

# Evangelizing the World with Catholic Social Teaching:

## A Lay Imperative

Closing Session Key Note - Robert A. Nalewajek<sup>i</sup>

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It is quite fitting that the closing session of our 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary gathering focuses us on evangelization. From our founding in 1993 Pope Saint John Paul saw the Foundation as a way to provide “a singular response to the invitation I [he] offered in the Encyclical which inspired this group, to promote and defend the knowledge and practice of the Church’s social doctrine.”<sup>ii</sup>

Saint John Paul called for a new evangelization, an evangelization led by the laity. He stated that “to teach and to spread her social doctrine pertains to the Church’s evangelization mission and is an essential part of the Christian message”<sup>iii</sup> and later, he states even more strongly: “the Church’s *social teaching* is itself a *valid instrument of evangelization*.”<sup>iv</sup> A message strongly reiterated, endorsed and given even greater prominence by Pope Benedict and is being forcefully repeated by Pope Francis.

Yet most Catholics are unaware of our social doctrine. Even if we attend Mass regularly and are active in our parishes we know little of this teaching. With the press of so many topics to instruct, our Church’s social doctrine is often left out of seminary curricula. With the simultaneous drop in formal Catholic school education it has become difficult to even become aware of the tenets of our social doctrine, let alone be able to form our conscience on them.

This condition represents an injustice to our fellow man. For, while Catholic social teaching (CST) is quite useful as a guide for living in and creating a civil society -- it is first and foremost Christian teaching. As Saint John Paul emphasizes in *Centesimus Annus*: CST “is aimed at helping man on the path of salvation...it proclaims God and his mystery of salvation in Christ to every human being...in this light, and only in this light does it concern itself with everything else”.<sup>v</sup>

CST stands in marked contrast to the social-contract theory undergirding modernity. 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.

And, it is exactly in this inherently social versus autonomous anthropology – and the principles of Human Dignity, Solidarity and Subsidiarity, that CST provides such a compelling answer to the multiple problems of modernity.

Catholic social doctrine is a gift to the world!<sup>vi</sup> But, do we keep it hidden -- a light kept under a bushel?

## Our Challenge

Let us take a moment to frame our challenge, as I see it. There are an estimated 1.3 billion Roman Catholics in the world.<sup>vii</sup> And Catholics are in positions of leadership and power throughout our societies. Catholics hold chairmanships and key staff positions in the world's greatest companies. We hold or held majority and minority leadership positions in countless legislatures; we have had numerous heads of state, political leaders and court justices who are and have been Catholic. But: Where is the visible effect of this in our society and culture?

Allow me to share some insights of Dana Gioia<sup>viii</sup>: It is a paradox of our time that as Catholics have risen to social prominence, our impact seems to be felt less. Now "Catholic" leaders publicly support such basically un-Catholic positions as abortion and, in my country (USA), 'Piss Christ' - a crucifix placed in a jar of human urine - and "Dung Mary" - a portrait of our Holy Mother created out of feces - passes for art and displayed in leading cultural institutions.

Now, we are a religion that easily accepts paradoxes (two propositions seemingly in contradiction but, both true). Indeed, we revel, marvel and celebrate them: We believe in three persons, but one God; we believe in Mary as virgin and mother; we believe in Jesus as man and God; we believe in communion as bread and wine and body and blood.

But this paradox of Catholics increasing in number and positions of power and the simultaneous erosion of Catholic values in public life is troubling, because both the culture and the Church suffer from it. Our culture's loss is 2000 years of its very basis leading to nihilism and banality in everyday life, while our Church's loss is that its ability to affect the world is greatly lessened just when it seems most needed.

And make no mistake: Once a church retreats from any portion of society, or way to integrate or engage with society, it is a failure.

What's needed from us Catholics is faith, hope and - ingenuity. Faith in our spiritual and cultural identity as Roman Catholics - for this is who we are; Hope in the Holy Spirit's continuing guidance, and; Ingenuity. We need ingenuity to engage, with resolve, the secular world.

We must remember, as CST points out, that the pathologies eating away at our social environment are mostly 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 -- we have deprived society of the insight of the necessary relationship between truth and freedom.

