FOREWORD BY MICHAEL GALLIGAN-STIERLE

A Vision of Justice

Engaging Catholic Social Teaching on the College Campus

EDITED BY
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Chapter 4

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Catholic Social Teaching, Poverty, and the Economy

In responding to the question "Who is my neighbor?" Jesus told the parable of the Good Samaritan. In this story, we learn that our neighbor is one who is vulnerable, left for dead, and even our enemy. In the last judgment, Jesus makes clear that our neighbor is the one who is hungry, thirsty, marginalized, naked, sick, and in prison (Matt 25:41-43). Jesus clearly aligns himself primarily with those who are poor, vulnerable, and marginalized in both his teachings and his life example. Guided by Jesus' example, Catholic Social Teaching (CST) calls for a preferential option for the poor and solidarity with the poor, where we put the needs of those who are poor and vulnerable first. To that end, CST calls for an economy that functions "as an instrument for the overall growth of . . . the human quality of life"[1] and should be measured "not by what it produces but . . . whether it protects or undermines the dignity of the human person."[2] It is the moral dimension of the economy that addresses some of the underlying causes of poverty and human suffering.

In selecting the name Pope Francis, Cardinal Jorge Mario Bergoglio offered new relevance to the life and example of St. Francis of Assisi, who rejected a family context of wealth, prestige, and status to radically emulate Jesus' life and teachings by embracing poverty, simplicity, service, and true solidarity with people living in poverty. In explaining why he chose the name Francis, the Pope stated:

1. *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, 326.
2. *Economic Justice for All*, para. 2.

> During the election, I was seated next to . . . Cardinal Claudio Hummes . . . a good friend! When things were looking dangerous, he encouraged me. And when the votes reached two thirds, there was the usual applause. . . . And he gave me a hug and a kiss, and said "Don't forget the poor!" And those words came to me: the poor, the poor. Then, right away, thinking of the poor, I thought of Francis of Assisi. . . . That is how the name came into my heart: Francis of Assisi. For me, he is the man of poverty, the man of peace, the man who loves and protects creation. . . . How I would like a Church which is poor and for the poor![3]

In the early months of his papacy, Pope Francis made clear that his ministry will be characterized by an effort to rebuild God's church in a way that service to and solidarity with the poor will be given primacy. Onlookers have taken notice of his humble actions in the first days of his papacy: forgoing the ermine-rimmed cape to dress in simple garments at the public announcement of his election; asking for the people's blessing as he undertook his position, rather than blessing the people; selecting simple quarters rather than the palatial papal apartment; washing the feet of young men and women in a juvenile detention center on Holy Thursday, and visiting an impoverished *favela* in Brazil, to name just a few examples.

In the first homily of his papacy, Pope Francis called attention to everyone's responsibility to "embrace with tender affection the whole of humanity, especially the poorest, the weakest, the least important, those whom Matthew lists in the final judgment on love."[4] Furthermore, he also addressed the notion of power and its expression in the person of the pope when stating, "Let us never forget that authentic power is service, and that the Pope too, when exercising power, must enter ever more fully into that service which has its radiant culmination on the Cross."[5] In a later homily,

3. Pope Francis, Address of the Holy Father to Representatives of the Communications Media, Saturday, March 16, 2013, http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/francesco/speeches/2013/march/documents/papa-francesco_20130316_rappresentanti-media_en.html.

4. Pope Francis, Homily of the Holy Father at the Inauguration of his Papal Ministry, March 19, 2013, http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/francesco/homilies/2013/documents/papa-francesco_20130319_omelia-inizio-pontificato_en.html.

5. Ibid.

Pope Francis added, "Real power is service. . . . And there is no other way in the Church to move forward. For the Christian, getting ahead, progress, means humbling oneself. If we do not learn this Christian rule, we will never, ever, be able to understand Jesus' true message on power."[6]

Similarly, the pope has also called attention to the role of the economy in exacerbating wealth inequalities, poverty, human suffering, and the subjugation of people, echoing Pope Benedict's warning about "the scandal of glaring inequalities."[7] He has called for a "return to person-centered ethics in the world of finance and economics" and a "balanced social order that is more humane."[8] In a powerful speech in a poor Brazilian *favela*, Francis spoke directly to and about the poor:

> And the Brazilian people, particularly the humblest among you, can offer the world a valuable lesson in solidarity, a word that is too often forgotten or silenced, because it is uncomfortable. I would like to make an appeal to those in possession of greater resources, to public authorities and to all people of good will who are working for social justice: never tire of working for a more just world, marked by greater solidarity! No one can remain insensitive to the inequalities that persist in the world! Everybody, according to his or her particular opportunities and responsibilities, should be able to make a personal contribution to putting an end to so many social injustices. The culture of selfishness and individualism that often prevails in our society is not what builds up and leads to a more habitable world: it is the culture of solidarity that does so, seeing others not as rivals or statistics, but brothers and sisters. . . . The measure of the greatness of a society is found in the way it treats those most in need, those who have nothing apart from their poverty![9]

6. Pope Francis, Homily, May 21, 2013, http://en.radiovaticana.va/news/2013/05/21/pope_at_mass:_true_power,_even_in_the_church,_is_in_serving_others/en1-694087.

7. *Caritas in Veritate*, 22.

