

Theological Constants of Justice in Catholic Social Teaching¹

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The Catholic Social Teaching is an “instrument of evangelization” because it places the human person and society in relationship to the Gospel. The Church, by its very nature, proclaims God and his mystery of salvation in Christ to every human being. It is by virtue of this mission that it concerns itself with everything else: “the human rights of the individual, and in particular of the ‘working class’, the family and education, the duties of the State, the ordering of national and international society, economic life, culture, war and peace, and respect for life from the moment of conception until death”² as well as care for the earth. As an “instrument of evangelization,” the Catholic Social Teaching developed as historical responses to pressing and prevailing social issues and problems, not only to reach out to human beings in society but of “*enriching and permeating society with the Gospel.*”³

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² John Paul II, *Centesimus Annus*. On the Hundredth Anniversary of *Rerum Novarum* (1991), 54.

³ Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace. *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church* (Vatican: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2005), par 62, p. 34. Hereafter this document is referred to as CST.

For example, the magna carta of all social encyclicals, *Rerum Novarum*, was a response to the plight of the workers arising from injustices brought about by the industrial revolution.

The messages of succeeding documents of the Catholic Social Teaching of the Church appear to get their cue from *Rerum Novarum*, the first social encyclical written in 1891. While building on the principles of the previous ones, subsequent encyclicals specifically address issues and challenges confronting humanity in their respective time. Thus, there is both continuity and newness all throughout the social encyclicals. To illustrate, *Rerum Novarum* deals with the ills caused by industrialization and stresses the need for a family wage that goes beyond what has been agreed upon by the contracting parties. Forty years later, *Quadragesimo Anno*, facing the turmoil and disillusionment brought about by the Great Depression,⁴ the rise of Communism and fascist dictatorship,⁵ underscores the importance of subsidiarity as a guide to government interventions. In 1961, thirty years after *Quadragesimo Anno*, *Mater et Magistra* was written. Although there was no dramatic event behind the writing of this document, Blessed John XXIII talked about global justice in the context of emerging cultures brought about by technological advances after the Second World War causing the widening gap between the rich and the poor. From *Rerum Novarum* to *Centesimus Annus*, written 100 years later, different challenges were addressed and new messages came out.⁶

⁴ The Great Depression began with the U.S. Stock Market Crash in 1929 and lasted until the early 1940's. It was the worst economic collapse in the history of the modern industrial world and affected most of the world's industrial countries. "Great Depression in the United States," Microsoft® Encarta® Online Encyclopedia 2007 <http://encarta.msn.com>

⁵ The Russian Revolution of 1917 led to the rise of the communist movement. "Russian Revolutions of 1917," Microsoft® Encarta® Online Encyclopedia 2007 <http://encarta.msn.com>. Fascism began in Italy through Benito Mussolini. Fascist Dictatorship arose in the mid 1920's and spread to Germany through Adolf Hitler. "Fascism," Microsoft® Encarta® Online Encyclopedia 2007 <http://encarta.msn.com>

⁶ Thomas Massaro, SJ, *Living Justice: Catholic Social Teaching in Action* (Oxford UK: Sheed & Ward, 2000), 72-79.

The overarching theme of all Catholic Social Teaching is justice⁷ and doing justice. The understanding of justice⁸ in every document is shaped by the specific events and challenges to which it responds, therefore, what we see are different expressions of justice.⁹ Justice is not static, rather a process of ordering society according to the demands and requisites of the Christian faith as a response to the call and challenges of a particular context. The approach of the Catholic Social Teaching, then, is not a sociological comprehension but a contextual theological valuation of the role of the individual, communities, and the dynamics of society, guided by the Gospel towards the coming of a 'new heaven and a new earth.' In fact, Pope John Paul II asserts that "the theological dimension is needed both for interpreting and for solving present day problems in human society."¹⁰ The way issues are tackled in the Catholic Social Teachings is by drawing upon faith, that is,

