

*Twenty questions regarding
consumption after the financial crisis*

Fundación Centesimus Annus
Spanish Chapter

May 25, 2015

1. Consumption as a phenomenon (i)

- Consumption today: Buy and sell as much as you can, with the best margins
- Consumption up to XIX century: Supply of essential goods
- XIX-XX century: Distribution networks, new needs of consumers
- XX-XXI century: satisfaction is found in the acquisition of the product or service
- Early years of XXI century: Consumption dropped between 30% and 50%. Jobless and destruction of wealth

John Paul II already warned about this approach. Mankind is oriented to “have” rather than to “be” as a way of development and growth of the person

1. Consumption as a phenomenon (ii)

Questions

- Can we imagine , from the consumption point of view, a model of life different from the one we have today?
- And a different way to consume?
- Can we develop our society without consumption?
- Can our economy develop or grow without consumption?
- Is consumption consubstantial to the human being, the fact of “having”, rather than “being”?

2. Consumption and economy(i)

- Macroeconomy and microeconomy.
 - New markets
 - Public expenditure
 - Debt rescheduling and forgiveness

- Consumption reduction
 - From the wealthy
 - From the “street people”

- Consequences: Increase inequality,
- Lost opportunity
- Welfare state redefinition

2. Consumption and economy (ii)

Questions

- What can be done in order to increase the purchase power of those less favored?
- How can responsible consumption be encouraged?
- What can be done from the consumer perspective?
- What is the real power of judgement of the consumer in our actual economy?
- Is it oriented to the “fair life”?

3. Consumption and public responsibility(i)

- Government intervention
 - Tax increase
 - Public employment
 - Responsibility towards developing countries

- Different perspectives

- CA number 11:
 - Solidarity
 - Subsidiarity

3. Consumption and public responsibility(ii)

Questions

- Is it necessary that the State impose the rules for consumption based on social legitimacy?
- Does the State need to grant the economic fundamentals of society?
- What is the role of the State? How should subsidiarity work?
- Pope Francis has spoken about an economy that kills. How do we address this question with regard to consumption and public intervention?

4. *Consumption, education and culture(i)*

- Christian approach: Austerity
- New forms of living and consuming
- Basic and luxury goods
- Transit:
 - From having to being
 - From “static” to “dynamic” being

4. Consumption, education and culture(ii)

Questions:

- Can you consume - and, consequently, educate - differently to be happy otherwise?
- Where is "our treasure" ("where is your treasure...")?
- What does reflect our behavior in relation to consumption?
- How does it influence our children's education?
- Are we aware of the opportunity to train and educate about consumption to build a better future?