8. Pope Francis, Address to the New Non-Resident Ambassadors to the Holy See: Kyrgyzstan, Antigua and Barbuda, Luxembourg and Botswana, May 16, 2013.

9. "Full Text: Pope Francis Visits Rio Shanty Town," Catherine Harmon, *The Catholic World News Report*, July 25, 2013, http://www.catholicworldreport.com/Blog/2446/full_text_pope_francis_visits_rio_shanty_town.aspx#.UgJ9CdKsg6Y; accessed August 7, 2013.

Pope Francis' early papacy continues a long history of CST in emphasizing our responsibility for creating a society where all people can flourish, giving special attention to those who are poor and marginalized and to an economy that promotes human development. CST assumes that participation in societal life, local and global, public and economic, is an inherently moral undertaking. To that end, CST can be a powerful tool in guiding ethical and moral dimensions of professional practice and good citizenship where the preferential option for the poor can be used as a primary principle through which to assess one's action in the world.

This chapter will discuss issues of poverty in light of CST. We will provide an overview of the prevalence of poverty in the United States and globally, briefly review CST on poverty and the economy, and then offer some examples of how Catholic colleges and universities are teaching about issues of poverty and the economy through the lens of CST. This chapter comes with several disclaimers. First, it is written by two social scientists who study poverty, not by moral theologians. We are not scholarly experts in CST, but out of interest, we have pursued courses and independent reading in order to bring CST to light in our own disciplines. Second, theologians have written extensively about CST, poverty and the economy, and we do not intend this chapter to be an exhaustive analysis of all the relevant encyclicals and other documents. Our intent in this chapter is to present a basic overview of both poverty and CST as it relates to poverty and the economy.

Poverty

Poverty is a global experience that violates human dignity, undermines the common good, and requires us to respond to the call of the prophets to "do justice, love goodness, and walk humbly with God" (Mic 6:8). In 2011, 15 percent of Americans lived in poverty. This represents 46.2 million people, including 16.1 million children[10] and is the largest number of Americans living in poverty since the government started tracking this statistic in 1952. In addition, 6.6 percent of Americans, or 20.4 million people, live in "deep poverty" where their incomes are only one-half of the poverty threshold (see table 1). In other words, there are families of

10. Census, 2011.

four in America who are trying to live on less than $11,525 per year, and 1 in 50 Americans report no other source of income other than food stamps.[11]

Families who rely on food stamps as their sole source of income are either homeless, living with friends and family members, drawing on meager savings, staying in subsidized apartments, bartering services, searching for under-the-table jobs, or engaging in some other survival strategy. As the most recent recession was taking its toll, food-stamp enrollment exploded from 26.3 million recipients in 2007 to 46 million recipients in 2011.[12] Around this same time (2007 to 2010), family homelessness increased by 20 percent, and families using emergency or transitional housing increased from 30 to 35 percent. Homelessness is the most severe expression of poverty in the United States.

Table 1. 2012 Poverty guidelines for the forty-eight contiguous states and the District of Columbia[13]

Persons in Household	Annual Income
1	$11,170
2	$15,130
3	$19,090
4	$23,050
5	$27, 010
6	$30, 970
7	$34, 930
8	$38, 890

11. J. DeParle, "Living on Nothing but Food Stamps," *The New York Times*, January 3, 2010. Retrieved from http://query.nytimes.com/gst/fullpage.html?res=940DE4DD173EF930A35752C0A9669D8B63&ref=thesafetynet&pagewanted=print

12. P. Edelman, *So Rich, So Poor: Why It's So Hard to End Poverty in America.* (New York: The New Press, 2012).

13. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (2012). "Poverty guidelines." Retrieved from http://aspe.hhs.gov/poverty/12poverty.shtml.

Poverty has been creeping up from its 2000 level at 11.3 percent to its current rate of 15.1 percent where it has held steady for the past two years.[14] We also know that poverty can have devastating consequences for children. Children growing up in poverty have worse health outcomes compared with children growing up in financially stable households. They have higher rates of asthma, diabetes, and other chronic illness versus their non-impoverished counterparts.[15] Due to stressful family contexts, children in poverty start to lag behind in school at an early age and generally attend lower-quality schools, causing them to be less prepared for high school. Consequently, they have higher high school dropout rates, are less likely to attend college, and have less education overall and fewer contacts in the labor market to compete for better paying jobs.[16] So children growing up in poverty often stay in poverty or enter the ranks of the "near poor."

The number of low-income or "near-poor" working families continues to rise and is projected to reach 50 million people in the next few years.[17] Figure 1 shows the percentage of working families by poverty status. Over 30 percent of working families meet the threshold of being low-income or poor, and like their nonworking counterparts, they struggle to cover basic expenses such as housing, utilities, day care, transportation, and food. They tend to work low-paying jobs such as food service, retail, housekeeping, and health care (e.g., medical assistants). Cashiering is the most common occupation for low-income families.[18]