⁷ As an historical response, the understanding of justice oscillates between natural law and the centrality of Jesus Christ. Where universal application and understanding of justice is concerned, the Church's fundamental premise of elucidating "what is due to man" lies in his humanity, the natural law. Where the understanding requires the specific Christian dimension of social justice, the centrality of Jesus as the source and category of all meanings apply. These are not separate and distinct approaches, however. It is because the nature of man is considered as the expression of the divine based on the principle of the *Imago Dei*. See Joe Holland, *Modern Catholic Social Teaching: The Popes Confront the Industrial Age 1740-1958* (New York: Paulist Press, 2003), and the analysis on the theological, ethical and ecclesiological methodologies of the documents on social justice by Charles E. Curran, *Catholic Social Teaching: A Historical and Ethical Analysis* (Washington D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 2002) and John Gallagher, "Theological Categories in the Social Encyclicals," *Rerum Novarum: One Hundred Years of Catholic Social Teaching*. Edited by John Coleman and Gregory Baum (The Netherlands: Stitching Concilium, 1991), 36-46.

⁸ What is justice? The *Compendium*, following the Catechism of the Catholic Church and the *Summa Theologica* of St. Thomas Aquinas, defines justice as that which "consists in the constant and firm will to give their due to God and neighbour". The *Compendium* went on to explain the dual aspects of this definition. The first aspect is the subjective point of view which translates justice into a "behavior that is based on the will to recognize the other as a person." The second is the objective point of view which "constitutes the decisive criteria of morality in the inter subjective and social sphere" CST 201.

⁹ Mary Elsbernd and Reimund Bieringer, *When Love Is Not Enough: A Theologic Ethic of Justice* (Collegeville Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 2002), 106.

¹⁰ *Centesimus Annus*, 54.

on the Church's understanding of God and the human being, and of society before God.¹¹

1. Our specific understanding of God as Norm: From the God of Order to the God of Communion

The God of Order refers to God's gratuitous presence in the world. It is the acknowledgment and appreciation of the relational character of God as the source of everything. God's "plan for the whole humanity"¹² is revealed and fulfilled in the incarnation of Jesus Christ,¹³ and historically made possible and attainable for humanity by the "superabundant gift of the Holy Spirit."¹⁴ The order that God has ordained is itself the divine active presence in the world, which shines forth in the identity and vocation of the person,¹⁵ i.e. immanent in the nature of human beings expressed in their inviolable dignity as persons, leading towards the communion between God and people, becoming the Church of Christ as the foretaste, the beginning of the Kingdom of God.¹⁶

God is both the giver and the measure of order. As the origin of everything that exists, God provides "to men and women organized in a society the basic conditions of life, placing at their disposal the goods that are necessary," while at the same time "the *measure of what should be*, as the presence that challenges human action – both at the personal and social levels – regarding the use of those very goods in relation to other people."¹⁷ It is then imperative that the individual and society organize itself.

The documents of the Catholic Social Teaching consistently stress the dignity of the human person and the importance placed

¹¹ "... it is precisely from faith that the Church's social teaching begins. While drawing upon all the contributions made by the sciences and philosophy, her social teaching is aimed at helping man on the path of salvation." *Centesimus Annus*, 54.

¹² CST 26.

¹³ CST 28-29.

¹⁴ CST 29.

¹⁵ CST 34-44.

¹⁶ CST 49-55.

¹⁷ CST 20.

on the social aspect of the human being, or “the human-person-in-community” as the foundation of justice.¹⁸ Human dignity is, according to the Catholic Social Teaching, the basis for justice, equity, common good and solidarity. The source of this dignity is being created in God’s image and likeness. Respect for the dignity of the human person in society is a requisite in realizing the plan God has ordained.¹⁹ There is, according to the documents, an order that God has placed in the world when he created it. This order is what regulates the actions of human beings.²⁰

The “God of Order” model describes God as “the Creator and Ruler of the world, as the source of all law and authority.”²¹ As a historical model, this norm is characterized as Eurocentric, hierarchical and paternalistic.²² The patriarchal/monarchical vision of God dominated papal strategies in the pre-Vatican II era. Anti-modern was the basic attitude and orientation of the Church. This rejection of modernity was aimed at “defending or restoring Europe’s aristocratic Christian civilization against the cultural and political assault of the modern European Enlightenment.”²³ Both the Pre-Leonine and Leonine Church approached the industrial revolution with nostalgia of the *Ancien Régime*.²⁴ The

¹⁸ Elsbernd and Bieringer, *When Love Is Not Enough*, 112-113

¹⁹ “... there will be no peace nor justice in the world until they return to a sense of their dignity as creatures and sons of God...” *Mater et Magistra*, 215. See also *Rerum Novarum*, 40: “It is the soul which is made after the image and likeness of God; ... No man may with impunity outrage that human dignity which God Himself treats with great reverence, ... To consent to any treatment which is calculated to defeat the end and purpose of his being is beyond his right; he cannot give up his soul to servitude, for it is not man’s own rights which are here in question, but the rights of God, the most sacred and inviolable of rights.”

