Good morning and welcome, again, to the Catholic University of America/Centesimus Annus Pro Pontifice Certificate Program in Catholic Social Teaching. I trust it is as much a privilege for you to be here as it is for me to be with you.

This program was, literally, years in the making. It has involved: two deans of theology and the vice-provost of Catholic University, Archbishop Claudio Maria Celli of the Vatican, CAPP-USA, review and approval of a US Cardinal (Theodore McCarrick) and Bishop (William E. Lori) and ending, finally, with review at the Vatican by the CAPP Board.

We took all this time to ensure orthodoxy; i.e., that what will be presented is true to the teaching of the magisterium and can reliably be represented as true teaching of the Church.

This is no mean feat. Any search of the literature will uncover numerous definitions and proposals representing Catholic Social Teaching (CST) and even some confusion. For example one can find 10 principles of CST presented by a well know Jesuit Father, seven themes identified by the USCCB, and numerous “Introductions to …” and other monographs representing CST.

This opening session is designed to be an overview of the entire week and a synopsis of the Church’s social teaching. Now, having 90 minutes to summarize the breath and depth of CST in general and richness and uniqueness of Centesimus Annus in particular reminds me of the old joke: How do you make God laugh? Tell him your plans.

So, first, a disclaimer: I’m positive any professor of CST (and I’m sure we may have some here) would be aghast at someone trying to summarize this body of work in 90

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1 This paper differs from the presentation. It has been expanded to take advantage of the lack of time constraints. However, “chapter”/”section” delineations remain the same.
2 Special thanks to Dr. Karen Shields Wright, Program Director of The Catholic University of America-Centesimus Annus Pro Pontifice Certificate Program in Catholic Social Teaching and Professor George E. Garvey, that program’s liaison from The Catholic University, for their invaluable assistance in preparing this expanded version of the introductory lecture.
minutes, let alone include in that time a review of the details of *Centesimus Annus* (CA), *Deus Caritas Est* (DCE) and *Caritas in Veritate* (CIV). I will, of necessity, leave important things out, understate the value of some, overstate the value of others, and otherwise mangle the documents in the eyes of the fully initiated. To you, I apologize.

Similarly, to the uninitiated I apologize in advance if I don’t do justice to these brilliant documents and convey the richness and surprises they contains.

Before starting, however, let’s review three main goals that, in addition to understanding the details of CST, we hope to achieve this week:

1. Understanding CST’s purpose, and analogous to that: what is CST and what is it not?
2. Understanding that CST is not a political teaching. It is neither left nor right. Rather, it possesses valuable lessons for both sides of any political debate.
3. Understanding CST is built on three key principles – The Dignity of the Human Person, Solidarity and Subsidiarity.

We’ll return to all of this but for now, let’s jump in!

I will try doing this by using a funnel analogy. We will start very wide, with the big picture and then go ever narrower until we end highlighting some of the key precepts of CA, DCE, and CIV.

**WHAT IS CST?**

While my education consisted of what I call a Catholic sweep: Felician sisters, Christian brothers, Franciscan friars, and Vincentian priests - let me start by borrowing from the Jesuit tradition where one is always encouraged to “first, define your terms”. And Jesuit Fr. Bill Ryan offers a very useful definition of CST as:

“A set of **principles** for **reflection** to **evaluate** the framework of society and to provide criteria for prudential judgment and direction for current policy and **action**.”

Now, let’s parse that briefly:

1. CST, first of all, proposes a set of **principles**. (It is, in fact, a branch of Catholic moral theology.)

2. What does one do with these principles? While Fr. Ryan indicates that we are to **reflect** on them, our experience would lead me to suggest a stronger action. We should **internalize** these principles. In fact, we should use them to form our consciences.

3. What then? a) We should use these principles to **evaluate** the framework of society, and; b) to provide the criteria for making our prudential judgments as regards current policy options.
4. Finally, we should then act on these evaluations. We should use CST to form the basis for our acting in the public square.

Remember that, as it actually will provide a useful benchmark for understanding CST and how it is to be used: reflect, evaluate, and act.

WHAT ARE THESE PRINCIPLES?

Moving to a bit narrower level of the funnel, there are three fundamental principles of CST, the greatest of which the Church insists is the first: A correct understanding of the human person, which is Human Dignity: this is the prime principle!

A Correct Understanding of the Human Person: Human Dignity

This means a correct understanding of the human person and of each person’s unique value. All CST flows from this – the inherent dignity of every person that comes from being made in God’s image. It is in this beginning that human rights are grounded.

Now this is an ancient concept. It extends back to the Old Testament where we learn in Psalm 8: “You have made him little less than a god; with glory and honor you crowned him, gave him power over the works of your hand, put all things under his feet.” and was already well articulated in the 4th century by Church Father St. Gregory of Nyssa, when he said: “God did not make the heavens in his image, nor the moon, the sun, the beauty of the stars, nor anything else which you can see…You alone are made in the likeness of that nature which surpasses all understanding…Nothing in all creation can equal your grandeur.”

And, quoting from CA: “No one can take away this human right”\(^3\), not even the majority of a democratic political body, because this dignity does not arise from the state or the will of the governed. This concept is the core of CST going back to its earliest articulation by Leo XIII in 1891 when he wrote “the State is bound to protect natural rights, not to destroy them”\(^4\) and has been reiterated by Benedict XVI when he wrote “Fundamental rights are neither created by the lawmaker nor granted to the citizen. The value of human dignity…takes precedence over all political decision-making”\(^5\).

As Pope John Paul II said, “From this point forward it will be necessary to keep in mind that 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".\(^6\) God has imprinted his own image and likeness on man (cf. Gen 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

\(^3\) John Paul II, Encyclical Letter Centesimus Annus (1 May 1991), 9  
\(^4\) Leo XIII, Encyclical Letter Rerum Novarum (15 May 1891), 135  
do not correspond to any work he performs, but which flow from his essential dignity as a person.”

Human Dignity, rooted in a correct view of the human person, is the prime principle of the Catholic social doctrine.

Solidarity

Next is Solidarity, which is fundamental to the Christian view of social and political organization. Each person is connected to and dependent on all humanity, collectively and individually. We are all interdependent. We are “our brothers’ keeper”.

And we should remember that Solidarity flows from faith: “Love of neighbor…consists in the very fact that, in God and with God, I love even persons whom I do not like or even know.” How is this possible? “This can only take place on the basis of an intimate encounter with God”

What does this mean?

Let’s try to understand that Solidarity is not “a feeling of vague compassion or shallow distress at the misfortunes of others. It is a firm and persevering determination to commit oneself to the common good”. It implies a dedication to the poor and disadvantaged through individual actions and collective initiatives to make social, political, and economic structures more just and fraternal.

And, the same duty of solidarity that rests with individuals exists for nations. “Peace and prosperity, in fact, are goods which belong to the whole human race” and “[c]oncern for our neighbor transcends the confines of national communities and has increasingly broadened its horizon to the whole world.”

Perhaps more importantly, we should note that Solidarity is for our own good and is a necessary component of our faith. As Pope Benedict says, “love of neighbor is a path that leads to the encounter with God, and that closing our eyes to our neighbor also blinds us to God.” And later he remarks, “Only my readiness to encounter my neighbor and to show him love makes me sensitive to God as well.”

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7 One should also see the Catechism of the Catholic Church, Part Three, Section One, starting at paragraph 1700
8 Benedict XVI, Encyclical Letter Deus Caritas Est, (25 December 2005), 18
9 John Paul II, Encyclical Letter Sollicitudo Rei Socialis, (30 December 1987), 38
10 Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the World of Today Gaudium et Spes, 86
13 Ibid., 16
14 Ibid., 18
That, is probably the best “definition” of Solidarity I have come across – that love of God and love of neighbor are, in fact, linked and form one, single commandment.

I’m not sure we have adequately gotten across how radical the principle of solidarity really is. At the Last Supper Jesus said: “A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another.”[^10] This is a much more radical charge because how does God love us–unremittingly. It is no longer love our neighbor as our self but, rather, love our neighbor as God loves us. In his second encyclical, *Spe Salvi*, Pope Benedict says, “Truth and justice must stand above my comfort and physical well being or else my life itself becomes a lie.”[^11] Think about that for a moment. If the principles we are describing do not stand above even our own comfort – let alone our physical well being – we are told that our life becomes a “lie”.