14. Ibid.

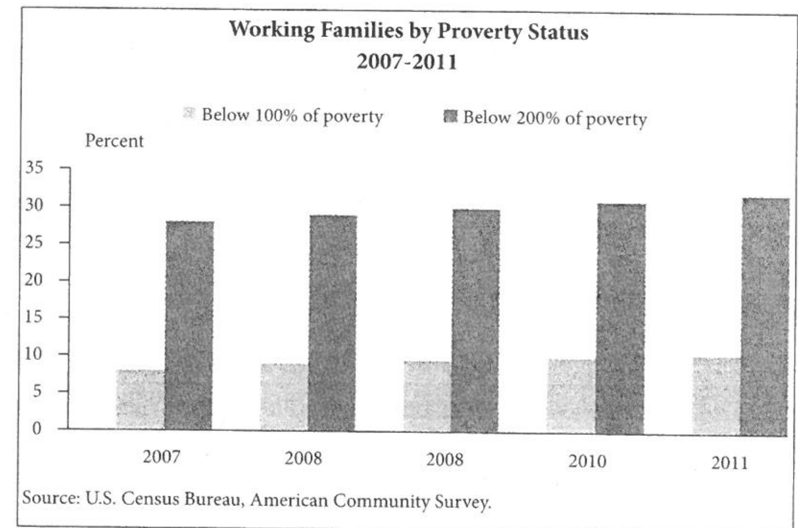
15. K. Magnuson and E. Votruba-Dryzal, "Enduring Influences of Childhood Poverty," in *Changing Poverty, Changing Policies*, ed. Maria Concian and Sheldon Danziger (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 2009).

16. Ibid., and H. Holzer, "Penny Wise, Pound Foolish: Why Tackling Child Poverty during the Great Recession Makes Economic Sense" (2010). Retrieved from http://www.americanprogress.org/issues/2010/09/pdf/hit_childpoverty.pdf.

17. Working Poor Families Project (2012–2013). "Low-Income Working Families: The Growing Economic Gap." Retrieved from http://www.workingpoorfamilies.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/01/Winter-2012_2013-WPFP-Data-Brief.pdf.

18. Ibid.

Figure 1. Working families by poverty status



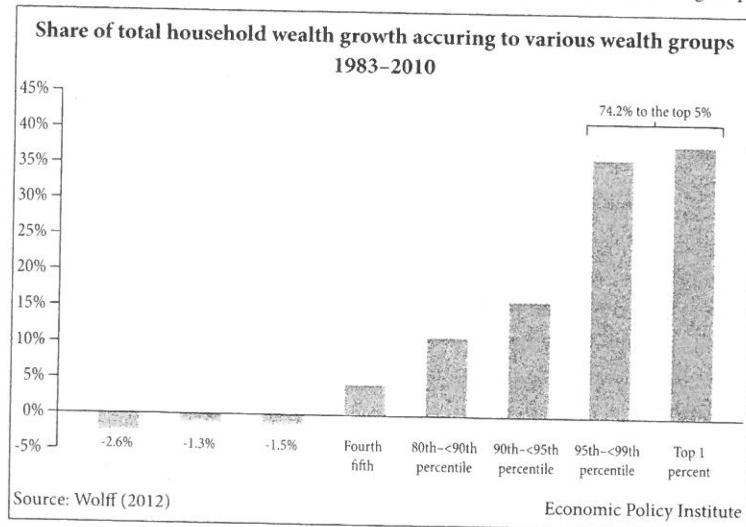
Labor analysts predict that occupations such as retail sales, home health aides, and personal care aides will be among the fastest growing occupations,[19] yet these jobs represent some of the lowest paying jobs in the economy. Because low-wage, low-income members of working families often hold more than one job to make ends meet, they have little time to spend with their families, participate in their communities, or attend to spiritual or leisure activities, among other things. CST stresses that participation in such spheres of life gives meaning to our lives and helps us realize our human dignity.

While poverty, low-wage jobs, and homelessness in America are growing, the gap in wealth among Americans is widening, i.e., the rich are getting richer and the poor are getting poorer (see figure 2.) Wealth refers to one's total assets, including real estate, stocks, bank accounts (savings, checking), minus total liabilities (credit card debt, mortgages, etc.). Wealth, more than income, speaks to a family's security and ability to

19. M. Lockard and M. Wolf, "Occupational Employment Projections to 2020," *Monthly Labor Review* 135, no. 1 (2012): 84–108. Retrieved from http://www.bls.gov/opub/mlr/2012/01/art5full.pdf.

pursue opportunities (e.g., borrowing on home equity for college) or withstanding economic setbacks (e.g., liquidating assets to cover expenses in the event of job loss). One's wealth can explain differences in how families manage during an economic recovery. For example, stock markets tend to recover faster than labor markets, so families with wealth will recover from economic setbacks faster than those whose assets are primarily tied to family income versus physical or investment assets. Wealthy households are more insulated from the effects of stagnating wages, increasing health costs, high rates of unemployment, and the impact of foreclosures experienced by the majority of Americans.