²⁰ “... it is God, the provident Creator of all things, ... He has decreed that men’s dealings with one another should be regulated by an order which He Himself has established” *Pacem in Terris*, 50.

²¹ Charles E. Curran, 71.

²² Charles Curran, see methodology. See also Joe Holland.

²³ John Holland, 293.

²⁴ *Ancien Régime* refers primarily to the aristocratic social and political system established in France under the Valois and Bourbon dynasties (14th century to 18th century). The term is French for “Former Regime,” but rendered in English as “Old Rule,” “Old Order,” or simply “Old Regime”. As defined by the creators of the term, the *Ancien Régime* developed out of the French monarchy of

Church, considered herself as the “mother,” took the “will of the Father, or the King” which was the restoration of the Christian civilization as her ultimate mission. The father’s will, which was the establishment of the Christian civilization and characterized by the return of the monarchial and paternal authority of the Church over all nations, therefore, was the only way to bring justice and peace on earth.

The patriarchal model is also hierarchical. “Society is constructed from the top down, with rulers protecting and guarding the untutored multitude from all moral and physical dangers as a father protects his children.”²⁵

The context of the social teachings of the Church was initially limited and considered in the social question on the welfare of the workers.²⁶ The condition of the workers, however, considered in the wider panorama of industrial revolution indicated bigger and more complex structures and wider issues, such as the advancement of technology, rise of free market economy, capitalism, socialism, communism, liberalism and other manifestations of modernity.

The social question, that is, the suffering workers, was the result of the systematic attempt of modernity to reshape the landscape of the *ancien régime*. “[I]ndustrial conflict raged because of the loss of ancient guilds, which then left modern workers with no means of self-defense.”²⁷ Thus, the Church in the early stages

the Middle Ages, and was swept away centuries later by the French Revolution of 1789. Europe’s other *anciens régimes* had similar origins, but diverse ends: some eventually became constitutional monarchies, whereas others were torn down by wars and revolutions. Power in the *Ancien Régime* relied on three pillars: the monarchy, the clergy, and the aristocracy. Society was divided into three Estates of the realm: the First Estate, the Roman Catholic clergy; the Second Estate, the nobility; and the Third Estate, the rest of the population. More generally, *Ancien Régime* means any regime which shares the former’s defining features. The *Ancien Régime* retained many aspects of a feudal system that had existed since at least the 8th century, in particular noble and aristocratic privilege, and supported by the doctrine of the Divine Right of Kings. It differed from that earlier feudal order in that political power had increasingly become concentrated in an absolute monarch. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ancien_R%C3%A9gime

²⁵ Charles Curran, 69.

²⁶ CST, 85.

²⁷ Joe Holland, 305.

of the Catholic Social Teaching approached modernity as the real enemy and only by restoring the world (Europe) according to the Old Order justice could be restored.

The first wave of industrial revolution, otherwise known as the advent of modernity, was characterized by the start of British factory revolution, the founding of the modern liberal philosophy's laissez-faire model of the state, and the appearance of small and radical socialist movements catapulted into different political and economic revolutions in Europe – the French, German and English revolutions to name a few. Due to the machine revolution – scientific and technological advances in metallurgy, electrification and petrochemical industry – the second wave of industrial revolution pushed the free-market economy towards industrial colonialism across the third world. Socialism was divided into dictatorial communism and democratic socialism. It was also during this period that the world witnessed the two world wars. The end of the Leonine period marked the rise of United States of America to world power with the imminent downfall of communism in Russia. In short, the social question became global.”²⁸

These changes in the global economic, political and social landscape marked a shift of understanding the norm “God of Order” starting from the papacy of Pope John XXIII. The Church during this period is challenged by the electronic revolution making possible the neoliberal capitalist globalization²⁹ based on rapid international communications and transportations, global economic

²⁸ Aubert, Roger. *Catholic Social Teaching: A Historical Perspective*, preface by Charles Curran and edited by David A. Boileau (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 2003), p. 233. He describes the reign of Paul VI onwards as the global context of the social question. The two parts of the encyclical *Populorum progressio* indicate very much this contention: the principles which must rule the development of man; and the actions which must be undertaken in order to obtain a “fraternal [‘solidaire’] development of humanity.”