And a bit latter he says, “Let us say it once again: The capacity to suffer for the sake of the truth is the measure of humanity.”[^12]

This also makes it clear that Solidarity is not an ideological or political principle. It is a Catholic principle based on and emanating from faith. Absent that, it is not the solidarity of CST.[^13]

**Subsidiarity**

Now for a jargon alert. We’ve all probably heard the term about to come up but what does it mean? Bear with me because the third fundamental principle is key - we really need to understand what it means before progressing.

The third principle is **subsidiarity**. Basically, what this means is that decisions in society need to be taken at the lowest competent level. In other words, problems are best solved at the level where they arise or, if this is not possible, at the lowest competent level. Any activity that can be performed by a more decentralized entity – should be.

Pope Pius XI best defined Subsidiarity when he said: “It is a fundamental principle of social philosophy, fixed and unchangeable, that one should not withdraw from individuals and commit to the community what they can accomplish by their own enterprise and industry. So, too, it is an injustice and at the same time a grave evil and a disturbance of right order to transfer to the larger and higher collectivity functions which can be performed and provided for by the lesser and subordinate bodies.”[^14]

Subsidiarity, as JPII told us, “insists on necessary limits to the State’s intervention…inasmuch as the individual, the family and society are prior to the state and

[^10]: John, 13:34
[^12]: Ibid., 39
[^13]: See also, *The Catechism of the Catholic Church*, (1948)
[^14]: Pius XI, Encyclical Letter *Quadragesimo Anno* (May 15,1931), 79
inasmuch as the State exists in order to protect their rights and not stifle them”\(^{20}\) while at the international level Pope Benedict points out that, “In order not to produce a dangerous universal power of a tyrannical nature, the governance of globalization must be marked by subsidiarity.”\(^{21}\)

And, as Pope Benedict tells us, “We do not need a State which regulates and controls everything, but a State which, in accordance with the principles of subsidiarity, generously acknowledges and supports initiatives arising from different social forces and combines spontaneity with closeness to those in need.”\(^{22}\)

The principle of subsidiarity lies at the heart of a stable social order by fostering the personal responsibility that naturally accompanies individual liberty - ensuring that personal interest is not placed in opposition to societal interests - and by seeking to bring individual desires and the demands of the common good into fruitful harmony.

Pope Benedict XVI further develops this principle in CIV where he says that subsidiarity “is always designed to achieve…emancipation because it fosters freedom and participation through assumption of responsibility. Subsidiarity respects personal dignity by recognizing in the person a subject who is always capable of giving something to others.”\(^{23}\)

**SOLIDARITY vs. SUBSIDIARITY?**

The principles of solidarity and subsidiarity, resulting from over a century of magisterial reflection in major encyclicals on politics, economics and culture, are occasionally presented as independent of each other or even, at times, in conflict. In fact, these foundational principles of CST are both offspring of the prime principle, human dignity which flows from a correct understanding of the human person. Both are born in and are expressions of human dignity and both are absolutely central to Catholic social (if not plain good economic) teaching.

The case for solidarity deriving from human dignity may appear to be, perhaps, easier to grasp than for subsidiarity. In fact, it is not. Pope Benedict tells us in CIV\(^{24}\), “undoubtedly the principle of subsidiarity [is] an expression of inalienable human freedom. Subsidiarity is first and foremost a form of assistance to the human person” and “Subsidiarity respects personal dignity by recognizing in the person a subject who is always capable of giving something to others.”

Perhaps the debate over the primacy of these principles has at last been put to bed by Benedict XVI who tells us “The principle of subsidiarity must remain closely linked to the principle of solidarity and vice versa.” Why? Subsidiarity without solidarity leads to

\(^{20}\) Op. Cit., *Centesimus Annus*, 11
\(^{21}\) Benedict XVI, Encyclical Letter *Caritas in Veritate* (29 June 2009), 57
\(^{22}\) Op. Cit., *Deus Caritas Est*, 28
\(^{23}\) Op. Cit., *Caritas in Veritate*, 57
\(^{24}\) Ibid., 57
“social privatism” while solidarity without subsidiarity leads to a “demeaning” and “paternalist” form of social assistance.  

More importantly Pope Benedict, and this is very deep insight, points out that “the principles of solidarity and subsidiarity…have the potential to place men and women on the path to discovering their supernatural destiny.”  

“True solidarity” he tells us, “begins with an acknowledgment of the equal worth of the other” and “comes to fulfillment only when I willingly place my life at the service of others.”

“Similarly, subsidiarity…manifests a “vertical” dimension pointing towards the Creator of the social order. A society that honors the principle of subsidiarity liberates people…granting them the freedom to engage with one another in the spheres of commerce, politics and culture…they leave space for individual responsibility and initiative, but most importantly, they leave space for love.”

Three Principles of CST

I was a bit disheartened during the extensive coverage of the death and funeral of John Paul II when a well known US prelate, asked to summarize exactly what is this social teaching of the Pope, replied that, “one should think of it as having two legs, a correct understanding of the human person and charity or solidarity”. This misunderstanding permeates understanding of CST.

One key take away from this program is to understand that CST is built on three key principles. It is not composed of “two legs”; it is composed of three legs. It is not a bi-pedal thing walking through the world; it is a tripod - a firm structure which adapts to any terrain to provide a stable platform.

This is evident not only in the encyclicals from 1931 to CA to DCE to CIV but in Pope John Paul II’s teachings when he told the American bishops that: "Her moral vision in this area 'rests on the threefold cornerstone of human dignity, solidarity and subsidiarity' " And, as Pope Benedict affirms. “It is up to the lay faithful to demonstrate concretely in their personal and family life, in social, cultural and political life that…the fundamental principles of the social doctrine of the Church such as the dignity of the human person, subsidiarity and solidarity are extremely relevant and valuable in order to support new paths of development in service to the whole person and to all humanity.”

[25] Ibid, 58
[26] Benedict XVI, Address to the 14th Pontifical Council on Social Sciences (May 2008)
[27] Ibid.
[28] Ibid.
[29] John Paul II, Ecclesia in America, (2 January 1999), 55
WHAT IS THE PRACTICAL PURPOSE OF CST?

So, of what practical use is all this? Well, CST informs us that good governments and good economic systems find ways of fostering these three principals. Good governments and economic systems foster a correct understanding of the human person.

As John Paul II said “The State must contribute to the achievement of these goals both directly and indirectly. Indirectly and according to the principle of subsidiarity, by creating favourable conditions for the free exercise of economic activity, which will lead to abundant opportunities for employment and sources of wealth. Directly and according to the principle of solidarity, by defending the weakest.”

Now, jumping to some ‘practical conclusions’ of CA we learn, specifically, that of the social systems currently available, democracy and free market economies have the best potential for promoting human development. Indeed, CA places economic freedom parallel to political freedom. CA recognizes that free enterprise, rightly understood and implemented, is currently the best available vehicle for systemically caring for the physical needs of the poor and true global economy is the key way to create lasting development and thereby, peace.

Having jumped way out ahead with that insight, let’s circle back to support that point.

HOW WAS CST DEVELOPED?

CST “is built on the foundation handed on by the apostles to the Fathers of the Church and then received and further explored by the great Christian doctors...It is attested to by the saints and by those who gave their lives for Christ.”

Specifically, “It is an expression of the prophetic task of the supreme pontiffs to give apostolic guidance to the church of Christ and to discern the new demands of evangelization.”

The beginning of this “expression of the prophetic task of the supreme pontiffs” is usually traced back to Pope Leo XIII and his landmark encyclical in 1891, Rerum Novarum (RN), wherein he condemned the abuses and illusions of unbridled capitalism, socialism and, especially, communism.

In this letter he both established and strongly defended the Church’s moral authority to promote justice in public life and went on to affirm those rights and principles we know so well and take for granted (forgetting just how radical they were in 1891, even suffering outright criticism for some decades):

1. The dignity of the worker (and work) – as such.

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31 Op. cit., Centesimus Annus, 15
32 Op. Cit., Caritas in Veritate, 12
33 Ibid., 12
2. Right to private property.
3. Right to form private and professional associations.
4. Right to a limitation of working hours.
5. Right to legitimate rest.
6. Right of women and children to be treated differently with regard to type and duration of work.
7. Right to a just wage.
8. Right to freely discharge one’s religious duties.
9. Established that the state should “specially care for and protect” the defenseless and the poor.

It’s apparent from our familiarity with these principles and rights that CST of 1891 had a marked impact and became the template for political, economic and social reforms that followed.

Forty years later Pope Pius XI in *Quadragesimo Anno* confirmed Leo’s teaching and expanded it significantly to account for the realities of the Great Depression, as well as the rise of European totalitarianism, and developed the aforementioned principle of subsidiarity.

