cultural life while overcoming any purely individualistic conception.<sup>86</sup>

<sup>83</sup> JOHN XXIII, Encyclical Letter *Mater et magistra* (May 15, 1961): A.A.S. 53 (1961), page 417; cf. PIUS XII, Christmas Radio Message *Con sempre nuova* (December 24, 1942): A.A.S. 35 (1943), page 13.

<sup>84</sup> JOHN XXIII, Encyclical Letter *Pacem in terris* (April 11, 1963): A.A.S. 55 (1963), page 272.

<sup>85</sup> JOHN PAUL II, Encyclical Letter *Sollicitudo rei socialis* (30 December 1987), nn. 39-40: A.A.S. 80 (1988), pp. 566-569.

<sup>86</sup> VATICAN COUNCIL II, Pastoral Constitution *Gaudium et spes*, nn. 30-32; CONGREGATION FOR

Subsidiarity is to be considered as the complement of solidarity. It protects the human person, local communities and "intermediary bodies" from the danger of losing their legitimate autonomy. The Church is attentive to the application of this principle by reason of the very dignity of the person, respect for what is most human in the organization of social life,<sup>87</sup> and the safeguarding of the rights of peoples in relations between individual societies and universal society.

### 39. *Organic concept of social life*

As appears from what has been said, an ordered society is not adequately understood without an organic concept of social life. This principle requires that the society be founded, on the one hand, on the inner dynamism of its members - which originates in the intelligence and free will of the persons who seek the common good in solidarity. On the other hand, it is founded on the structure and organization of society comprised not only of individual free persons, but also of intermediate societies which are integrated into higher units, beginning with the family and arriving — through local communities, professional associations, regions and national states — at supernational bodies and the universal society of all peoples and nations.<sup>88</sup>

### 40. *Participation*

Participation occupies a predominant place in recent developments of the social teaching of the Church. Its strength lies in the fact that it ensures fulfilment of the ethical requirements of social justice. The just, proportionate and responsible participation of all members and sectors of society in the development of socio-economic, political and

THE DOCTRINE OF THE FAITH, Instruction *Libertatis conscientia* on Christian freedom and liberation (March 22, 1986), n. 73: A.A.S. 79 (1987), page 586; JOHN PAUL II, Discourse *Je désire* to the 68th Session of the International Labor Conference (June 15, 1982): A.A.S. 74 (1982), pages 992 ff.

<sup>87</sup> PIUS XI, Encyclical Letter *Quadragesimo anno* (May 15, 1931): A.A.S. 23 (1931), page 203; JOHN XXIII, Encyclical Letter *Pacem in terris* (April 11, 1963): A.A.S. 55 (1963), page 294; JOHN PAUL II, Encyclical Letter *Laborem exercens* (September 14, 1981): A.A.S. 73 (1981), page 616; CONGREGATION FOR THE DOCTRINE OF THE FAITH, Instruction *Libertatis conscientia* on Christian freedom and liberation (March 22, 1986), n. 73: A.A.S. 79 (1987), page 586.

<sup>88</sup> PIUS XI, Encyclical Letter *Quadragesimo anno* (May 15, 1931): A.A.S. 23 (1931), page 203; JOHN XXIII, Encyclical Letter *Mater et magistra* (May 15, 1961): A.A.S. 53 (1961), pages 409-410, 413; PAUL VI, Encyclical Letter *Populorum progressio* (March 26, 1967), n. 33: A.A.S. 59 (1967), pages 273-274; Apostolic Letter *Octogesima adveniens* (May 14, 1971), nn. 46-47: A.A.S. 63 (1971), pages 433-437; VATICAN COUNCIL II, Pastoral Constitution *Gaudium et spes*, nn. 30-31.

cultural life, is the sure path for attaining a new human coexistence. Not only does the Church not overlook this principle,<sup>89</sup> but she finds in it a constant motivation for promoting the advancement of the quality of life of individuals and of society as such. It is a deep human aspiration which expresses man's dignity and freedom in scientific and technical progress in the world of work and public life.<sup>90</sup>

#### 41. *Human structures and communities of persons*

The Church has repeatedly sought to prevent the real danger threatening the dignity of the person, individual freedom and social liberties which derives from the technical and mechanistic concept of life and from the social structure that does not leave sufficient room for the development of a true humanism. In many nations the State is transformed into a huge, administrative machine which invades all areas of life and drags man into a state of fear and anxiety causing his depersonalization.<sup>91</sup>

The Church thus feels that bodies and many private associations are necessary which reserve the proper space for the person and encourage the growth of collaboration in subordination to the common good. However, in order for these organizations to be real communities, their members must be considered and respected as persons, and called upon to participate in common tasks.<sup>92</sup> According to the Church, therefore, a sure path for attaining this goal is found in associating labor and capital, and in creating intermediate bodies.<sup>93</sup>

Implementation of these principles governing social life and the different levels of social organization and in the various sectors of human activity enable the overcoming of all tensions between

<sup>89</sup> JOHN XXIII, Encyclical Letter *Pacem in terris* (April 11, 1961): A.A.S. 55 (1963), page 278; VATICAN COUNCIL II, Pastoral Constitution *Gaudium et spes*, nn. 9, 68; JOHN PAUL II, Encyclical Letter *Sollicitudo rei socialis* (December 30, 1987), n. 44: A.A.S. 80 (1988), pages 576-577.

<sup>90</sup> JOHN XXIII, Encyclical Letter *Mater et magistra* (May 15, 1961): A.A.S. 53 (1961), page 423; PAUL VI, Apostolic Letter *Octogesima adveniens* (May 14, 1971), n. 22: A.A.S. 63 (1971), page 417; JOHN PAUL II, Encyclical Letter *Laborem exercens* (September 14, 1981): A.A.S. 73 (1981), page 617; CONGREGATION FOR THE DOCTRINE OF THE FAITH, Instruction *Libertatis conscientia* on Christian freedom and liberation (March 22, 1986), n. 86: A.A.S. 79 (1987), page 593.

<sup>91</sup> PIUS XII, Christmas Radio Message *Levate capita vestra* (December 24, 1952): A.A.S. 45 (1953), page 37.

<sup>92</sup> JOHN XXIII, Encyclical Letter *Mater et magistra* (May 15, 1961): A.A.S. 53 (1961), page 416.

<sup>93</sup> JOHN PAUL II, Encyclical Letter *Laborem exercens* (September 14, 1981), n. 14: A.A.S. 73 (1981), pages 612 ff.

socialization and personalization. The present day phenomenon of the multiplication of relations and social structures on all levels, deriving from free decisions and aimed at improving the quality of human life, can only be welcomed in a positive way since they manifest the attainment of human solidarity and favor the expansion of the person's material and spiritual activity.

#### 42. *The universal purpose of goods*

With this "characteristic principle of Christian social concern"<sup>94</sup> it is affirmed that the goods of the earth are for the use of everyone in order to satisfy their right to a life consonant with the dignity of the person and the needs of the family. In fact, "God intended the earth and all that it contains for the use of every human being and people. Thus, as all men follow justice and unite in charity, created goods should abound for them on a reasonable basis."<sup>95</sup> It follows that the right to private property, valid and necessary in itself, must be restricted within the limits imposed by its social function. As the Pope explains in his Encyclical *Laborem exercens*, "Christian tradition has never upheld this right as absolute and untouchable. On the contrary, it has always understood this right within the broader context of the right common to all to use the goods of the whole creation; the right to private property is subordinated to the right to common use, to the fact that goods are meant for everyone."<sup>96</sup>

## 2 Fundamental Values

#### 43. *The sure path*

The principles for reflection of the Church's social doctrine, as laws governing social life, are not independent from real recognition of the fundamental values inherent in the dignity of the human person. These values are principally: truth, freedom, justice, solidarity, peace and charity or Christian love. Living these values is the sure path not only

<sup>94</sup> JOHN PAUL II, Encyclical Letter *Sollicitudo rei socialis* (December 30, 1987), n. 42: A.A.S. 80 (1988), page 573.

<sup>95</sup> VATICAN COUNCIL II, Pastoral Constitution *Gaudium et spes*, n. 69.

<sup>96</sup> JOHN PAUL II, Encyclical Letter *Laborem exercens* (September 14, 1981), n. 14: A.A.S. 73 (1981), page 613.

to personal perfection, but also for putting a true humanism and a new social coexistence into practice. Reference must therefore be made to them in order to bring about substantial reforms of economic, political, cultural and technological structures and the necessary changes in institutions.

#### 44. *Towards a renewal of society*

The vital importance of these values explains why the Church has always proposed them so insistently as true foundations of a new society more worthy of man. While recognizing the autonomy of earthly realities,<sup>97</sup> the Church knows, however, that the laws discovered and employed by man in social life do not in themselves guarantee, almost mechanically, the good of all. They in fact must be applied under the guidance of virtues derived from the concept of the dignity of the person.<sup>98</sup> All of these values demonstrate the priority of ethics over techniques, the primacy of the person over things, the superiority of the spirit over matter.<sup>99</sup>

#### 45. "Wisdom" in social commitment

Values, however, often enter into conflict with the situations in which they are openly or indirectly negated. In such cases, man finds himself in the difficulty of having to honor them all coherently and simultaneously. For this reason Christian discernment becomes even more necessary in the choices to be made in the different circumstances, in the light of the fundamental values of Christianity. This is the way to practice real "wisdom" which the Church requires in social commitment by Christians and all men of good will.<sup>100</sup>

#### 46. *Values for development*

Considering the great complexity of contemporary human society and the need to promote certain values as the basis of a new society,

<sup>97</sup> VATICAN COUNCIL II, Pastoral Constitution *Gaudium et spes*, n. 36.

<sup>98</sup> JOHN XXIII, Encyclical Letter *Pacem in terris* (April 11, 1963): *A.A.S.* 55 (1963), page 259.

<sup>99</sup> JOHN PAUL II, Encyclical Letter *Redemptor hominis* (March 4, 1979), n. 16: *A.A.S.* 71 (1979), pages 290 ff.

