



## Forgotten texts of the Social Doctrine of the Church

Forgotten texts of the Social Doctrine of the Church  
Compilation, analysis and reflection prepared by the Christian Association of  
Business Managers, Uruguay

### Summary

1. "The current economy ... full of very serious vices" (QA 28)
2. Our economic system
3. Some consequences of the system
4. Labor relations
5. State intervention
6. International relations
7. Concrete problems
8. The commitment of the Church
9. Conclusion

### Acronyms and contextualization of documents

RN: Rerum novarum (1891) - Leo XIII - First word of the Church after the first Industrial Revolution

QA: Quadragesimo Anno (1931) - Pius XI - Time of fascism, corporatism and collectivism

Sol: La solemnitá (1941) - Pius XII - In the middle of the Second World War, calls for justice and peace

MM: Mater et Magistra (1961) - John XXIII

PT: Pacem in Terris (1963) - John XXIII - Opening to new social problems, human rights and peace "work of justice"

GS: Gaudium et spes (1965) - Vatican Council II - The new presence of the Church in the world

PVI: Address to businessmen (1964) - Paul VI

PP: Populorum Progressio (1967) - Paul VI

OA: Octogesima adveniens (1971) - Paul VI - Global solidarity in development. Decade of development, Vatican II and May 68

LE: Laborem Exercens (1981) - John Paul II

SRS: Sollicitudo rei socialis (1987) - John Paul II

CA: Centesimus annus (1991) - John Paul II - In the crisis of development, priority of the person over capital.

The term "social doctrine of the Church" (SDC) was created by Pius XII. Then it was preferred to speak of various "social teachings" of the Church, to avoid being understood in a fixist manner, losing sight of their dynamic character.

It is a known fact that the first social encyclical (too late) was published by Leo XIII in 1891 and that, since 1941, hardly any pope has missed the anniversaries of that date, for some new social declaration. In spite of everything, we have had an interest in not leaving texts of the first social encyclicals that today continue to be striking, until the end that someone has thrown the rhetorical question: "fallen the East has arrived the hour of the SDC?".

It can be said that this selection is incomplete, that essential texts are missing. We did neither want to be exhaustive nor scholars in a brief article.

We tried to make a kind of trailer that would highlight original texts and encourage them to discover their prophetic value in the middle of a dormant society. Trailers can be biased, flashy and provocative or decontextualize the scenes.

Maybe we have fallen into that. But we feared rather to be boring. That is why we warn that this is not a notebook to be read in one go: it would be enough to read (and reflect) a text or group of them per day. It will seem to others that there are no concrete solutions to such a serious and difficult problem; the Church does not intend to give technical solutions, but wants to remember that any technical solution must put man above money.

Given the possible suspicion of unilateralism that the reader of our selection may have, we would like to say, above all, that the selection is true: all the paragraphs cited have been signed by the popes and belong to the social teachings of the Church.

Second, we would like to add that:

a) Some of these texts are among the most hidden and that is why they should be highlighted.

The SDC has not limited itself to saying that communism was bad or newspaper headline generalities (e.g., the SDC condemns capitalism and socialism equally, it pretends or does not pretend to be a middle way, the property is legitimate ...), but it has said very concrete and interpellant things. (Another question will be whether the Church herself has subsequently had the courage and audacity to fulfill and apply to it what it has taught).

b) These texts are part of the most prophetic texts, of which less actuality has lost and more validity they maintain in the inevitable decanting that the historical advance produces on all the moral paths that human beings seek. The Bible itself has overcome moral teachings, because God has manifested himself to humanity in historical development. Well, it would be unlawful that this Church, which rightly applies a historical hermeneutic to Scripture, would not allow it to apply it to its own teachings, as if they had more consistency than the Word of God. The teaching of the Church also has its "old testaments"!

