

Centesimus Annus Foundation, UK Chapter: 2020-2021 Programme

Looking at the post-lockdown world through the lens of Catholic social thought and teaching

Is the post-covid 'new normal' a necessary refresh in light of *Laudato Si* or a Trojan horse for systemic repression?

Introduction to the theme

Covid-19 is the single most disruptive global event since World War II. Even at the height of the Cold War, the world's economies did not come to a standstill. Never before has a pandemic or plague led to the government-induced, co-ordinated shutdown of practically the entire world economy. The policy response to Covid-19 is therefore unprecedented in world history and represents the largest and costliest act of state interventionism in human history over such a short period.

That there will be significant unintended consequences from these actions is guaranteed. Their nature, timing and scope is more difficult to predict. Economic interventionism and social engineering always and everywhere have behavioural, economic, social and political consequences, which are exceedingly difficult to model due to non-linearities, behavioural components and inter-dependencies.

Given the sharp ideological divide on how governments should respond, and setting aside any pre-conceived notions, the UK Chapter of the CAPP Foundation will aim, over the course of 2020-2021, to study the normative questions that arise from such largescale exogenous shocks to socio-economic systems and how Catholic Social Thought and Teaching can help to inform a policy response that is ethical, reasonable, fair, proportionate and legitimate.

A proper theoretical understanding of the role, limitations and obligations of the State, is therefore critically important to properly undertaking this assessment in the light of Catholic Social Thought and Teaching. Our deliberations over the 2020-2021 cycle will reflect this priority, and, in line with all other CAPPF Chapters globally, consider in particular three dimensions: governance, education and business models.

Modus operandi

We will organise eight sessions of 90 minutes each. The first half will be dedicated to a formal presentation by a leading academic subject matter expert, followed by questions.

The second half will be dedicated to a roundtable discussion on the practical application of these principles to the relevant policy and societal questions that are to be addressed in that session. The discussions will be guided/led by Jean Pierre Casey, CAPPF UK Coordinator and the relevant academic expert for each session, under the chairmanship of Dan Lord Brennan.

The idea is to publish a volume at the end of the year, which summarises the eight sessions. Conclusions will be presented at the Centesimus Annus Annual Conference in Rome in June, 2021.

A selection of brief readings will be sent to participants two or three weeks before each session.

The first session is described in detail below and an indication of the other topics is also given. The order may change.

Session 1

6pm-7:30pm: November 2nd 2020

The role of the state in Catholic Social Thought and Teaching

Discussion Leader: Dr. Andre Alves, Catholic University of Portugal and St. Mary's University

Topics to be addressed:

- What is the legal grounding for state intervention in shaping socio-economic outcomes?
- The basis for human rights and the authority of the state in Catholic social thought.
- What limits ought to be applied to state interventions, and how ought these to be determined?
- How ought the state to consider trade-offs between the freedom and rights of citizens and families and the protection of others in the community?
- What tensions exist between civil/natural rights and civic rights?

Session 2

The origins of legal authority and the limits of the law

Session 3

The social and political consequences of unprecedented state interventionism and the social new world (dis)order

Session 4

The role of the state, the household, charity and civil society in relieving poverty and the distribution of income

Session 5

The meaning of work, the dignity of labour, and the family as the fundamental cell of society

Session 6

The ethics of business models and the limits of economic policy

Session 7

The future of work and dynamics of business models in the digital age

Session 8

The Catholic vision of education and civil / civic responsibilities