
Pope John Paul II's 'Centesimus Annus'

The name for peace is development

Editor's note: Any abridgement of so complex and far-reaching a document, runs the risk of falsifying the meaning of the original by its sins of omission, so to speak. Yet space limitations constrain us to present less than the full text of the encyclical Centesimus Annus, which is dated May 1, 1991, and was issued in commemoration of the 100th anniversary of Pope Leo XIII's encyclical Rerum Novarum, of 1891. We indicate our ellisions by the punctuation (. . .) Ellipses which are in the original encyclical itself, are indicated by ". . ." without parentheses. Footnotes have been omitted.

Chapter 1: Characteristics of 'Rerum Novarum'

4. Toward the end of the last century the church found herself facing a historical process which had already been taking place for some time but which was by then reaching a critical point. The determining factor in this process was a combination of radical changes which had taken place in the political, economic, and social fields, and in the areas of science and technology, to say nothing of the wide influence of the prevailing ideologies.(. . .) A traditional society was passing away and another was beginning to be formed—one which brought the hope of new freedoms, but also the threat of new forms of injustice and servitude.

In the sphere of economics, in which scientific discoveries and their practical application come together, new structures for the production of consumer goods had progressively taken shape. A new form of property had appeared—capital; and a new form of labor—labor for wages, characterized by high rates of production which lacked due regard for sex, age, or family situation and were determined solely by efficiency, with a view to increasing profits.

In this way labor became a commodity to be freely bought and sold on the market, its price determined by the law of supply and demand without taking into account the bare minimum required for the support of the individual and his family. Moreover, the worker was not even sure of being able to sell "his own commodity," continually threatened as he was by unemployment, which in the absence of any kind of social security meant the specter of death by starvation.

The result of this transformation was a society "divided into two classes separated by a deep chasm."(. . .) Thus the

prevailing political theory of the time sought to promote total economic freedom by appropriate laws or, conversely, by a deliberate lack of any intervention. At the same time, another conception of property and economic life was beginning to appear in an organized and often violent form, one which implied a new political and social structure.

At the height of this clash, when people finally began to realize fully the very grave injustice of social realities in many places and the danger of a revolution fanned by ideals which were then called "socialist," Pope Leo XIII intervened with a document which dealt in a systematic way with the "condition of the workers."(. . .)

5. (. . .) The pope and the church with him were confronted, as was the civil community, by a society which was torn by a conflict all the more harsh and inhumane because it knew no rule or regulation. It was the conflict between capital and labor or—as the encyclical puts it—the worker question.(. . .)

Here we find the first reflection for our times as suggested by the encyclical. In the face of a conflict which set man against man, almost as if they were "wolves," a conflict between the extremes of mere physical survival on the one side and opulence on the other, the pope did not hesitate to intervene by virtue of his "apostolic office,"(. . .) to restore peace, and the present-day reader cannot fail to note his severe condemnation, in no uncertain terms, of the class struggle. However, the pope was very much aware that peace is built on the foundation of justice: What was essential to the encyclical was precisely its proclamation of the fundamental conditions for justice in the economic and social situation of the time.(. . .)

In Pope Leo XIII's time such a concept of the church's right and duty was far from being commonly admitted. Indeed, a twofold approach prevailed: one directed to this world and this life, to which faith ought to remain extraneous; the other directed toward a purely otherworldly salvation, which neither enlightens nor directs existence on earth. The pope's approach in publishing gave the church "citizenship status" as it were amid the changing realities of public life, and this standing would be more fully confirmed later on.(. . .)

6. With the intention of shedding light on the conflict which had arisen between capital and labor, Pope Leo XIII

affirmed the fundamental rights of workers. Indeed, the key to reading the encyclical is the dignity of the worker as such and, for the same reason, the dignity of work, which is defined as follows: "to exert oneself for the sake of procuring what is necessary for the various purposes of life and first of all for self-preservation." The pope describes work as "personal, inasmuch as the energy expended is bound up with the personality and is the exclusive property of him who acts and, furthermore, was given to him for his advantage." Work thus belongs to the vocation of every person; indeed, man expresses and fulfills himself by working. At the same time work has a "social" dimension through its intimate relationship not only to the family, but also to the common good, since "it may truly be said that it is only by the labor of workmen that states grow rich." (. . .)