It is time to renovate and reclaim our Catholic traditions and teachings and put them in service of our fellow man. We must insist on a vibrant, publicly assertive moral-cultural order. We must demand a dialogue with society, a dialogue unashamedly based on CST.

Indeed: "Freedom...demands the courage to engage in civic life and to bring one's deepest beliefs and values to reasoned public debate"<sup>ix</sup>.

### Three Key CST Principles

It is important to recognize and emphasize CST is built on three foundational principles: Human Dignity; Solidarity; Subsidiarity.

This is evident not only in all the social encyclicals but in Pope Saint John Paul's *Ecclesia In America* where he told us: "Her moral vision in this area 'rests on the threefold cornerstone of human dignity, solidarity and subsidiarity'"<sup>x</sup> And, as Pope Benedict affirmed: "It is up to the lay faithful to demonstrate concretely in their personal and family life, in social, cultural and political life...the fundamental principles of the social doctrine of the Church such as the dignity of the human person, subsidiarity and solidarity".<sup>xi xii</sup> (Emphasis mine)

So, taking a cue from the Jesuits, who insist on *always defining one's terms*, let us briefly highlight the three key principles of CST, starting with the greatest – the Prime Principle:

**HUMAN DIGNITY** and A Correct Understanding of the Human Person: All CST flows from this - the inherent dignity of every person that comes from being made in God's image.<sup>xiii</sup> Our *fullness* as a human person is grounded in this truth. It is this concept which *animates* the Church's social teaching and any social program, social structure or way of living/acting is to be appraised in its light.

And "no one can take away this human right",<sup>xiv</sup> 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 Pope Leo XIII in 1891 when he wrote, "the State is bound to protect natural rights, not to destroy them"<sup>xv</sup> and has been reiterated by Pope Benedict 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".<sup>xvi</sup>

"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". God has imprinted his own image and likeness on man, conferring upon him an incomparable dignity... In effect, beyond the rights which man acquires by his own work, there exist rights which do not correspond to any work he performs, but which flow from his essential dignity as a person."<sup>xvii</sup>

Human Dignity, rooted in a correct view of the human person (or, Christian anthropology), is the prime principle of Catholic social doctrine.<sup>xviii</sup>

The next two principles derive from the prime principle of Human Dignity.

**SOLIDARITY**, as Pope Francis informs us, insists "all men and women are called to live as one, each taking care of the other".<sup>xix</sup> We are "our brothers' keeper".

This means 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"<sup>xx</sup>. 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.

“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”<sup>xxi</sup>.

And, solidarity is *radical*: 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.”<sup>xxii</sup> It is no longer, love our neighbor as our self, but - ***love our neighbor as God loves us!***

We must be willing to “lose ourselves” for the sake of others”<sup>xxiii</sup> “Truth and justice must stand above my comfort and physical well-being or else my life itself becomes a lie.”<sup>xxiv</sup> Think about that for a moment.....

Solidarity “requires you to look at another and give yourself to another with love”<sup>xxv</sup> “The capacity to suffer for the sake of the truth is the measure of humanity”<sup>xxvi</sup> And, lest we ever begin to think this is easy, recall Pope Francis’ words: “I distrust a charity that costs nothing and does not hurt.”<sup>xxvii</sup>

As Catholics, we must also always remember that solidarity flows from our 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.”<sup>xxviii</sup>

This is a key point: “True brotherhood among people presupposes and demands a transcendent Fatherhood”,<sup>xxix</sup> “because the love of God, once welcomed becomes the most formidable means of transforming our lives and relationships with others, opening us to solidarity and to genuine sharing.”<sup>xxx</sup> Indeed, “a fraternity devoid of reference to a common Father as its ultimate foundation is unable to endure.”<sup>xxxi</sup>

To truly be in solidarity “entails weaving a fabric of fraternal relationships marked by reciprocity, forgiveness and complete self-giving, according to the breadth and the depth of the love of God offered to humanity in the One who, crucified and risen, draws all to himself”<sup>xxxii</sup>.