In a radio broadcast fifty years on in 1941, Pope Pius XII embraced the social message of Pope Leo XIII and advocated the need for a new international order to ensure peace.

In 1961, Pope John XXIII in *Mater et Magistra* made the social question global by shifting the focus from a developed world (Europe and North America) perspective to a focus on the extensive poverty in the “third world” and the gap between the rich and poor countries.

In 1971 Pope Paul VI in *Octogesima Adveniens* introduced a dramatic ‘innovation’ by emphasizing the need for political action to achieve economic goals.

And that brings us to 1991, and Pope John Paul II’s encyclical, CA.

*CARITAS IN VERITATE*

An aside – while CIV is the Church’s most recent addition to her social doctrine, it is complex and ambitious in scope. It will take some time for thoughtful and faithful experts to fully explore and appreciate the encyclical’s significance. So, while we will be presenting portions of it in this program, of necessity our review should be considered somewhat cursory.

However, we should note that with CIV Pope Benedict continues what he views as a ‘new stream’ of the Church’s social teaching. One began by Paul VI with *Populorum Progressio*, followed 20 years later by John Paul II’s *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis* and commemorated again by his CIV. Indeed, he indicates that in CIV “I intend to pay tribute and to honor the memory of the great Pope Paul VI, revisiting his teachings on integral
human development and taking my place within the path that they marked out so as to apply them to the present moment.”

He even says “that Populorum Progressio deserves to be considered “the Rerum Novarum of the present age,” shedding light upon humanity’s journey toward unity.”

So, in many ways, what Benedict appears to be doing in CIV is confirming the “details” of CST and moving to a different level, if you wish.

Some of the themes that have been identified include:

1) As Cardinal Paul Cordes, President of Cor Unum and a man who had a part in assisting the Holy Father in writing CIV tells us: CIV “roots social teaching in the virtue of charity” Love is at the heart of CST.

2. Human development must be integral – involving all aspects of our humanity, not just economic and political. “Through this close link with truth, charity can be recognized as an authentic expression of humanity and as an element of fundamental importance in human relations, including those of a public nature.”

3. CST/social action requires belief, acceptance and the integration of God in all facets of life and development, it requires personal conversion. “Adhering to the values of Christianity is not merely useful but essential for building a good society and for true integral human development.”

4. In some ways Benedict makes CST more binding on the individual faithful. He makes personal conversion a requirement of true social action. He sees CST as a way to “give flesh to our faith”. “To defend the truth, to articulate it with humility and conviction, and to bear witness to it in our life are therefore exacting and indispensable forms of charity”

5. As will be detailed shortly, Benedict anchors issues of life to the Church’s social teaching.

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34 Ibid., 8
35 Ibid.
36 Ibid., 3
37 Ibid., 9
38 Ibid., 4
39 Ibid., 9
40 Ibid., 1
REVIEW

But before moving on, let’s recap. What is CST? It is the Church’s teaching on how we should address the ‘social condition’. It proposes a set of principles for reflection, evaluation, and action.

What are the key, overriding principles involved? 1) Correct understanding of the human person – Human Dignity; 2) Solidarity; and 3) Subsidiarity.

How was it developed? From over 100 years of papal magisterial teaching, with successive Popes adapting the key elements to the times.

CENTESIMUS ANNUS – AN OVERVIEW

Let’s again apply our analogy of a funnel as we approach CA. First, in the big picture, let’s overview CA in its entirety, addressing:

Why is this document so different?
Why is it so impactful?
What makes it so important?

FIVE UNIQUE FEATURES OF CENTESIMUS ANNUS

First, CA succeeds in drawing together the most creative and effective parts of CST over the prior hundred years. It is more than a summary however; it synthesizes the best of what’s come before. It keeps and builds on long standing CST while also returning to Leo’s original and penetrating contribution regarding the importance of the person at the heart of the social order.

Second, JP II did more than recapitulate and synthesize the teachings of his predecessors - he broke new ground. How? Well, for one, CA, as previously mentioned, affirms the value of the free market and of democracy. In essence, the Holy Father tells us that the economy should rely first on individual initiative and free markets. Only when basic human needs cannot be met through individual enterprise aided by private associations should the state provide for them.

Similarly, in the political realm, the preferred structure is the one that best fosters the participation by and exercise of the judgments of individual citizens: democracy.

Third, another innovation is that it introduces what George Weigel, noted biographer of Pope John Paul II, calls “an empirical sensitivity to issues of economic development”. CA demonstrates the greatest depth of economic understanding of any magisterial document and contains a modern appreciation for the dynamic nature of free exchange and the way wealth is produced. Indeed, CA, in its breath and depth, has been called “a completely new synthesis previously unseen in any other single work of religious reflection on the economy”. 
Fourth, CA is extraordinary in the way it reconfigures the basic framework of CST. It establishes the need to maintain vibrant and critical interaction between economics, culture, and politics, emphasizing that of these three, culture is the most important.

A Challenge

On this point CA goes even further, however, and points out that at the heart of culture lay morality and at the heart morality lay religion. And by insisting on a vibrant, publicly assertive moral-cultural order, CA throws down a gauntlet to the modern world and what it calls “skeptical relativism”.

Jargon alert’ again. Skeptical relativism basically holds that there is no such thing as an objective truth. There’s just what I believe, you believe, a group, a nation believes, nothing is objectively true.

In a fully packed, short paragraph CST challenges this conclusion and I want to share this in detail:

“Authentic democracy is possible only in a state ruled by law on the basis of a correct view of the human person...Nowadays there is a tendency to claim that agnosticism and skeptical relativism are the philosophy and the basic attitude which correspond to democratic forms of political life. Those who are convinced that they know the truth and firmly adhere to it are considered unreliable from a democratic point of view, since they do not accept that truth is determined by the majority or that it is subject to variation according to different political trends. It must be observed in this regard that if there is no ultimate truth to guide and direct political activity, than ideas and convictions can easily be manipulated for reasons of power. As history demonstrates a democracy without values easily turns into open or thinly disguised totalitarianism.”

With this, CA demands a dialogue with society. A dialogue unashamedly based on CST.

Pope Benedict Adds To This Point

This theme is picked up and aggressively confronted by Pope Benedict who has made our battle, with what he calls, the “dictatorship of Relativism” a major theme of his pontificate. “The greatest challenge of our time is secularization” he declared in April 2006. He went on to say that society creates an illusion that God does not exist or that God can be restricted to the realm of purely private affairs. He insists that Christians can not accept that attitude.

In fact, on 8 Sept 06 Pope Benedict even went further than JPII when he said that the marked presence in society of that relativism “which, recognizing nothing as definitive, leaves as the ultimate criterion only the self with its desires. Within such a relativistic

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41 Op. Cit., Centesimus Annus, 46
42 Benedict XVI, Encounter with the Youth, #3, (6 April 2006)
horizon an eclipse of the sublime goals of life occurs with a lowering of the standards of excellence, a timidity before the category of the good, and a relentless but senseless pursuit of novelty parading as the realization of freedom.”

And as recent as 16 April 2008, Pope Benedict said here in Washington: “The ‘Dictatorship of relativism’, in the end, is nothing less than a threat to genuine human freedom, which only matures in generosity and fidelity to the truth.”

And “Freedom…demands the courage to engage in civic life and to bring one’s deepest beliefs and values to reasoned public debate.”

Pope Benedict continues this theme in CIV where he says: “Without truth, without trust and love for what is true, there is no social conscience and responsibility, and social action ends up serving private interests and the logic of power…” and “fidelity to the truth…alone is the guarantee of freedom and of the possibility of integral human development”.

And later, Pope Benedict XVI tells us that when religion is excluded from the public square, “Public life is sapped of its motivation and politics takes on a domineering and aggressive character. Human rights risk being ignored…”

Fifth, another innovation is that John Paul II, for the first time, included family and life issues on the list of ‘social’ concerns. These issues had been somewhat quarantined from CST. The implications for their integration here were potentially huge BUT were not entirely sorted out.

This has now been corrected in Benedict’s Caritas in Veritate wherein the Church makes clear that there can be no separation of issues of life and social justice: “respect for life…cannot in any way be detached from questions concerning the development of peoples…Openness to life is at the center of true development. When a society moves toward the denial or suppression of life, it ends up no longer finding the necessary motivation and energy to strive for man’s true good.”

Many are calling this Benedict’s unique contribution to CST—pointing out that a primary task of working for social justice includes promoting a culture of life.