²⁹ Neoliberal capitalist globalization refers to the practice of allowing free market forces to dictate trade among countries. It is a form of capitalism that is free from cultural and governmental control and regulation. This results in transnational companies and highly developed economies having major control over the market to the detriment of less developed countries. See Henry L., Bernardo, *Responding to the Call of Justice and Love* (Mandaluyong City: National Bookstore, 2001), pp. 252-256 and, Vitaliano R. Gorospe, *Forming the Filipino Social Conscience*, 2nd ed., (Makati City: Bookmark, Inc., 1997), p. 26.

competitions dominated by transnational corporations with utter disregard to global social ethics and ecological standards, the global division between the rich and the poor, and other manifestations of postmodernity.³⁰

The vision "God of Order" was no longer rooted in the "Eurocentric Christian civilization and instead pointing the Church toward the service of a new global and multicultural humanistic civilization."³¹ The social question was no longer treated as a mere result of the deviant modernist horizon. From an order dictated by the *Ancién Regime*, the order envisioned starting with the papacy of John XXIII includes the critical and spiritual dialogue with the prevailing economic and political systems such as capitalism, socialism, communism and democracy. The Church initiated dialogue in all forms from Christian ecumenism to dialogue with other faith persuasions such as Islam, Buddhism and others. The Church renewed her structure by integrating clergy, religious, and laity in the common framework of the one People of God, and the strong advocacy and commitment towards world ecology and environmental promotion and protection.

Starting with John XXIII, the Father of the Second Vatican Council, God as a norm has shifted to the models of participation, communion and dialogue. God, who created human beings in his image, is a God who is a communion of persons. This then becomes the "supreme model of unity."³² The human being does not live in isolation. The human being, like God, is relational, a person-in-community, called to live in solidarity and in communion with fellow human beings. "For by his innermost nature man is a social being, and unless he relates himself to others he can neither live nor develop his potential."³³

Based on the new understanding of God as communion, the Church, for example in politics, already advocates democracy as a

³⁰ Postmodernity here is not treated as a philosophical school of thought. It simply means realities in the global scale after the modern period based on the classification that Joe Holland has made.

³¹ Joe Holland, 296.

³² Pope John Paul II. *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis*, December 30, 1987, par. 40.

³³ *Gaudium et Spes*, 12.

form of government. It encourages the active participation of every citizen towards progress and development. The juridical and political structure should "afford all citizens the chance to participate freely and actively in establishing the constitutional bases of a political community, governing the state, determining the scope and purpose of different institutions, and choosing leaders."³⁴

Another implication of the model of communion is the element of collegiality and participation in the life of the Church. Thus, through this model, the Church, in a negative sense, "should not aim to authenticate an inherited structure or a prefabricated model of society, but that it must limit itself to enlightening men, and in particular laymen, in their search for the best-adapted solutions to the diverse concrete situations in which they live."³⁵ By implication, the Church provides general guidelines on morality and social justice. In other words, the Church becomes collegial in her approaches towards social issues.

2. Action involved:

2.1 Action of God: Gift of Salvation

The specific understanding of the norm God of Order and the God of Communion actually points to the same action of God: salvation of all. Order and communion are just two different ways of understanding salvation in context. As for the model of communion, it means that it is the desire of God to bring all his creations in unity with him. In understanding this act of God, the Catholic Social Teaching of the Church recalls the Exodus experience of the Israelites in the Old Testament. According to the Book of Exodus, the Lord speaks these words to Moses: "I have seen the affliction of my people who are in Egypt, and have heard their cry because of their taskmasters; I know their sufferings, and I have come down to deliver them out of the hand of Egyptians, and to bring them out of that land to a good and broad land, a land flowing with milk and honey" (Exodus 3:7-8).