Another important principle is undoubtedly that of the right to "private property." (. . .) This is something which must be affirmed once more in the face of the changes we are witnessing in systems formerly dominated by collective ownership of the means of production as well as in the face of the increasing instances of poverty or, more precisely, of hindrances to private ownership in many parts of the world, including those where systems predominate which are based on an affirmation of the right to private property. (. . .)

7. In close connection with the right to private property, Pope Leo XIII's encyclical also affirms other rights as inalienable and proper to the human person. Prominent among these, (. . .) is the "natural human right" to form private associations. This means above all the right to establish professional associations of employers and workers or of workers alone. Here we find the reason for the church's defense and approval of the establishment of what are commonly called trade unions: (. . .) because the right of association is a natural right of the human being, which therefore precedes his or her incorporation into political society. (. . .) Together with this right, which—it must be stressed—the pope explicitly acknowledges as belonging to workers or, using his own language, to "the working class," the encyclical affirms just as clearly the right to the "limitation of working hours," the right to legitimate rest, and the right of children and women to be treated differently with regard to the type and duration of work. (. . .)

8. The pope immediately adds another right which the worker has as a person. This is the right to a "just wage," which cannot be left to the "free consent of the parties, so that the employer, having paid what was agreed upon, has done his part and seemingly is not called upon to do anything beyond." (. . .) For if work as something personal belongs to the sphere of the individual's free use of his own abilities and energy, as something necessary it is governed by the grave obligation of every individual to ensure "the preservation of life." "It necessarily follows," the pope concludes, "that every individual has a natural right to procure what is required to live; and the poor can procure that in no other

way than by what they can earn through their work."

A workman's wages should be sufficient to enable him to support himself, his wife, and his children. "If through necessity or fear of a worse evil the workman accepts harder conditions because an employer or contractor will afford no better, he is made the victim of force and injustice."

Would that these words, written at a time when what has been called "unbridled capitalism" was pressing forward, should not have to be repeated today with the same severity. Unfortunately, even today one finds instances of contracts between employers and employees which lack reference to the most elementary justice regarding the employment of children or women, working hours, the hygienic condition of the workplace and fair pay; and this is the case despite the international declarations and conventions on the subject and the internal laws of states. (. . .)

10. (. . .) *Rerum Novarum* criticizes two social and economic systems: socialism and liberalism. The opening section, in which the right to private property is reaffirmed, is devoted to socialism. Liberalism is not the subject of a special section, but it is worth noting that criticisms of it are raised in the treatment of the duties of the state. The state cannot limit itself to "favoring one portion of the citizens," namely the rich and prosperous, nor can it "neglect the other," which clearly represents the majority of society. Otherwise, there would be a violation of that law of justice which ordains that every person should receive his due, "When there is question of defending the rights of individuals, the defenseless and the poor have a claim to special consideration. The richer class has many ways of shielding itself and stands less in need of help from the state; whereas the mass of the poor have no resources of their own to fall back on and must chiefly depend on the assistance of the state. It is for this reason that wage earners, since they mostly belong to the latter class, should be specially cared for and protected by the government."

(. . .) Leo XIII is repeating an elementary principle of sound political organization, namely, the more that individuals are defenseless within a given society, the more they require the care and concern of others, and in particular the intervention of governmental authority.

In this way what we nowadays call the principle of solidarity, the validity of which both in the internal order of each nation and in the international order I have discussed in the encyclical *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis*, is clearly seen to be one of the fundamental principles of the Christian view of social and political organization. This principle is frequently stated by Pope Leo XIII, who uses the term *friendship*, a concept already found in Greek philosophy. Pope Pius XI refers to it with the equally meaningful term *social charity*. Pope Paul VI, expanding the concept to cover the many modern aspects of the social question, speaks of a *civilization of love*. (. . .)

11. (. . .) the main thread and in a certain sense the

guiding principle of Pope Leo's encyclical and of all of the church's social doctrine is a correct view of the human person and of his unique value inasmuch as "man . . . is the only creature on earth which God willed for itself." God has imprinted his own image and likeness on man (cf. Gn. 1:26), conferring upon him an incomparable dignity, as the encyclical frequently insists. In effect, beyond the rights which man acquires by his own work, there exist rights which do not correspond to any work he performs but which flow from his essential dignity as a person.