<sup>100</sup> JOHN XXIII, Encyclical Letter *Pacem in terris* (April 11, 1963): *A.A.S.* 55 (1963), pages 265 f.; JOHN PAUL II, Encyclical Letter *Dives in misericordia* (November 30, 1980), n. 12: *A.A.S.* 72 (1980), page 1215; CONGREGATION FOR THE DOCTRINE OF THE FAITH, Instruction *Libertatis conscientia* on Christian freedom and liberation (March 22, 1986), nn. 3, 4, 26, 57: *A.A.S.* 79 (1987), pages 556 f., 564 f., 578.

the Church is called upon to intensify the process of education for the purpose of making not only individuals, but also public opinion understand — at least in the countries where her presence is admitted and her action permitted — the vital need to defend and promote the fundamental values of the human person without which there can be no real human and integral development of each society.

For this reason, it will not be possible to lay the bases of true human development, called for by the Church in her most recent social Magisterium, without a continuous reassertion of human dignity and its ethical and transcendent requirements; without an ethics of responsibility and solidarity among peoples<sup>101</sup> and social justice; without a revision of the meaning of work<sup>102</sup> which includes its more equal re-distribution.

<sup>101</sup> CONGREGATION FOR THE DOCTRINE OF THE FAITH, Instruction *Libertatis conscientia* on Christian freedom and liberation (March 22, 1986), nn. 89-91: *A.A.S.* 79 (1987), pages 594-595; PONTIFICAL COMMISSION " IUSTITIA ET PAX ", Document *At the Service of the Human Community: An Ethical Approach to the International Debt Question* (December 17, 1986): *L'Osservatore Romano* (January 28, 1987).

<sup>102</sup> JOHN PAUL II, Encyclical Letter *Laborem exercens* (September 14, 1981), nn. 3, 6, 12, 14: *A.A.S.* 73 (1981), pages 583, 589 f., 605 f., 612 f.; CONGREGATION FOR THE DOCTRINE OF THE FAITH, Instruction *Libertatis conscientia* on Christian freedom and liberation (March 22, 1986), nn. 81-87: *A.A.S.* 79 (1987), pages 591-593.



#### IV CRITERIA FOR JUDGMENT

##### 47. *Knowledge about reality*

The social doctrine of the Church has the goal of communicating knowledge which is not only theoretical but also practical and directive of pastoral action. This is why, in addition to the permanent principles for reflection, she also offers criteria for judging situations, structures and institutions, organizing economic, social, political, cultural and technological life, as well as the social systems themselves.<sup>103</sup> In this regard, there is no doubt that pronouncements about the more or less human living conditions of persons, about the ethical value of structures and social, economic, political and cultural systems, concerning the demands of social justice, are part of the evangelizing mission of the Church.

In order to make a correct judgment in this regard, the Church must have knowledge about local, national and international historical situations, and about the cultural dignity of every community and people. Even if she makes use of all the means supplied by the sciences, the fact remains that her principal reference for approach to social reality is always the above-mentioned fundamental values which provide very precise "norms of judgment" for Christian discernment. These norms, according to official declarations, which are included in social doctrine, are irreplaceable and must therefore be made known and appreciated in the teaching imparted in Seminaries and Theology Departments.

<sup>103</sup> *Ibid.*, n. 74: *A.A.S.* 79 (1987), page 587.

#### 48. *Ability to judge objectively*

The right-duty of the Church to emit moral judgments requires the ability of pastoral, ecclesiastical and lay workers to judge the different situations and structures and the different economic and social systems objectively. Knowledge about social problems and their ethical interpretation in the light of the evangelical message, as expressed in the social doctrine of the Church, already offers guidelines for such judgment from which Christian behavior and choices must be guided. The passage, however, from the doctrinal to the practical implies mediations of a cultural, social, economic and political nature for which lay persons are particularly competent, even if not exclusively, and it is up to them to develop temporal activities on their own initiative and under their own responsibility.

#### 49. *Examples of judgments*

An analysis of the documents points out that the social doctrine of the Church contains numerous judgments about concrete situations, structures, social systems and ideologies. Some cases can be cited as examples: *Rerum novarum* speaks about the causes of the workers' malaise and refers to the "yoke" imposed on them by "a very small number of very rich people";<sup>104</sup> *Quadragesimo anno* judges that the state of human society at that time favors violence and struggles;<sup>105</sup> *Vatican Council II* describes the imbalances of the modern world and concludes by asserting that they lead to discouragement, conflicts and misfortunes directed against man;<sup>106</sup> *Populorum progressio* does not hesitate to denounce the relations between developed and developing countries as unjust;<sup>107</sup> *Laborem exercens* states that even today different ideological systems are the cause of flagrant injustices;<sup>108</sup> *Sollicitudo rei socialis* criticizes the division of the world into two blocs (East-West), and the resulting negative consequences for the developing nations.<sup>109</sup>

<sup>104</sup> LEO XIII, Encyclical Letter *Rerum novarum* (May 15, 1891): *Acta Leonis XIII* 11 (1891), page 99.

<sup>105</sup> PIUS XI, Encyclical Letter *Quadragesimo anno* (May 15, 1931): *A.A.S.* 23 (1931), pages 219 f.

<sup>106</sup> VATICAN COUNCIL II, Pastoral Constitution *Gaudium et spes*, n. 8.

<sup>107</sup> PAUL VI, Encyclical Letter *Populorum progressio* (March 26, 1967), nn. 48-49: *A.A.S.* 59 (1967), page 281.

<sup>108</sup> JOHN PAUL II, Encyclical Letter *Laborem exercens* (September 14, 1981), n. 8: *A.A.S.* 73 (1981), page 596.

<sup>109</sup> JOHN PAUL II, Encyclical Letter *Sollicitudo rei socialis* (December 30, 1987), n. 21: *A.A.S.* 80 (1988), pages 537-539.

Obviously, the formulation of moral judgments about social situations, structures and systems does not bear the same degree of authority, which is proper to the Magisterium of the Church, when pronouncements are made about fundamental principles. Nonetheless, among the various judgments, those concerning abuses against human dignity have great authority because they are linked to principles and values founded on divine law itself.

#### 50. *Danger of ideological influence*

For a more realistic dialogue with men, for a rightful openness to the different circumstances of social coexistence and for objective knowledge about situations, the Church can make use of all "the help the sciences can offer"<sup>110</sup> when she makes a judgment, for example, of critically measurable empirical data, but being well aware that it is not her task to scientifically analyze reality and the possible consequences of social changes.<sup>111</sup> This is true both for the universal Church and for the local Churches.

An important criterion for using the means offered by the social sciences is to remember that sociological analysis does not always offer an objective presentation of data and facts because it may be subject from the start to a particular ideological view or very precise political strategy, as can be observed in Marxist analysis. It is well-known that the Magisterium has not failed to make official pronouncements about the danger that can come from this type of analysis for the Christian faith and the life of the Church.<sup>112</sup>

This danger of ideological influence on sociological analysis also exists in the liberal ideology that inspires the capitalistic system. In it, empirical data are often subjected, by principle, to an individualistic concept of the socio-economic relationship in contrast with the Christian concept.<sup>113</sup>

<sup>110</sup> VATICAN COUNCIL II, Decree *Optatam totius*, n. 20.

<sup>111</sup> JOHN PAUL II, Encyclical Letter *Laborem exercens* (September 14, 1981), n. 1: *A.A.S.* 73 (1981), page 580.

<sup>112</sup> PAUL VI, Apostolic Letter *Octogesima adveniens* (May 14, 1971), n. 34: *A.A.S.* 63 (1971), pages 424 f.; CONGREGATION FOR THE DOCTRINE OF THE FAITH, Instruction *Libertatis nuntius* on some aspects of the "Theology of Liberation" (August 6, 1984), Part VII, n. 6: *A.A.S.* 76 (1984), pages 890 f.

<sup>113</sup> PAUL VI, Apostolic Letter *Octogesima adveniens* (May 14, 1971), n. 26: *A.A.S.* 63 (1971), page 420.

The destiny of man can certainly not be closed in between these two opposing historical programs because it would be contrary to human freedom and creativity. In fact the history of men, peoples and communities has always shown itself to be rich and articulate, and projects of social models have always been numerous in the different ages. On this point, it is important to state that many variations of the principle of economic liberalism, such as those represented by christian-democratic parties, can no longer be considered expressions of "liberalism" in the strict sense, but as new alternatives of social organization.

#### 51. *Discernment of choices*

The dialogue of the Church with the historical movements which have sought to overcome the acute dilemma that exists between capitalism and socialism deserves special attention. With her social teaching, however, the Church does not pretend to encourage an alternative socio-economic and political system, or draw up her own well-defined plan for society. This task falls on the groups and communities to whom social and political roles have been assigned. In them, however, Christians are called upon to exercise an on-going discernment. Furthermore, the dialogue and possible commitment of Christians in movements born out of various ideologies, yet differing from them, must always be carried out carefully, with due critical discernment and always in reference to the moral judgment pronounced by the Magisterium of the Church.<sup>114</sup>

The saving mission of the Church, that springs from the teachings, witness and the life of Jesus Christ, the Savior, implies two unavoidable choices; one for man according to the Gospel, and another for the evangelical image of society. Without hypothesizing a "third way"<sup>115</sup> with regard to the "liberal utopia" and the "socialist utopia", believers must always opt for a humanizing model of socio-economic relations which are in harmony with the above-mentioned scale of values. In this perspective, the pillars of every truly human model - that is, one in harmony with the dignity of the person, are: truth, freedom, justice, love, responsibility, solidarity, and peace. The attainment of these values in the society's structures implies the primacy of man over things, the

<sup>114</sup> JOHN XXIII, Encyclical Letter *Pacem in terris* (April 11, 1963): A.A.S. 55 (1963), page 300; *Puebla Document*, nn. 554-557.

<sup>115</sup> JOHN PAUL II, Encyclical Letter *Sollicitudo rei socialis* (December 30, 1987), n. 41: A.A.S. 80 (1988), page 571.

priority of work over capital, and overcoming the antinomy between labor and capital.<sup>116</sup> These choices in themselves are not political, but they concern the political sphere and especially the relationship between Church and politics. They are not socio-economic either, but they also involve this dimension in the man-society and Church-society relationship. Therefore, it is clear that one cannot do without the ethical judgment of the Church regarding the foundations of the social system to be built, and the concrete plans and programs of coexistence in which the image of man and of society offered by the Gospel must also come together.