Each one is free to accept the answer they prefer: that they are the most forgotten texts, or that they are most valuable. We can only indicate again that the inevitable reduced dimensions of a Notebook like this have imposed another selection that is often random and that force us to leave out other texts that we would have liked to keep. More than once the text we cited could be accompanied by several others very similar. This is why we allow the reader to refer to two books: J. RENAULT, *Interpellated by reality* (Sal Terrae, 1994) and I. CAMACHO, *Social Doctrine of the Church, historical approach*, (Paulinas, 1994, 2nd ed.), the first of more informative mood, the second, a complete manual.

Cristianisme i Justícia  
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#### 1. "WE HAVE EXAMINED THE CURRENT ECONOMY AND HAVE FOUND IT TO HAVE A PLAGUE OF HEAVY VICIES" (QA 28)

We chose as a title a phrase of Pius XI. You can think that "current economy" refers only to the 30-40 years and then was corrected (welfare state, etc.). One can also think that precisely the globalization of the current economy, with many countries in the process of industrialization (and with very harsh social conditions that make them more competitive than the already industrialized countries, e.g. the case of the "tigers") becomes more current than never the words of Pius XI. In any hypothesis we transcribe below some judgments of two other popes.

1. In some ... nations, in the face of the extreme poverty of the majority, the abundance and unrestrained luxury of a few contrast in an open and insolent way with the situation of the needy; in others, the current generation is burdened with excessive burdens to increase the productivity of the national economy in accordance with accelerated rhythms that exceed the limits imposed by justice and equity; finally, in other nations a high percentage of the national income is spent in strengthening the national prestige more than just or huge budgets are allocated to the arms race (MM 69).

The existing differences are intolerable. It goes too fast, but not to reduce the lack of the poor, but to increase the overabundance of those who can pay. It is spent intolerably on weapons. How can this not be an economy plagued by "very serious

vices"?

2. Not only the hiring of work, but also commercial relations of all kinds are subject to the power of a few, to the extent that a very small number of affluent and wealthy have imposed little less than the yoke of slavery to an infinite crowd of proletarians ... The cruelty of the ambitious ... abuses people without moderation, as if they were things for personal gain (RN 2 and 31).

Leo XIII dared to compare the economic - social situation of his time with that of slavery that Modernity boasted of having abolished. But, of course, all these brushstrokes can only be qualified as evils or vices, from a budget that is no longer economic but prior to the economy. This is what the following text clarifies:

3. Economic development and social progress must go together and accommodate each other so that all social categories have adequate participation in the increase of the nation's wealth. In order to which we must watch and try, by all possible means, that the discrepancies that exist between the social classes by the inequality of the wealth do not increase, but, on the contrary, they diminish as much as possible (MM 73).

The economy is a science that is not cultivated only to produce more (hoping that chance will then distribute the produce well) but to distribute. In the underlined sentence, the word "participation" appears as a more primary purpose than the word "wealth increase" which, however necessary, appears only as a budget or secondary purpose concerning the previous one. Ethical analysis and judgment about our economic system must emerge from these assumptions.

## 2. OUR ECONOMIC SYSTEM

### Description

4. On these new conditions of society has been built a system that considers profit as an essential engine of economic progress, competition as the supreme law of the economy, private ownership of the means of production as an absolute right, without corresponding social limits or obligations. This unbridled liberalism, which leads to the dictatorship, was just denounced by Pius XI as the generator of "the international imperialism of money"... It would be unjust to attribute to industrialization itself the evils that are due to the nefarious system that accompanies it (PP 26).

- This paragraph is so splendid that it is enough to attend to the underlined words that give some of the main features without needing any other comment.

### Valuation

5. It is visible to the eyes of everyone ... that in our time not only accumulate

wealth, but also accumulates a huge and tyrannical economic power in the hands of a few who, most of the time are not owners, but only custodians and administrators of a wealth in deposit, which they manage at their will and discretion. A domain exercised in the most tyrannical way by those who, having in their hands the money and dominating over it, also seize the finances and rule over the credit and, for this reason, it would be said that they administer the blood of which they live. The economy and they seem to have in their hands the soul of it so that no one can breathe against their will.

This accumulation of resources and power "is almost characteristic of the contemporary economy" - is the natural result of the unlimited freedom of competitors, from which only the most powerful have survived, which is often equivalent to saying: the most violent and the most devoid of conscience.