This makes clear that Solidarity is not an ideological or political principle. It is a Catholic principle – based on and emanating from faith. Absent this truth, it is not the solidarity of CST.<sup>xxxiii xxxiv</sup>

Finally, Solidarity is and must always be *personal*. “Without faces and stories, human lives become statistics, and we run the risk of bureaucratizing the sufferings of others. Bureaucracies shuffle papers; compassion (not pity, but com-passion, suffering with) deals with people.”<sup>xxxv</sup> We must focus on “real people who are suffering and starving”<sup>xxxvi</sup>

**SUBSIDIARITY** is crucial to fully understanding CST’s view of society because it identifies how and at which level decisions need to be taken – i.e., at the lowest competent level. 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 efficaciously performed by a more decentralized entity – should be.

Indeed, CST informs us that “no actual or established power has the right to deprive peoples of the full exercise of their sovereignty”<sup>xxxvii</sup> “Experience has shown that where personal initiative is lacking, political tyranny ensues.”<sup>xxxviii</sup>

Pope Pius XI best defined subsidiarity when he wrote: “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”.<sup>xxxix</sup> [Note the Holy Father’s terminology: *injustice; grave evil; disturbance of right order*].

And, it is in recognizing and respecting subsidiarity that the state, itself, is justified: i.e., “will more freely, powerfully, and effectively do all those things that belong to it alone because it alone can do them”.<sup>xl</sup>

Nor should subsidiarity be viewed as a *negative* control. The principle of 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.”<sup>xli</sup>

In summary, the principle of subsidiarity both: 1. “Insists on necessary limits to the State’s intervention...inasmuch as the individual, the family and society are prior to the state and inasmuch as the State exists in order to protect their rights and not stifle them”,<sup>xlii xliii</sup> and; 2. Recognizes that “individuals and groups have the right to go their own way, even though they may sometimes make mistakes. In full respect for that freedom, civil society is called to help each person and social organization to take up its specific role and thus contribute to the common good.”<sup>xliv</sup>

Ultimately and “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”<sup>xliv</sup> which “respects personal dignity”.<sup>xlvi</sup>

We should note that the principle of subsidiarity also applies at the international level where “in order not to produce a dangerous universal power of a tyrannical nature, *the governance of globalization must be marked by subsidiarity*.”<sup>xlvii xlviii</sup>

In summary, 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.

## 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 CST.

Similarly, the debate over the primacy of these principles, one over the other, appears settled: “*The principle of subsidiarity must remain closely linked to the principle of solidarity and vice versa.*” Why? Subsidiarity without solidarity leads to “social privatism” while solidarity without subsidiarity leads to a “demeaning” and “paternalist” form of social assistance.<sup>xlix</sup>

## What Is The Practical Purpose Of CST?

CST informs us that good governments and good economic systems find ways of fostering the three principles of **human dignity**, **solidarity** and **subsidiarity**.

“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”.<sup>1</sup>

With this as background, let us turn to the important question:

### **WHOSE JOB IS IT TO IMPLEMENT CST?**

#### The Church’s Role

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.<sup>li</sup> The Church “recognizes that it is not the Church’s responsibility to make this teaching prevail in political life... The Church cannot and must not take upon herself the political battle to bring about the most just society possible.”<sup>lii</sup>

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.”<sup>liii</sup>

“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).”<sup>liv</sup>

#### What, then, is the church’s role?

First, and foremost, the Church seeks to assist in the formation of conscience:<sup>lv</sup> “The Church wishes to help form consciences in political life and to stimulate greater insight into the authentic requirements of justice as well as greater readiness to act accordingly.”<sup>lvi</sup>

“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.”<sup>lvii</sup>

“The Church wishes for her part to cooperate in the pursuit of the common good, through her social and educational works, promoting ethical and spiritual values, and serving as a prophetic sign which brings a ray of light and hope to all, especially those most in need.”<sup>lviii</sup> Therefore, the Church “has to play her part through rational argument and she has to reawaken the spiritual energy without which justice, which always demands sacrifice, cannot 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.”<sup>lix</sup>

While admitting “the Church does not separate a proper regard for temporal welfare from solicitude for the eternal...she has nevertheless clearly outlined the guiding principles [Human Dignity, Solidarity, Subsidiarity] 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.”<sup>lx</sup>

In summary: “The Church is duty bound to offer, through the purification of reason and through ethical formation, her own specific contributions towards understanding the requirements of justice and achieving these politically.”<sup>lxi</sup> And, she “considers it her duty to ask political leaders and those with economic and financial power to promote development... based on respect for the dignity of every man and woman.”<sup>lxii</sup>

### Our Role (the Laity)

Since Vatican II our Church has called on us, the laity, to be God’s voice in the world.<sup>lxiii</sup> 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.