Chapter 2: Toward the 'new things' of today

12. The commemoration of *Rerum Novarum* would be incomplete unless reference were also made to the situation of the world today. (. . .)

This is especially confirmed by the events which took place near the end of 1989 and at the beginning of 1990. (. . .) Pope Leo foresaw the negative consequences—political, social and economic—of the social order proposed by "socialism," which at that time was still only a social philosophy and not yet a fully structured movement. (. . .) However, he correctly judged the danger posed to the masses by the attractive presentation of this simple and radical solution to the "question of the working class" of the time—all the more so when one considers the terrible situation of injustice in which the working classes of the recently industrialized nations found themselves. (. . .)

13. Continuing our reflections (. . .) we have to add that the fundamental error of socialism is anthropological in nature. Socialism considers the individual person simply as an element, a molecule within the social organism, so that the good of the individual is completely subordinated to the functioning of the socioeconomic mechanism. Socialism likewise maintains that the good of the individual can be realized without reference to his free choice, to the unique and exclusive responsibility which he exercises in the face of good or evil. Man is thus reduced to a series of social relationships, and the concept of the person as the autonomous subject of moral decision disappears, the very subject whose decisions build the social order. From this mistaken conception of the person there arise both a distortion of law, which defines the sphere of the exercise of freedom, and an opposition to private property. (. . .)

In contrast, from the Christian vision of the human person there necessarily follows a correct picture of society. According to *Rerum Novarum* and the whole social doctrine of the church, the social nature of man is not completely fulfilled in the state, but is realized in various intermediary groups, beginning with the family and including economic, social, political and cultural groups which stem from human nature itself and have their own autonomy, always with a view to the common good. This is what I have called the "subjectivity" of society which, together with the subjectivity of the individual, was canceled out by "real socialism."

If we then inquire as to the source of this mistaken concept of the nature of the person and the "subjectivity" of society, we must reply that its first cause is atheism. It is by responding to the call of God contained in the being of things that man becomes aware of his transcendent dignity. Every individual must give this response, which constitutes the apex of his humanity, and no social mechanism or collective subject can substitute for it. (. . .)

The atheism of which we are speaking is also closely connected with the rationalism of the Enlightenment, which views human and social reality in a mechanistic way. Thus there is a denial of the supreme insight concerning man's true greatness, his transcendence in respect to earthly realities, the contradiction in his heart between the desire for the fullness of what is good and his own inability to attain it, and above all, the need for salvation which results from this situation.

14. From the same atheistic source, socialism also derives its choice of the means of action condemned in *Rerum Novarum*, namely, class struggle. The pope does not, of course, intend to condemn every possible form of social conflict. The church is well aware that in the course of history conflicts of interest between different social groups inevitably arise and that in the face of such conflicts Christians must often take a position, honestly and decisively. (. . .)

However, what is condemned in class struggle is the idea that conflict is not restrained by ethical or juridical considerations or by respect for the dignity of others (and consequently of oneself); a reasonable compromise is thus excluded, and what is pursued is not the general good of society, but a partisan interest which replaces the common good and sets out to destroy whatever stands in its way. (. . .)

15. *Rerum Novarum* is opposed to state control of the means of production, which would reduce every citizen to being a "cog" in the state machine. It is no less forceful in criticizing a concept of the state which completely excludes the economic sector from the state's range of interest and action. (. . .)

In this regard, *Rerum Novarum* points the way to just reforms which can restore dignity to work as the free activity of man. These reforms imply that society and the state will both assume responsibility, especially for protecting the worker from the nightmare of unemployment. (. . .)

Furthermore, society and the state must ensure wage levels adequate for the maintenance of the worker and his family, including a certain amount for savings. (. . .) The role of trade unions in negotiating minimum salaries and working conditions is decisive in this area.

Finally, "humane" working hours and adequate free time need to be guaranteed as well as the right to express one's own personality at the workplace without suffering any affront to one's conscience or personal dignity. This is the place to mention once more the role of trade unions (. . .)

The state must contribute to the achievement of these

goals both directly and indirectly.(. .)

17. Reading the encyclical within the context of Pope Leo's whole magisterium, we see how it points essentially to the socioeconomic consequences of an error which has even greater implications.(. .) this error consists in an understanding of human freedom which detaches it from obedience to the truth and consequently from the duty to respect the rights of others. The essence of freedom then becomes self-love carried to the point of contempt for God and neighbor, a self-love which leads to an unbridled affirmation of self-interest and which refuses to be limited by any demand of justice.