#### 52. *Social tasks of the local Churches*

The local Churches are, in their respective territories, centers of thought, moral reflection and pastoral action in the social field as well. They in fact cannot leave aside the particular local problems which require the proper adaptations, as many letters of Bishops and Episcopal Conferences demonstrate. However, in order to rightly evaluate the socio-economic, political and cultural situations and realities in which they find themselves, as well as contribute effectively to their progress and, if necessary, to their transformation, it is very important that they draw the principles and criteria of judgment from the sources of social teaching which are valid for the universal Church.<sup>117</sup>

#### 53. *New judgments in new situations*

The change in situation may postulate the modification of a former judgment expressed in a different situation. This really explains why in the social doctrine of the Church there may be different judgments today from those of another era, although they are in continuity with a line imposed by principles. In any case, it is obvious that a mature judgment about new situations, new models of society and new programs does not depend only on social doctrine, but also on philosophical-theological formation, political sense and discernment about the changes in the world. All of this requires remote and proximate preparation, study and reflection, as these Guidelines recommend.

<sup>116</sup> JOHN PAUL II, Encyclical Letter *Laborem exercens* (September 14, 1981), nn. 12, 14 f.: A.A.S. 73 (1981), pages 605 f., 612 f.

<sup>117</sup> PAUL VI, Apostolic Letter *Octogesima adveniens* (May 14, 1971), n. 36: A.A.S. 63 (1971), page 425.

V  
DIRECTIVES FOR SOCIAL ACTION

54. *Criteria for action*

The social doctrine of the Church, as theoretical-practical knowledge, is directed toward the evangelization of society. Thus it necessarily includes an invitation to social action by offering, for the different situations, adequate directives<sup>118</sup> inspired by the fundamental principles and criteria for judgment<sup>119</sup> illustrated above. The action that is suggested is not deduced *a priori* once and for all from philosophical and ethical considerations. Instead, it is specified case by case through Christian discernment of reality interpreted in the light of the Gospel and the social teaching of the Church which demonstrates its up-datedness in every historical moment. It would therefore be a grave doctrinal and methodological error if, in the interpretation of the problems of each historical era, the rich experience acquired by the Church and expressed in her social teaching were not taken into consideration. For this reason, all Christians will have to place themselves before the new situations with a conscience well-formed according to the ethical demands of the Gospel, and with a truly Christian social sensitivity that has matured through careful study of the various magisterial pronouncements.

55. *Respect for the dignity of the human person*

In her social apostolate, the Church is committed to the full realization of human advancement. This advancement enters into the

<sup>118</sup> JOHN XXIII, Encyclical Letter *Mater et magistra* (May 15, 1961): A.A.S. 53 (1961), pages 455 f.

<sup>119</sup> CONGREGATION FOR THE DOCTRINE OF THE FAITH, Instruction *Libertatis conscientia* on Christian freedom and liberation (March 22, 1986), n. 76: A.A.S. 79 (1987), pages 558 f.

plan of man's salvific advancement and of building the Kingdom of God in that it aims at ennobling the human person in all the dimensions of the natural and supernatural order. As *Gaudium et spes* teaches, the mission of evangelization, which aims at man's salvation or definitive liberation, requires a pastoral action that is diversified according to the environment in which it is carried out: prophetic, liturgical or of charity. The Church's pastoral action in her relations with the world is an action of presence, dialogue and service, starting from the faith, in the broad and vast social, economic, political, cultural, technological, ecological, etc. fields. In brief, it includes the whole panorama of temporal realities.

Given the primacy of man over things, a first criterion or norm not only of judgment but also of action is the dignity of the human person which implies respect and fostering of all the personal and social rights inherent in his nature.

Morality and discrimination between what is just and unjust will depend on the conformity, or lack of conformity of political lines and decisions, of the projects and programs adopted by the different social agents (governments, political parties, institutions and organizations, persons and groups) with the dignity of the person who has inviolable ethical requirements.

#### 56. *Respectful dialogue*

In the situation of the contemporary world, the profound changes in all fields of human, economic, cultural, scientific and technical activity, have caused new problems to emerge which demand the commitment of all men of good will. Among these problems the outstanding ones are hunger, violence, national and international terrorism, disarmament and peace, the foreign debt and the underdevelopment of Third World countries, genetic manipulation, drugs, deterioration of the environment.

In this context, the pastoral action of the Church must be carried out in collaboration with all the living and working forces in the present-day world. Hence, a second criterion of action is engaging in

respectful dialogue as a suitable method for finding a solution to the problems through programmatic and operative agreements.

#### 57. *Struggle for justice and social solidarity*

Today's world is also characterized by other "areas of misery"<sup>120</sup> and by other "forms of injustice more vast"<sup>121</sup> than in previous eras, such as hunger, unemployment, social marginalization, the gap that separates the rich countries, regions, groups and persons - from the poor. Thus, a third criterion for action is "a noble and reasoned struggle for justice and social solidarity".<sup>122</sup>

#### 58. *Formation in the necessary areas of expertise*

Concrete action in the field of temporal realities, according to the guidelines of the Magisterium, is principally the task of the laity who must let themselves be guided constantly by their Christian conscience. Therefore, they must acquire, together with moral and spiritual formation, the required expertise in the scientific and political field which renders them capable of carrying out an effective action according to lawful moral criteria.<sup>123</sup> In these matters, however, tasks of no less importance await Pastors as well who must help lay people to form a lawful Christian conscience and give them "light and spiritual strength".<sup>124</sup> It is obvious that Pastors will only be able to carry out this specific task if they themselves know well and uphold the social doctrine, and if they have acquired a sensitivity for action in this field in the light of the Word of God and the example of the Lord. Therefore, a fourth criteria of action is formation in these areas of expertise.

<sup>120</sup> JOHN PAUL II, Encyclical Letter *Redemptor hominis* (March 4, 1979), n. 16: A.A.S. 71 (1979), pages 292-293.

<sup>121</sup> JOHN PAUL II, Encyclical Letter *Laborem exercens* (September 14, 1981), n. 8: A.A.S. 73 (1981), page 596.

<sup>122</sup> CONGREGATION FOR THE DOCTRINE OF THE FAITH, Instruction *Libertatis conscientia* on Christian freedom and liberation (March 22, 1986), n. 77: A.A.S. 79 (1987), page 589; JOHN PAUL II, Encyclical Letter *Laborem exercens* (September 14, 1981), n. 20: A.A.S. 73 (1981), pages 629 ff.

<sup>123</sup> VATICAN COUNCIL II, Pastoral Constitution *Gaudium et spes*, n. 43; Decree *Apostolicam actuositatem*, n. 13; CONGREGATION FOR THE DOCTRINE OF THE FAITH, Instruction *Libertatis conscientia* on Christian freedom and liberation (March 22, 1986), n. 80: A.A.S. 79 (1987), pages 590 f.; Instruction *Libertatis nuntius* on some aspects of the "Theology of Liberation" (August 6, 1984), nn. 12-14: A.A.S. 76 (1984), pages 906 ff.

<sup>124</sup> VATICAN COUNCIL II, Pastoral Constitution *Gaudium et spes*, n. 43; CONGREGATION FOR THE DOCTRINE OF THE FAITH, Instruction *Libertatis nuntius* on some aspects of the "Theology of Liberation" (August 6, 1984), n. 14: A.A.S. 76 (1984), pages 906 ff.

What is most important is that pastors and the faithful be and feel united in participating, each one according to his or her own abilities, in the one saving mission of the Church. In this ecclesiological view, the task of animating temporal realities in a Christian way is not delegated to the laity by the hierarchy, but it flows naturally from their Baptism and Confirmation. In our times an increasingly vivid awareness has grown of the need for the laity's contribution to the evangelizing mission of the Church. *Lumen gentium* affirms that in certain places and in certain circumstances, without them, the Church cannot become salt of the earth and light of the world.<sup>125</sup>

59. *The experience of temporal realities and the experience of faith*

The ecclesial identity of the laity, rooted in Baptism and Confirmation and made actual in communion and in mission, implies a dual experience: one based on knowledge about the natural, historical and cultural realities of this world, and the other which comes from their interpretation in the light of the Gospel. They are not interchangeable; one cannot substitute the other, but both find unity in their first basis which is the Word of God, the *Verbum* through whom all things were made, and in their ultimate end, which is the Kingdom of God. Hence, a fifth criterion for the methodological aspect of action is use of this dual experience: the one of temporal realities and the other of the Christian faith.

This method applied to interpretation of the social doctrine of the Church will aid all Christians, and especially the laity, in making a more correct interpretation of reality. In this way, they will be able to see to what degree human and Christian values that express the dignity of the human person are incarnated into historical reality. They will be able to: link general principles of thought and action in the social sphere to the values that a society must always respect in order to solve its problems; have an orientation in the concrete search for the solutions needed; stimulate the change or transformation of the structures of society which show themselves to be inadequate or unjust; evaluate wisely the programs drawn up by all the living forces on the political and cultural plane. In this way, the authentic progress of man and society will be ensured in a more human dimension of development

<sup>125</sup> VATICAN COUNCIL II, Dogmatic Constitution *Lumen gentium*, n. 33.

which does not leave aside nor is exclusively governed by economic growth.

60. *Openness to the gifts of the Spirit*

As has already been stated, the Church does not offer her own model for social life. She remains open to a certain pluralism of projects and hypotheses for action, according to the charisms and gifts which the Spirit grants to the laity for accomplishing their mission in the context of the family, work, the economy, politics, culture, technology, ecology, etc. It derives from this that the directives for action contained in the social doctrine of the Church take on a particular meaning according to the specific characteristics of the action to be carried out in each of these areas. From this comes a sixth criterion for action: openness to the charisms and gifts of the Holy Spirit in Christian commitment and choices in social life.

61. *Practicing love and mercy*

The awareness of having been called to offer her service in social realms has always been alive in the Church from the first centuries until today. In fact her history is filled with social works of charity and assistance<sup>126</sup> in which, taken together, shines forth the face of a poor and merciful community which has aimed at putting the "sermon on the mount" into practice.