We must acknowledge that “a new state of affairs today both in the Church and in social, economic, political and cultural life, calls with a particular urgency for the action of the lay faithful. If lack of commitment is always unacceptable, the present time renders it even more so. *It is not permissible for anyone to remain idle.*”<sup>lxiv</sup>

We are being called to “an exacting and indispensable form of charity”<sup>lxv</sup> grounding us in faith in the risen Christ as the basis for our implementing *Catholic* social teaching. “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.”<sup>lxvi</sup>

Saint John Paul called for the Church to 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.”<sup>lxvii</sup>

Conversely, he warned us, “**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.**”<sup>lxviii</sup>

Changing The Structures Of Society – CST recognizes that 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”.<sup>lxix</sup> To combat this Catholics are called to become acquainted with the social teachings of the Church so we can change: 1. Our life styles; 2. Our models of production and consumption, and; 3. The established structures of power which today govern societies.<sup>lxx</sup>

There are structures of society that need to be destroyed. There are structures that need to be built. “To destroy structures and replace them with more authentic forms of living in community is a task which demands courage and patience”.<sup>lxxi</sup> And, this “working for a just distribution of the fruits of the earth and human labor is not mere philanthropy. It is a moral obligation. For Christians, the responsibility is even greater: it is a commandment.”<sup>lxxii</sup>

**In summary, this is what CST is about – to have Catholics form their consciences on its principles so that we may change our 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.”<sup>lxxiii</sup>**

### **WHAT MUST I “DO”?**

“Freedom...demands the courage to engage in civic life and to bring one’s deepest beliefs and values to reasoned public debate”<sup>lxxiv</sup>

On a practical level, in democratic societies a key way every Catholic can accomplish this obligation is through voting. Indeed, participation in politics is a Christian obligation: “We, Christians, cannot ‘play Pilate’ and wash our hands... We must participate in politics because politics is one of the highest forms of charity because it seeks the common good. And Christian lay people must work in politics.”<sup>lxxv</sup>

Pope Francis recognizes that this “is not easy; politics has become too tainted. But I ask myself: Why has it become tainted? Because Christians have not participated in politics with an evangelical spirit? ...To work for the common good is a Christian duty, and many times the way in which to work towards it is through politics.”<sup>lxxvi</sup>

As for those of us charged with promoting economic development, we “have the responsibility of ensuring that it always has a human face. Economic development must have a human face...In economics, in business and in politics, what counts first and foremost, in every instance, is the human person”.<sup>lxxvii</sup>

Public vs. Private Life - We must constantly challenge ourselves, asking: “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.”<sup>lxxviii lxxix</sup>

“Christian consistency” is a chief trait of being a Christian. In all things of life, we need “to think like a Christian; to feel like a Christian and to act like a Christian”.<sup>lxxx</sup>

To accomplish this requires that our “inner, spiritual unity must be restored, so that faith may be the light and love the motivating force of all [our] actions.”<sup>lxxxxi</sup> We are called to shape our public and private *positions* (political, economic, cultural, moral) on a well formed conscience – based especially on the *principles* of CST.

“What is ‘Truth’?” - And, we should recognize that this will not be easy! “Anyone who lives and proclaims the faith of the Church is on many points out of step with the prevalent way of thinking... Today’s regnant agnosticism has its own dogmas and is extremely intolerant regarding anything that would question it and the criteria it employs.”<sup>lxxxii</sup>

Indeed, our culture has a problem accepting anything as ‘true’. Beset with moral relativism it rejects that there is any such thing as an “objective truth”. There is just what I believe, you believe, a group, a nation believes – nothing is objectively true. However, “[i]t 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.”<sup>lxxxiii</sup>

If nothing is objectively right or wrong, nothing prevents those with more power from inflicting their ‘truth’ on others.