Figure 2. Share of total household wealth growth accruing to various wealth groups



While numerically more white people experience poverty than other groups, blacks and Hispanics, whose poverty rates are 27.6 percent and 25.3 percent respectively, disproportionately experience poverty.[20] People of color disproportionately work in low-wage jobs, have less-than-

20. U.S. Census Bureau, "Income, Poverty, and Health Insurance Coverage in the United States" (2011). Retrieved from http://www.census.gov/prod/2012pubs/p60-243.pdf.

desirable educational opportunities, have greater exposure to violence, and are subject to racism and discrimination, all of which impede their economic opportunity. Poverty also has a disproportionate effect on women. About 34 percent (34.2 percent) of families headed by single women are poor with 16.9 percent of such families living in "deep poverty."[21] This feminization of poverty is largely related to employment in low-wage occupations wage disparity between men and women,[22] lack of affordable housing and child care, experience of violence and abuse, and an inadequate safety net.[23] The poverty rate for children has risen from 16.2 percent in 2000 to 21.9 percent in 2011, and 9.7 percent of children under 18 live in deep poverty.[24]

The feminization of poverty is a global phenomenon. Of the 1.4 billion people in the world living in extreme poverty,[25] 70 percent of them are women.[26] Throughout the world, discrimination against girls and women undermines their access to education, employment, and participation in government.[27] All over the world, violence (physical, sexual, psychological) is a universal experience for women and girls that cuts across class and culture. The percentage of women reported to have experienced physical violence at least once in their lifetime ranges from 12 percent to 59 percent, depending on the country, and between 6 percent and 35

21. Ibid.

22. According to the Institute for Women's Policy Research, women earn 77 cents on every dollar earned by their male counterparts ("The Gender Wage Gap: 2011," September 2012).

23. While food stamp enrollment skyrocketed from 2007 to 2010 (46 million), households receiving Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) have remained surprisingly low at 4.5 million households in 2011 (Edelman, 2012), giving evidence of the challenges to getting cash assistance since the 1996 welfare reform bill was passed.

24. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, "Information on Poverty and Income Statistics: A Summary of 2012 Current Population Survey Data" (2012). Retrieved from http://aspe.hhs.gov/hsp/12/povertyandincomeest/ib.shtml.

25. United Nations defines "extreme poverty" as living on less than $1.25 per day.

26. UN Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women, http://www.unifem.org/gender_issues/women_poverty_economics/.

27. United Nations, "The Millennium Development Goals Report," 2012.

percent report having experienced sexual violence.[28] Violence against women is both a cause and consequence of poverty. Furthermore, violent conflicts throughout the world have uprooted many people. The United Nations reports that by the end of 2011, approximately 42.5 million people were "living in a place to which they had been forcibly displaced due to conflict or persecution."[29]

With poverty comes hunger. Approximately 850 million people in the world suffer from hunger and malnutrition, contributing to disease, illness, and death. The World Health Organization estimates that malnutrition is the root cause of more than one-third of childhood deaths.[30] Due to malnutrition and unsanitary and environmental conditions, children are susceptible to serious diseases like cholera, malaria, yellow fever, dengue fever, and tuberculosis. Every year, a million people die of malaria, and 90 percent of those are children who live in sub-Saharan Africa.[31] Lack of access to healthy, nutritious food is a problem even in wealthy countries like the United States, as 20 percent of all U.S. households with children under age 18 suffered from food insecurity in 2011.[32]

Catholic Social Teaching on Poverty and the Economy

Catholic Social Teaching on poverty begins with the Hebrew prophets crying out for justice for the most vulnerable in their societies and continues in the example of Jesus and the formation of the earliest Christian communities, who demonstrated love of God and love of neighbor in their everyday interactions. While concern for and charity toward the poor existed for many centuries, the first "official" document of CST appeared in 1891, with Pope Leo XIII's *Rerum Novarum* (On the Condition of Labor). Coming against the backdrop of the Industrial Revolution, this encyclical aligned the church with social justice concerns such as the

28. UN Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women.

29. United Nations, "The Millennium Development Goals Report," 2012.

30. World Health Organization, "World Health Statistics," 2009.

31. World Health Organization.

32. United States Department of Agriculture Economic Research Service, http://www.ers.usda.gov/topics/food-nutrition-assistance/food-security-in-the-us/key-statistics-graphics.aspx#.UeMLVtKsiSo, accessed July 12, 2013.

right to a living wage, just working conditions, and the right of workers to form labor unions.[33] Through this encyclical, Pope Leo XIII was reading and responding to "signs of the times," specifically, the condition and exploitation of workers during the industrial revolution.

Catholic Social Teaching speaks to the responsibility of the church to scrutinize the signs of the times and interpret them in light of the gospel.[34] Developing a thoughtful method of social analysis enables the church's teaching to deepen, evolve, and respond to contemporary questions that effect human existence and social relationships. As noted in the introduction, in addition to official documents that comprise CST, the broader Catholic social tradition also encompasses the work of organizations such as Catholic Charities, the Catholic Campaign for Human Development, and Catholic Relief Services, as well as the example of leaders such as Dorothy Day and Mother Teresa.

Catholic Social Teaching is often discussed in terms of "key themes," and commentators have used various schemas to present these key themes. Several common themes are of particular importance when considering issues of poverty and the economy. The first two are the dignity of the human person and the concept of the common good.[35] These themes undergird CST and are critically important for considering the moral implications of poverty and inequality.

The dignity of the human person, simply put, states that every person is valued and loved in the eyes of God. Too often our society marginalizes people who are poor, homeless, or hungry, but CST asserts that they have inherent dignity and equal value as human beings. Thomas Massaro, SJ, explains that CST calls for a more equal sharing of economic resources and power and extends the theological doctrine of human dignity into

33. See Thomas Massaro, *Living Justice: Catholic Social Teaching in Action*, 2nd ed. (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2012), 33–76, for an excellent discussion of the historical development of Catholic Social Teaching.