Ultimate consequences ... are: free competition destroys itself; the economic dictatorship takes over the free market; the unbridled ambition for power has happened to the desire for profit; the whole economy has become horribly hard, cruel and atrocious ...; loss of the prestige of the State that, (although it should occupy the position of rector and supreme arbitrator of things free of all interest of parties and attentive exclusively to the common good and to justice), it becomes the slave, delivered and sold to the passion and human ambitions ... (QA 105-109).

- It is shocking to think that these paragraphs are not from 1996 but from 1931. How many rich "Christians or not" would accept today that they are not owners but administrators of wealth in deposit and that they cannot manage it at their will? Pius XI has no objection to using the words "tyranny" and "dictatorship" where we only talk about democracy (because without economic democracy there can be no political democracy). In a tyranny, the triumph is not a sign of more capacity but of more violence and less conscience. The result is that the same ideal values of the system "destroy themselves" (third paragraph).

6. If the Church condemns the current Marxist regimes, it cannot fail to notice that the worker, in his effort to improve his condition, stumbles upon a social system that, far from being in accord with nature, is opposed to the order established by God and the purpose that He assigned to the goods of the Earth "(Pius XII, September 7, 1947) (Text taken from the New History of the Church of Christianity editions, vol V, p.513).

7. The economic-social system, created by Manchesterian liberalism and which still persists in the criterion of the one-sidedness of the possession of the means of production, of the economy aimed at a prevailing private advantage, does not bring perfection, does not bring the peace, does not bring justice, if it continues dividing men into irreducibly enemy classes, and characterizes society by the deep and lacerating discomfort that torments it, barely contained by the legality and the momentary truce of some agreements in the systematic struggle implacable, which should lead to the oppression of one class against the other.

Many misfortunes consequent to the search for human welfare, founded exclusively and predominantly on economic goods and temporary happiness, are born precisely from this materialistic structuring of life, imputable not only to those who from the old dialectical materialism make the fundamental dogma of a sad sociology, but also to all those who place the golden calf in the place that corresponds to the God of heaven and earth. You have understood that for you the acceptance of the Christian message is a sacrifice: while for the classes lacking in goods it is a message of bliss and hope, for you, it is a message of responsibility, renunciation, and fear (PVI).

- According to the harsh text of Pius XII the system is unnatural. Paul VI clarifies this adjective: the system is not of justice and peace but of injustice and war (paragraph 1). And it is because it is based on a materialism [, not atheist but] idolatrous (paragraph 2). An example of this class struggle, conceived as a fact consistent with the system and not as a means to overcome it, is this personal interpellation of the same document of Paul VI, (directed, remember, entrepreneurs):

8. Do you not experience this strange result in your efforts? ... In the aversion that arises against you precisely in those same ones whom you have offered ... work? Your companies, wonderful fruits of your efforts, are they not cause for displeasure and attacks? Mechanical and bureaucratic structures work perfectly, but human structures do not. The company ... is not it still today a friction of spirits and interests? Is it not sometimes considered as an argument against who has constituted, directs and administers it? Do not you say that you are capitalists and the only culprits? ... It must have some deep vice, a radical insufficiency in this system if from its beginnings it has such social reactions.

- These words were considered in their day, as one of the most important that a pope ever said. And they still are. Its value lies precisely in that the Pope does not blame his recipients at all. Rather, in lamenting the hostility that arises against them, it leads them to discover some deep insufficiency of the system. And this insufficiency consists in the radical primacy of economic structures over human structures.

Elements for correction

9. Priority of human work on ... capital ... Work is always a primary efficient cause, while capital ... is only an instrument ... The set of media is the result of the historical heritage of human work... Intrinsically true and in turn morally legitimate maybe that system which, at its root, overcomes the antinomy between work and capital, trying to structure itself according to the principle stated above of the substantial and effective priority of work.