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43 Benedict XVI, Address of to the Episcopal Conference of Canada-Ontario on their ‘Ad Limina’ Visit, 4, (8 Sept 2006)
44 Benedict XVI, Response to Questions Posed by US Bishops (16 April 08), Washington, DC
45 Benedict XVI, White House Welcoming Ceremony, (16 April 2008), Washington, DC
47 Ibid, 9
48 Ibid., 56
49 Ibid., 28
ANOTHER REVIEW

So, before finishing our tour down the funnel by looking at the specifics of CA, let’s summarize some of the things that, overall, make current CST so different and special:

1. It draws together and synthesizes all that has come before.
2. It points out that of the social systems currently available, democracy and free market economies have the best potential for promoting human development.
3. It introduces an “empirical sensitivity” to CST’s understanding of economic development.
4. It insists on a vibrant, publicly assertive moral-cultural order and recognizes the interaction between economics, culture, and politics, with culture as, by far, the more important.
5. And, for the first time, it included family and life issues on the list of ‘social’ concerns.

CENTESIMUS ANNUS: WHAT DOES IT TELL US - SPECIFICALLY

We’re now ready to finish our trip down the funnel by reviewing what CA says in some specificity. So, what is current CST? Well, in summary:

CA identifies the new framework for CST – it posits a three-part proposition of free culture, free markets, and free polities that create a free society. Of these the key is a culture that promotes the dignity of human life. While endorsing democracy and market economies CA also points out the pathologies and dangers facing us in both these arenas and begins to suggest some necessary actions.

So, let’s begin our review with market economies and a surprise - the Church’s endorsement of free markets.

MARKET ECONOMIES

CA says the free market economy is an “important source of wealth and should be viewed carefully and favorably”. CA also recognizes the free market for its:

2. Promotion of commerce.
3. Its giving central place to individual desires and preferences in a contractual context.

It says a “business economy has many positive aspects – its basis is human freedom exercised in the economic field”\(^{50}\)

In summary: “It would appear that at the national and international level the free market is the most efficient way for utilizing resources and effectively responding to needs.”\(^{51}\)

\(^{50}\) Op. cit., Centesimus Annus, 32
And is a model that should be proposed to the third world – as long as it is circumscribed in a strong juridical framework, which places it at the service of human freedom in its totality.\textsuperscript{52}

Those are strong statements. However, CA goes on to point out some “risks and problems” as it calls them. It starts by differentiating between the developed and developing world’s issues so let’s review these in turn, starting with the LDC (lesser developed countries).

DEVELOPING WORLD ISSUES/SOLUTIONS

Here CST points out that many people do not have the means to enable them to take their place in a market economy in an effective and dignified way. They are marginalized. They are attracted by the “dazzle of opulence” – driven by necessity they crowd third world cities. Their dignity is not acknowledged in any real way.

What is the prescription of CST?

1. Presaging the eventual global discussion, just as Leo did in Rerum Novarum, JPII, in 1991, stated that poor countries that did develop did so through taking part in international trade. So the key issue is to gain fair access to international markets, i.e. remove trade barriers.\textsuperscript{53}

I should note here that it took a good eight (8) years more for this topic to rise to the top of the WTO agenda and another five (5) for it to be seriously addressed. Finally, the disgraceful farm subsidies of first the EU but with the USA not that far behind are on the bargaining table. The key impediment to global trade was finally being addressed.

However, this very topic then caused, in July 2006 and, again, in July 2008, the collapse of the Doha Trade Round. These critical talks again attempted a restart this month in New Delhi and, if all goes well, might be continued at the G-20 meeting and the WTO general assembly in November. Also, the recent economic crisis has been no friend to this important topic. However, as a global recovery proceeds, trade volumes are up 15% and protectionist measures are abating. This is not a guarantee, though, that current monetary posturing will not turn in trade protectionist measures.

Returning to Centesimus Annus:

2. Second, RN’s objectives remain valid and operative in the developing world. This 118-year-old document remains fully in force – especially as pertains to: 1) sufficient wages to support the family; 2) social insurance for old age and unemployment, and; 3) protection for the conditions of employment.\textsuperscript{54}

\textsuperscript{51} Ibid., 34
\textsuperscript{52} Ibid., 42
\textsuperscript{53} Ibid., 35
\textsuperscript{54} Op. cit., Centesimus Annus, 34
3. Third, it remains the role of unions to defend workers rights. But CST strongly warns that this is not a struggle against an economic system but rather it is “for a society of free work, of enterprise and of participation.”

4. Fourth, the requirements of charity and solidarity remain: “It is the strict duty of justice and truth not to allow fundamental human needs to remain unsatisfied”. We must help people acquire the skills and capabilities “to survive and, in time, to make an active contribution to the common good and humanity”.

5. Finally, CST recognizes the burden developing people must shoulder for themselves. Developing nations “must learn to use these opportunities by making the necessary efforts and sacrifices”. They must ensure:
   a. Political and economic stability
   b. The certainty of better prospects for the future
   c. The improvement of workers’ skills and training,
   d. Corporate leaders who are conscious of their responsibilities, and
   e. A state that will guarantee basic needs and create an environment conducive to development.

Here, again, CST presaged eventual secular responses. The excellent World Bank Study “World Development Report 2005” argues that environments positively hostile to doing business dominate the economies of too many developing countries. It calls on developing countries to take action to reduce corruption and cronyism in order to improve investment climate, promote growth and reduce poverty.

Here are just some examples cited by the report:

1. The time it takes to register a new business in: Brazil – 152 days; Haiti – 203 days and Australia – 2 days;
2. The cost to start a business expressed as a %of per capita income is: Haiti – 176%; Sierra Leone - 1,268%; Denmark – 0%
3. The time to enforce a contract is: Brazil – 500 days; Guatemala – 1,459 days
4. The time it takes to close a business is: Brazil – 10 years; Haiti – almost 20 years
5. And in Burkina Faso night and weekend work is forbidden and the minimum wage is fully 82% of the average value-added per worker.

The report recognizes that poor countries are strangled by red tape and blinded by uncertainty and specifically calls for developing countries to “Deliver on the Basics”: 1. Reduce red tape; 2. Make regulation more predictable; 3. Provide the basics of a stable
political environment; 4. Secure property rights and contract enforcement, and; 5. Provide adequate infrastructure; 6. Etc., etc.

The 2005 report succeeds in describing what is the core agenda for development, over 10 years after being identified by CST.

DEVELOPED WORLD ISSUES

Let’s now turn to the Developed world or, if you wish, our issues.

Here CA points out three dangers or major ‘risks and problems’:

1. Consumerism
2. The Ecological Question (distinguishing the natural and human environment)
3. Alienation

Let’s spend a moment on each of these as addressing them, along with implementing the positives of democracy and free markets, will help define the actions required to implement CST.

CONSUMERISM

So, what is Consumerism? Well, simply but elegantly defined, it is: A style of life directed towards “having” rather than “being”. It is a “web of false and superficial gratifications.”

We are called to help society (maybe our children first) to understand CST’s warning that if direct appeals are made to material and instinctive dimensions then “consumer attitudes and life styles can be created which are objectively improper and often damaging to [our] physical and spiritual health”. CST invites society, “to a serious review of its lifestyle, which in many parts of the world is prone to hedonism and consumerism, regardless of their harmful consequences.”

CST goes on to say, “It is not wrong to want to live better, what is wrong is a style of life…which wants to have more, not in order to be more but in order to spend life in enjoyment as an end in itself.” A person who is concerned solely or primarily with possessing and enjoying – who can no longer subordinate his instincts, cannot be free.

Pope Benedict also linked work and consumerism when he said, “Work must serve the true good of humanity” and man must not become “enslaved by work.”

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59 Ibid., 41
60 Ibid., 36
63 Pope Benedict XVI, Homily at the Eucharistic Celebration for all Workers on the Feast of St. Joseph, (19 March 2006)
These warnings go back to at least Pope Pius XII who told us, “Those who look for the salvation of society from the machinery of the world economic market have remained thus disillusioned because they had become not the lords and masters but the slaves of material wealth, which they served without reference to the highest end of man, making it an end in itself.”

However, CA does not blame the free market economy for this situation because “an economic system does not possess criteria for correctly distinguishing new and higher forms of satisfying human needs…” Instead CST calls for a great deal of educational and cultural work, including: a) Education of consumers in responsible choices; b) Formation of a strong sense of responsibility among producers and especially among the mass media; c) The “necessary” intervention by public authorities regards drug use, pornography and “other forms of consumerism which exploit the frailty of the weak…”,

The goal of CST is for life styles in which the quest for truth, beauty, goodness, and communion with others for the sake of the common good will determine consumers’ choices, savings, and investments.