The testimonies to this pastoral awareness are countless in the Popes, the teachers of social doctrine. In their documents, they ask for improvement of the workers' conditions and encourage experiences in this direction;<sup>127</sup> they recommend the practice of charity harmonized with justice;<sup>128</sup> they extend social action to all temporal environments;<sup>129</sup> they ask that the assertion of principles, the declaration of intentions and the denunciation of injustices be

<sup>126</sup> JOHN PAUL II, Apostolic Letter *Salvifici doloris* (February 11, 1984): A.A.S. 76 (1984), pages 201 ff.

<sup>127</sup> LEO XIII, Encyclical Letter *Rerum novarum* (May 15, 1891): *Acta Leonis XIII*, 11 (1891), pages 141 ff.; PIUS XI, Encyclical Letter *Quadragesimo anno* (May 15, 1931): A.A.S. 23 (1931), page 182.

<sup>128</sup> JOHN XXIII, Encyclical Letter *Mater et magistra* (May 15, 1961): A.A.S. 53 (1961), page 402.

<sup>129</sup> VATICAN COUNCIL II, Decree *Apostolicam actuositatem*, n. 7.

accompanied by effective and responsible action;<sup>130</sup> they recall, as proof of the Church's continuous attention to the social question, not only the documents of the Magisterium — Conciliar, Papal and Episcopal —, but also the activity of different centers of thought and action, and the concrete initiatives of the social apostolate in the local Churches and in the international field;<sup>131</sup> they invite the clergy, religious and the laity to become engaged in the "different sectors, works and services" of "social pastoral care".<sup>132</sup> From this social awareness a final criterion of action emerges which must be present in all the other criteria mentioned above: the practice of the commandment of love and mercy in everything which, in the spirit of the Gospel, gives priority to the poor.<sup>133</sup>

Such priority, witnessed by the whole tradition of the Church, has been strongly emphasised in *Sollicitudo rei socialis*: "Today furthermore, given the worldwide dimension which the social question has assumed, his love of preference for the poor, and the decisions which it inspires in us, cannot but embrace the immense multitudes of the hungry, the needy, the homeless, those without medical care and, above all, those without hope of a better future. One cannot fail to take account of the existence of these realities. To ignore them would mean becoming like the "rich man" who pretended not to know the beggar Lazarus lying at his gate (cf. Lk 16:19-31)".<sup>134</sup>

## 2. Link between social doctrine and Christian practice

In the Church's awareness the essential uniting link is evident between the social doctrine and Christian practice in the sectors, works and services in which the principles and norms are put into practice. In particular, pastoral concern requires social doctrine and this leads to pastoral action as a privileged part of Christian practice. The presence

<sup>130</sup> PAUL VI, Apostolic Letter *Octogesima adveniens* (May 14, 1971), n. 48: A.A.S. 63 (1971), pages 437 f.

<sup>131</sup> JOHN PAUL II, Encyclical Letter *Laborem exercens* (September 14, 1981), n. 2: A.A.S. 3 (1981), page 581.

<sup>132</sup> JOHN PAUL II, Allocution *C'est la deuxième* to the Delegates of "Caritas Internationalis" (May 30, 1983): *Insegnamenti di Giovanni Paolo II*, VI, 1 (1983), pages 1399 ff.

<sup>133</sup> CONGREGATION FOR THE DOCTRINE OF THE FAITH, Instruction *Libertatis conscientia* on Christian freedom and liberation (March 22, 1986), nn. 66-70: A.A.S. 79 (1987), pages 582-585; JOHN PAUL II, Encyclical Letter *Sollicitudo rei socialis* (December 30, 1987), n. 42: A.A.S. 80 (1988), page 572.

<sup>134</sup> JOHN PAUL II, Encyclical Letter *Sollicitudo rei socialis* (December 30, 1987), n. 42: A.A.S. 80 (1988), page 573.

and dialogue of the Church with the world in seeking to resolve the complex problem of man requires the necessary expertise in pastors and thus requires their serious study of social doctrine together with formation to sensitivity for pastoral action and the apostolate. Once again we find ourselves before a precise need for adequate programming and good general bases for teaching.

## 63. Repercussions in the political area

The fact that the Church does not have nor does she present a particular "model" of social life, nor is she linked with any political system as a "way" of her own to be chosen out of other systems<sup>135</sup> does not mean that she must not form or encourage her faithful — and especially the laity — to become aware of their responsibility in the political community,<sup>136</sup> or opt for solutions, when they can be found historically of a model in which the inspiration of the faith can become Christian practice. The directives of the social doctrine of the Church for action by the laity are valid both in political matters and in other areas of temporal reality in which the Church must be present by reason of her evangelizing mission.

The Christian faith, in fact, values and highly regards the political dimension of human existence and the activity in which it is expressed. It follows that the presence of the Church in the political area is a requirement of faith itself, in the light of the Kingship of Christ, which leads to excluding the divorce between faith and daily life "one of the gravest errors of our time"<sup>137</sup>. Nonetheless, evangelizing the whole of human existence, including its political dimension, does not mean denying the autonomy of political reality as well as that of the economy, culture, technology, etc., each one in its own order.

In order to clarify this presence of the Church, it is good to distinguish the "two concepts of politics and of political commitment".<sup>138</sup> With regard to the first concept, the Church can and must justify political behavior not only regarding what affects the religious sphere, but everything that concerns the dignity and fundamental rights of man, the common good, social justice: all

<sup>135</sup> VATICAN COUNCIL II, Pastoral Constitution *Gaudium et spes*, n. 76; JOHN PAUL II, Encyclical Letter *Sollicitudo rei socialis* (December 30, 1987), n. 41: A.A.S. 80 (1988), page 571.

<sup>136</sup> VATICAN COUNCIL II, Pastoral Constitution *Gaudium et spes*, n. 75.

<sup>137</sup> *Ibid.*, n. 43.

<sup>138</sup> *Ibid.*, n. 76; *Puebla Document*, nn. 521, 523.

problems having an ethical dimension, considered and evaluated by the Church in the light of the Gospel by reason of her mission to "evangelizing the political order" and, for this itself, to humanize it completely. It is a policy understood in its highest value, which is the task of the whole Church. Political commitment, on the other hand, in the sense of concrete decisions to be made, programs to be drawn up, campaigns to be conducted, peoples' representation to be managed, power to be exercised, is a task for the laity according to the just laws and institutions of earthly society of which they are part. What the Church asks for and tries to obtain in her children is that they have a lawful conscience in conformity with the requirements of the Gospel itself in order to act wisely and responsibly at the service of the community.<sup>139</sup>

Pastors and other ministers of the Church, in order to better preserve their freedom in the evangelization of political reality, will keep themselves outside of the various parties and groups which could create divisions or compromise the effectiveness of the apostolate, nor will they give preferential support unless "the common good requires it in concrete and exceptional circumstances".<sup>140</sup>

#### 64. *Sign of the presence of the Kingdom*

In the scheme of values, principles and norms which has been outlined, it appears that the social action of the Church, enlightened by the Gospel, is a sign of the presence of the Kingdom of God in the world in that it proclaims the requirements of this Kingdom in the history and in the lives of peoples as the foundation of a new society; in that it denounces everything that threatens the life and dignity of the person in social attitudes, structures and systems; in that it promotes a full integration of everyone into society, as an ethical requirement of the evangelical message of justice, solidarity and love. It is a pastoral action carried out through the Word that transforms men's conscience; through the preparation and dissemination of a social doctrine, aimed at calling everyone's attention and arousing everyone's sensitivity, especially of young people, to social problems and the evangelical requirement of commitment to justice in favor of the poor and all the suffering; lastly, through a timely and generous action which seeks to respond to the many concrete problems that make the lives of persons

<sup>139</sup> C.I.C., Can. 227.

<sup>140</sup> Puebla Document, nn. 526-572; C.I.C., Can. 287.

and society more difficult. In this way, the Word enlightens the conscience, and works incarnate the Word.

#### 65. *Conclusion about the meaning and dynamism of social doctrine*

From the analysis of the nature and historical dimension of the social doctrine of the Church and its constitutive elements — namely, the fundamental principles, criteria for judgment and directives for action — the conviction is drawn that, while it already constitutes a "rich and complex heritage", that is sufficiently delineated and consolidated, it still has many stages to pass through depending on the dynamism of human society's development in history.

Due to its situation, this social doctrine, while difficult to define in rigorously scholastic terms, in the preceding paragraphs is outlined at least in its essential contours, with sufficient clarity, and presents itself in the first place as an integral part of the Christian concept of life.<sup>141</sup> In fact, it can be seen that its influence in the world is not marginal but decisive, as an action of the Church "leaven", "salt of the earth", "seed" and "light" of humanity.<sup>142</sup>

On the basis of these presuppositions, the Magisterium of the Church — Papal, Conciliar, Episcopal — with the contribution of the study and experience of the whole Christian community, works out, articulates and expounds this doctrine as an ensemble of teachings offered not only to believers, but also to all men of good will, in order to enlighten with the Gospel the common path to development and the integral liberation of man.

<sup>141</sup> JOHN XXIII, Encyclical Letter *Mater et magistra* (May 15, 1961): A.A.S. 53 (1961), page 453.

<sup>142</sup> *Matthew* 5:13-14; 13:13, 24.



## VI FORMATION

### 66. *Objective of the document*

The guidelines given in the above exposition are intended for those who have the task and responsibility for the formation of candidates to the priesthood and of students in the various theological Institutes. They have been prepared in order to facilitate and encourage formative work in the area of social doctrine. Thus there is no doubt that professors will benefit from them in giving a good general basis to the context and method of their teaching. The purpose of this document is in fact to highlight those points which are fundamental in the study of this discipline and therefore indispensable ones for a solid theological and pastoral formation of future priests.

Therefore, it seems useful to dedicate the present chapter to concrete indications that may enhance the specific preparation of professors and give a better structure to students' formation.

### 1 The formation of professors

### 67. *Theological, scientific and pastoral formation*

It is not necessary to insist on the fact that a good reception of the social doctrine of the Church by students depends to a great extent on the professors' competency and teaching method. Acquiring these qualities requires a great preparation on their part that cannot be ensured only by some courses on social doctrine taken within the framework of philosophical and theological studies.