We are cautioned that this moral relativism can also be personally devastating as “it also needs to be kept in mind that apart from the pursuit of truth, each individual becomes the criterion for measuring himself and his own actions...so that the concept of human rights, which has an intrinsically universal import, is replaced by an individualistic conception of rights. This leads to an effective lack of concern for others and...to human impoverishment and cultural aridity” where-in “we no longer have the capacity to build authentic human relationships marked by truth and mutual respect.”<sup>lxxxiv</sup>

“Doing” CST takes courage - So, the stakes are high and doing all this has a price – one I am sure we have all faced paying - because “the approval of the prevailing wisdom...is not the criterion to which we submit.”<sup>lxxxv</sup> Too often we separate our Christian faith from its ethical requirements “and thus fall into moral subjectivism and certain objectionable ways of acting.”<sup>lxxxvi</sup> “The courage to contradict the prevailing mindset is particularly urgent” even though “inevitably, we will also be beaten by those who live lives opposed to the Gospel”.<sup>lxxxvii</sup>

Nevertheless, “it is always from the truth that the dignity of conscience derives. In the case of the correct conscience, it is a question of the *objective truth* received by man; in the case of the erroneous conscience, it is a question of what man, mistakenly, *subjectively* considers to be true.”<sup>lxxxviii</sup>

Indeed, “conscience, as the ultimate concrete judgment, compromises its dignity when it is culpably erroneous, that is to say, ‘when man shows little concern for seeking what is true and good, and conscience gradually becomes almost blind from being accustomed to sin’.”<sup>lxxxix</sup>

If we find ourselves in opposition to Church moral and social teachings, validation of our position by ‘conscience’ cannot be the end of our internal debate but only the beginning! “There are faults which we fail to see but which nevertheless remain faults, because we have refused to walk towards the light.”<sup>xc</sup>

A fair question - “But what does it mean, in practical terms, to promote moral truth in the world...? It means acting in a responsible way on the basis of an objective and integral knowledge of the facts; it means deconstructing political ideologies which end up supplanting truth and human dignity in order to promote pseudo-values under the pretext of peace, development and human rights; it means fostering an unswerving commitment to base positive law on the principles of the natural law.”<sup>xc1</sup>

Bottom Line - We must internalize CST. Then, having formed our conscience on it, we must, by duty, actively engage in the secular world.

Our collective challenge is to develop a strong, committed group of lay women and men, rich in faith and theologically prepared to be present in public life to explain, develop and implement Catholic Social Teaching.

### **A Big Catholic “However”**

It is all about faith – first.

We must acknowledge that because “faith enables reason to do its work more effectively and to see its proper object more clearly”<sup>xcii</sup> our acting in society requires belief, acceptance and the integration of God in all facets of our life...it requires personal conversion: “Adhering to the values of Christianity is not merely useful but essential for building a good society”<sup>xciii</sup>

“To respond to their vocation, the lay faithful must see their daily activities as an occasion to join themselves to God, fulfill his will, serve other people and lead them to communion with God in Christ”<sup>xciv</sup>.

Yes, “the human person must work, must involve himself in domestic and professional concerns, to be sure, but he has need of God before all else, who is the interior light of love and truth. Without love, even the most important activities lose value and do not bring joy. Without a profound meaning, everything we do is reduced to sterile and disordered activism.”<sup>xcv</sup>

So, armed with our faith and closeness to God, we can “change the world” -- while always remembering when doing so that “we are not provocative; on the contrary we invite all to enter into the joy of that truth which shows us the way...Our criterion is the Lord himself. If we defend his cause, we will constantly gain others to the way of the Gospel.”<sup>xcvi</sup> “As Pope Francis reminds us: “Christians must always have this attitude of meekness, humility...trusting in Jesus and entrusting themselves to Jesus.”<sup>xcvii</sup>

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On 4 December 2004, just a few months before his death, in a moving and, in hindsight, last will and testament to the lay organization he founded to help evangelize the world with CST, Saint John Paul urged that our social teaching be used as a stimulus to concrete action by the lay faithful and said:

“I therefore urge the Members to spare no effort to ensure that the Foundation seeks to pursue these goals”<sup>xcviii</sup>.

That, I suggest, is our common, continuing goal.