From this perspective, the position of "rigid" capitalism, which defends the

exclusive right to private ownership of the means of production, as an untouchable "dogma" in economic life, remains unacceptable. The principle of respect for work requires that this right be subjected to a constructive revision in theory and in practice. Indeed, if it is true that capital, like all the means of production, in turn, constitutes the product of the work of generations, then it is no less true that this capital is created incessantly thanks to the work carried out with the help of that same set of means of production ... (LE 12.13.14).

- It may be good to remember that these lines are rigorously contemporary with the beginning of the "Reagan era" (although the attack on the Pope delayed publication for a few months). In them, there is a fundamental principle that means both the criticism and the way of overcoming the system: the primacy of work over capital, based on the fact that capital (and the means of production) are only instruments, while labor is the cause of wealth. This is followed, among other consequences, by a de-absolutization of private ownership of the media by capital, given that, at least at least, they are the work of work. (See also the text of QA 54 that we will cite when talking about salary).

Final balance

10. It is demonstrated how unacceptable is the assertion that the defeat of socialism leaves capitalism as the only model of economic organization. We must break the barriers and monopolies, which leave so many people on the margins of development, and ensure to all "individuals and nations" the basic conditions that allow participating in development (CA35).

- Capitalism is therefore neither the victorious model, nor the best model, nor even the only possible model. Although it is the only one that we have now. But, once in it, we must be very conscious about some of its consequences that are disastrous not only for its victims but for all. And we must try to save the maximum of justice in labor relations. That's what the next two chapters are about.

### 3. SOME SYSTEM CONSEQUENCES

#### 1. Consumerism as a personal and environmental anti-ecology

11. Through the production and consumption options, a certain culture is revealed as a global conception of life. Hence the phenomenon of consumerism. When discovering new needs and new modalities for their satisfaction, it is necessary to be guided by an integral image of the man who respects all the dimensions of his being and who subordinates the material and instinctive to the interior and spiritual. On the contrary, by going directly to their instincts, regardless of one way or another of their personal, conscious and free reality, they can create habits of consumption and lifestyle that are objectively illicit and often even harmful to their physical and spiritual health.

The economic system does not have in itself criteria to correctly distinguish the new and higher forms of satisfaction of the new human needs, which are an obstacle to the formation of a mature personality (SRS 36).

12. That is why it is necessary to strive to implement lifestyles, according to which the elements that determine the options of consumption, savings and investments are the search for truth, beauty, and the common good, as well as communion with other men ... In this regard, I cannot limit myself to remembering the duty of charity, that is, the duty to help with one's own "superfluous" and, sometimes, even with one's own "necessary" to give the poor the indispensable to live. I refer to the fact that also the option of investing in one place and not in another, in one productive sector instead of another, is always a moral and cultural option (CA 36).

13. It is also worrying, along with the problem of consumerism and strictly linked to it, the ecological issue. Man, driven by the desire to have and enjoy, rather than to be and to grow, consumes in an excessive and disorderly manner the resources of the Earth and his very life. At the root of the senseless destruction of the natural environment, there is an anthropological error, unfortunately very widespread in our time (CA 37).

-The economic system has no criteria to decide what makes men more men or more home to land. It only has criteria to know who can pay, and how to induce to pay, even to those who can less (e.g., producing weapons).

## 2. External debt as perpetual plunder

14. Having changed the circumstances, both in the indebted countries and in the international financing market, the instrument chosen to give development aid has become a counterproductive mechanism ... The indebted countries, to meet the debt commitments, they are forced to export the capital that would be necessary to increase or even to maintain their standard of living ... for the same reason, they cannot obtain new indispensable sources of financing (SRS 19).

It is certainly just the principle that debts must be paid. It is not lawful, on the other hand, to demand or expect payment when it would actually impose such political options that would lead to hunger and despair for entire populations. You cannot expect the debts contracted to be paid with unbearable sacrifices. In these cases, it is necessary to find ways to reduce, delay or extinguish the debt, compatible with the fundamental right of peoples to subsistence and progress (SRS 35).

-It does not seem that these words need much comment, what they require is a willingness to accept them. Perhaps it should be added that the SRS is from 1987, and that since then some modalities have been found (the "Brady plan" of 1988) that, if they have not made the debt fully compatible "with the fundamental right of the peoples" They have served to soften it in many cases.