THE ECOLOGICAL QUESTION

CA then turns to something it calls “equally worrying”, “The Ecological Question” which it breaks into two parts.

Physical Environment

First, the physical or natural Environment where The Holy Father tells us: “In his desire to have and to enjoy rather than to be and to grow, man consumes the resources of the earth and his own life in an excessive and disordered way…In this regard, humanity today must be conscious of its duties and obligations towards future generations.”

Ecology thus becomes part of CST.

Pope Benedict reiterated his concern for the environment -- a concern that he has expressed consistently throughout his pontificate -- saying: “The earth is a precious gift of the Creator, who has designed its intrinsic order, thus giving us guidelines to which we must hold ourselves as stewards of his creation. From this awareness, the Church considers questions linked to the environment and its safeguarding as profoundly linked with the topic of integral human development.” He went on to say, “I referred to these questions several times in my last encyclical "Caritas in Veritate," reminding of the pressing moral need for renewed solidarity" (49) not only in relations between countries,
but also between individuals, as the natural environment is given by God to everyone, and its use entails a personal responsibility towards the whole of humanity, in particular, towards the poor and future generations. (Cf. 48).  

Human Environment

CA then points out what it calls “the more serious destruction of the human environment, something which is by no means receiving the attention it deserves.” And, as Benedict said in August 2009, “The Church…above all is committed to protect man from the destruction of himself.”

While specifics here include urban planning and the “social ecology” of work, this more serious destruction of our human environment really transcends these specifics and involves issues of the social structure in which we live. These structures can either help or hinder our living in accordance with the truth and it is here that CST begins to integrate issues of life.

THE FAMILY

Now, the key to fixing this “more serious destruction” of our human environment, the starting point, what CA calls “the first and fundamental structure for human ecology that we must concern ourselves with” is the family. And it immediately defines this as “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.”

The problem is that people forget this and see their “lives as a series of sensations to be experienced rather than as a work to be accomplished.”

CA says it is necessary to go back to seeing the family as sacred – “the heart of the culture of life”

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69 Benedict XVI, General Audience, (26 August 2009)
70 Benedict made this topic the theme for his 1 January 2010 World Day of Peace message where he makes the most developed magisterial case to date on the topic of the environment. It must be noted, however, that, just as he does in Caritas in Veritate, he points out the inseparable link between protecting the environment and protecting life: “Hence I readily encourage efforts to promote a greater sense of ecological responsibility which, as I indicated in my Encyclical Caritas in Veritate, would safeguard an authentic “human ecology” and thus forcefully reaffirm the inviolability of human life at every stage and in every condition, the dignity of the person and the unique mission of the family, where one is trained in love of neighbour and respect for nature. There is a need to safeguard the human patrimony of society. This patrimony of values originates in and is part of the natural moral law, which is the foundation of respect for the human person and creation.”

71 Op. cit., Centesimus Annus, 36
72 Benedict XVI, General Audience, (26 August 2009)
73 Op. cit., Centesimus Annus, 38
74 Ibid., 39
75 Ibid., 39
76 Ibid., 39
And this applies to our laws. As Benedict said in September 2007, “Far from remaining indifferent to marriage, the State must acknowledge, respect and support this venerable institution as the stable union between a man and a woman who willingly embrace a lifelong commitment of love and fidelity”\textsuperscript{77} and, even more specifically, “[s]tates are called to \textit{enact policies promoting the centrality and the integrity of the family}”\textsuperscript{78}.

Failing this Pope Benedict recently said, in reference to Canada but isn’t that far off from being a message for us, ‘In the name of ‘tolerance’ your country has had to endure the folly of the redefinition of spouse, and in the name of ‘freedom of choice’ it is confronted with daily destruction of unborn children. When the Creator’s divine plan is ignored the truth of human nature is lost.”\textsuperscript{79}

And, in another address that same day he said the Church can not compromise in the defense of certain human rights. Every state has the obligation to defend the family in its “incomparable mission to be the source of communal life and the building block of all society.”\textsuperscript{80}

WHY DO THESE PROBLEMS EXIST?

What causes these problems in the human environment? Again, CA points out that these “pathologies” eating away at our environment are the fault of our ethical and cultural systems not economic ones. By ignoring ethical and religious dimensions in the public square we have weakened ourselves to limiting society to issues of the production of goods and services rather than on the necessary relationship between truth and freedom.

The economic sphere “is part and parcel of human activity and precisely because it is human it must be structured and governed in an ethical manner…It is not the instrument that must be called to account, but individuals, their moral conscience and their personal and social responsibility.”\textsuperscript{81}

The “conviction that the economy must be autonomous, that it must be shielded from ‘influences’ of a moral character, has led man to abuse the economic process in a thoroughly destructive way.”\textsuperscript{82}

And, to what result? “[c]ultures can no longer define themselves within a nature that transcends them, and man ends up being reduced to a cultural statistic. When this happens, humanity runs new risks of enslavement and manipulation.”\textsuperscript{83}

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{77}Benedict XVI, \textit{Address to New Ambassador of the Slovak Republic to the Holy See}, (13 September 2007)
\item \textsuperscript{78}Caritas in Veritate, 44
\item \textsuperscript{79}Benedict XVI, \textit{Address to Ontario, Canada Bishops}, (8 Sep 06)
\item \textsuperscript{80}Benedict XVI, \textit{Address to the new Chilean ambassador to the Holy See}, (8 Sep 06)
\item \textsuperscript{81}Op. Cit., Caritas in Veritate, 36
\item \textsuperscript{82}Ibid., 34
\item \textsuperscript{83}Ibid., 26
\end{itemize}
CST points out that we have forgotten George Washington’s observation in his farewell address: “Of all the dispositions and habits which lead to political prosperity, religion and morality are indispensable supports.”

HOW DO WE BEGIN TO FIX THEM?

In a brief but profound problem/solution statement on family policies/issues CA goes on to say we must overcome today’s widespread individualistic mentality through a concrete commitment to solidarity and charity, beginning in the family. And it urgently calls for social policies that have the family as their principle object.

And it is the task of the state to defend those collective goods that constitute the essential framework for the legitimate pursuit of the personal goals of each individual and to preserve our natural and human environments that cannot be safeguarded simply by market forces. The market place cannot satisfy all human needs.

ALIENATION

Now, returning to a theme introduced by Marx, but wrongly applied, CA next points to the issue of Alienation, defined as the loss of the “authentic meaning of life.”

CST goes on to distinguish between personal and societal alienation:

“A man is alienated if he refuses to transcend himself and to live the experience of self giving” and “Man is alienated when he is alone, when he is detached from reality, when he stops thinking and believing in a foundation.”

“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 solidarity between people” and “[a]ll humanity is alienated when too much trust is placed in merely human projects, ideologies and utopias.”

The cause of this in developed countries, CST tells us, is:

- Consumerism,
- work settings which isolate a person in a maze of relationships marked by destructiveness, competitiveness and estrangement, and
- “Manipulation by the means of mass communication which impose fashions and trends of opinion through carefully orchestrated repetition”.

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85 Op. Cit., *Centesimus Annus*, 41
86 Ibid., 41
88 Op. Cit., *Centesimus Annus*, 41
John Paul tells us that “The concept of alienation needs to be led back to the Christian vision of reality, by recognizing in alienation a reversal of means and ends. When man does not recognize in himself and in others the value and grandeur of the human person, he effectively deprives himself of the possibility of benefiting from his humanity and of entering into that relationship of solidarity and communion with others for which God created him.”

While Pope Benedict says, “Social and psychological alienation and the many neuroses that afflict affluent societies are attributable in part to spiritual factors…There cannot be holistic development and universal common good unless people’s spiritual and moral welfare is taken into account”.

STATE & CULTURE

Now, after this review of market economies and “risks and problems” associated with them in the developing and developed world, CA turns to issues of state and culture. And it begins here by endorsing the rule of law which it defines as: three powers – legislative, executive and judicial – with each power balanced by other powers and by spheres of responsibility which keep them within proper bounds. This sounds very familiar to American ears.

STATE & CULTURE

DEMOCRACY

In our private audience with His Holiness on 19 May 06 Pope Benedict even called ‘democracy’ “the most valid historical instrument” for advancing human rights and development. He went on to say democracy has proven to be an effective means of “guaranteeing the future in a way worthy of man.”