And, as we mark our 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary I invite us to prayer for our founder's intercession in helping us discern the best way forward, the best plans and actions, for our persistent pursuit of these goals:

Loving Father, you gather us together in this time and place. Send your Spirit to be with us and open our hearts to do your will as we make this journey, dedicated to evangelizing your Word through Catholic social teaching. Help us with your grace to embrace this new evangelization with faith and love. May it empower us to recognize you and to bear witness to your presence in the world. We ask this through the intercession of our founder, Saint John Paul the Great and Our Lady of Fatima, with her son Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

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<sup>i</sup> The author prefers to allow the Church's Magisterium to "speak for itself". Therefore, wherever possible, her words will be used to convey the salient points.

<sup>ii</sup> Saint John Paul II, *Message to the Members of the "Centessimus Annus Pro Pontifice Foundation"*, 5 July 2003

<sup>iii</sup> Saint John Paul II, Encyclical letter *Centessimus Annus*, 1 May 1991, 5

<sup>iv</sup> *Ibid.*, 54

<sup>v</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>vi</sup> "The Church's social doctrine has become a set of fundamental guidelines offering approaches that are valid even beyond the confines of the Church." Benedict XVI, Encyclical Letter *Deus Caritas Est*, 25 December 2005, 27

<sup>vii</sup> Census of 2017, *Annuario Pontificio*, Holy See

<sup>viii</sup> Dana Gioia is an internationally acclaimed, award-winning poet and former Chairman of the USA's National Endowment for the Arts

<sup>ix</sup> Benedict XVI, *White House Welcoming Ceremony*, 16 April 2008, Washington, DC

<sup>x</sup> Saint John Paul II, Apostolic Exhortation *Ecclesia in America*, 2 January 1999, 55

<sup>xi</sup> Benedict XVI, *Address to the 24th Plenary Session of the Pontifical Council for the Laity*, 21 May 2010

<sup>xii</sup> For the question: "What are the principles of CST", there is no definitive, canonical answer. Fr. Michael Konrad, professor at the Pontifical Lateran University, points out that while we, here, identify: "three main principles of CST: personal dignity, solidarity and subsidiarity (an affirmation often repeated by Saint John Paul II) this is not the only possibility: *The Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church* dedicates a chapter to the human person (chapter 3) and a chapter to the principles of CST (chapter 4). The Compendium enumerates different principles: the common good, the universal destination of goods, subsidiarity, participation, solidarity and others. In his introduction to CST (*Christliche Sozialethik*) Cardinal Reinhart Marx individuates yet other principles." There is also the "exposition of Cardinal Joseph Höffner: *Christian Social Teaching* (first German edition 1962). He dedicates the first chapter to the human person and society, and the second chapter to the principles of order in a society (solidarity, the common good and subsidiarity). In my opinion these three fundamental principles (which are all present in [this] paper) respond to three different questions: The principle of solidarity responds to the questions: "What should I do for my neighbor?" and "What should he do for me?"; the principle of the common good responds to the question "What should I do for the community?"; and the principle of subsidiarity responds to the question "What should the community do (or not do) for me?". I agree with you (and with Pope John Paul II) that the human person is also a principle of CST, but not in the same sense as the other three principles. I would say that the human person is the "material principle" of CST, whereas the other three are "formal principles", "principles of the order of society"."

<sup>xiii</sup> Genesis 1:26-27

<sup>xiv</sup> Saint John Paul II, op. cit., *Centessimus Annus*, 9

<sup>xv</sup> Leo XIII, Encyclical Letter *Rerum Novarum*, 15 May 1891, 135

<sup>xvi</sup> Benedict XVI, "Europe and its Discontents", *First Things*, January 2006