34. *Gaudium et Spes.*

35. Lists of key themes of Catholic Social Teaching generally begin with the dignity of the human person, but Todd David Whitmore argues that starting with the concept of the common good is actually a better starting ground. See Todd David Whitmore, "Catholic Social Teaching: Starting with the Concept of the Common Good," in *Living the Catholic Social Tradition: Cases and Commentaries*, ed. Kathleen Maas Weigert and Alexia K. Kelley (Lanham, MD: Sheed & Ward), 59–81.

the social and political realm.[36] The concept of the common good runs counter to the prevailing cultural ethos of individualism and calls us to see that we are *interdependent* members of one human family. In this light, the fact that people in our midst are living in deep, despairing poverty and lacking basic needs (food, shelter, education, health care, and so on) is not a problem only for the poor. It is a problem for all of us, since we are interdependent. Catholic Social Teaching views human nature as fundamentally social in that people live together in a community, not as self-maximizing individualists. If we are fundamentally social, then the notion of the *common* good prevails, not a notion of "what's in it for me?"

Catholic Social Teaching defines the common good as "the sum of all social conditions which allow people, either as groups or as individuals, to reach their fulfillment more fully and more easily."[37] Included among the social conditions that promote human development are "a commitment to peace; the organization of State powers; a sound juridical system, the protection of the environment, and the provision of essential services to all, some of which are at the same time human rights: food, housing, work, education and access to culture, transportation, basic health care, the freedom of communication and expression, and the protection of religious freedom."[38]

Theologian David Todd Whitmore believes that the notion of the common good is the fundamental starting point of CST, as human dignity arises from the relationships people have with each other,[39] including economic relationships. David Hollenbach, also a theologian, reflects that our economic choices can promote relationships that support or undermine human dignity and the common good:

> [Some choices may result in greater] inequality or exclusion from resources necessary for the realization of human dignity. . . . Such negative interdependence is evident between groups whose interactions are marred by domination or oppression, by conflict or war, or who are living under economic institutions that exclude some people from relationships that are prerequisite for decent lives. Morally positive [choices are] . . . marked by equality and reciprocity. Those who are interacting show respect for each other's equal human dignity and relate to each other in ways that reciprocally support each other's dignity and freedom.[40]

36. Massaro, *Living Justice*, 82.
37. *Compendium*, 164.
38. *Compendium*, 166.
39. Whitmore, "Catholic Social Teaching," 60.

Pope Benedict's 2009 encyclical letter *Caritas in Veritate* (Charity in Truth) highlights the importance of interdependent relationships: "As a spiritual being, the human creature is defined through interpersonal relations. The more authentically he or she lives these relations, the more his or her own personal identity matures. It is not by isolation that man establishes his worth, but by placing himself in relation with others and with God."[41] David Coleman offers a fuller philosophical reflection on CST and the common good in chapter 3 of this volume.

Flowing from the ideas of the common good and dignity of the human person is the notion of solidarity, as it emphasizes interdependence and common humanity as opposed to individualism. Solidarity is an especially important theme when learning about poverty and the economy as it is considered both a "social principle" and "moral virtue" that calls for the transformation of "structures of sin" into "structures of solidarity."[42] When Pope Francis called us to "embrace the whole of humanity, especially the poorest,"[43] he was referring to the universal quality of solidarity (i.e., solidarity with everyone, especially people who are poor) in order to restore them to fully participating members of the community. College students who have come from privileged backgrounds may have had little interaction with people who are poor. If they have done social service in high school, they have likely perceived and experienced it as doing charity

40. D. Hollenbach, "Economic Justice and the New Challenges of Globalization," in *The Almighty and the Dollar*, ed. Mark Allman (Winona, MN: Christian Brothers Publications, 2012), 102.
41. Pope Benedict XVI, *Caritas in Veritate* (2009), 53, http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/encyclicals/documents/hf_ben-xvi_enc_20090629_caritas-in-veritate_en.html.
42. *Compendium*, 193.
43. Pope Frances, Homily of the Holy Father at the Inauguration of his Papal Ministry, March 19, 2013.

for those who are other. In college, public service programs and immersion trips to poor areas domestically and abroad can reinforce a charity model. Students taking social science classes may read books and articles that inadvertently contribute to the notion of the poor as "other."

Considering poverty through a lens of solidarity can confront a charity model which treats the poor as unfortunate "others" lower in the social hierarchy. Solidarity, by contrast, emphasizes that the poor are equal members of the human family. Further, solidarity implies interdependence—something which people who might be volunteering in or doing service learning in poor communities need to keep in mind. In this way of thinking, privileged volunteers are not "rescuing" people, but rather are learning from people and working together with them in partnership. Both solidarity and interdependence lead to a model of community engagement which highlights both charity and justice, seeking to understand the social structural reasons underlying many problems and working with neighborhood residents to develop solutions together rather than imposing solutions as outsiders.

Pope John Paul II's 1987 encyclical *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis* (On Social Concern) states the following:

> [Solidarity] is not a feeling of vague compassion or shallow distress at the misfortune of so many people, both near and far. On the contrary, it is a firm and persevering determination to commit oneself to the common good; that is to say to the good of all and of each individual, because really we are responsible for all. . . . Solidarity . . . helps us to see the other . . . as our neighbor . . . on a par with ourselves, in the banquet of life to which all are equally invited by God. . . . The motivating concern for the poor must be translated at all levels into concrete actions, until it decisively attains a series of reforms.