However, it must be pointed out that CA goes on to insist on the dignity of each person, made in the visible image of God, and enjoying rights no individual, group or even nation can violate – “not even the majority of a social body”. So while endorsing democratic systems, CST insists that “authentic democracy” is possible only in a state ruled by law and on the basis of a correct conception of the human person.

Again, just as JPII cautioned that free markets must have a juridical base and be ordered to the service of mankind, Pope Benedict has weighed in quite strongly on this topic when he said “Democracy succeeds only to the extent that it is based on truth and a correct understanding of the human person.” He went on to say “Catholic involvement in political life can not compromise that principle.”

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91 Ibid, 41
92 Op. Cit., Caritas in Veritate, 76
93 Benedict XVI, Address to Members of The Centesimus Annus Foundation, (19 May 2006)
94 Op. cit., Centesimus Annus, 46
Human Rights on which the State Must be Ordered

Much like RN identifies a list of workers rights, CA identifies the most important human rights on which a democracy must be ordered:

1. The right to life (and CA points out that an integral part of this is the right of the child to develop in the mother’s womb from the moment of conception).
2. The right to live in a united family.
3. The right to live in a moral environment (conducive to the growth of a child’s personality).
4. The right to develop one’s intelligence and freedom (in seeking and knowing the truth).
5. The right to work (and from that work to support oneself and one’s dependants).
6. The right to freely establish a family (to have and rear children through the responsible exercise of one’s sexuality).
7. The right to religious freedom (understood as the right to live in the truth of one’s faith and in conformity with one’s transcendent dignity as a person).

This brief section on the state is a clear road map to all societies and governments and can be used as a diagnostic tool or an inspiration, as the situation demands.

STATE & CULTURE
ECONOMY

CA then identifies the role of the state as regards economic activity. What should and must the state do and not do regarding encouraging the economy? Well, the State must:

1. Guarantee individual freedom.
2. Guarantee private property rights.
3. Ensure a stable currency.
4. Ensure efficient services are provided.
5. Create conditions which will ensure job opportunities by:

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95 Ibid., 47
96 Pope Benedict has outlined seven defining principles for what “decent” work is: 1. it expresses ones essential dignity; 2. it is freely chosen; 3. it enables respect and freedom form discrimination; 4. it allows families to meet their needs and provide for their children’s education; 5. it permits free organization of workers; 6. it “leaves enough room for rediscovering one’s roots at a personal, familial and spiritual level”; 7. it guarantees retirees “decent standard of living.” Caritas in Veritate, 63
97 Pope Benedict XVI points out that some “religious and cultural attitudes…end up retarding or even obstructing authentic human development” and insists “that adequate discernment is needed. Religious freedom does not mean religious indifference nor does it imply that all religions are equal.” Caritas in Veritate, 55
98 The Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life, in their December 2009 report, Global Restrictions on Religion, identify that 70% of the world’s population face high or very high restrictions on their religious freedom while another 16% face moderate ones. Clearly, only a small minority of the peoples enjoy full religious liberty
a. Stimulating those activities where they are lacking, and
b. Supporting them in moments of crisis.

6. Intervene when monopolies create delays or obstacles to development.
7. In exceptional circumstances, the state should exercise a substitute function in crises or when getting started. This, however, must be as brief as possible.
8. The state should avoid enlarging excessively the sphere of state intervention to the detriment of both economic and civil freedoms.

A WELFARE STATE: WARNING

On this last point CA has a special warning based on recent years where what it calls a new “Welfare State” and in its worst examples a “Social Assistance State” has developed whose malfunctions and defects result from an inadequate understanding of the tasks proper to the state. “Here again the principle of Subsidiarity must be respected.”

Quoting directly from CA, CST states that: “By intervening directly and depriving society of its responsibility, the Social Assistance State leads to a loss of human energies and an inordinate increase in public agencies which are dominated more by bureaucratic ways of thinking than by concern for serving their clients, and which are accompanied by an enormous increase in spending. In fact, it would appear that needs are best understood and satisfied by people who are closest to them and who act as neighbors to those in need”.

CST goes on to state that it “favors and promotes” voluntarism and urges everyone to participate.

A theme again echoed by Benedict in DCE when he says we need a State that “generously acknowledges and supports initiatives arising from different social forces and combines spontaneity with closeness to those in need.” And, later, in CIV “subsidiarity is the most effective antidote against any form of all-encompassing welfare state.”

STATE & CULTURE

INTERNATIONAL BODIES

The section on the state and culture ends with an urgent call on the international community to develop alternatives to war. Also, recognizing that another name for peace is development, it calls for a concerted, worldwide effort to promote development.

A call strongly re-iterated by Benedict in CIV. Indeed, at the UN in 2008, Pope Benedict made a direct and, I think, not fully appreciated call on the international community when he said: “Every State has the primary duty to protect its own population from grave and

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100 Ibid., 48
101 Ibid., 48
sustained violations of human rights, as well as from the consequences of humanitarian crises, whether natural or man-made. If States are unable to guarantee such protection, the international community must intervene. And, this intervention “should never be interpreted as an unwarranted imposition or a limitation of sovereignty. On the contrary, it is indifference or failure to intervene that do the real damage.”

POSTSCRIPT

Well, we did it: a review of CST in less than an hour.

I would be remiss if I left the impression that CST is just an alternative sociological, economic or anthropological view of the world, albeit a prescriptive one, with many of its insights being substantiated by these disciplines.

Catholic vs. Secular Social Theory

Indeed, CST stands in marked contrast to the social theory of Hobbes and Locke. CST assumes we are inherently social – reflecting our Trinitarian God, in whose image we are created, and whose own being is irreducibly social.

By contrast, social contract theory assumes we are inherently autonomous, committed to no higher moral grounding than our own self-interest.

In fact, I posit that it is in this inherently social versus autonomous anthropology – and the three principles of – a correct understanding of the human person – human dignity, solidarity and subsidiarity, that CST provides such a compelling answer to the multiple problems of modernity identified earlier – consumerism, the destruction of our Human environment and alienation.

CST is Christian Teaching

So, while it is quite useful as a guide for living in and creating a civil society - areas we will be exploring in some depth - it should be remembered that CST is first and foremost Christian teaching. As John Paul II emphasized in CA, “it proclaims God and his mystery of salvation in Christ to every human being, and for that very reason reveals man to himself…in this light, and only in this light” does CST go on to concern itself with issues of human rights, workers right, property rights, the role of the state, economy and culture, and “respect for life”.

This is another ‘signature point’, essential to a correct and full understanding of CST and one that has received a great deal of attention by Pope Benedict as will become evident in a moment.

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104 Benedict XVI, Meeting With the Members of The General Assembly of The United Nations Organization, New York, (18 April 2008)
105 Op. cit., Centesimus Annus, 54
CST vs. CHARITY

But first, we need to be clear to distinguish between charity and CST. This is important because what we call things is important and because Pope Benedict gives this much attention in CIV. So, spending time here will go a long way towards clearing up some of the confusion caused by the many diocesan and parish projects labeled ‘social justice’ but which are, in fact, usually initiatives of charity.

So, briefly: Charity is a theological virtue. It applies to all and involves engaging, directly, those around us who are in need.

CST, a branch of Catholic moral theology, is magisterial teaching proposing a set of principles to be used to form our conscience as we impact on the social structures around us.

Social Justice (which is noun not a verb) is the result of CST applied in the world. Social Action (which is a verb) is the implementation of CST -- not acts of Charity.

Again, Charity, as a Theological virtue, is what we are all called to do. As Pope Benedict says charity or “love of neighbor, grounded in the love of God, is first and foremost a responsibility of each individual member of the faithful,”106 and, “[t]o desire the common good and strive towards it is a requirement of justice and charity.”107

CST proposes a set of principles to be used in forming ones conscience on how to respond to the structures of society.

As Benedict defines it in CIV: “Her social doctrine is a particular dimension of this proclamation [of the truth]: It is a service to the truth that sets us free. Open to the truth from whichever branch of knowledge it comes, the church’s social doctrine receives it, assembles into a unity the fragments in which it is often found and mediates it within the constantly changing life patterns of the society of peoples and nations.”108

Clothing runs, food drives, home building projects are acts of charity, not social justice.

Now charity, as a Theological Virtue, does inform CST. Pope Pius XII informed us that “The social program of the Catholic Church is based upon three powerful pillars: truth, justice and Christian charity.”109

Indeed, Benedict tells us in CIV that “Charity is at the heart of the Church’s social doctrine.”110 and, later, “‘Caritas in Veritate’ is the principle around which the church’s

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108 Ibid., 9
social doctrine turns…“111 Continuing, he makes the point that “Justice is the primary way of charity” while “on the other hand, charity transcends justice and completes it.”112 -- But they are not the same.