### 3. The arms threat

15. Justice, right reason and the sense of human dignity urgently call for an end to the arms race: that, on one side and on the other, nations simultaneously reduce the armaments they possess; that nuclear weapons are banned, that, finally, all agree on a gradual disarmament pact, with mutual and effective guarantees. The calamity of a World War, with its economic and social ravages and its crimes and moral disturbances, cannot be allowed to take the third toll on humanity (PT 106).

16. If the production of weapons is a serious disorder that reigns in the world today with respect to the real needs of men and the use of adequate means to satisfy them, trade-in them is no less so. Moreover: in this connection, it is necessary to add that the moral judgment is even more severe (SRS 24).

17. Although the recent wars have brought grave material and moral damage to our world, still daily in some areas of the world, the war continues its devastation. Moreover, by employing in the war all kinds of scientific weapons, their intrinsic cruelty threatens to lead those who fight to such barbarism, which greatly exceeds that of the past. The complexity of the current situation and the labyrinth of international relations allow prolonging wars disguised with new insidious and subversive methods. In many cases, the use of terrorism methods is admitted as a new warfare system (GS 79).

18. The consequences of this state of affairs are manifested in the accentuation of a typical and revealing plague of the imbalances and conflicts of the contemporary world: the millions of refugees, whom wars, natural calamities, persecutions and discriminations of all kinds have made lose house, work, family and homeland. The tragedy of these crowds is reflected in the broken faces of men, women, and children who, in a divided and inhospitable world, cannot find a home anymore (SRS 24).

- How prophetic are the words of the last two paragraphs read in 1996! Hopefully not the final words of the first of these four texts. In any case, there is the Vatican II judgment that the barbarity of our "civilized" world can compete with that of earlier times. But it happens that p. ex. the mines are so lucrative! If the system involves those intrinsic threats, it is logical that mechanisms are sought to overcome them. Text 9 spoke of the priority of work over capital and the desabsolutization of private ownership of means of wealth. This brings us to the following two chapters: labor relations and state intervention in the economy.

### 4. LABOR RELATIONS

The capital-labor relationship is currently unjust and therefore conflictive

19. The problem of work, at the time of industrial development, has been raised and manifested in the context of a great conflict between the "world of capital" and the "world of work", that is, between the restricted group, but very influential, of the entrepreneurs, owners of the means of production and the vast majority of people who did not have these means, and who participated, instead, in the productive process exclusively through work. This conflict has arisen from the fact that the workers, offering their strength for work, put them at the disposal of the group of businessmen, and this, guided by the principle of maximum performance, tried to establish the lowest salary possible for the work done by the workers.

The call to solidarity and to the common action launched to the workers ... had an important value ... It was the reaction against the degradation of man as a subject of work and against the unprecedented and concomitant exploitation in the field of profits, the conditions of work and provision towards the person of the worker (LE 11 and 8).

20. For a long time, in effect, riches or "capital" were attributed too much to themselves. Capital claimed for itself the yield, the totality of the product, leaving the worker barely enough to repair and restore his forces. For it was said that, by virtue of an absolutely incontrovertible economic law, all accumulation of capital corresponded to the rich, and that, by virtue of that same law, the workers were condemned and reduced to perpetual misery or to very little welfare ... Not always or everywhere the reality of the facts was in agreement with this opinion of the liberals vulgarly called Manchesterians, even though neither can it be denied that the socio-economic institutions were constantly inclined to this principle (QA 54).

-For the first time a Pope is faced with the principle that the lack of equity between capital and labor is an "incontestable law of the economy", although that is accepted by "the majority of institutions": it is rather a law unfair of a certain economic system, which must provoke conflicts and logical reactions on the part of the victims. If text 19 is strictly contemporary with "Reagan my," 20 is fifty years earlier.