This very error had extreme consequences in the tragic series of wars which ravaged Europe and the world between 1914 and 1945.(. .) Without the terrible burden of hatred and resentment which had built up as a result of so many injustices both on the international level and within individual states, such cruel wars would not have been possible in which great nations invested their energies and in which there was no hesitation to violate the most sacred human rights, with the extermination of entire peoples and social groups being planned and carried out.(. .) May the memory of those terrible events guide the actions of everyone, particularly the leaders of nations in our own time when other forms of injustice are fueling new hatreds and when new ideologies which exalt violence are appearing on the horizon.

18. While it is true that since 1945 weapons have been silent on the European continent, it must be remembered that true peace is never simply the result of military victory, but rather implies both the removal of the causes of war and genuine reconciliation between peoples. For many years there has been in Europe and the world a situation of non-war rather than genuine peace. Half of the continent fell under the domination of a communist dictatorship, while the other half organized itself in defense against this threat. Many peoples lost the ability to control their own destiny and were enclosed within the suffocating boundaries of an empire in which efforts were made to destroy their historical memory and the centuries-old roots of their culture. As a result of this violent division of Europe, enormous masses of people were compelled to leave their homeland or were forcibly deported.(. .) The logic of power blocs or empires (. .) led to a situation in which controversies and disagreements among Third World countries were systematically aggravated and exploited in order to create difficulties for the adversary.(. .)

19.(. .) Another kind of response, practical in nature, is represented by the affluent society or the consumer society. It seeks to defeat Marxism on the level of pure materialism (. .) [and] insofar as it denies an autonomous existence and value to morality, law, culture, and religion, it agrees with Marxism in the sense that it totally reduces man to the sphere of economics and the satisfaction of material needs.

20. During the same period, a widespread process of "decolonization" occurred by which many countries gained or regained their independence and the right freely to deter-

mine their own destiny. With the formal reacquisition of state sovereignty, however, these countries often find themselves merely at the beginning of the journey toward the construction of genuine independence. Decisive sectors of the economy still remain de facto in the hands of large foreign companies which are unwilling to commit themselves to the long-term development of the host country. Political life itself is controlled by foreign powers, while within the national boundaries there are tribal groups not yet amalgamated into a genuine national community.(. .)

Chapter 3: The year 1989

22. It is on the basis of the world situation just described and already elaborated in the encyclical *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis* that the unexpected and promising significance of the events of recent years can be understood. Although they certainly reached their climax in 1989 in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe, they embrace a longer period of time and a wider geographical area.(. .)

23. Among the many factors involved in the fall of oppressive regimes, some deserve special mention. Certainly the decisive factor which gave rise to the changes was the violation of the rights of workers. It cannot be forgotten that the fundamental crisis of systems claiming to express the rule and indeed the dictatorship of the working class began with the great upheavals which took place in Poland in the name of solidarity. It was the throngs of working people which foreswore the ideology which presumed to speak in their name. On the basis of a hard, lived experience of work and of oppression, it was they who recovered and in a sense rediscovered the content and principles of the church's social doctrine.(. .)

It seemed that the European order resulting from World War II and sanctioned by the Yalta agreements could only be overturned by another war. Instead, it has been overcome by the non-violent commitment of people who, while always refusing to yield to the force of power, succeeded time after time in finding effective ways of bearing witness to the truth.(. .)

24. The second factor in the crisis was certainly the inefficiency of the economic system, which is not to be considered simply as a technical problem, but rather a consequence of the violation of the human rights to private initiative, to ownership of property and to freedom in the economic sector. To this must be added the cultural and national dimension: It is not possible to understand man on the basis of economics alone nor to define him simply on the basis of class membership. Man is understood in a more complete way when he is situated within the sphere of culture through his language, history and the position he takes toward the fundamental events of life such as birth, love, work and death. At the heart of every culture lies the attitude man takes to the greatest mystery: the mystery of God. Different cultures are basically different ways of facing the question of the meaning of per-

sonal existence. When this question is eliminated, the culture and moral life of nations are corrupted. For this reason the struggle to defend work was spontaneously linked to the struggle for culture and for national rights.