In chapter 9, the essay by Ron Pagnucco and Peter Gichure explores a variety of ways in which solidarity has been theorized and practiced and relates these broader understandings to the Catholic notion of solidarity.

Participation is another important theme of CST linked to notions of solidarity and the common good. In summary this theme says that a test of a good society is one in which everyone has the opportunity to participate. Injustices that block participation in educational, economic, and

social spheres, for example, deny people who are poor their right to play a full role in society. The church has a long-standing concern with worker rights and underscores the belief that people have a fundamental right to participate fairly in economic life.

Pope Leo XIII outlined a number of labor-related rights in the 1891 Papal encyclical *Rerum Novarum*. Subsequent encyclicals have also addressed the dignity of work, safe working conditions, and a living wage where one could support a family. In his 1981 encyclical *Laborem Exercens* (On Human Work), Pope John Paul II identified work as the "key to the social question," where work is the way in which human beings participate in the creative activity of God, realize their dignity, and contribute to the common good. Furthermore, he made clear that human beings are the subject of work versus instruments or objects of work. If one views workers merely as instruments of work, one might ignore the ultimate purpose of labor (i.e., promoting human development and participation). In connecting the dignity of work with poverty, Pope Benedict XVI wrote that "poverty results from a violation of the dignity of human work, either because work opportunities are limited (through unemployment or underemployment), or because a low value is put on work and the rights that flow from it, especially the right to a just wage and to the personal security of the worker and his or her family."[44]

Catholic Social Teaching particularly concerns itself with people who are poor. The "preferential option for the poor" in CST states that the measure by which any society should be judged as a moral society depends upon how it treats its poorest members.[45] The preferential option for the poor was forcefully stated in the U.S. context in the U.S. bishops 1986 letter, *Economic Justice for All: Pastoral Letter on Catholic Social Teaching and the U.S. Economy*. "The obligation to evaluate social and economic activity from the viewpoint of the poor and the powerless arises from the radical command to love one's neighbor as one's self. Those who

44. *Caritas in Veritate*, para. 63.

45. The term "preferential option for the poor" derives from liberation theology in Latin America in the 1970s. While some aspects of liberation theology were criticized by the Vatican as Marxist in their notions of class struggle and polarization, the theme of the preferential option for the poor has become an important part of Catholic Social Teaching.

are marginalized and whose rights are denied have privileged claims if society is to provide justice for all."[46]

The letter goes on to explicitly address a variety of public policies, stating, "The way society responds to the needs of the poor through its public policies is the litmus test of its justice or injustice."[47] Catholic poverty policy analyst and Harvard public policy professor Mary Jo Bane, who resigned her post as the assistant secretary at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services in protest of the 1996 welfare reform law, has written on the impact of Catholic social thought in viewing poverty and poverty policy. Bane, an accomplished social scientist and experienced high-level social services administrator, assesses poverty policy initiatives in some detail in her essay "A Catholic Poverty Analyst Looks at Poverty."[48] For Bane, the challenge of poverty in the United States "lies in the fact that some Americans lack one or more of the most important capabilities necessary for human flourishing in this society" in that they "lack income, or opportunities to work, or opportunities to participate fully in society."[49]

Catholic Social Teaching tells us that people with resources have responsibilities to others who do not. As Thomas Massaro, SJ, puts it, "To recognize our property as coming under a social mortgage means that we cannot disregard the needs of the less fortunate, use our property in ways that harm them, or exclude them from full participation in society."[50] The notion of social mortgage relates to the CST concept "universal destination of goods" where one's right to private property and ownership is not for self-enrichment, but for facilitating the "development of the whole person and all of humanity."[51]

46. *Economic Justice for All*, 87.

47. *Economic Justice for All*, 123.

48. Mary Jo Bane and Lawrence M. Mead, "A Catholic Policy Analyst Looks at Poverty," in *Lifting up the Poor: A Dialogue on Religion, Poverty, and Welfare Reform* (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press, 2003), 12–51.

49. Ibid, 21.

50. Massaro, *Living Justice*, 95.

51. *Compendium*, 177.

Catholic Social Teaching describes a business enterprise as a "community of solidarity"[52] where interdependent and mutually beneficial relationships are present. Catholic Social Teaching speaks out forcefully against consumerism. Pope John Paul II warned against the "civilization of consumerism" that involves the over-accumulation of material goods, making us "slaves of possession and of immediate gratification"[53] where the focus is on *having* rather than on *being*. He even drew similarities between consumerism and other "ideological evils" such as Marxism, Nazism, and Fascism, stating that all tend to elevate the individual to the exclusion of the common good and the dignity of all human beings.[54]

Recently, Pope Francis has condemned the excesses of unbridled capitalism. "While the income of a minority is increasing exponentially, that of the majority is crumbling. This imbalance results from ideologies which uphold the absolute autonomy of markets and financial speculation, and thus deny the right of control to States, which are themselves charged with providing for the common good." Francis has condemned "a savage capitalism [that] has taught the logic of profit at all cost, of giving to get, of exploitation without looking at the persons . . . and we see the results in the crisis we are living."[55] Again and again, we see CST on the economy connecting with the key CST principles of solidarity, dignity of the human person, the importance of worker rights, and the preferential option for the poor. Scholar Rebecca Todd Peters comments, "If the principle of solidarity was central to the development of . . . economic

52. *Compendium*, 340.