For this purpose, Bishops and superiors of Centers of ecclesiastical formation have the grave responsibility to send some students, who are capable and interested, to the Departments of Social Sciences and other similar Institutes approved by ecclesiastical authority, in order to ensure the availability of professors equipped with an adequate scientific formation. The Church wants these professors, to whom the formation of the clergy is entrusted, to be chosen from among the best, and to master solid doctrine and adequate pastoral experience together with a good spiritual and pedagogical formation.<sup>143</sup>

It must also be kept in mind that in order to teach social doctrine simple knowledge about the relative documents of the Magisterium is not enough. The professors must also have a broad and deep theological formation, competency in social morality and knowledge at least of the basic elements of the modern social sciences. Furthermore, their close collaboration must be encouraged with professors of morality, dogmatics and pastoral care in order to ensure the coherence, unity and solidity of their teaching and, ultimately, to enable students to have a synthetic view of theology and pastoral care. Likewise, it is desirable for doctrinal formation and pastoral formation to be closely linked to spiritual formation.<sup>144</sup>

#### 68. *Function of the social sciences*

As has already been mentioned above (nn. 10, 50), the social doctrine of the Church cannot do without the social sciences if it wants to stay in contact with the life of society and effectively influence pastoral reality. For this reason, it is highly recommended that professors of social doctrine take an interest in the successful pastoral preparation of candidates to the priesthood, keeping in mind that in teaching they cannot limit themselves "simply to recalling general principles", but that they must concern themselves with developing them "through reflection applied to the changing situations of this world, under the driving force of the Gospel as the source of renewal".<sup>145</sup> It follows that it is also their task to initiate students in the use of the means offered by the human sciences, according to the norms of the Church.<sup>146</sup>

<sup>143</sup> VATICAN COUNCIL II, Decree *Optatam totius*, n. 5.

<sup>144</sup> *Ibid.*, n. 8.

<sup>145</sup> PAUL VI, Apostolic Letter *Octogesima adveniens* (May 14, 1971), n. 42: *A.A.S.* 63 (1971), page 431.

<sup>146</sup> VATICAN COUNCIL II, Pastoral Constitution *Gaudium et spes*, n. 62; Decree *Optatam totius*, n. 20.

The human sciences in fact are an important instrument for evaluating the changing situations and setting up a dialogue with the world and with men of all opinions.<sup>147</sup> They offer the social teaching in the empirical context in which the fundamental principles can and must be applied; they make abundant material for analyses available for the evaluation and judgment of social situations and structures; they aid orientation in the concrete choices to be made. Undoubtedly, in study and interest in the social sciences, the danger must be avoided of falling into the snares of ideologies that manipulate the interpretation of data, or into positivism which over-evaluates empirical data to the detriment of an overall understanding of man and the world.

#### 69. *On-going formation*

It is an obvious fact that social reality and the sciences which interpret it are subject to continuous and rapid change. For this reason, the on-going formation of professors is particularly necessary which guarantees their continuous up-dating. Lack of close contact with the new problems and new directions on the national, international and world level, as well as with the new developments of the social doctrine of the Church, can deprive their teaching of interest and formative capacity.

#### 70. *Pastoral experience*

For professors to teach social doctrine not as an abstract theory, but as a discipline directed toward concrete action, direct pastoral experience will be most useful to them. It will be an experience that is diversified according to places, situations and the abilities and inclinations of each one, but always chosen and set up so as to enhance the concreteness, validity and effectiveness of their teaching.

## 2

### The formation of students

#### 71. *Pastoral instruction*

In the spirit of the Second Vatican Council and the Code of Canon Law, qualification for the pastoral ministry of candidates to the

<sup>147</sup> VATICAN COUNCIL II, Pastoral Constitution *Gaudium et spes*, n. 43; Decree *Optatam totius*, n. 19.

priesthood is achieved through an integral formation that is careful to allow the aspects of the priestly personality to grow: human, spiritual, theological and pastoral. The same can be said with regard to preparation of the laity for the apostolate.

In this regard it must be remembered that, while it is true that all formation has a pastoral end, it is still necessary to foresee specifically pastoral instruction for everyone,<sup>148</sup> which also takes into consideration the social doctrine of the Church.

72. In the context of this formation, which undoubtedly requires and includes, as we have said, an adequate theological preparation for announcing the Word according to the needs of persons, places and times, and for the dialogue of the Church with the world, the students' interest in and sensitivity about the Church's social doctrine and pastoral care must be aroused. In this sense the Code speaks about the need to educate future priests to "dialogue with persons", and to sensitize them to the "social tasks" that await the Church.<sup>149</sup>

#### 73. *Course on social doctrine*

With regard to the space to be reserved for social doctrine within the program of studies in Centers for ecclesiastical formation, it seems clear that, in conformity with what has been said, it is not enough to deal with it in some optional lessons within philosophy or theology courses. Required and elective courses on this discipline must be included in the program.

The best moment for these studies depends on the academic curriculum of the different Centers and Institutes of Formation. Perhaps it would be useful to spread these courses out over the entire period of the students' formation. This solution would guarantee the required continuity and graduality of learning, and would allow better understanding of the concepts of social philosophy and theology present in the various documents. In any case, it is absolutely necessary for knowledge about the major social encyclicals to be ensured during formation.

These encyclicals must be the subject of special courses and represent required reading material for the students. Their contact with them will

<sup>148</sup> C.I.C., Can. 255.

<sup>149</sup> *Ibid.*, Can. 256.

have to keep in mind the socio-cultural context in which they were written, the theological and philosophical premises on which they are based, their relationship to the social sciences, and their meaning for the present situation. Furthermore, in connection with the documents of the universal Church, the social problems of the particular and local Churches will have to be studied.

#### 74. *Philosophical-theological foundation*

In addition to pastoral sensitivity to social problems, students must be offered a solid philosophical-theological foundation on the principles of the social doctrine and their interdisciplinary relations. This foundation is of special importance in the present-day situation of "dialogue with the world", which the Church lives by putting the guidelines of Vatican Council II into practice. In fact both priests and the laity involved in the social apostolate are often questioned by radical and totalitarian ideologies, both collectivist and individualist, by secularizing trends when not by a secularism which is extraneous to the Christian spirit.

#### 75. *The authentic and integral message of Christ*

As has already been stated, theological-pastoral and spiritual formation of all those who wish to dedicate themselves to social action includes sensitization to the different problems of society and the habit of evaluating situations, structures and economic, social and political systems with the criteria of the doctrine of the Church. It also includes specific preparation for operating adequately on the various levels and in the different sectors of human activity.

Above all, however, this formation requires that lay people and candidates to the priesthood become aware that, through their work, they must give witness to Christ in the world. In particular, bishops and priests are called upon to preach the message of Christ in such a way that all human temporal activity will be permeated by the light of the Gospel.<sup>150</sup> Undoubtedly the Church's essential contribution in the social area is always the integral announcement of the Gospel, which also dedicates great attention to social problems.

<sup>150</sup> VATICAN COUNCIL II, Pastoral Constitution *Gaudium et spes*, n. 43.

Interpretation and application of the Gospel to social reality today is thus essential in the theological and interdisciplinary formation of students, and has a decisive value for the effectiveness of pastoral care. In this formation, life witness, preaching and action cannot be separated because they stand united in the very person of Jesus, in the Gospel and in the tradition of the Church.

76. *First pastoral experiences*

During the period of formation, it is suggested that students be directed toward experiences of a pastoral and social nature which place them in direct contact with the problems studied, as is already taking place in some countries with positive results. In such formation, it is very important for students to be fully aware of the specifically priestly role in social action which has been stressed particularly in recent times on various occasions by the Magisterium of the universal Church and of the particular Churches. Visits and dialogue are especially recommended by students, accompanied by professors, with business people, workers, labor unions, with social organizations and marginalized sectors.

77. *Task of the priest with regard to the laity*

As part of their formation in social pastoral care, students must be instructed about the task and method to be followed in making the laity have an increasingly vivid awareness of their mission and responsibility in the social area. In this perspective, the priest's task is to help the laity become aware of their duty, form them both spiritually and doctrinally, follow them in their social action, participate in their toils and sufferings, recognize the important function their organizations have both on the apostolic level and that of social commitment, and give them the witness of a deep social sensitivity. The effectiveness of the Christian message also depends, in addition to the action of the Holy Spirit, on the lifestyle and pastoral witness of the priest who, by evangelically serving, reveals the real countenance of the Church.<sup>151</sup>

78. *Conclusion*

Lastly, the Congregation for Catholic Education, in entrusting this document to the Bishops and to the various Institutes of theological

studies, expresses its sincere wish that it may offer a real help and a sound guideline for the teaching of the social doctrine of the Church. Such teaching, if imparted correctly, will inspire a new apostolic momentum in future priests and other pastoral workers, pointing out the sure path for effective pastoral action.

In consideration of the many spiritual and material needs of present-day society which have been pointed out on many occasions by the Supreme Pontiff, John Paul II, it can only be hoped that each candidate for the priesthood will become an enlightened and responsible messenger of this modern expression of evangelical preaching, which is the only one capable of proposing effective remedies to the evils of our times and thereby contributing to the salvation of the world.

It is up to the Bishops and those in charge of the Institutes of priestly formation to provide all the means so that these "Guidelines", when duly illustrated and integrated into formation programs, will produce that strengthening of doctrinal and pastoral preparation which is awaited everywhere today and responds to our common wishes.

Rome, Palace of the Congregations, December 30, 1988.

WILLIAM Cardinal BAUM

*Prefect*

✠ JOSÉ SARAIVA MARTINS  
*Titular Archbishop of Tuburnica  
Secretary*

<sup>151</sup> *Ibid.*, n. 43.