But the true cause of the new developments was the spiritual void brought about by atheism (. . .). Marxism had promised to uproot the need for God from the human heart, but the results have shown that it is not possible to succeed in this without throwing the heart into turmoil.

25. The events of 1989 are an example of the success of willingness to negotiate and of the Gospel spirit in the face of an adversary determined not to be bound by moral principles. These events are a warning to those who in the name of political realism wish to banish law and morality from the political arena.(. . .)

(. . .) Man tends toward good, but he is also capable of evil. He can transcend his immediate interest and still remain bound to it. The social order will be all the more stable, the more it takes this fact into account and does not place in opposition personal interest and the interests of society as a whole, but rather seeks ways to bring them into fruitful harmony. In fact, where self-interest is violently suppressed, it is replaced by a burdensome system of bureaucratic control which dries up the wellsprings of initiative and creativity. When people think they possess the secret of a perfect social organization which makes evil impossible, they also think that they can use any means, including violence and deceit, in order to bring that organization into being. Politics then becomes a "secular religion" which operates under the illusion of creating paradise in this world.(. . .)

26. The events of 1989 took place principally in the countries of Eastern and Central Europe. However, they have worldwide importance because they have positive and negative consequences which concern the whole human family.(. . .)

The crisis of Marxism does not rid the world of the situations of injustice and oppression which Marxism itself exploited and on which it fed. To those who are searching today for a new and authentic theory and praxis of liberation, the church offers not only her social doctrine and, in general, her teaching about the human person redeemed in Christ, but also her concrete commitment and material assistance in the struggle against marginalization and suffering.(. . .)

27. The second consequence concerns the peoples of Europe themselves. Many individual, social, regional and national injustices were committed during and prior to the years in which communism dominated; much hatred and ill will have accumulated. There is a real danger that these will re-explode after the collapse of dictatorship, provoking serious conflicts and casualties should there be a lessening of the moral commitment and conscious striving to bear witness to the truth which were the inspiration for past efforts.(. . .)

(. . .) A patient material and moral reconstruction is needed, even as people, exhausted by longstanding priva-

tion, are asking their governments for tangible and immediate results in the form of material benefits and an adequate fulfillment of their legitimate aspirations.

(. . .) Peace and prosperity, in fact, are goods which belong to the whole human race: It is not possible to enjoy them in a proper and lasting way if they are achieved and maintained at the cost of other peoples and nations by violating their rights or excluding them from the sources of well-being.

28. In a sense, for some countries of Europe the real postwar period is just beginning. The radical reordering of economic systems, hitherto collectivized, entails problems and sacrifices comparable to those which the countries of Western Europe had to face in order to rebuild after World War II. It is right that in the present difficulties the formerly communist countries should be aided by the united effort of other nations.(. . .)

This need, however, must not lead to a slackening of efforts to sustain and assist the countries of the Third World, which often suffer even more serious conditions of poverty and want. What is called for is a special effort to mobilize resources, which are not lacking in the world as a whole, for the purpose of economic growth and common development.(. . .) But it will be necessary above all to abandon a mentality in which the poor—as individuals and as peoples—are considered a burden, as irksome intruders trying to consume what others have produced. The poor ask for the right to share in enjoying material goods and to make good use of their capacity for work, thus creating a world that is more just and prosperous for all. The advancement of the poor constitutes a great opportunity for the moral, cultural and even economic growth of all humanity.

29. Finally, development must not be understood solely in economic terms, but in a way that is fully human. It is not only a question of raising all peoples to the level currently enjoyed by the richest countries, but rather of building up a more decent life through united labor, of concretely enhancing every individual's dignity and creativity as well as his capacity to respond to his personal vocation and thus to God's call.(. . .) It is important to reaffirm this latter principle for several reasons:

a) Because the old forms of totalitarianism and authoritarianism are not yet completely vanquished (. . .)

b) Because in the developed countries there is sometimes an excessive promotion of purely utilitarian values (. . .)

c) Because in some countries new forms of religious fundamentalism are emerging which covertly, or even openly, deny to citizens of faiths other than that of the majority the full exercise of their civil and religious rights (. . .)

Chapter 4: Private property and the universal destination of material goods

30. In *Rerum Novarum*, of Material Goods, Leo XIII strongly affirmed the natural character of the right to private property. (. . .) At the same time the church teaches that the

possession of material goods is not an absolute right and that its limits are inscribed in its very nature as a human right.(. .)

