The Catholic Social Justice Tradition

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Outline

Relationships

Preliminary understandings

Theological foundations

Church’s social tradition
Caritas in Veritate
Benedict XVI
Fundamentally

Justice is about relationships
Preliminary Understandings
Catholic Social Tradition

Catholic Social Teaching

Catholic Social Thought

Catholic Social Practice
Catholic Social Teaching

Encyclicals, pastoral letters, conciliar documents, etc.

“Accurate formulation of the results of a careful reflection on the complex realities of human existence.”  

Rooted in scripture

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Catholic Social Thought

Work of theologians, philosophers, economists, political scientists, management theorists, educators, etc.

Ongoing in Catholic schools, seminaries, health care, other ministries
Catholic Social Practice

Actions of individuals, organizations ministering with, for the Church

Dynamic movements emerged to serve needy (Catholic Worker, Catholic Relief Services, Catholic Charities, Catholic health care)
Not only Catholics

Walter Rauschenbusch (Baptist)
Washington Gladden
(Congregational)
Isidore Singer (Jewish)
Abraham Heschel (Jewish)
Martin Luther King, Jr. (Baptist)
Catholic Social Tradition

A centuries-old tradition of theology and practice
Rooted in the prayer and liturgical life of the faithful
Shaped by historical and cultural realities
Not limited merely to teaching after Rerum Novarum (1891)
Types of Right Relationships

Relational or commutative

Distributive

Contributive or general

Restorative
Theological Foundations
Old Testament

Notion of justice – “fidelity to the demands of a relationship”

Person called to justice (as part of a community)
Old Testament

Recognize Yahweh’s justice

In spite of human failings, Yahweh’s justice endures

Call’s people to accountability

Restores harmony to the people
New Testament

Jesus the fulfillment of prophets of old

Ministry of the servant

Concern for poor, disadvantaged, oppressed, imprisoned
New Testament

Like prophets Amos and Nathan, Jesus brings the word of justice

He teaches, heals, challenges, even alienates some
Theologians
Augustine
Thomas Aquinas
Through the Lives of the Faithful
Papal Teaching

Articulated most widely during height of industrial revolution

Encyclicals to Church and world
Papal Teaching

Involved Church in public and economic life

Driving force (and moral muscle) was pastoral
Phases of Modern Social Justice

Late 19th century focused on needs of emerging working (industrial) class
Phases of Modern Social Justice

First half of 20\textsuperscript{th} century
new and more just economic order
Phases of Modern Social Justice

Contemporary phase

Building peace through development of peoples

Human rights

Environmental concerns
Social responsibility
Ethical and Religious Directives

Human dignity
Care for the poor
Common good
Stewardship of resources
Human dignity
Created in image and likeness of God
Possessing inalienable dignity
Every life sacred; deserving respect, protection
Right to the means for proper development of life
Care for the Poor

Biblical mandate (OT and NT)

All levels of ministry

Outreach to needs of the poor

Poor in our midst (employees)
Care for the poor
“If we step outside ourselves, we find poverty … Today, the thought that a great many children do not have food to eat is not news. This is serious, this is serious! We cannot put up with this!”

Pope Francis
Common Good
Common Good

“The common good is realized when economic, political and social conditions ensure protection for the fundamental rights of all individuals and enable all to fulfill their common purpose and reach their common goals.”

USCCB, *Economic Justice for All*
Humans are social by nature

Our dignity is connected to relationships with others

Responsibility for well-being of others, betterment of society (solidarity)
Common Good

Responsibility to contribute to social conditions/structures, allowing persons to reach their full potential and realize dignity
Common Good

Involves world view, think systemically

Judicious ability to weigh goods, determine priorities

Neither utilitarianism nor pragmatism
### Common Good

<table>
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<th>Socialism</th>
<th>Common good</th>
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<td><strong>State ownership</strong></td>
<td><strong>Private ownership and profit</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Individuals sacrificed for whole</strong></td>
<td><strong>Individual as part of whole</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Minimal participation</strong></td>
<td><strong>Broad participation (subsidiarity)</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Centralized government; authority at top</strong></td>
<td><strong>Distributed authority; diffuse responsibility</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Political action curtailed</strong></td>
<td><strong>Encourage political involvement</strong></td>
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Subsidiarity Participation
Subsidiarity, Participation

“A principle in social organization: functions which subordinate or local organizations perform effectively belong more properly to them than to a dominant central organization.”