<sup>xvii</sup> Saint John Paul II, op. cit., *Centessimus Annus*, 11

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- <sup>xxviii</sup> Also, see: *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, Liberia Editrice Vaticana, 1994, Part Three, Section One, starting at paragraph 1700
- <sup>xix</sup> Francis, *World Day of Peace Message*, 1 January 2014, 2
- <sup>xx</sup> Saint John Paul II, Encyclical Letter *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis*, 30 December 1987, 38
- <sup>xxi</sup> Benedict XVI, *Address to Members of the "Centesimus Annus" Foundation*, 19 May 2006
- <sup>xxii</sup> John, 13:34
- <sup>xxiii</sup> Francis, *World Day of Peace Message*, 1 January 2014, 4
- <sup>xxiv</sup> Benedict XVI, Encyclical Letter *Spe Salvi*, 30 November 2007, 38
- <sup>xxv</sup> Francis, Pastoral Visit to Cagliari, *Meeting with the Poor and Prison Inmates*, 22 September 2013
- <sup>xxvi</sup> Benedict XVI, Op. Cit., *Spe Salvi*, 39
- <sup>xxvii</sup> Francis, *Message for Lent - 2014*, 2
- <sup>xxviii</sup> Benedict XVI, Op. Cit., *Deus Caritas Est*, 18
- <sup>xxix</sup> Francis, op. cit., *World Day of Peace Message 2014*, 1
- <sup>xxx</sup> *Ibid.*, 3
- <sup>xxxi</sup> *Ibid.*, 1
- <sup>xxxii</sup> Francis, op. cit., *World Day of Peace Message 2014*, 10
- <sup>xxxiii</sup> See also: *The Catechism of the Catholic Church*, (1948)
- <sup>xxxiv</sup> *Loving our neighbor* requires we first learn to love ourselves. When a genuine appreciation and respect for one's self-worth is lacking - truly loving another is difficult. Self-love (based on recognizing the inherent dignity that comes from being made in God's image) must take place before one is able to truly love another.
- <sup>xxxv</sup> Francis, *Visit To The Headquarters Of World Food Program*, Rome, 13 June 2016
- <sup>xxxvi</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>xxxvii</sup> Francis, *Address to the Second World Meeting of Popular Movements*, Santa Cruz de la Sierra, Bolivia, 9 July 2015, 3.2
- <sup>xxxviii</sup> Saint John XXIII, Encyclical Letter *Mater et Magistra*, 15 May 1961, 57
- <sup>xxxix</sup> Pius XI, Encyclical Letter *Quadragesimo Anno*, 15 May 1931, 80
- <sup>xl</sup> *Ibid.*, 79
- <sup>xli</sup> Benedict XVI, Encyclical Letter *Caritas In Veritate*, 29 June 2009, 57
- <sup>xlii</sup> Saint John Paul II, op. cit., *Centesimus Annus*, 11
- <sup>xliii</sup> "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." Benedict XVI, Encyclical Letter *Deus Caritas Est*, 28
- <sup>xliv</sup> Pope Francis, *Address to a Meeting With Political, Economic and Civic Leaders*, Quito, Ecuador, 7 July 2015
- <sup>xlv</sup> Benedict XVI, op. cit., *Caritas In Veritate*, 57
- <sup>xlvi</sup> *Ibid*
- <sup>xlvii</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>xlviii</sup> "The same principle of subsidiarity which governs the relations between public authorities and individuals, families and intermediate societies in a single State, must also apply to the relations between the public authority of the world community and the public authorities of each political community." Pope Saint John XXIII, Encyclical Letter *Pacem In Terris*, 11 April 1963, 140
- <sup>xliv</sup> Benedict XVI, op. cit., *Caritas In Veritate*, 58
- <sup>i</sup> John Paul II, op. cit., *Centesimus Annus*, 15
- <sup>li</sup> The Holy Fathers have used the term "the Church" here to refer to the Magisterium - popes and bishops in synod, whether collectively or singly. *Gaudium et Spes* spells out that "[T]he direct duty to work for a just ordering of society...is proper to the lay faithful". (*Deus Caritas Est*, 29)
- <sup>lii</sup> Benedict XVI, op. cit., *Deus Caritas Est*, 28
- <sup>liii</sup> Pius XII, *Radio message for Pentecost*, 1941
- <sup>liiv</sup> Benedict XVI, op. cit., *Caritas in Veritate*, 9
- <sup>liv</sup> John Paul II, op. cit., *Ecclesia In America*, 67
- <sup>lvi</sup> Benedict XVI, op. cit., *Deus Caritas Est*, 28
- <sup>lvii</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>lviii</sup> Francis, op. cit., *Address to a Meeting With Political, Economic and Civic Leaders*, Quito, Ecuador
- <sup>lix</sup> Benedict XVI, op. cit., *Deus Caritas Est*, 28
- <sup>lx</sup> Pius XI, Encyclical Letter *Divini Redemptoris*, 19 March 1937, 34
- <sup>lxi</sup> Benedict XVI, op. cit., *Deus Caritas Est*, 28
- <sup>lxii</sup> Benedict XVI, op. cit., *Message for Lent*, 2006