31. (. .) The original source of all that is good is the very act of God, who created both the earth and man, and who gave the earth to man so that he might have dominion over it by his work and enjoy its fruits (Gn. 1:28). God gave the earth to the whole human race for the sustenance of all its members, without excluding or favoring anyone. This is the foundation of the universal destination of the earth's goods.(. .) But the earth does not yield its fruits without a particular human response to God's gift, that is to say, without work. It is through work that man, using his intelligence and exercising his freedom, succeeds in dominating the earth and making it a fitting home. In this way he makes part of the earth his own, precisely the part which he has acquired through work; this is the origin of individual property. Obviously he also has the responsibility not to hinder others from having their own part of God's gift; indeed he must cooperate with others so that together all can dominate the earth.(. .)

32. In our time in particular there exists another form of ownership which is becoming no less important than land: the possession of know-how, technology, and skill. The wealth of the industrialized nations is based much more on this kind of ownership than on natural resources.(. .) It is precisely the ability to foresee both the needs of others and the combinations of productive factors most adapted to satisfying those needs that constitutes another important source of wealth in modern society. Besides, many goods cannot be adequately produced through the work of an isolated individual; they require the cooperation of many people in working toward a common goal.(. .) In this way the role of disciplined and creative human work and, as an essential part of that work, initiative and entrepreneurial ability becomes increasingly evident and decisive.

(. .) Indeed, besides the earth, man's principal resource is man himself. His intelligence enables him to discover the earth's productive potential and the many different ways in which human needs can be satisfied. It is his disciplined work in close collaboration with others that makes possible the creation of ever more extensive working communities which can be relied upon to transform man's natural and human environments.(. .)

33. (. .) The fact is that many people, perhaps the majority today, do not have the means which would enable them to take their place in an effective and humanly dignified way within a productive system in which work is truly central. They have no possibility of acquiring the basic knowledge which would enable them to express their creativity and develop their potential.(. .) Thus, if not actually exploited, they are to a great extent marginalized; economic development takes place over their heads, so to speak, when it does not actually reduce the already narrow scope of their old subsistence economies. They are unable to compete against

the goods which are produced in ways which are new and which properly respond to needs, needs which they had previously been accustomed to meeting through traditional forms of organization. Allured by the dazzle of an opulence which is beyond their reach and at the same time driven by necessity, these people crowd the cities of the Third World where they are often without cultural roots and where they are exposed to situations of violent uncertainty without the possibility of becoming integrated. Their dignity is not acknowledged in any real way, and sometimes there are even attempts to eliminate them from history through coercive forms of demographic control which are contrary to human dignity.

Many other people, while not completely marginalized, live in situations in which the struggle for a bare minimum is uppermost.(. .) In other cases the land is still the central element in the economic process, but those who cultivate it are excluded from ownership and are reduced to a state of quasi-servitude. In these cases it is still possible today, as in the days of *Rerum Novarum*, to speak of inhuman exploitation. In spite of the great changes which have taken place in the more advanced societies, the human inadequacies of capitalism and the resulting domination of things over people are far from disappearing. In fact, for the poor, to the lack of material goods has been added a lack of knowledge and training which prevents them from escaping their state of humiliating subjection.

Unfortunately, the great majority of people in the Third World still live in such conditions. It would be a mistake, however, to understand this "world" in purely geographic terms. In some regions and in some social sectors of that world, development programs have been set up which are centered on the use not so much of the material resources available but of the "human resources."

Even in recent years it was thought that the poorest countries would develop by isolating themselves from the world market and by depending only on their own resources. Recent experience has shown that countries which did this have suffered stagnation and recession, while the countries which experienced development were those which succeeded in taking part in the general interrelated economic activities at the international level. It seems therefore that the chief problem is that of gaining fair access to the international market, based not on the unilateral principle of the exploitation of the natural resources of these countries but on the proper use of human resources.

34. It would appear that on the level of individual nations and of international relations the free market is the most efficient instrument for utilizing resources and effectively responding to needs. But this is true only for those needs which are "solvent" insofar as they are endowed with purchasing power and for those resources which are "marketable" insofar as they are capable of obtaining a satisfactory price. But there are many human needs which find no place

on the market. It is a strict duty of justice and truth not to allow fundamental human needs to remain unsatisfied and not to allow those burdened by such needs to perish. (. . .)

