“Living our Mission of Charity”

Fr. César Izquierdo
Three Roles of the Church

1) proclaiming the word of God

2) celebrating the sacraments

3) exercising the ministry of charity (gr. *diakonia*)

Two Ways of exercising the ministry of charity

- 1) **Amelioration** of the suffering or satisfaction of the need, such as feeding the hungry or providing shelter for the homeless (recovery, first aid, instant/emergency betterment)

- 2) **Seeking for justice** by addressing the causes of injustices and changing the structures which oppress [based on the word of God]
Living Our Mission of Charity

"When I give food to the poor, they call me a saint. When I ask why they are poor, they call me a communist."

Dom Helder Camara (1909-1999)
Six Principles of Catholic Social Teaching

1) **Human Dignity** - regarded as inviolable since every human person has been created by God in His image

2) **Common Good** - which recognizes the social character of all human beings and their interdependence and mutuality

3) **Subsidiarity** – which recognizes the rights of the family and intermediate organizations in relation to the state

4) **Solidarity** – which recognizes a responsibility to all other human beings and which rejects extreme forms of individualism

5) **Preferential Option for the Poor** – which is solidly rooted in both the Old and New Testament

6) **Preferential Option for Non-Violence** – which is solidly rooted in Jesus’ teaching and example

[Hornsby-Smith 2006:13]
Summary:

- Catholic Social Teaching based on two missions: proclaiming the word of God (justice, truth on social life), exercising the ministry of charity (gr. *diakonia*)

- Twofold service:
  - *amelioration* (charity – *fish giving*)
  - *seeking for justice* (addressing the causes of injustices – *fishing-rod offering*)

- 6 principles: human dignity, common good, subsidiarity, solidarity, preferential option for the poor, preferential option for non-violence
Nature of CST

- CST develops as the Church faces *problems emanating from life in society* and sets up itself as a doctrine by using the resources of *human wisdom and the sciences* (John Paul II, *Laborem exercens* [1981], 3)
- The Church reading the signs of the times *even as they unfold in the course of history ... to lead people to respond, with the support ... of rational reflection and of the human sciences, to their vocation as responsible builders of earthly society* (JP II, *Sollicitudo rei socialis* [1987], 1)
- Considering *the technical aspects ... but always in order to judge them from the moral point of view* (Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, *Libertatis conscientia* [1986], 72)
Nature of CST

- Different responsibilities of clergy and laity: preaching and sanctifying – earthly responsibilities. Christians (lay) should be even more ready to fulfill their responsibilities according to the vocation of each (Gaudium et spes, 43)

- Far from constituting a closed system, it [CST] remains constantly open to new questions which continually arise; it requires the contribution of all charisms, experiences and skills (Libertatis conscientia, 72)
Nature of CST

- Cornerstone: human dignity

  *individual human beings are the foundation, the cause and the end of every social institution* (John XXIII, *Mater et Magistra* [1961], 219)

- *that man is made in the image and likeness of God* (John Paul II, *Address to the Second Meeting of the Council of Latin American Bishops CELAM at Puebla* [1979])

- Man and woman then *cannot be reduced to a mere fragment of nature or to an anonymous element in the human city* (ibidem)
Nature of Catholic Social Thought

Origins of the teaching

- 1) the Scriptures
- 2) the tradition of the Church (Magisterium, others)
- 3) the experience of the Church throughout the history and the society
- 4) the relevant findings of all kind (including non-Christian) thinkers, social scientists, others
Method of action

- Catholic social practice

John Paul II:

*The Church is aware that her social message will gain credibility more immediately from the witness of actions than as a result of its internal logic and consistency.* Catholic social teaching and thought as messengers of the Gospel cannot be considered mere theory, *but above all else a basis and a motivation for action.* *(Centesimus annus [1991], 57).*

Amelioration of suffering (direct action)

+ Removal of the causes of that suffering (social action)—Abp Helder Câmara (‘bishop of the slums’) [1909-1999] of Recife (North East Brazil): *When I feed the hungry they call me a saint, but when I ask why they are hungry, they call me a communist*

Amelioration is rather uncontroversial and highly regarded. In contrast, seeking justice is many times controversial, challenging and threatening. It addresses sinful structures, it tends to be social and political, it questions existing social arrangements, laws, regulations, norms, wealth distribution.
Method of action

- The four stage cycle of social action
  (Hornsby-Smith 2006: 17)

  Observation
  Reflection
  Action

1. Observe social reality and identify needs
2. Social analysis to identify social causes
3. Theological reflection in the light of Scripture and Catholic Social Thought
4. Social action to change sinful social structures
A Spirituality of Fundraising
Henri J. M. Nouwen

John S. Mogabgab, Series Editor
Encouragement

- "Fundraising is a very rich and beautiful activity. It is a confident, joyful and hope-filled expression of ministry. In ministering to each other, each from the riches that he or she possesses, we work together for the full coming of God's Kingdom."

- "Fundraising is proclaiming what we believe in such a way that we offer other people an opportunity to participate with us in our vision and mission."

- "We are inviting you to invest yourself through the resources that God has given you – your energy, your prayers and your money – in this work to which God has called us."
**Challenge**

- "We will never be able to ask for money if we do not know how we ourselves relate to money. What is the place of money in our lives?"

- "Are we willing to be converted from our fear of asking, our anxiety about being rejected or feeling humiliated, our depression when someone says, 'No I'm not going to get involved in your project'?"

- "The Spirit of love says: ‘Don't be afraid to let go of your need to control your own life. Let me fulfill the true desire of your heart.'"
Conversion

"Fundraising is also always a call conversion. And this comes to both those who seek funds and those who have funds. Whether we are asking for money or giving money we are drawn together by God, who is about to do a new thing through our collaboration."

"We must claim the confidence to go to a wealthy person knowing that he or she is just as poor and in need of love as we are."

"Every time we approach people for money, we must be sure that we are inviting them into this vision of fruitfulness and into a vision that is fruitful."
Inspiration

"Once we are prayerfully committed to placing our whole trust in God, and have become clear that we are concerned only for the Kingdom; once we have learned to love the rich for who they are rather than what they have; and once we believe that we have something of great value to give them, then we will have no trouble at all in asking someone for a large sum of money."

"I ask for money standing up, not bowing down because I believe in what I am about. I believe I have something important to offer."

"We do not need to worry about the money. Rather, we need to worry about whether, through the invitation we offer them (the donor) and the relationship we develop with them, they will come closer to God."
Prayer

- "From beginning to end, fundraising as ministry is grounded in prayer and undertaken in gratitude."

- "Prayer is the radical starting point of fundraising. To pray is to desire to know more fully the truth that sets us free."

- "When we approach fundraising in a spirit of gratitude, our confidence in our mission does not depend on how the person we are with responds to our request! We are free to remain secure in God's love with our hearts set joyfully on the kingdom."
“When we give ourselves to planting and nurturing love here on earth, our efforts will reach beyond our own chronological existence”