53. *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis*, 28.

54. Message of His Holiness Pope John Paul II for the celebration of the World Day of Peace, January 1, 1999. Retrieved from http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/messages/peace/documents/hf_jp-ii_mes_14121998_xxxii-world-day-for-peace_en.html.

55. M. S. Winters, "Pope Francis Spotlights Social Teaching with Blunt Calls for Ethical Economy," *National Catholic Reporter* (June 1, 2013). Retrieved from http://ncronline.org/news/vatican/pope-francis-spotlights-social-teaching-blunt-calls-ethical-economy.

policy, it could contribute to the development of an alternative vision of economic life rooted in the common good."[56]

While a thorough historical discussion of the complexities of CST on the economy is beyond the scope of this essay, CST calls for an economy that serves the common good and integral human development.[57] According to the *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church* compiled by the Vatican Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace in 2004, modern CST affirms free markets but underscores their limitations and condemns their excesses.[58] Individual profit can never be the sole objective of the economy, and the market alone cannot supply all important human needs.[59] The market must be socially useful and in service to the common good, otherwise it becomes "an inhuman and alienating institution."[60] Markets must be regulated so as to serve the common good. "Freedom in the economic sector, however, must be regulated by appropriate legal norms so that it will be placed at the service of integral human freedom."[61]

In his encyclical *Caritas en Veritate* (Charity in Truth), Pope Benedict XVI highlights the importance of distributive justice and social justice for the market economy. He notes, "It must be remembered that the market does not exist in the pure state. It is shaped by the cultural configurations which define it and give it direction. Economy and finance, as instruments, can be used badly when those at the helm are motivated by purely selfish ends. . . . The economic sphere . . . must be structured and governed in an ethical manner"[62] Benedict continues, "The economy

56. R. T. Peters, "Considering a Solidarity Economy as a Framework for Justice," in *The Almighty and the Dollar*, ed. Mark Allman (Winona, MN: Christian Brothers Publications,2012), 137.

57. *Compendium*, 348.

58. Some critics contend that competitive economic systems such as markets are not compatible with Catholic Social Teaching. See, for example, Joe Torma's "The Cooperatist: Catholic Social Principles and Economics." While not rejecting markets, Rebecca Todd Peters calls for solidarity economies as alternatives to global free markets, such as barter economies, worker cooperatives; see R. T. Peters, "Considering a Solidarity Economy," 137.

59. *Compendium*, 349.

60. *Compendium*, 348.

61. *Compendium*, 350.

62. *Caritas in Veritate*, 36.

needs just laws and forms of redistribution governed by politics, and what is more, it needs works redolent of the spirit of gift."[63]

Catholic Social Teaching and Catholic Campuses in Solidarity with the Poor

Catholic Social Teaching demands that we stand in solidarity with people who are poor, engage in service to ameliorate their immediate needs, and work for justice to address the structural dimensions that violate their dignity and undermine the common good. Catholic campuses are using a variety of strategies to give students an opportunity to stand in solidarity with the poor at home and abroad. This section of the chapter highlights a few of many examples.

At the University of St. Thomas in Miami, the Center for Justice and Peace has engaged its students in global and local initiatives that seek social and economic justice. Their Global Solidarity Partnership (GSP) combines faculty research, curriculum development, student engagement, and community outreach to build the economic infrastructure of local communities in Haiti's Northwest region. The three long-term initiatives are a fair-trade coffee partnership, a women's artisan initiative, and sustainable solar energy initiatives. All three are designed to connect students and faculty with the people of Haiti in a collaborative partnership that enables relationships built on mutuality.

Closer to home, the Center for Justice and Peace helped students participate in a local faith-based organizing effort called People Acting for Community Together (PACT). Students intern with PACT, joining with the local community on issues residents care about, such as the drug problem and school safety, while taking courses on ethics and theology. Through the Center, students have also joined with the Coalition of Immokalee Workers while taking full 3-credit immersion courses that focus on the integration of CST, immigration, and farm labor.

In a graduate social work class on homelessness at the Catholic University of America, National Catholic School on Social Service students are invited to practice the principle of human dignity by engaging in a *regular* conversation with someone who is homeless that they meet on

63. *Caritas in Veritate*, 37.

the street. For these regular conversations, students are directed to talk about everyday things such as the weather, local sports, politics, etc., and not to explore the personal story of the individual, which may underscore difference and is often disrespectful. Students are invited to meet with this person at least three times over the course of the class to allow a relationship to emerge that is based on mutuality and respect for human dignity, not a relationship based on power, have-have not, or doing-for dynamics. Students then write a paper that reflects on this experience and course content and then identify whether or not it is possible to end homelessness.

