

Incentivizing Solidarity and Civic Virtue

Contribution by Malta Group

Introduction

In this paper, Incentivizing Solidarity and Civic Virtue, we consider Solidarity to mean Human Solidarity and Social Charity¹ and Civic Virtue to be a quality, ability, attitude or disposition that is needed to perform our role well as a citizen, in such a way that maintains **social cohesion and the good health of our civic and political life**. Further, it is understood that, where civic cohesion exists, harmony will prevail, even over indifferences: This holds because, each member of society has the ability to function using the right approach, first towards his country, and then towards a universal view of the common good².

The term used by Pope Francis in His encyclical letter '*Laudato Si: On Care for a Common Home*', represents a shift in mentality towards a 'common fraternity', one that places the earth within the context of a 'common home'. As a start, treating the earth as a 'home' already places the emphasis on 'care'. It is commonly understood that sharing is caring, and so sharing in the responsibility of a common good, results in the care of a 'common home'. Since care is due from the micro levels of society to the macro levels of society, then the relationships that exist between members of groups ought to be altruistic ones. In their very essence, where such relationships fail to meet the needs of individual members of society, from the more basic needs, to the transcendental³ needs, progress then becomes

¹ Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church, par. 192, stating that we are mainly connected by the "phenomenon of interdependence". Our response ought to be an ethical-social one to one another.

² There is evidence to suggest that how well the economy and the community functions, will depend substantially on the degree to which the citizens possess civic virtues. Further, there is also evidence to suggest a strong correlation between educational attainment and good citizenship. Accordingly, education systems need to increase the proportion of individuals who develop the literacy, numeracy, and critical thinking skills required for effective 'good citizenship'. Civic education in primary, secondary and tertiary education can contribute to civic virtue.

³ This term echoes that which is described of in the early paragraphs of Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church in paragraph 2: The capacity to improve one's own social, economic and political context is at the very heart of Catholic Social Teaching. Paragraph 4 extends the desire of personal improvement to wanting to

jeopardized. In a situation where the priority given to a value-driven society declines, then safety gets compromised and so the most vulnerable are marginalized⁴.

The impact of treating the common home as 'common' can be the antidote to the current situation where global turmoil threatens the very foundations of every society. By Global turmoil this paper will take into consideration three references made by Pope Francis on the matter: 1) the globalisation of indifference, 2) inequalities created by the globalised economies and 3) cooperative globalisation.

The Globalisation of Indifference

An individualistic mentality silences the voices of those who get in the way of profit, at the cost of an increasing indifference towards the needy⁵. Pope Francis on separate accounts goes as far as saying that the globalisation of indifference leads to murder when contrasting beliefs or ideals interact⁶.

The needy are on the increase, especially where resources become scarcer because of the greed of the few who seek to conquer every bit of land for personal gain. In the process, the rights of the locals are ignored. Furthermore, the consequences related to greed have an adverse effect on the locals, because of policies that are inexistent or ineffective. Although homelessness may not be present everywhere, the enjoyment of living in a pleasant neighbourhood, gets compromised, with the emergence of high rise buildings and lack of green open spaces.

Another note to consider is irregular migration, which causes the most needy to leave their homes in the hope of finding a haven in Europe and promised by the dream of settling in a civilized continent. Reality presents something quite different, where there is the chance

live in harmony with one's neighbour. This transcending spirit to improve, effects man in every dimension of their life.

⁴ As understood in *Evangelii Gaudium* in par. 59, a natural consequence to lack of security, spawns members of society into a violent uprising which can be avoided only if and when exclusion and inequality cease to operate.

⁵ *Evangelii Gaudium* par. 53.

⁶ Pope Francis latches the term 'globalisation of indifference to being the cause of the loss of various lives, such as the drowning of Somalis and Eritreans in 2013 and in the 2016 killings of four Missionaries of Charity in Yemen.

that they are met again with hostility and in some instances, and sent back to their homelands. Pope Francis stresses that even in these situations governments must strive for global solidarity⁷.

Inequalities Created by the Globalised Economies

Where global wealth has risen, its people have not always climbed out of poverty⁸. This was the message that Cardinal Peter Turkson insisted was the motivator behind the structural change currently being used by Pope Francis to eradicate all forms of poverty. He further advocates that business should serve man. He adds, that in God's plan it is understood that the human person was God's only creation created to serve itself. Everything else was created to serve man. So, he argues that if anything else gets in the way of God's plan for man, then there "could be something off".