## 2. Primacy of work does not mean collectivism or state property

21. One can speak of socialization only when the subjectivity of society is assured, that is, when every person, based on their own work, has full title to be considered at the same time "co-owner" of that kind of large workshop in the one that commits with everyone. One way to achieve that goal could be to associate, as much as possible, work to the ownership of capital and give life to a rich range of intermediate bodies with economic, social, cultural purposes: bodies that enjoy effective autonomy to the public authorities ... (LE 14).

## 3. Means right to work and attention to the subject of work

22. The Church has solemnly affirmed it again at the last Council: "The human person is and must be the beginning, the subject and the end of all institutions." Every man has the right to work, to the possibility of developing his qualities and his personality in the exercise of his profession (OA 14).

23. There is no person who does not realize the current situation and the growing seriousness of unemployment in the industrialized countries. If it appears alarmingly in the developing countries, with its high rate of population growth and the high number of young people, in the countries of great economic development it seems that the sources of work are contracted, and thus the possibilities of employment, instead of increasing, decrease (SRS 18).

24. Therefore, we must continue to ask ourselves about the subject of the work and the conditions in which we live. In order to achieve social justice in different parts of the world, in different countries, and in the relations between them, new solidarity movements of men of work are always necessary. This solidarity must always be present wherever it is required by the social degradation of the subject of work, the exploitation of workers, and the growing zones of misery and even hunger.

Human work is a key, perhaps the essential key, of the whole social question, if we try to see it truly from the point of view of the good of man. If the gradual solution of the social question ... should be sought in the direction of making human life, then the key, which is human work, acquires a fundamental and decisive importance (LE 8 and 3).

-The problem of economics is whether it aims to make human life more human for all or just easier for a few. Depending on whether you choose one or the other purpose, the laws of the economy will be very different. That is why it can be said: "the economy has been made for man (for all men), not men for the economy" (of a few).

4. All this means reviewing salary criteria

25. If the worker, forced by necessity or harassed by the fear of a greater evil, accepts, even not wanting it, a harder condition, because the employer or employer imposes it, this is certainly to withstand violence, against which he demands justice (RN 32).

-For example: if there is a large mass of unemployed the worker will accept anything for himself, and vindicate much less for his class: not because he wants it freely but "forced by necessity".

26. It is necessary to fight hard, therefore, so that parents receive a salary broad enough to adequately attend to ordinary domestic needs. And if in the current circumstances this is not always possible, social justice postulates that the necessary reforms are introduced as quickly as possible so that a salary of this

type is fixed for every adult citizen (QA 71).

27. It is true that to establish the measure of salary with justice, many reasons must be considered; but generally keep in mind the rich and the bosses who oppress for their profit the needy and the helpless and seek their gain in the poverty of others, neither divine nor human laws permit. And defrauding someone in the salary due is a great crime, which loudly calls the vengeful wrath of heaven. "Behold, the wages of the workers ... who were disappointed by you, cry out, and their cry has reached the ears of the God of armies" (Sgo 5, 4). Finally, the rich must carefully avoid adversely affecting in the least the interests of the proletarians with violence or deceit, or usurious devices; all the more so because they are not sufficiently prepared against injustice and outrage, and, therefore, the weaker their economy, the more sacred it must be considered (RN 14).

28. Every man has the right to an equitable remuneration that allows him and his family "to lead a dignified life on a material, cultural and spiritual level", to assistance in case of need due to illness or age (OA 14).

-Release in the light of these texts, and the biblical quotation of No. 27, all our discourses on "adjustment", "moderation" salary and other euphemisms. Relay the conditions imposed by the IMF to the poorest countries. There is no doubt that this is the point at which the SDC most clashes with the usual practice of capitalism. But not only because this is not feasible at a certain moment, but because there is absolutely no will to "walk as quickly as possible" towards that goal, as Pius XI requested. The latent will is rather the opposite, in a system that is governed only by competitiveness, forgetting the necessary counterpoint of solidarity ... We also want to note that the popes speak only of functionality, not of the amount of salary. This function can be performed either by its volume, or by forms of participation in the company, etc.