³⁴ *Gaudium et Spes*, 75.

³⁵ Roger Aubert, pp. 235-35.

Based on the Exodus model, we can infer three aspects of the action of God: a) God listens to the poor and the oppressed; b) God enters history and dialogues with humanity; and, c) God transforms humanity and changes the “face of the earth”. Thus, the Old Testament God is considered as “liberator of the oppressed and the defender of the poor.”³⁶ The highest point of God’s saving intervention is through Jesus Christ who was sent to the poor and the oppressed and who identifies with the “least ones”³⁷ (see Lk 6:18-21; Mt 25:40).

The God of Communion puts forward a design for all social relations – a new heaven and a new earth. “God has spoken his Word to men and women throughout history; indeed he himself has entered history in order to enter into dialogue with humanity and to reveal to mankind his plan of salvation, justice and brotherhood. In Jesus Christ, his son made man, God has freed us from sin and has shown us the path we are to walk and the goal towards which we are to strive.”³⁸ The Church faithfully follows this path in the changing circumstances of our histories. In a sense, this historical design of the God of Communion” continues to unfold through the Church, the efficacious sign of God’s presence in the world.

According to the Catholic Social Teaching, the expressions of the historical action of God point to *freedom* and *land*.³⁹ Freedom, initially, refers to the emancipation of humanity from oppressive and sinful structures. Land, on the one hand, signifies the achievement of justice, metaphorically expressed as flowing with milk and honey. It is not surprising then that the history of the Catholic Social Teaching is a constant struggle of liberation and the search for the perfect and just society. It is along this line that the Church, guided by the light of Faith, “felt the need to become involved and intervene in a new way: the *res novae* (“new things”) brought about by these events represented a challenge to her teaching and motivated her special pastoral concern for the masses of people. A new

³⁶ *Justice in the World*, 30.

³⁷ *Justice in the World*, 31.

³⁸ CST 17.

³⁹ CST 21.

discernment of the situation was needed, a discernment capable of finding appropriate solutions to unfamiliar and unexplored problems.⁴⁰

At the bottom of this discernment, based on the gift of salvation, is the foundational understanding of the person as *imago Dei*. God's action of salvation is not extrinsic to man. God's action of salvation, though historical, is not a mechanical handling of humanity and the world. Indeed, it is through His immense love for all that God sent Jesus Christ who is "the image of the invisible God" (Col. 1:15) and through whom we are to pattern our lives since Jesus Christ, fully human and divine "is himself the perfect man."⁴¹ Human beings are created in the image and likeness of God and by their innermost nature are social beings.⁴² And it is with this nature, when persons in community act accordingly to their nature, that social justice is achieved.

2.2 On the part of human beings: Agent of Salvation

The principle of *imago Dei* points to the nature of persons desiring to be in unity or communion with God. "Man and woman, created in his image and likeness, are for that very reason called to be the visible sign and the effective instrument of divine gratuitousness in the garden where God has placed them as cultivators and custodians of the goods of creation."⁴³ It follows that primacy should be given to the human being. He is the subject of all institutions and should never be a means towards an end. The documents stress the importance of the inviolability of the dignity of the human person and the duty to respect his rights.

In receiving the gift of salvation then, all persons likewise are called upon to be agents of salvation themselves. This is by way of living the nature God has freely given to them as a gift.

⁴⁰ CST 88.

⁴¹ *Gaudium et Spes* 22.

⁴² See *Gaudium et Spes* 12-19 for a comprehensive discussion about the nature of the human being.

⁴³ CST 26.

When lived accordingly, their freedom and intellect seek the common good, and as a consequence they become respectful of the dignity of others also. Aware that it is through a fruitful dedication and commitment to the nature God has bestowed upon them that rests their communion with God, they become advocates of justice and lovers of peace.