Pope Francis frames the financial crisis as a descent in the moral fabric of society, and as being first and foremost a profound human crisis. The trickle-down theories mentioned by Pope Francis that adhere to the idea that a free market will automatically bring about greater justice and social inclusiveness, are merely naïve⁹. While warning against economic idolatry the Pope asserts that this will lead to a new tyranny, which will effectively impose new laws and new rules.¹⁰ It is therefore, the scope of Catholic Social Teaching to advocate the value of the individual, to foster fraternity, and finally promote solidarity.

⁷ Global solidarity resonates St John Paul's plea for a system of values based on solidarity rather than on competition. This was also the Lenten Message of Pope Francis on the Globalisation of Indifference, March 2017.

⁸ Charles Rose interviewed Cardinal Peter Turkson, at Fortune – The Time+Fortune Global Forum, December 2, 2016. The emphasis of the matter in *Evangelii Gaudium* shifts the attention to the wealth being enjoyed by the few, while the poverty gap is only getting larger. This is a result, according to Pope Francis of an innate need which is also governing man, thus reducing man's humanity and solidarity towards others. This is the need for consumption.

⁹ The 'trickle-down' theory as expressed by Pope Francis resonates that which is already mentioned in the *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, par. 203 which points towards justice and social inclusiveness not merely as values on their own, however, as a path that would eventually accompany society to the path of peace. It is that these values need to be accompanied by the principle of solidarity for the true effect of love and peace to materialise.

¹⁰ *Evangelii Gaudium* par 56.

Cooperative Globalisation

The end for each organisation is profitability. For corporate organisations, it would mean financial gain, however, in contrast, non-profit organisations would seek to reach different ends, such as human development. In addition, both financial profitability through competitive advantage and human development are required for the sustainable development of any country and also for its long-term vision to be realised.

Society shows that although so many programmes and funding are in place, the poverty gap is widening. With more services being created, unemployment still destroys the lives of so many families, and mental problems, social disability and social displacement are still prevalent. Therefore, having considered these situations, what remedy could be viewed as sustainable to face these challenges?

The answer to this question requires *commitment*. Long term strategy could be understood as looking at the same diamond from a different facet. The structures that have formed nations until today have presented the world with great leaders and with the ability to take civilization forward in many ways, especially economically. However, the shifts occurring in society that are reducing so many to the clutches of poverty, tend to raise questions about the overall moral fabric that hold these very same systems together. Following is a discussion about the problem being faced due to global turmoil.

The Problem with Global Turmoil

Pope Francis addressed the European leaders urging them to “fight populism with solidarity” which He calls “the most effective antidote to modern forms of populism”. In the event of focusing solely on the result acquired by means of a progressive mentality, the other principal elements of culture, and the fluidity by which complex systems change and adapt, remain yet to be included in fostering solidarity.

An urgent need to address the modern situation of fairness for all workers is paramount, especially due to the technological advances that guide this era of globalisation. This

applies to education where the formative years of students, pre-empting their adult working years, are fundamental building blocks for the real world. Without good character formation, grounded in the capacity to act out of one's own good-will, even the most brilliant intellectuals will hesitate to act as responsible citizens, when dealing with public and private affairs.

Evidence shows that where the education system meets student needs, the chances of learning occur more frequently. There are varying degrees of learners and different learning styles, however, using training and education for the chances of an improved quality of life is a universal principle. Further, development and progression must be accompanied by a search for the truth, in order to satisfy the purpose of education itself, even in cases where training is focused on answering to industry demands.

In contrast, the fate of the poor uneducated nearly automatically excludes them from the chances of gainful employment and the right to a dignified life. A mainstream mentality will continue to contribute to the increasing poverty gap caused by injustices found in the different fora of society.

The alternative approach which considers profitability and wellbeing through a multiple shareholder value perspective remains at stake. Searching from the perspective of a multi-stream shareholder mentality shall safeguard the novitiate from the grasp of the broad-shouldered capitalist market and consequently enable him to progress with fairness.

Systems for human development and for financial profitability to coexist may be lacking, and still more, the current *hype* is capitalist-led and so, mainstreamed. This means that a mainstreaming mentality is the rule of the day¹¹. Undoubtedly, together with continuing efforts to increase profitability, an inclusive society requires a concerted effort to create a

¹¹ Referring to the 1987 encyclical by Pope John Paul II *Sollicitudo rei Socialis* (The Social Concern) which insists that the true moral nature of real development should be shown clearly, in such a way that it is not limited to the multiplication of goods and services, but must contribute to the fullness of the human being. Economic progress does not constitute development without concern for the social and spiritual dimensions of the individual. Pope John Paul II clearly states that both communism and unrestrained capitalism are extremes to be condemned, and he cautions against the "new" cultural imperialism, which, though not violent, seeks to impose the values of the West on other societies.

culture of fairness. This would logically call for any authority of good-will to enable the private sector by regulating the **free** market with the objective of transforming it into a **fair** market, that is, a market that provides for the proper harnessing of growth of the sector, while favouring those who would need to be included most, and who would otherwise risk becoming side-lined and forgotten.