CHARITY

Let’s now focus on ‘charity’ and the need to understand, specifically, Catholic ‘charity’—as the Church makes some very critical points about its practice. We will then turn to CST.

First, let us understand that “Charity goes beyond justice…but it never lacks justice…I cannot “give” what is mine to the other, without first giving him what pertains to him in justice…Not only is justice not extraneous to charity, not only is it not an alternative or parallel path to charity: justice is inseparable from charity, and intrinsic to it.”113

Pope Benedict calls on those engaged in ‘charity’ to “give to others not only something of my own, but my very self; I must be personally present in my gift.”114 and he insists that “[i]t is time to reaffirm the importance of prayer in the face of the activism and the growing secularism of many Christians engaged in charitable work.”115 Similarly, the requirements of Charity do inform CST as Pope Benedict points out in CIV.

Pope Benedict goes even further, however, and insists: “In fact, it is quite impossible to separate the response to people’s material and social needs from the fulfillment of the profound desires of their hearts…It is clear that no economic, social or political project can replace that gift of self to another through which charity is expressed…He who does not give God gives too little”116 echoing Mother Theresa who wrote, “Pray – I must be able to give only Jesus to the world. People are hungry for God. What [a] terrible meeting [it] would be with our neighbour if we give them only ourselves.”117

He even warns that while CST is important it has limits: “The primary contribution that the Church offers to the development of mankind and peoples does not consist merely in material or technical solutions. Rather it involves the proclamation of the truth of Christ118 and this “Truth is the light that gives meaning and value to charity…without truth, charity degenerates into sentimentality. Love becomes an empty shell, to be filled in an arbitrary way.”119

111 Ibid., 6
112 Ibid., 60
113 Ibid., 6
115 Ibid., 37
116 Benedict XVI, Message for Lent, 2006
119 Caritas in Veritate, 2
That is why he said “simple activism” is not enough, even if the level of activism is “heroic”. If the exterior action is not born of a profound and intimate communion with Christ” it can be pointless. As he says in CIV: “Truth opens and invites our minds in the logos of love: This is the Christian proclamation and testimony of charity.”

This picks up where he began with DCE when he said: “With regards to the personnel who carry out the Church’s charitable activity on the practical level the essential has already been said: They must not be inspired by ideologies aimed at improving the world, but should rather be guided by the faith which works through love.” and “It is very important that the Church’s charitable activity maintains all if its splendor and does not become just another form of social assistance.”

These are the messages that our Church insists enlighten our charitable activities and, tangentially, of CST ones also.

CST

So, what is the role of CST?

Perhaps this question is best considered in light of Benedict’s letter to the 10th annual meeting of the Pontifical Academies where he said that in a society that has lost sight of God “man tends to fall back ever more on himself, to close himself in an airless existential microcosm.” This strips contemporary culture of its ability to stimulate the search for truth leaving man “in a prolonged infancy or adolescence”.

This is where CST comes to the fore and it is worth reviewing, in detail, JPII’s 1999 comments to American bishops:

“As I have already noted, love for the poor must be preferential, but not exclusive. The Synod Fathers observed that it was in part because of an approach to the pastoral care of the poor marked by a certain exclusiveness that the pastoral care for the leading sectors of society has been neglected and many people have thus been estranged from the Church. The damage done by the spread of secularism in these sectors — political or economic, union-related, military, social or cultural — shows how urgent it is that they be evangelized, with the encouragement and guidance of the Church’s Pastors, who are called by God to care for everyone.”

Referring now to the laity he continues, “[w]ith their support, Pastors will face the not easy task of evangelizing these sectors of society. With renewed fervor and updated
methods, they will announce Christ to leaders, men and women alike, insisting especially on the formation of consciences on the basis of the Church's social doctrine. This formation will act as the best antidote to the not infrequent cases of inconsistency and even corruption marking socio-political structures. Conversely, if this evangelization of the leadership sector is neglected, it should not come as a surprise that many who are a part of it will be guided by criteria alien to the Gospel and at times openly contrary to it."\textsuperscript{126}

So, one way to express CST purpose is: To inform lay Catholic leaders’ consciences on how we are to interact with and impact upon the framework of society with the principles of CST – Human Dignity, Solidarity and Subsidiarity.

This was echoed by Pope Benedict\textsuperscript{127} when he encouraged Catholics to become acquainted with the social teachings of the Church so that, as JPII said, we can change:

1. Our life styles.
2. Our models of production and consumption.
3. The established structures of power which today govern societies.\textsuperscript{128}

Why? Because “The decisions which create a human environment can give rise to specific structures of sin which impede the full realization of those who are in any way oppressed by them”\textsuperscript{129}

There are structures of society that need to be destroyed. There are structures that need to be built. As JPII said, “To destroy structures and replace them with more authentic forms of living in community is a task which demands courage and patience.”\textsuperscript{130}

In summary, this is what CST is about - to have lay Catholic leaders form their consciences on its principles so that they may change their own lives, first, and then, change the world. CST is not a theory, it is “above all else a basis and a motivation for action.”\textsuperscript{131}

**WHOSE JOB IS IT?**

This leads us to a final significant point: While the Church fully realizes that society must be structured appropriately, she is just as clear that this is NOT the job of the Church. As Pope Benedict says the Church, “recognizes that it is not the Church’s responsibility to make this teaching prevail in political life...The Church can not and must not take upon herself the political battle to bring about the most just society possible.”\textsuperscript{132}

\textsuperscript{126} *Ibid.*
\textsuperscript{127} Benedict XVI, *Homily on the Feast of St. Joseph*, (19 March 2006)
\textsuperscript{128} Op. cit., *Centesimus Annus*, 58
\textsuperscript{129} *Ibid.*, 38
\textsuperscript{130} *Ibid.*, 38
\textsuperscript{131} *Ibid.*, 57
\textsuperscript{132} Op. cit., *Deus Caritas Est*, 28
This continues a long tradition of forcefully and directly stating that fact: “He [Leo XIII] had no intention of laying down guiding principles on the purely practical, we might say technical, side of the social structure; for he was well aware of the fact – as Our immediate Predecessor of saintly memory, Pius XI, pointed out ten years ago in his commemorative Encyclical, Quadragesimo Anno – that the Church does not claim such a mission.”

And, “The church does not have technical solutions to offer and does not claim ‘to interfere in any way in the politics of states. (Populorum Progressio, 13).”

WHAT IS THE CHURCH’S ROLE?

Before turning to whose job this is, let’s clarify what the Church does define as her role regards CST and it not simply to sit on the sidelines!

First and foremost, AS JPII said in 1999, it is to assist in the formation of conscience.

Benedict also says “The Church wishes to help form consciences in political life and to stimulate greater insight into the authentic requirements of justice [Human dignity, solidarity, subsidiarity] as well as greater readiness to act accordingly.”

Further, as delineated by Pope Benedict in DCE, it is not just for Catholics: “The Church’s social doctrine has become a set of fundamental guidelines offering approaches that are valid even beyond the confines of the Church.”

Also, “Faith enables reason to do its work more effectively and to see its proper object more clearly. This is where Catholic social doctrine has its place…its aim is simply to help purify reason and to contribute, here and now, to the acknowledgement and attainment of what is just.”

“The Church does not separate a proper regard for temporal welfare from solicitude for the eternal…she has nevertheless clearly outlined the guiding principles which, while susceptible of varied concrete applications according to the diversified conditions of times and places and peoples, indicate the safe way of securing the happy progress of society.”

Now, since it is a “most important human responsibility” to build a just social and civil order “The Church is duty bound to offer, through the purification of reason and through

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133 Pius XII, Radio message for Pentecost, 1941
136 Ibid., 27
137 Ibid., 28
138 Pius XI, Divini Redemptoris, (19 March 1937), 34
ethical formation, her own specific contributions towards understanding the requirements of justice and achieving these politically.”

As Benedict says in his message for Lent 2006: “The Church today considers it her duty to ask political leaders and those with economic and financial power to promote development”, and not any development, but: “Development based on respect for the dignity of every man and woman.”

He then insists that “These are the criteria by which Christians should assess the political programs of their leaders.”

The Church then “has to play her part through rational argument and she has to reawaken the spiritual energy without which justice, which always demands sacrifice, can not prevail and prosper” “the promotion of justice through efforts to bring about openness of mind and will to the demands of the common good is something which concerns the Church deeply.”