In Third World contexts, certain objectives stated by *Re-rum Novarum* remain valid and in some cases still constitute a goal yet to be reached, if man's work and his very being are not to be reduced to the level of a mere commodity. These objectives include a sufficient wage for the support of the family, social insurance for old age and unemployment, and adequate protection for the conditions of employment.

35. Here we find a wide range of opportunities for commitment and effort in the name of justice on the part of trade unions and other workers' organizations. These defend workers' rights and protect their interests as persons while fulfilling a vital cultural role so as to enable workers to participate more fully and honorably in the life of their nation and to assist them along the path of development.

In this sense, it is right to speak of a struggle against an economic system, if the latter is understood as a method of upholding the absolute predominance of capital, the possession of the means of production and of the land, in contrast to the free and personal nature of human work. In the struggle against such a system, what is being proposed as an alternative is not the socialist system, which in fact turns out to be state capitalism, but rather a society of free work, of enterprise and of participation. (. . .)

We have seen that it is unacceptable to say that the defeat of so-called "real socialism" leaves capitalism as the only model of economic organization. (. . .) Stronger nations must offer weaker ones opportunities for taking their place in international life, and the latter must learn how to use these opportunities by making the necessary efforts and sacrifices and by ensuring political and economic stability, the certainty of better prospects for the future, the improvement of workers' skills and the training of competent business leaders who are conscious of their responsibilities.

At present, the positive efforts which have been made along these lines are being affected by the still largely unsolved problem of the foreign debt of the poorer countries. The principle that debts must be paid is certainly just. However, it is not right to demand or expect payment when the effect would be the imposition of political choices leading to hunger and despair for entire peoples. It cannot be expected that the debts which have been contracted should be paid at the price of unbearable sacrifices. In such cases it is necessary to find—as in fact is partly happening—ways to lighten, defer or even cancel the debt compatible with the fundamental right of peoples to subsistence and progress. (. . .)

38. In addition to the irrational destruction of the natural environment, we must also mention the more serious destruction of the human environment, something which is by no means receiving the attention it deserves. Although people are rightly worried—though much less than they should be—about preserving the natural habitats of the various animal

species threatened with extinction because they realize that each of these species makes its particular contribution to the balance of nature in general, too little effort is made to safeguard the moral conditions for an authentic "human ecology." Not only has God given the earth to man, who must use it with respect for the original good purpose for which it was given to him, but man too is God's gift to man. He must therefore respect the natural and moral structure with which he has been endowed. (. . .)

39. The first and fundamental structure for "human ecology" is the family, in which man receives his first formative ideas about truth and goodness, and learns what it means to love and to be loved, and thus what it actually means to be a person. Here we mean the family founded on marriage, in which the mutual gift of self by husband and wife creates an environment in which children can be born and develop their potentialities, become aware of their dignity and prepare to face their unique and individual destiny. But it often happens that people are discouraged from creating the proper conditions for human reproduction and are led to consider themselves and their lives as a series of sensations to be experienced rather than as a work to be accomplished. The result is a lack of freedom, which causes a person to reject a commitment to enter into a stable relationship with another person and to bring children into the world or which leads people to consider children as one of the many "things" which an individual can have or not have, according to taste, and which compete with other possibilities. |

(. . .) In the face of the so-called culture of death, the family is the heart of the culture of life.

Human ingenuity seems to be directed more toward limiting, suppressing or destroying the sources of life—including recourse to abortion, which unfortunately is so widespread in the world—than toward defending and opening up the possibilities of life. The encyclical *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis* denounced systematic anti-childbearing campaigns which, on the basis of a distorted view of the demographic problem and in a climate of "absolute lack of respect for the freedom of choice of the parties involved," often subject them "to intolerable pressures . . . in order to force them to submit to this new form of oppression." These policies are extending their field of action by the use of new techniques to the point of poisoning the lives of millions of defenseless human beings as if in a form of "chemical warfare." (. . .)

40. It is the task of the state to provide for the defense and preservation of common goods such as the natural and human environments, which cannot be safeguarded simply by market forces. (. . .)

41. (. . .) The historical experience of the West (. . .) shows that even if the Marxist analysis and its foundation of alienation are false, nevertheless alienation—and the loss of the authentic meaning of life—is a reality in Western societies too.