INDEX  
OF TOPICS WHICH MAY BE USEFUL  
IN TEACHING THE SOCIAL DOCTRINE  
OF THE CHURCH IN SEMINARIES

Since the purpose of the present "Guidelines" is to indicate the points to be considered indispensable in studying the social doctrine of the Church, the Congregation for Catholic Education wishes to offer teachers of this discipline a program outline in order to help them give a good general basis to the content of their teaching. Given the great diversity of local situations, it is obviously only a proposal that leaves the professors all the necessary space for organizing their lessons and pastoral exercises according to the concrete needs of the dioceses and the indications of the Episcopal Conferences and the diocesan Bishops. In fact, there is great awareness that solid and useful teaching of the social doctrine of the Church, although linked to an essential nucleus of truths and irreplaceable principles common to all (cf. above page 51, n. 52), cannot overlook the particular local problems and the need for appropriate adaptations in order to insert the evangelical message into the concreteness of life.

I

In the *introduction* to the course or courses on the social doctrine of the Church, the following could be given, among other points, and according to the particular academic program;

1. Presentation and explanation of the *Guidelines*.
2. Nature of the social doctrine of the Church (cf. *Guidelines*, nn. 3-14).
3. Scriptural roots of the social doctrine of the Church, both from the Old and New Testament: saving liberation in the history of salvation - Jesus Christ liberator - Distinction between saving liberation and human liberations -

Integral liberation - The dialogue of the Church with the world - The social dimension of the evangelizing mission of the Church (cf. *Guidelines*, nn. 15-17).

4. Theological dimension of the social teaching of the Church (cf. *Guidelines*, n. 9); Christological and ecclesiological premises - Anthropological foundation; the complete truth of man and about man - "Man is the first and fundamental path of the Church" - The integral promotion of man with regard to himself, God, others and things - The "preferential love for the poor" - Consequences on the social, economic and political plane.

## II

A "rich heritage": stages in the development of the social doctrine of the Church (cf. *Guidelines*, nn. 18-28).

1. History of social doctrine - Beginning of this history; Old Testament (Exodus and Prophets) - Apostolic Writings.

2. The contribution of the Holy Fathers, the Doctors and great Theologians of the Church (St. Thomas Aquinas) up until the modern era.

3. The industrial revolution and the birth of the "social question" in a strict sense - Precursors of the social doctrine.

4. Pre-Conciliar period of social doctrine: from Leo XIII to Pius XII - Socio-cultural context of *Rerum novarum* and *Quadragesimo anno* - Finality and content of these Encyclicals and the social messages of Pius XII.

5. Conciliar period (1961-1971): technical-economic, socio-political and socio-cultural situation - Finality and general content of the documents of this period: *Mater et magistra* and *Pacem in terris* of John XXIII, *Gaudium et spes* of Vatican Council II, *Populorum progressio*, *Octogesima adveniens* and *Evangelii nuntiandi* of Paul VI.

6. Period of John Paul II: technical-economic, socio-political and socio-cultural context - Finality and general content of the Encyclicals of John Paul II: *Redemptor hominis* (the social part), *Dives in misericordia* (the social content), *Laborem exercens*, *Familiaris consortio* (the social part), *Sollicitudo rei socialis* - Major discourses and social Messages.

## III

Principles and guidelines of the Church in the different areas of social life (cf. *Guidelines*, nn. 30-52).

1. *Logical premise*: basic equality of men on the plane of values and rights - The fundamental values: freedom, truth, justice, love, peace - The common

destination of the goods of this world - The ambiguity of the world, its aspirations - The condemnation of all forms of racism and colonialism in the name of the unity and universality of humanity and the common vocation of all men - The need for reforms in society aimed at grasping the causes of injustices.

2. *The human person*: The dignity of the human person: autonomous, intelligent, free, spiritual and transcendent subject - The meaning of man's vocation.

3. *Human rights*: Church-State relation; Philosophy and theology of human rights - Identity and universality of human rights - Proclamation and defense of rights - Defense of human dignity: from political, economic and cultural oppression; from the pressures of the mass media; from attacks on religious freedom, foundation and guarantee of the other freedoms - The international charter of human rights - The rights of peoples.

4. *Person-society interdependence*: Sociality or social dimension of man - Conflictual dimension of personal existence - Importance of a formation for understanding the nature of conflicts - The meaning of society and community - The dynamics of groups and associations in social life - Intermediate social bodies - Expressions of sociality in the family and in the political community - Social equilibrium.

5. *The common good*: Notion and content of the common good - Authority as service to the common good - The international common good - Interpretation of the common good according to modern ideologies.

6. *Human solidarity*: Solidarity between men and between peoples, between rich and poor countries - North-South relations - International and world solidarity - Solidarity: modern evangelical word (social love).

7. *Subsidiarity*: The directive function of the State and subsidiarity - Excessive planning and loss of freedom - Programming that promotes freedom - Subsidiarity as reaction to the exploitation of persons and groups.

8. *Participation*: Participation and society - The participation of all sectors and levels of society in the common good - Everyone's access to decisions in the different areas and levels of social life - Reconciliation and dialogue.

9. *Organic concept of social life*: Christian and community personalism - Multiplication of social relations and groups - Associative dynamism - Intermediate societies and higher units - Community and societal structure - Importance of Christian social associationism.

## IV

*Attainment of principles and values on different levels* and in different sectors of social life (cf. *Guidelines*, nn. 53-63).

1. *Social doctrine and social sciences*: Autonomy of the temporal sphere - Autonomy of science, interdisciplinary dialogue - Theology and science - Social

and economic sciences: aids in the pastoral action of the Church - Sciences, technology, ideologies.

2. *In the family:* Family problems in today's world - Fundamental value of the family as vital cell and nucleus of society - The family and the person - The family and civil society - The family and the Church - Rights and duties of the family - Constitutive elements of the family community - The family and the educational role - The family's transformations in society - Indissoluble marriages compared with other forms of marriage.

3. *In the economy:* Legitimate autonomy of earthly realities at the service of man - Economic life in its contemporary aspects and problems - Characteristics of current production systems - The crisis of the economic systems: capitalism and collectivism - Phenomena of the current economic crisis: unemployment, inflation, monetary crisis, foreign debt problem - Need, laws and ethical requirements of economic progress - Role of the economy in man's life - The criterion of sociality - The path of social justice - Social economy - Freedom and social control of the economy - Need and social function of capital - Social justice in trade and finance - Social justice in international trade - Price balance in relations between rich and poor countries - Reinvestment policy and the criterion of the common good - Monetary policy at the service of the common good and the poorest - Social regulation of interest rates - Illicitness of transactions which in currency exchange values harm weaker classes, regions and nations - New economic-social order.

*Private property:* Universal destination of material goods - Everyone's access to the goods of the earth - The right to property, use and transformation of the land - Reasons for and limits of private property - Subordination of private property to life - Bases of a renewal of the right to property - The case of socialism - Collectivization as inconceivable with Christian Humanism - The law of equilibrium and social harmony - The criterion of sociality - Attention to the agricultural world - Agrarian reform: division and distribution of uncultivated lands.

- *Work:* Current crisis and problem of work - Work conflict: industrialized and non-industrialized countries - Work crisis in the Third World - The problem of hunger - Social marginalization - Context of work in social doctrine - Value and dignity of work: philosophical, theological and spiritual foundations of human work - Objective and social dimension of work - Unjust working conditions - Primacy of work over capital - Workers' rights and duties - Organization of work - Intervention of public authorities - Subsidiary function of the State - The problem of just retribution for work - just, legal, family, sufficient salary - Work and family in modern society - Women's work in present-day society - Workers' social insurance - Labor rights: overcoming its mercantile character, overcoming man's alienation in work, regaining of the meaning of work - Towards a new distribution of work - Unemployment.

- *The firm as work community:* Co-management - Association in the working world - Workers' movement and class struggle - Labor unions, company and society - Workers' participation in the common good - Workers' solidarity for the common good - Solidarity of workers and with workers - Individual and collective work contract - Nature of strikes: conditions for their licitness - Abuses in strikes.

4. *In politics:* Contemporary political phenomenology - Major ideological and socio-political currents - Nature of society and power - Political society and the State - Modern forms of government: totalitarian State, authoritarian State and democratic State - Components of a sound democratic order - Social democracy - Moral requirements of social democracy - Economic democracy - Participative democracy - Ideology and practice in Communism - Liberalism and the absolutization of freedom - State's autonomy and its function of service to the common good, respect for human rights, renewal of structures for the exercise of freedom and of a healthy pluralism - Belonging to and participation in the political community - The Church and politics - Freedom of the Church and of the State - Christian socio-political commitment: rights, duties and responsibilities of Catholics.

5. *In culture:* Cultural changes today - Spread of industrial and urban civilization - Integral concept of culture - Its function in the progress of man and society - The church, culture and the plurality of cultures - Promotion of culture - Dialogue between culture and Christian faith - The theme of inculturation of the faith - Ideology, faith and theology - Christians' commitment - Environments and means of cultural education: family, school, university, means of communication, sports, tourism - Respect and support of the Church for men of science, letters and the arts - Relations between culture and theology - Cultural mission of Catholic schools and universities - Technical progress and culture - Subordination of technological progress to the supreme end of life - Social communication, culture and human progress - Right to information and the circulation of ideas - Importance and function of public opinion - Function of journalism in culture and modern society - Information at the service of truth - Responsibility of the Church.

6. *In science and technology:* The problem of manipulation of science and technology - Fields in which such manipulations occur - Ethical sense.

7. *In the international community:* International community - Human community and international society: current problems - Respect for the freedom and self-determination of peoples - Cooperation, interdependence and solidarity as laws of just relations between peoples - International justice and economic-social development of peoples - Problems and situations - North-South relations - East-West relations - The problem of war: its immorality - Disarmament - Constructive role of science and technology - Rejection of the arms race - Peace: world requirements of social peace - International solidarity

for peace - Phenomenology of violence - Forms of violence - Causes of political violence - Terrorism and guerilla warfare - Repressive violence - Condemnation of violence - Commitment for justice - The phenomenon of human mobility - Right to emigration.

8. *In ecology*: Ecological crisis - Ecological policy for the protection of the environment in favor of everyone's health - Thinking of Paul VI and John Paul II - Phenomenon of urban concentration - Ecological ethics.

9. *The "social question" of the Third World*: Problems, unjust situations - Hopes.

## V

Elaboration and development of social teaching in the *Pastoral Letters* of the Episcopal Conferences and local Churches.