**WHOES JOB IS IT TO IMPLEMENT CST?**

Our Church, since Vatican II’s *Lumen Gentium*, has called on the laity to be God’s voice in the world. It is our special task to order and throw light upon all the affairs of the world in line with the teachings of Jesus Christ. That is our unique and special mission. And what an onerous task it is -- if taken seriously. We are directly charged to help fulfill Christ's prophetic office.

Nor is this some ephemeral charge! “The laity have the principal role in the overall fulfillment of this duty.” Both individually and corporately we are called on to make a practical difference in the world: “let the laity also by their combined efforts remedy the customs and conditions of the world.”

**THE NEW EVANGELIZATION**

Now, Pope John Paul II called for a new evangelization. And he stated that “to spread her social doctrine pertains to the Church’s evangelization mission and is an essential part of the Christian message” and later, he states even more strongly: “the Church’s social teaching is itself a valid instrument of evangelization.”

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141 Ibid.
143 Dogmatic Constitution on The Church, *LUMEN GENTIUM*, 21 NOVEMBER 1964, Chapter IV
144 Ibid., 36
145 Ibid., 36
147 Ibid., 54
And Benedict said that “the direct duty to work for a just ordering of society…is proper to the lay faithful”\(^\text{148}\) and “Every Christian is called to practice this charity in a manner corresponding to his vocation and according to the degree of influence he wields…”\(^\text{149}\) “True social justice, furthermore, can only be possible in a perspective of genuine solidarity that commits people to live and work always for others. Thus, to achieve this in practice in the context of the contemporary world is the great challenge of Christian people”\(^\text{150}\)

It is our role then – ordained, religious and lay – to work towards developing strong, committed Catholic lay men and women, rich in faith and theologically prepared with the tenants of CST to be present in public life to explain and implement CSD in our world.

Indeed, in CIV Benedict tells us “To defend the truth, to articulate it with humility and conviction, and to bear witness to it in life are therefore exacting and indispensable forms of charity.”\(^\text{151}\) And, as he said in March 2009, “In the face of suffering or violence, poverty or hunger, corruption or abuse of power, a Christian can never remain silent. The saving message of the Gospel needs to be proclaimed loud and clear, so that the light of Christ can shine into the darkness of people’s lives.”\(^\text{152}\)

And it is towards this end that Cardinal McCarrick asked us to develop this program. To put those responsible for Catholic Charities, catechesis and social justice on the same page, so to speak, so that, as JPII said on 6 December 2004, by forming the consciences of lay Catholics American bishops might be able to avoid “serious pastoral problems created by a growing failure to understand the Church’s binding obligation to remind the faithful of their duty in conscience to act according with her authoritative teaching.” He went on to suggest the need for “a comprehensive catechesis of the lay apostolate” to help US Catholics understand their public duties.\(^\text{153}\)

THIS IS NOT POLITICAL!

Finally, just as “Christian charitable activity must be independent of parties and ideologies”\(^\text{154}\) it must be reiterated and acknowledged that CST is not political teaching. We need to be clear that CA, DCE, CIV nor any of the magisterial documents are teachings to or for the right or the left. CST is neither liberal nor conservative.

However, there are warnings to both sides of the political spectrum.

Individuals of the right can latch on to the endorsement of free markets as the only economic principle that seems to promote affluence and draw great comfort from that

\(^{149}\) Op. cit., Caritas in Veritate, 7  
\(^{150}\) Benedict XVI, Address to Members of the “Centesimus Annus” Foundation, 19 May 2006  
\(^{151}\) Op. cit., Caritas in Veritate, 1  
\(^{152}\) Benedict XVI, Address at Nsimalen International Airport, (17 March 2009)  
\(^{153}\) John Paul II, Ad Limina address to 22 Southern US bishops, (2 December 2004)  
\(^{154}\) Op. cit., Deus Caritas Est, 31
fact – while forgetting about the evils of consumerism, improper business activities and the fact that their brothers are in dire economic straits.

A second group, lets call them individuals of the left, might try to focus primarily or only on the principle of solidarity and the Church’s endorsement of the “preferential option for the poor” – these are individuals who have been enamored of government responses to the social problems, ignoring the clear call of CST for free markets and Subsidiarity.

The danger of the first reaction to CST is that people in business and the professions, proponents of capitalism if you wish, will fail to be evangelized by CST. The danger to the second reaction is that they will miss the chance to properly utilize CST to evangelize. In any event, both fail to implement CST through their lives.

And both run the risk of forgetting the aforementioned key message of CA, DCE and CIV: “It is clear that no economic, social or political project can replace the gift of self to another…He who does not give God gives too little”.

HOW SHALL WE ‘USE’ CATHOLIC SOCIAL TEACHING?

In a moving and in hind sight last will and testament to the lay organization he founded to help evangelize the world with CST, JPII told CAPP, on 4 Dec 04, that the Church’s social doctrine seems to be “more often cited than understood”. He lamented what he called its “Instrumental” use by groups promoting their own agenda and called for CST to be presented in a “precise, clear and comprehensive way”.

He also urged that CST be used as the stimulus to concrete action by the lay faithful – a task he confirmed as a “characteristic element of lay spirituality.”

As Benedict asked us on 16 April 2008: “Is it consistent to profess our beliefs in church on Sunday, and then during the week to promote business practices or medical procedures contrary to those beliefs? Is it consistent for practicing Catholics to ignore or exploit the poor and the marginalized, to promote sexual behavior contrary to Catholic moral teaching, or to adopt positions that contradict the right to life of every human being from conception to natural death? Any tendency to treat religion as a private matter must be resisted. Only when their faith permeates every aspect of their lives do Christians become truly open to the transforming power of the Gospel.”

That, reverend fathers, deacons, sisters, ladies and gentlemen is why we are here at the CUA/CAPP Certificate program in CST. We are privileged with “living out” an attempt

155 John Paul II, Address to The Participants in the Congress of the Vatican Foundation "CENTESIMUS ANNUS - PRO PONTIFICE", (4 December 2004)
156 Ibid.
157 Ibid.
158 Ibid.
159 Ibid.
160 Benedict XVI, Celebration of Vespers and Meeting With the Bishops of the United States of America, National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington, D.C., (16 April 2008)
to implement CST in concrete action within our call to holiness -- as JPII called for in 1999 and Cardinal McCarrick asked be done in 2001.

I am motivated by feeling a personal link to a course of action called for by Pope Benedict and by his predecessor, a man I believe is now with God, and acts to empower us in the fulfillment of this mission.

4 KEY LEARNINGS

I pray that we will leave this week with an appreciation for four points:

1. That “[m]uch remains to be done to ensure that this enriching contribution of ecclesial teaching becomes a consistent yardstick and a certain force of inspiration for Christian social action.”\textsuperscript{161}

2. I hope we will have overcome that, “[o]ne sometimes has the impression either that the social doctrine of the Church is mentioned rather than known, or that it is seen merely as a horizon of values perhaps too grand and noble ever to be put into practice in this world, rather than a demanding criterion for judgment and action.”\textsuperscript{162}

3. That we understand that “[i]t is therefore truly important to have a precise, motivated and complete approach to making the Church's social teaching known so as to avoid stressing any one aspect more than another, swayed by preconceived emotions or views, thus losing sight of its integral structure and using it instrumentally.”\textsuperscript{163}

4. That we leave prepared to help ensure that “people must learn to use this doctrine as a valid reference in the context of family, professional and civil responsibilities.” That “[t]hey…accept it as a shared criterion for personal and community decisions and actions, in continuity with the fine witness borne, especially since Rerum Novarum, by Christians, both lowly and great, who have lived the passion for the human cause in the light of the Gospel.”\textsuperscript{164}

On 16 April 2008, Pope Benedict said, “the Church in America…is faced with the challenge of recapturing the Catholic vision of reality and presenting it, in an engaging and imaginative way….\textsuperscript{165}

In that aforementioned moving ‘last will and testament’ JPII told CAPP: “I therefore urge the Members to spare no effort to ensure that the Foundation seeks to pursue these goals”\textsuperscript{166}

\textsuperscript{161} Op. cit., Address to The Participants in the Congress of the Vatican Foundation "CENTESIMUS ANNUS - PRO PONTIFICE"
\textsuperscript{162} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{163} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{164} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{165} Benedict XVI, Response to Questions Posed by US Bishops, 1, (16 April 08), Washington, DC
\textsuperscript{166} Ibid., 4
May that be our common goal.