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- lxiii Dogmatic Constitution on The Church, *LUMEN GENTIUM*, 21 NOVEMBER 1964, Chapter IV
- lxiv Saint John Paul II, Apostolic Exhortation *Christifideles Laici*, 30 December 1988, 3
- lxv Benedict XVI, op. cit., *Caritas in Veritate*, 1
- lxvi Benedict XVI, *Address at Nsimalen International Airport*, 17 March 2009
- lxvii Saint John Paul II, op. cit., *Ecclesia In America*, 67
- lxviii *Ibid*
- lxix Saint John Paul II, op. cit., *Centesimus Annus*, 38
- lxx *Ibid.*, 58
- lxxi *Ibid.*, 38
- lxxii Francis, *Address to the Second World Meeting of Popular Movements*, Expo Feria Exhibition Centre, Santa Cruz de la Sierra (Bolivia), 9 July 2015 3.1
- lxxiii Saint John Paul II, op. cit., *Centesimus Annus*, 58
- lxxiv Benedict XVI, op. cit., *White House Welcoming Ceremony*, Washington, DC
- lxxv Francis, *Address to the Students of the Jesuit Schools of Italy and Albania*, 7 June 2013
- lxxvi *Ibid.*
- lxxvii Francis, *Meeting With Representatives of Civil Society*, Estadio Leon Condou, Presbítero Marcelino Noutz, Asuncion, Asunción, Paraguay, 11 July 2015
- lxxviii 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
- lxxix This connects with long standing Church teaching going back to, at least, Pope Leo XIII who declared in 1885: "Further, it is unlawful to follow one line of conduct in private life and another in public, respecting privately the authority of the Church, but publicly rejecting it; for this would amount to joining together good and evil, and to putting man in conflict with himself; whereas he ought always to be consistent, and never in the least point nor in any condition of life to swerve from Christian virtue." (Encyclical Letter *Immortale Dei*, 47)
- lxxx Francis, Homily, 27 February 2014 – Reported in: *L'Osservatore Romano*, 7 March 2014, #10, pg. 14
- lxxxi Saint John XXIII, op. cit., *Pacem in Terris*, 152
- lxxxii Benedict XVI, *Homily*, 6 January 2013
- lxxxiii Saint John Paul II, op. cit., *Centesimus Annus*, 46
- lxxxiv Francis, *Address to the Council of Europe*, Strasbourg, France, 25 November 2014
- lxxxv Benedict XVI, op. cit., *Homily*, 6 January 2013
- lxxxvi Saint John Paul II, Encyclical Letter *Evangelium Vitae*, 25 March 1995, 95
- lxxxvii Benedict XVI, op. cit., *Homily*, 6 January 2013
- lxxxviii Saint John Paul II, Encyclical Letter *Veritatis Splendor*, 6 August 1993, 63
- lxxxix *Ibid.*
- xc *Ibid.*
- lxxci Benedict XVI, *World Day of Peace Message 2011*, 12
- lxxcii Benedict XVI, *Address To Participants In The General Assembly Of The Pontifical Academy For Life*, 25 February 2012, 28
- lxxciii Benedict XVI, op. cit., *Caritas in Veritate*, 4
- lxxciv Saint John Paul II, Apostolic Exhortation *Christifideles Laici*, 30 December 1988, 17
- lxxcv Benedict XVI, *Angelus*, 18 July 2010
- lxxcvi Benedict XVI, Op. Cit., *Homily*, 6 January 2013
- lxxcvii Francis, *Address in Saint Peter's Square*, 18 May 2013
- lxxcviii Saint John Paul II, *Address to The Participants in the Congress of the Vatican Foundation "CENTESIMUS ANNUS - PRO PONTIFICE"*, 4 December 2004