At the College of the Holy Cross, a sociology seminar called Catholic Thought and Social Action challenges students to engage in a leadership project for social change while reading social science theories of leadership and democratic citizenship. The course is heavily steeped in Catholic social thought with students reading parts of social encyclicals, learning about the work of Catholic social agencies, and reading autobiographies of lay leaders such as Dorothy Day. Coordinating with community organizations, students in the seminar have worked to mobilize support for legislative issues with regard to affordable housing, education, the environment, and school nutrition and have been involved in community efforts to help low-income youth get summer jobs and expand college access.[64] Guided by Catholic social thought, students learn to work together with others toward a greater common good and learning to see the poor and marginalized people with whom they may be working not as charity recipients, but as people sharing a common dignity and humanity—people who are equals and partners in a struggle for greater justice.

At the University of Notre Dame, undergraduates can minor in the Catholic Social Tradition. This minor was established in 1997 in order to provide graduates entering a wide variety of professions a solid grounding in the social justice teachings of the Catholic Church. As opposed to a primary emphasis on volunteer work, the program's emphasis is on preparing students for service through their professional vocations. To obtain the minor, students must complete fifteen credit hours, including the Catholic Social Tradition core course, two three-credit electives, a

64. Sullivan and Post, "Combining Community-Based Learning and Catholic Social Teaching," 126.

senior capstone, and three one-credit seminars or colloquia on social concerns. Electives can include service learning and internship courses in the United States and abroad, as well as topical courses on issues relevant to CST, such as poverty or immigration. After completing the minor, graduates are well-prepared to take the rich social justice teaching of the Catholic Church into their future careers.

A number of Catholic colleges and universities partner with Catholic Relief Services (CRS) to integrate Catholic social thought and action on issues of international poverty. Cabrini College hosted the first campus CRS ambassadors' program where students who are committed to global humanitarian concerns raise awareness about global conditions on their campuses, hold regular meetings for students to learn more about and discuss issues of global poverty, and even engage in legislative initiatives to advance human rights and social and economic justice. One outcome of the Cabrini College-CRS partnership was student involvement in lobbying for comprehensive immigration reform. This lobbying effort was the culmination of a semester-long study of immigration issues and CST. Cabrini College was able to link this effort to their institutional identity, as St. Francis Cabrini is the patron saint of immigrants.

William Vos, Agnes Kithikii, and Ron Pagnucco[65] describe how the principle of mutuality (a core element of solidarity) informed the growth and development of a partnership between the Dioceses of St. Cloud and Homa Bay, Kenya. This CRS Global Solidarity Initiative includes faculty, students, and staff of the College of Saint Benedict/Saint John's University in the partnership. The partnership began in 1999 with an intention to create a collaboration based on a recognition that each partner has gifts to be shared, responsibility for creating a shared vision, along with mutually developed roles and responsibilities in the partnership. It was designed with an intention toward avoiding the traditional "sister diocese" or "sending church/receiving church" relationship. The essay identifies factors that lead to developing strong partnerships that truly reflect global solidarity. Catholic Relief Services has extensive resources for classroom use, which can be accessed online at www.crscollege.org.

65. W. Vos, A. Kithikii, and R. Pagnucco, "A Case Study in Global Solidarity: The St. Cloud-Homa Bay Partnership," *Journal for Peace & Justice Studies* 17, no. 1 (2008): 45–60.

Conclusion

Jesus conveyed the essence of his ministry when he stated, "He has sent me to bring good news to the poor, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and to set the oppressed free" (Luke 4:18). Catholic Social Teaching is a rich resource for students to use as the lens through which they see, judge, and act in the world. Catholic colleges and universities are in a unique position to help students carry on that ministry on their campuses and beyond in concrete ways that show a preferential option for and solidarity with the poor. Several Catholic campuses offer powerful examples of how to use CST to deepen students' understanding of the structural dimensions of poverty and to give them opportunities to act on that analysis. A variety of tools exist to help students promote CST as a lens for understanding. The signs of the times call on us to put these tools into action.

Discussion Questions:

1. Discuss an immersion or community-based learning experience that deepened your understanding or experience of being in solidarity with people who are poor. What aspect of that experience helped move you from a place of being in service to others to a place of solidarity with others?
2. What principles of CST resonate most with you in terms of one's responsibility to people who are poor and vulnerable? Explain.
3. What might be some of the barriers to building solidarity relationships with people who are poor? What can we do to overcome these barriers?
4. Discuss whether or not CST (particularly principles of human dignity, the common good, solidarity, and the preferential option for the poor) adds anything to the secular discourse on the condition of poverty, the state of the economy, and societal responses to it.
5. Using a CST lens, how would you address the tension between profit-making and human development in a business enterprise?

A Vision of Justice: Engaging Catholic Social Teaching on the College Campus draws together the insights of social scientists, historians, and theologians in order to introduce readers to central topics in Catholic Social Teaching and to provide concrete examples of how it is being put into action by colleges and college students. The authors bring their disciplinary backgrounds and knowledge of Catholic Social Teaching to the exploration of the issues, making this book suitable for use in a wide range of courses and settings. Discussion questions at the end of each chapter help readers to think about issues raised in the essays and to think creatively about Catholic Social Teaching in an ever-changing world. The authors invite readers to join them in engaging contemporary thought and experience in the light of Catholic Social Teaching and the college campus.

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"[A] collection of intellectually stimulating, historically rooted, and empirically grounded essays. . . . [They] address the challenge we all face: to make CST no longer the 'best-kept secret.'"

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