## VI

Competence and task of Bishops, priests, religious and the laity in drawing up the social doctrine, and commitment in the social action of the Church - Social action of the local Church as response to local problems.

## VII

*Theological-pastoral Conclusion*: God's plan about man and his vocation - Rupture of God's plan: personal, social and structural sin - Conversion of man's heart as gift of the Holy Spirit.

## APPENDIX II



T E X T S  
OF THE SOCIAL MAGISTERIUM OF THE CHURCH  
CORRESPONDING TO SOME OF THE MORE  
SIGNIFICANT NOTES OF THE "GUIDELINES"

- (7) "While we note with satisfaction that in several Institutes this doctrine has been taught for some time. We feel urged to exhort that such teaching be extended by regular systematic courses in Catholic schools of every kind..." (*Mater et magistra*).
- (10) "The Church's social doctrine is not a 'third way' between liberal capitalism and Marxist collectivism, nor even a possible alternative to other solutions less radically opposed to one another; rather, it constitutes a category of its own. Nor is it an ideology, but rather the accurate formulation of the results of a careful reflection on the complex realities of human existence, in society and in the international order, in the light of faith and of the Church's tradition. Its main aim is to interpret these realities, determining their conformity with, or divergence from, the lines of the Gospel teaching on man and his vocation, a vocation which is at once earthly and transcendent; its aim is thus to guide Christian behaviour. It therefore belongs to the field, not of ideology, but of theology and particularly of moral theology" (*Sollicitudo rei socialis*, 41).
- (14) "Evangelization would not be complete if it did not take account of the unceasing interplay of the Gospel and of man's concrete life, both personal and social" (*Evangelii nuntiandi*, 29). "Between evangelization and human advancement - development and liberation - there are in fact profound links. These include links of an anthropological order, because the man who is to be evangelized is not an abstract being but is subject to social and economic questions. They also include links in the theological order, since one cannot dissociate the plan of creation from the plan of Redemption. The latter plan touches the very concrete situations of injustice to be combatted and of justice to be restored. They include links of the eminently evangelical order, which is that of charity:

how in fact can one proclaim the new commandment without promoting in justice and in peace the true, authentic advancement of man?" (*Evangelii nuntiandi*, 31).

- (18) "The Church is the standard-bearer and herald of a way of life which is ever up to date. The fundamental principle in such a conception is, as is seen from what has thus far been said, that individual human beings are and should be the foundation, the end and the subjects of all the institutions in which social life is carried on: individual human souls considered in so far as they are and should be by their nature, intrinsically social, and in so far as they are in the plan of Providence, by their elevation to the supernatural order. From this fundamental principle which guarantees the sacred dignity of the individual, the teaching office of the Church has made clear, with the cooperation of enlightened priests and laymen, especially during this last century, a social doctrine which points out with clarity the sure way to reconstruct the social relationships according to universal criteria based on human nature and the various dimensions of the temporal order and the characteristics of contemporary society, and hence acceptable to all" (*Mater et magistra*).
- (19) "We lay down the principle, long since clearly established by Leo XIII, that it is Our right and Our duty to deal authoritatively with social and economic problems. It is not, of course, the office of the Church to lead men to transient and perishable happiness only, but to that which is eternal: indeed, 'the Church believes that it would be wrong for her to interfere without just cause in such earthly concerns'. But she never can relinquish her God-given task of interposing her authority, not indeed in technical matters, for which she has neither the equipment nor the mission, but in all those that have a bearing on moral conduct. For the deposit of truth entrusted to Us by God, and Our weighty office of propagating, interpreting and urging in season and out of season the entire moral law, demand that both social and economic questions be brought within Our supreme jurisdiction, in so far as they refer to moral issues" (*Quadragesimo anno*).
- (23) "At all times the Church carries the responsibility of reading the signs of the time and of interpreting them in the light of the Gospel, if it is to carry out its task. In language intelligible to every generation, she should be able to answer the ever recurring questions which men ask about the meaning of this present life and of the life to come, and how one is related to the other. We must be aware of and understand the aspirations, the yearnings, and the often dramatic features of the world in which we live" (*Gaudium et spes*, 4).

- (57) "The ultimate and basic purpose of economic production does not consist merely in the increase of goods produced, nor in profit nor prestige: it is directed to the service of man, of man, that is, in his totality, taking into account his material needs and the requirements of his intellectual, moral, spiritual, and religious life; of all men whomsoever and of every group of men of whatever race or from whatever part of the world. Therefore, economic activity is to be carried out in accordance with techniques and methods belonging to the moral order, so that God's design for man may be fulfilled" (*Gaudium et spes*, 64).
- (58) "At the same time social conflicts have taken on world dimensions. The acute disquiet which has taken hold of the poor classes in countries that are becoming industrialized, is now embracing those whose economy is almost exclusively agrarian: farming people, too, are becoming aware of their 'undeserved hardship'. There is also the scandal of glaring inequalities not merely in the enjoyment of possessions but even more in the exercise of power" (*Populorum progressio*, 9).
- (59) "The development of peoples has the Church's close attention, particularly the development of those peoples who are striving to escape from hunger, misery, endemic diseases and ignorance; of those who are looking for a wider share in the benefits of civilization and a more active improvement of their human qualities; of those who are aiming purposefully at their complete fulfilment. Following on the Second Vatican Ecumenical Council a renewed consciousness of the demands of the Gospel makes it her duty to put herself at the service of all, to help them grasp their serious problem in all its dimensions, and to convince them that solidarity in action at this turning point in human history is a matter of urgency" (*Populorum progressio*, 1).
- (60) "If further development calls for the work of more and more technicians, even more necessary is the deep thought and reflection of wise men in search of a new humanism which will enable modern man to find himself anew by embracing the higher values of love and friendship, of prayer and contemplation. This is what will permit the fullness of authentic development, a development which is for each and all the transition from less human conditions to those which are more human" (*Populorum progressio*, 20).
- "Less human conditions: the material deficiencies of those who are without the minimum essential for life; the moral deficiencies of those who are mutilated by selfishness; oppressive social structures, whether due to the abuses of ownership or to the abuses of power, to the exploitation of workers or to unjust transactions. Conditions that are more human are

the passage from misery towards the possession of necessities, victory over social scourges, the growth of knowledge, the acquisition of culture. Additional conditions that are more human are increased esteem for the dignity of others, the turning towards the spirit of poverty, co-operation for the common good, and will and desire for peace. Conditions that are still more human are the acknowledgement by man of supreme values, and of God their source and their finality. Conditions that, finally and above all, are more human are faith, a gift of God accepted by the good will of man, and unity in the charity of Christ, who calls us all to share as sons in the life of the living God, the Father of all men" (*Populorum progressio*, 21).

- (62) "While in the present document we return to this question (of human work) once more ... this is not merely in order to gather together and repeat what is already contained in the Church's teaching. It is rather in order to highlight ... the fact that human work is a key, probably the essential key, to the whole social question, if we try to see that question really from the point of view of man's good" (*Laborem exercens*, 3b).
- (63) "The Church is convinced that work is a fundamental dimension of man's existence on earth. She is confirmed in this conviction by considering the whole heritage of the many sciences devoted to man: anthropology, palaeontology, history, sociology, psychology and so on; they all seem to bear witness to this reality in an irrefutable way. But the source of the Church's conviction is above all the revealed word of God, and therefore what is a conviction of the intellect is also a conviction of faith. The reason is that the Church — and it is worthwhile stating it at this point — believes in man: she *thinks of man* and addresses herself to him *not only* in the light of historical experience, not only with the aid of the many methods of scientific knowledge, but in the first place in the light of the revealed word of the living God" (*Laborem exercens*, 4a).
- (75) "The political community and the Church are autonomous and independent of each other in their own fields. Nevertheless, both are devoted to the personal vocation of man, though under different titles... At all times and in all places the Church should have true freedom to preach the faith, to proclaim its teaching about society, to carry out its task among men without hindrance, and to pass moral judgements even in matters relating to politics, whenever the fundamental rights of man or the salvation of souls requires it. The means, the only means, it may use are those which are in accord with the Gospel and the welfare of all men according to the diversity of times and circumstances" (*Gaudium et spes*, 76).

- (78) "The social nature of man shows that there is an interdependence between personal betterment and the improvement of society. Insofar as man by his very nature stands completely in need of life in society, he is and he ought to be the beginning, the subject and the object of every social organization" (*Gaudium et spes*, 25).
- (87) "Nonetheless, just as it is wrong to withdraw from the individual and commit to the community at large 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 organization to arrogate to itself functions which can be performed efficiently by smaller and lower bodies. This is a fundamental principle of social philosophy, unshaken, and unchangeable, and it retains its full truth today. Of its very nature the true aim of all social activity should be to help individual members of the social body, but never to destroy or absorb them" (*Quadragesimo anno*).
- (90) "While scientific and technological progress continues to overturn man's surroundings, his patterns of knowledge, work, consumption and relationships, two aspirations persistently make themselves felt in these new contexts, and they grow stronger to the extent that he becomes better informed and better educated: the aspiration to equality and the aspiration to participation, two forms of man's dignity and freedom" (*Octogesima adveniens*, 22).
- (93) "We can speak of socializing only when the subject character of society is ensured, that is to say, when on the basis of his work each person is fully entitled to consider himself a part-owner of the great workbench at which he is working with every one else. A way towards that goal could be found by associating labour with the ownership of capital, as far as possible, and by producing a wide range of intermediate bodies with economic, social and cultural purposes; they would be bodies enjoying real autonomy with regard to the public powers, pursuing their specific aims in honest collaboration with each other and in subordination to the demands of the common good, and they would be living communities both in form and in substance, in the sense that the members of each body would be looked upon and treated as persons and encouraged to take an active part in the life of the body" (*Laborem exercens*, 14.7).
- (100) "We must think of human society as being primarily a spiritual reality. By its means enlightened men can share their knowledge of the truth, can claim their rights and fulfil their duties, receive encouragement in their aspirations for moral goodness, share their enjoyment of all the wholesome pleasure of the world, strive continually to pass on to others all that is best in themselves, and make their own the spiritual riches of

others. These are the values which exert a guiding influence on culture, economics, social institutions, political movements and forms, laws, and all the other components which go to make up the external community of men and its continual evolution" (*Pacem in terris*).