Commitment to their nature as *imago Dei* brings them to a constant inner transformation, because it is only in their being progressively conformed to Christ, that will bring real transformation to their relationship to others. Thus, it is the persons' constant conversion in the heart of Jesus that guarantees their "constant determination to work for the good of all people and of each person, because we are all really responsible for everyone."⁴⁴

Furthermore, the Catholic Social Teaching notes that those whose dignity are not protected and live in subhuman conditions are those who are powerless and who are at the mercy of the stronger and privileged members of society. These powerless ones need to be the focus of everyone. "The joys and the hopes, the griefs and the anxieties of the men of this age, especially those who are poor or in any way afflicted, these are the joys and hopes, the griefs and anxieties of the followers of Christ."⁴⁵

The response of the person to the invitation of God is summarized in the following key words in the encyclical *Mater et Magistra* of Blessed Pope John XXIII "community and socialization: the Church is called in truth, justice and love to cooperate in building with all men and women an authentic communion. In this way, economic growth will not be limited to satisfying men's needs, but it will also promote their dignity."⁴⁶ In *Pacem in Terris*, he elucidated authentic communion as the "cooperation of all men and women"⁴⁷ in establishing new methods of relationships in human society.

⁴⁴ CST 42.

⁴⁵ *Gaudium et Spes* 1.

⁴⁶ CST 94

⁴⁷ CST 95.

3. Fidelity to the Norm: Doing Social Justice

Fidelity to the norm requires an unconditional and incessant commitment to work for social justice.⁴⁸ Social justice refers to a just society based on the order God has designed for the world and the world to come, an order ultimately directed to communion of persons. In particular, social justice is the set of norms and principles that directs social relations, institutions and other social structures that governs all the aspects of existence, including the persons' relationship to their environment. According to the Catholic Social Teaching, "*Social justice*, a requirement related to the *social question* which today is worldwide in scope, concerns the social, political and economic aspects and, above all, the structural dimension of problems and their respective solutions."⁴⁹ By living out this set of norms and principles, society becomes a "communion" of persons, a realization albeit temporally of the unity of the Trinity.

The dialectic between God's design and social injustices is precisely the historical drama of the Catholic Social Teaching. It clearly manifests the unwavering commitment of the Church to the God of Order and Communion to unselfishly provide her maternal care and protection to the faithful and the world, with the aim of leading the latter in the fold of God. Social justice, therefore, is integral in the mission of the Church. "*Action on behalf of justice and participation in the transformation of the world fully appear to us as a constitutive dimension of the preaching of the Gospel, or, in other words, of the Church's mission for the redemption of the human race and its liberation from every oppressive situation.*"⁵⁰

Society, its structures and development, must be oriented towards the progress of human persons and promotion of their

⁴⁸ The term "social justice" was coined by the Jesuit Luigi Taparelli in the 1840s, based on the teachings of Thomas Aquinas. He wrote extensively in his journal *Civiltà Cattolica*, engaging both capitalist and socialist theories from a Catholic natural law viewpoint. His basic premise was that the rival economic theories, based on subjective Cartesian thinking, undermined the unity of society present in Thomistic metaphysics; neither the liberal capitalists nor the communists concerned themselves with public moral philosophy.

⁴⁹ CST 201.

⁵⁰ *Justice in the World*, 6.

dignity.⁵¹ This orientation is the ultimate criterion of fidelity to the norm of justice. Outside this criterion, such structure becomes either outrightly an unjust and oppressive system or the very breeding ground of violence. The advocacy towards social justice, however, is a consequence of personal renewal. The conversion of hearts is the essential condition that gives rise to the concern for others. "Social institutions do not of themselves guarantee, as if automatically, the common good; the internal 'renewal of the Christian spirit' *must precede* the commitment to improve society..."⁵²

God who created human persons in his image and calls them to communion obliges human beings to live according to his plan. That is, "dignity imposes a corresponding duty to recognize and enhance human dignity in others."⁵³ It is dignity that imposes upon the person the duty to respect and serve others. Recognizing that dignity in others requires concrete measures of working towards the transformation of structures that are oppressive to humankind. Thus, Catholic Social Teaching speaks of equitable distribution of resources, subsidiarity, participation, solidarity and the common good. Almsgiving is not enough. What is called for is a commitment to the common good, an imperative that binds everyone for the betterment of all peoples.⁵⁴

The *Compendium* summarizes the four principles governing social justice, namely: human dignity, common good, subsidiarity and solidarity.⁵⁵ The practical expressions of the above principles are the fundamental values of "truth, freedom, justice and love."⁵⁶ Concretely, social justice is "necessary for each one's integral development as a person, for example the right to a job, to a living

⁵¹ CST 96.