Webster
Subsidiarity, Participation

British term – being at the “coal face”

Work changes people; can either enhance or suppress person’s dignity

“Work is for man (sic); not man for work.”

JP II, Laborem Exercens
Principle of Subsidiarity

“Recognizes that in human societies, smaller communities exist within larger ones ... The principle insists that the freedom and input of those closest to the effects to be felt should not be arbitrarily disregarded.”

Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, *The Vocation of the Business Leader*
Principle of Subsidiarity

“A community of a higher order should not interfere in the internal life of a community of lower order … but rather, should support it in case of need and help to coordinate its activity … with a view to the common good.”

JP II, *Centesimus Annus*
Subsidiarity

“The more participatory the workplace, the more likely each worker will be to develop ... This fosters initiative, creativity and a sense of shared responsibility.”

Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, *The Vocation of the Business Leader*
Dignity of Work, Rights of Workers

“The economy must serve people, not the other way around. Work is more than a way to make a living; it is a form of continuing participation in God’s creation.”

JP II, *Laborem Exercens*
Dignity of Work, Rights of Workers

“If the dignity of work is to be protected, then the basic rights of workers must be respected – the right to productive work, to decent and fair wages, to the organization and joining of unions, to private property, and to economic initiative.”

USCCB, *Seven Principles of Social Justice*
Responsible stewardship
Responsible Stewardship

Realization all that we have is gift

Resources
(time, talent, treasure)

Promotes equity of care

Requires dialogue with others
Responsible Stewardship

Involves subsidiarity

Empowering others

Decision-making at fundamental levels (close to the coal face)
Responsible Stewardship

Creation is a gift of God entrusted to all

Includes the Earth’s resources; human and financial resources
Responsible Stewardship

Called to be caretakers

Protect the planet and its resources

Share resources equitably

Manage individual gifts, time and talents
Responsible Stewardship

Develop all of creation, be creative, realize potential, bring fruition; participate in God’s creative powers
Pope Francis
*Laudato Si´*
May 24, 2015
Laudato Si’

All of creation is Brother and Sister to us – human dignity in context of creation

Current state – unsustainable

Care for the Earth; care for poor

Call for conversion
The responsibility of the Church is to “... awaken the spiritual energy without which justice, which always demands sacrifice, cannot prevail and prosper.” (28)
Caritas in Veritate

Clearly connects justice to a culture of life

Arises from “integral human development”
Caritas in Veritate

Affects all aspects of contemporary life

Economic
Civic/political/social
Environmental
Employment
Health and health care
Applications To Health Care
Care for the poor
Applications to Health Care
Care for the poor
Poverty is powerful determinant of poor health
Men and women
Adults and children
Whites and persons of color
Least care to African-American and Hispanic women
Applications to Health Care

Poverty and sickness
Poverty connects to:
Infant birth weight, mortality rate
Illiteracy
Housing, homelessness
Plight of children
Applications to Health Care

Expressed in “cured diseases”
Hansen’s disease, TB, others
Applications to Health Care

“This is our poverty: the poverty of the flesh of Christ, the poverty that brought the Son of God to us through his Incarnation. A poor Church for the poor begins by reaching out to the flesh of Christ. If we reach out to the flesh of Christ, we begin to understand something, to understand what this poverty, the Lord’s poverty, actually is; and this is far from easy.”

Pope Francis
Applications to Health Care

Labor issues

A Catholic health care institution must treat its employees respectfully and justly.  

Directive 7

What does this mean?

How is it expressed?
Applications to Health Care

Equal employment opportunities

Workplace promoting participation

Ensure safety and well-being

Just compensation, benefits

Recognize right to organize, bargain collectively
Applications to Health Care

“As we contemplate the vast amount of work to be done, we are sustained by our faith that God is present alongside those who come together in his name to work for justice … Only if we are aware of our calling, as individuals and as a community, to be part of God’s family … will we be able to generate a new vision.”

Benedict XVI, *Caritas in Veritate* (78)
Applications to Health Care

“... to demand our openness to understand it in depth and to mobilize ourselves at the level of the ‘heart,’ so as to ensure that current economic and social processes evolve towards fully human outcomes.”

Benedict XVI, *Caritas in Veritate* (78)
Reflection and Discussion
What challenges do the elements of Catholic social teaching present to you personally?
To your organization?