"It is not difficult to see that in the modern world *the sense of injustice* has been reawakening on a vast scale... *The Church shares with the people of our time* this profound and ardent desire for a life which is just in every aspect, nor does she fail to examine the various aspects of the sort of justice that the life of people and society demands. This is confirmed by the field of Catholic social doctrine, greatly developed in the course of the last century... And yet, it would be difficult not to notice that very often *programmes which start from the idea of justice* and which ought to assist its fulfilment among individuals, groups and human societies, *in practice suffer from distortions*. Although they continue to appeal to the idea of justice, nevertheless experience shows that other negative forces have gained the upper hand over justice, such as spite, hatred and even cruelty. In such cases, the desire to annihilate the enemy, limit his freedom, or even force him into total dependence, becomes the fundamental motive for action; and this contrasts with the essence of justice, which by its nature tends to establish equality and harmony between the parties in conflict... The experience of the past and of our own time demonstrates that justice alone is not enough, that it can even lead to the negation and destruction of itself, if *that deeper power, which is love*, is not allowed to shape human life in its various dimensions" (*Dives in misericordia*, 12, 1.2.3.).

- (101) "Solidarity is a direct requirement of human and supernatural brotherhood. The serious socio-economic problems which occur today cannot be solved unless new fronts of solidarity are created: solidarity of the poor among themselves, solidarity with the poor to which the rich are called, solidarity among the workers and with the workers" (Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, *Instruction on Christian Freedom and Liberation*, 89).

"The debt of the developing countries must be placed in a broader context of economic, political and technological relations which point to the increased inter-dependence between countries, as well as to the need for international collaboration in pursuing the objectives of the common good. In order to be just, this interdependence should give rise to new and broader expressions of solidarity which respect the equal dignity of all peoples, rather than lead to domination by the strongest, to national

egoism, to equalities and injustice" (Pontifical Commission "Iustitia et Pax", *At the service of the Human Community: An Ethical Approach to the International Debt Question*, I, 1).

- (102) "Thus the solution of most of the serious problems related to poverty is to be found in the promotion of a true civilization of work. In a sense, work is the key to the whole social question... If the system of labour relations put into effect by those directly involved, the workers and employers, with the essential support of the public powers, succeeds in bringing into existence a civilization of work, then there will take place a profound and peaceful revolution in people's outlooks and in institutional and political structures" (Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, *Instruction on Christian Freedom and Liberation*, 83).
- (104) "To this must be added that the hiring of labour and the conduct of trade are concentrated in the hands of comparatively few; so that a small number of very rich men have been able to lay upon the teeming masses of the labouring poor a yoke little better than that of slavery itself" (*Rerum novarum*).
- (106) "In the midst of it all stands man, at once the author and the victim of mutual distrust, animosity, conflict and woe" (*Gaudium et spes*, 8).
- (107) "The same duty of solidarity that rests on individuals exists also for nations: 'It is the very serious duty of the developed nations to help the under-developed'... Every nation must produce more and better quality goods to give to all its inhabitants a truly human standard of living, and also to contribute to the common development of the human race. Given the increasing needs of the under-developed countries, it should be considered quite normal for an advanced country to devote a part of its production to meet their needs, and to train teachers, engineers, technicians and scholars prepared to put their knowledge and their skill at the disposal of less fortunate peoples" (*Populorum progressio*, 48).
- (108) "Various ideological or power systems, and new relationships which have arisen at various levels of society, *have allowed flagrant injustices to persist or have created new ones*" (*Laborem exercens*, 8, d).
- (112) "In the case of Marxism, in the particular sense given to it in this context, a preliminary critique is all the more necessary since the thought of Marx is such a global vision of reality that all data received from observation and analysis are brought together in a philosophical and ideological structure, which predetermines the significance and importance to be attached to them. The ideological principles come prior to the study

of the social reality and are presupposed in it" (Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, *Instruction on certain aspects of the "Theology of Liberation"*, VII, 6).

"... it would be illusory and dangerous... to accept the elements of Marxist analysis without recognizing their relationships with ideology, and to enter into the practice of class struggle and its Marxist interpretations, while failing to note the kind of totalitarian and violent society to which this process leads" (*Octogesima adveniens*, 34).

(113) "Therefore the Christian who wishes to live his faith in a political activity which he thinks of as service cannot without contradicting himself adhere to ideological systems which radically or substantially go against his faith and his concept of man. He cannot adhere to the Marxist ideology,... nor can he adhere to the liberal ideology..." (*Octogesima adveniens*, 26).

(117) "In this renewed encounter of the various ideologies, the Christian will draw from the sources of his faith and the Church's teaching the necessary principles and suitable criteria to avoid permitting himself to be first attracted by and then imprisoned within a system whose limitations and totalitarianism may well become evident to him too late, if he does not perceive them in their roots. Going beyond every system, without however failing to commit himself concretely to serving his brothers, he will assert, in the very midst of his options, the specific character of the Christian contribution for a positive transformation of society" (*Octogesima adveniens*, 36).

(118) "A social doctrine has to be translated into reality and not just merely formulated. This is particularly true of the Christian social doctrine whose light is Truth, its objective Justice and its driving force Love" (*Mater et magistra*).

(123) "It is to the laity, though not exclusively to them, that secular duties and activity properly belong. ... It is their task to cultivate a properly informed conscience and to impress the divine law on the affairs of the earthly city" (*Gaudium et spes*, 43).

"The apostolate in one's social environment endeavors to infuse the Christian spirit into the mentality and behavior, laws and structures of the community in which one lives. To such a degree is it the special work and responsibility of lay people, that no one else can ever properly supply for them" (*Apostolicam actuositatem*, 13). "One of the conditions for necessary theological correction is giving proper value to the social

*teaching of the Church*. This teaching is by no means closed. It is, on the contrary, open to all the new questions which are so numerous today.... The teaching of the Church on social issues indicates the main lines of ethical orientation. But in order that it be able to guide action directly, the Church needs competent people from a scientific and technological viewpoint, as well as in the human and political sciences. Pastors should be attentive to the formation of persons of such capability who live the Gospel deeply. Laypersons, whose proper mission is to build society, are involved here to the highest degree" (Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, *Instruction on certain aspects of the "Theology of Liberation"*, XI, 12.14).

(127) "Those Catholics are worthy of all praise - and they are not a few - who, understanding what the times require, have striven, by various undertakings and endeavours, to better the condition of the working-class by rightful means. They have taken up the cause of the working-man, and have spared no effort to better the condition both of families and individuals; to infuse a spirit of equity into the mutual relations of employers and employed; to keep before the eyes of both classes the precepts of duty and the laws of the Gospel" (*Rerum novarum*).

(130) "It is not enough to recall principles, state intentions, point to crying injustices and utter prophetic denunciations; these words will lack real weight unless they are accompanied for each individual by a livelier awareness of personal responsibility and by effective action" (*Octogesima adveniens*, 48).

(131) "During the years that separate us from the publication of the Encyclical *Rerum novarum*, the social question has not ceased to engage the Church's attention. Evidence of this are the many documents of the Magisterium issued by the Popes and by the Second Vatican Council, pronouncements by individual Episcopates, and the activity of the various centres of thought and of practical apostolic initiatives, both on the international level and at the level of the local Churches" (*Laborem exercens*, 2).

(135) "The Church, by reason of her role and competence, is not identified with any political community nor bound by ties to any political system. It is at once the sign and the safeguard of the transcendental dimension of the human person.... But at all times and in all places the Church should have true freedom to preach the faith, to proclaim its teaching about society, to carry out its task among men without hindrance, and to pass moral Judgements even in matters relating to politics, whenever the fundamental rights of man or the salvation of souls requires it" (*Gaudium et spes*, 76).

(139) "Lay Christian faithful have the right to have recognized that freedom in the affairs of the earthly city which belongs to all citizens; when they exercise such freedom, however, they are to take account that their actions are imbued with the spirit of the gospel and take into account the doctrine set forth by the magisterium of the Church; but they are to avoid proposing their own opinions as the teaching of the Church in questions which are open to various opinions" (*The Code of Canon Law*, Can. 227).

(140) "1. Most especially, clerics are always to foster that peace and harmony based on justice which is to be observed among all persons.  
2. Clerics are not to have an active role in political parties and in the direction of labor unions unless the need to protect the rights of the Church or to promote the common good requires it in the judgment of the competent ecclesiastical authority" (*The Code of Canon Law*, Can. 287).

(137) "It is with all its dynamism that the social teaching of the Church accompanies men in their search. If it does not intervene to authenticate a given structure or to propose a ready-made model, it does not thereby limit itself to recalling general principles. It develops through reflection applied to the changing situations of this world, under the driving force of the Gospel as the source of renewal when its message is accepted in its totality and with all its demands" (*Octogesima adveniens*, 42).

(146) "In pastoral care sufficient use should be made, not only of theological principles, but also of the findings of secular sciences, especially psychology and sociology" (*Gaudium et spes*, 62).

"They should be taught to use correctly the aids provided by pedagogy, psychology and sociology, in keeping with the regulations of ecclesiastical authority" (*Optatam totius*, 20).

(148) "Although the whole formation of students in the seminary has a pastoral purpose, a specifically pastoral formation is also to be provided there; in this the students are to learn the principles and the techniques which, according to the needs of place and time, are relevant to the ministry of teaching, sanctifying and ruling the people of God" (*The Code of Canon Law*, Can. 255).

(150) "Bishops, to whom has been committed the task of directing the Church of God, along with their priests, are to preach the message of Christ in such a way that the light of the Gospel will shine on all activities of the faithful" (*Gaudium et spes*, 43).

(151) "Let all pastors of souls be mindful to build up by their daily behavior and concern an image of the Church capable of impressing men with the power and truth of the Christian message" (*Gaudium et spes*, 43).

"It is through life that the fruitfulness of the Christian Social Doctrine must be verified; and it is through concrete commitment, witness at work, action for advancement, that the beneficial light of the Gospel must be shed upon others." (John Paul II, *Commemorative Discourse 90th anniversary of "Rerum Novarum"*, 3).