Therefore, in answer to the current global turmoil, a drive towards sustainable living, is rightful and just to accelerate the growth of a generation of entrepreneurs and innovators¹². What is called for is a clear objective of what the main priorities of each country will be, towards achieving this end, keeping in mind what the long term socio-economic impact will have on society.

Constructive Alternatives for a more inclusive society: A fair culture of work.

A sustainable approach to adopt will involve a national effort that is open to fast changing needs. Having a regulatory system will benefit a culture of innovation and entrepreneurship while keeping close to heart the individual, especially those who are most in need. The following is a list of priority areas to be considered:

- A fair compensation for all workers is required and would, include a fair minimum wage in line with the dignity of the human person;
- Programmes set up by voluntary groups that will provide mentoring provision to corporate and civic organizations. The task will be to raise awareness about integral human development and civic virtue¹³;

¹² Following the thought taken from the CAPPF 2017 statement, Titled *Constructing Alternatives to Promote Human Dignity* where it states that “A process of human and participative development is best served by autonomous and responsible entrepreneurial initiative”.

¹³ To be effective one needs an increased understanding of the upcoming generations. Therefore, revising structures to adapt to the needs of the young, will create an inclusive culture through the mainstreaming of young talent, recognised by civil authorities as part of a national campaign against poverty and injustices. This will work towards achieving the common good. Where current infrastructure, especially rigid structures still aim to serve organization needs before individual human needs, restructuring will come into effect in an effort to respond to emerging needs and deliberate trends, and to make organizations more open to the development of each member.

- Justice and equity of healthcare systems to be more inclusive especially where health care is not provided for free¹⁴.
- Programmes that use creativity-through-innovation as a means towards creation of products or services that serve in the formation of the common good; such programmes will seek to promote the integral development of every individual member of society, without giving advantage to one individual or group over another¹⁵ and so in the long run, improve their socio-economic status too;
- Corporate Social Responsibility Programmes could include as their objectives, content to educate the workforce about ethical standards to living a life of dignity¹⁶;
- Influencing the education system so that, where the goal for vocational training and academic learning is being ordered in a manner to meet industry demands, programmes would also be in alignment with criteria that promote integral human development and civic virtue¹⁷;
- Programmes for the free education of migrant workers in our societies that are crowd funded;

¹⁴ It is being argued that, when eliminating health disparities that might occur by gender, disability, race or ethnicity, education or income, or sexual orientation, this would have an important social benefit, and contribute towards the development of civic virtues.

¹⁵ The situation with innovation science and how to appropriate a country to the fast changing technological and societal needs, may be an opportunity rather than a threat. The time is ripe to bring resources together and to think holistically about the future of any country and of the innovation market. As this generation of innovators is becoming a part of mainstream society it would, therefore, demand a vision to guide it, a framework to operate from, a regulator to ensure the equal distribution of goods, and a culture in which to nurture it.

¹⁶ Raising awareness about the dignity of work, as the vehicle towards the rightful expression and fulfilment of any individual's vocation, should find its expression in the daily operations of any organisation.

¹⁷ The trends of education today tend to answer to industry needs. It is often the case that graduates end up serving ends that do not always promote integral human development. Graduates, therefore, deserve to have training and learning, at all levels, made available in such a way that it allows learners to reach their transcendental capabilities¹⁷. In this way, they are able to enjoy self-fulfilment derived from discovering their vocation expressed within the remits of their career.

- Co-ordinated mentoring programmes offered by retired business people and entrepreneurs who would be prepared to handhold start-ups especially if these have a strong presence of young people;
- Civic responsibility initiatives that are linked to our environment, making it healthier and safer¹⁸;
- The replication of the solidarity Fund in our communities, choosing priority areas depending on the main social challenges in each society¹⁹.

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¹⁸ Vide Laudato Si – vide also the initiative taken by the Malta FCAPP in schools, in Malta, to instil a sense of responsible choice in young students.

¹⁹ Reference is being made to these diverse groups: (a) unaccompanied migrant children; (b) long term unemployed; (c) young unemployed, and (d) middle aged workers currently unemployed.