⁵² CST 552.

⁵³ Elsbernd and Bieringer, 110.

⁵⁴ *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis* 30, 32; Pope Paul VI. *Populorum Progressio*. Encyclical of Pope Paul VI on the Development of Peoples par. 48.

⁵⁵ CST 160.

⁵⁶ CST 197. The *Compendium* distinguishes *principles* from *values*. There is a close and inseparable link between the two to define the relationship between the society and the Gospel however. Read 178-180.

wage, to decent housing, to education, to healthcare, to respect.”⁵⁷ In safeguarding and promoting human dignity, the Compendium extensively discusses the following social structures and institutions in view of the ethical demands of Christian social justice: family, human work, economic life, political community, international community, and safeguarding the environment.

4. Priority of Love: The Perfection of the Kingdom

Justice attains its inner fullness only in love.⁵⁸ It is through the human being’s experience of God’s love that motivates the human person to live in accord with God’s justice and to work for the transformation of the world. The perfection of the Kingdom cannot be achieved through human effort. It is the GodSelf who ushers in the Kingdom and perfects it. Because of this the Kingdom is already in our midst but its fullness is yet to come. Our trust in God’s promise makes us work with the GodSelf until the final and definitive establishment of the Kingdom.

Human beings are called to live in communion with God, so that they may “be a spark of light, a center of love, a vivifying leaven amidst [their] fellowmen.”⁵⁹ This is their vocation: to create “a network of multiple relationships of love, justice and solidarity,”⁶⁰ with the preferential option for the poor. Jesus Christ has identified himself with the poor (cf. Mt. 25:31-45) and we are told that “those who do not love a brother or sister whom they have seen, cannot love God whom they have not seen” (1 Jn. 4:20).

Contractualistic justice, therefore, is not enough⁶¹ to establish the order of God in the world. This kind of justice can, at best, “merely do away with the obstacles of peace: the injury done or the damage caused.”⁶² With it, it is possible to establish solidarity

⁵⁷ Walter BJ. Burghardt, *Justice: A Global Adventure* (Mary Knoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2004) 25/26.

⁵⁸ *Justice in the World* 34.

⁵⁹ *Pacem in Terris* 164.

⁶⁰ CST 35.

⁶¹ CST 203, 206. Contractualistic Justice is a “reductionist vision” of justice which limits itself to legal aspects, meaning to say, justice is seen from the perspective of abiding by what is provided by law.

⁶² CST 494.

but only in a limited manner. Such justice can even betray itself because of its tendency to be rigid and formal in character. "*Human relationships cannot be governed solely by the measure of justice: 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.*"⁶³ It would be worthwhile quoting here the famous passage from *Quadragesimo anno*:

Justice alone can, if faithfully observed, remove the causes of social conflict but can never bring about union of minds and hearts. Indeed all the institutions for the establishment of peace and the promotion of mutual help among men, however perfect these may seem, have the principal foundation of their stability in the mutual bond of minds and hearts whereby the members are united with one another.... And so, only then will true cooperation be possible for a single common good when the constituent parts of society deeply feel themselves members of one great family and children of the same heavenly father; nay, that they are one body in Christ, but severally members of another.⁶⁴

Indeed, peace is the fruit of love.⁶⁵

The social encyclicals have always been clear about this distinction since *Rerum novarum*. Justice needs love to achieve peace, to solidify cooperation for the common good; but "justice" alone does not include love.⁶⁶ Without love, justice can not bring harmony and solidarity between and among hearts and minds. "*Love presupposes and transcends justice*, which 'must find its fulfilment in charity'. If justice is in itself suitable for 'arbitration' between people concerning the reciprocal distribution of objective goods in an equitable manner, love and only love (including that kindly love that we call 'mercy') is capable of restoring man to himself,"⁶⁷ the only way too of achieving social justice. □

⁶³ CST 206.

⁶⁴ *Quadragesimo anno*, 137.

⁶⁵ CST 494.

⁶⁶ Clearly, the encyclical tradition from Leo XIII to Paul VI distinguished justice from love. (Walter B.J. Burghardt. 2).

⁶⁷ CST 206.