(. . .) A man is alienated if he refuses to transcend him-

self and to live the experience of self-giving and of the formation of an authentic human community oriented toward his final destiny, which is God. A society is alienated if its forms of social organization, production and consumption make it more difficult to offer this gift of self and to establish this solidarity between people.(. .)

42. Returning now to the initial question: Can it perhaps be said that after the failure of communism capitalism is the victorious social system and that capitalism should be the goal of the countries now making efforts to rebuild their economy and society?(. .)

If by *capitalism* is meant an economic system which recognizes the fundamental and positive role of business, the market, private property and the resulting responsibility for the means of production as well as free human creativity in the economic sector, then the answer is certainly in the affirmative even though it would perhaps be more appropriate to speak of a *business economy*, *market economy*, or simply *free economy*. But if by *capitalism* is meant a system in which freedom in the economic sector is not circumscribed within a strong juridical framework which places it at the service of human freedom in its totality and which sees it as a particular aspect of that freedom, the core of which is ethical and religious, then the reply is certainly negative.

The Marxist solution has failed, but the realities of marginalization and exploitation remain in the world, especially the Third World, as does the reality of human alienation, especially in the more advanced countries. Against these phenomena the church strongly raises her voice. Vast multitudes are still living in conditions of great material and moral poverty.(. .)

43. The church has no models to present; models that are real and truly effective can only arise within the framework of different historical situations through the efforts of all those who responsibly confront concrete problems in all their social, economic, political and cultural aspects as these interact with one another.(. .)

Chapter 5: State and culture

(. .)47. Following the collapse of communist totalitarianism and of many other totalitarian and "national security" regimes, today we are witnessing a predominance, not without signs of opposition, of the democratic ideal, together with lively attention to and concern for human rights. But for this very reason it is necessary for peoples in the process of reforming their systems to give democracy an authentic and solid foundation through the explicit recognition of those rights. Among the most important of these rights, mention must be made of the right to life, an integral part of which is the right of the child to develop in the mother's womb from the moment of conception; the right to live in a united family and in a moral environment conducive to the growth of the child's personality; the right to develop one's intelligence and freedom in seeking and knowing the truth; the right to

share in the work which makes wise use of the earth's material resources, and to derive from that work the means to support oneself and one's dependents; and the right freely to establish a family, to have and to rear children through the responsible exercise of one's sexuality. In a certain sense, the source and synthesis of these rights is religious freedom (. .).

Even in countries with democratic forms of government, these rights are not always fully respected. Here we are referring not only to the scandal of abortion, but also to different aspects of a crisis within democracies themselves, which seem at times to have lost the ability to make decisions aimed at the common good. Certain demands which arise within society are sometimes not examined in accordance with criteria of justice and morality, but rather on the basis of the electoral or financial power of the groups promoting them. With time, such distortions of political conduct create distrust and apathy, with a subsequent decline in the political participation and civic spirit of the general population, which feels abused and disillusioned.(. .)

The church respects the legitimate autonomy of the democratic order and is not entitled to express preferences for this or that institutional or constitutional solution. Her contribution to the political order is precisely her vision of the dignity of the person revealed in all its fullness in the mystery of the incarnate Word.

48. These general observations also apply to the role of the state in the economic sector.(. .)

51. (. .) Sacred Scripture continually speaks to us of an active commitment to our neighbor and demands of us a shared responsibility for all of humanity.

This duty is not limited to one's own family, nation or state, but extends progressively to all mankind, since no one can consider himself extraneous or indifferent to the lot of another member of the human family.(. .)

52. (. .) I myself, on the occasion of the recent tragic war in the Persian Gulf, repeated the cry: "Never again war!" (. .) Just as the time has finally come when in individual states a system of private vendetta and reprisal has given way to the rule of law, so too a similar step forward is now urgently needed in the international community. Furthermore, it must not be forgotten that at the root of war there are usually real and serious grievances: injustices suffered, legitimate aspirations frustrated, poverty and the exploitation of multitudes of desperate people who see no real possibility of improving their lot by peaceful means.

For this reason, another name for peace is development. Just as there is a collective responsibility for avoiding war, so too there is a collective responsibility for promoting development. Just as within individual societies it is possible and right to organize a solid economy which will direct the functioning of the market to the common good, so too there is a similar need for adequate interventions on the international level.(. .)