All of the above is aggravated considerably when the economy becomes "productive" in "speculative"

29. It is necessary to denounce the existence of economic, financial and social mechanisms, which, although managed by the will of men, work in an almost automatic way, making the situations of wealth of the ones and poverty of the others more rigid. These mechanisms, maneuvered by the most developed countries directly or indirectly, favor because of their very functioning, the interests of those who maneuver them, although they end up suffocating or conditioning the economies of the less developed countries. It is necessary to submit these mechanisms in the future to an attentive analysis under the ethical-moral aspect (SRS 1).

-From here on, perhaps we can already respond to the phrase of Pius XI that served as the title of our chapter 1: what are those "very serious vices" of our economy? :

30. The economy is not vicious by nature, but violates the right order only when capital abuses the workers and the proletarian class for the purpose and in such a way that businesses and even the entire economy will fold at their own will and profit, without taking into account at all the human dignity of the workers, or the social character of the economy, not even social justice itself and the common good (QA 101).

-The scathing question that has been thrown against the Church by some defenders of the system ("Is God against the economy?") Has the answer, given half a century ago.

And if the system involves this intrinsic dynamics of injustice, one of the minimum remedies that it demands (not to be transformed but at least to be softened) will be state intervention.

## 5. THE INTERVENTION OF THE STATE

31. While the state, during the XIX century, for exaggerated exaltation of freedom, considered as his exclusive goal to protect freedom with the right, Leo XIII warned him to be equally his to apply to social care, seeking the welfare of all the people and all its members, particularly the weak and the disinherited (Sun 9).

-In these words (which come from a message to mark the 50th anniversary of RN) the two positions that we see today debate between right and left reappear: the state should intervene only to guarantee the freedom of capital, because whenever it intervenes, the economy is worse. To which Pius XII contrasts this other conception: the state has almost no more reason to be than to guarantee the defense of the weakest and, from there, the welfare of all citizens. The reason, deeply biblical, had already been given, fifty years earlier, by Leo XIII:

32. The race of the rich, as it can be walled with its own resources, needs less from the protection of public authority; the poor people, lacking the means to defend themselves, have to rely heavily on the sponsorship of the state ... It is within the reach of the rulers to benefit the other social orders and greatly alleviate the situation of the proletarians, and this by virtue of the best right and without the slightest suspicion of interference, since the State must ensure the common good as its own mission (RN 22 and 23).

33. And in no way should the error be made that civil authority serves the interests of one or a few, having been established to procure the good of all. However, reasons of justice and fairness may perhaps require that public authorities have special considerations towards the weakest members of the social body, finding themselves in an inferior position to assert their own rights and to achieve their legitimate interests (PT 51).

- The bias towards the weakest is the only way that the authority is truly "of all citizens". One of the primary reasons for authority is, therefore, the defense of the defenseless and those who lack resources. How this support should be understood is suggested by the following text:

34. The lack of security, together with the corruption of public authorities and the proliferation of illicit sources of increased family wealth, and of easy benefits based on illegal or purely speculative activities, is one of the main obstacles to development and for the economic order (CA 48).

-It should be an interaction between powers that control the economic corruption of the well off, and a citizenry that controls the corruption of the public powers. That would be a true democracy. Some concreteness of these "special considerations" (mentioned in text 33) is suggested by the following text:

35. No less effort will be made by those with civil power to ensure that workers who are fit for work are offered the opportunity to obtain suitable jobs for their forces; that the remuneration for work is determined according to criteria of justice and equity; that in the productive complexes the workers are given the possibility of feeling responsible for the company in which they work; that intermediate units can be constituted that make the coexistence of the citizens easier and more fertile; that finally all, by suitable and gradual procedures, can have participation in the cultural assets (PT 59).

-Right to work, right to fair wages, right to co-responsibility and autonomous levels of management, right to culture. A system that does not facilitate these objectives, even if it achieves others, is not a rational or human or just system, as the following paragraph suggests:

36. Experience shows that, wherever appropriate action by public authorities is lacking, the economic, social and cultural imbalances of human beings tend, above all in our time, to be accentuated rather than to be reduced, and it is arrived at to make "rights and duties of man" are nothing more than words devoid of any effectiveness (PT 58).

-But all this state intervention must always be done respecting the important "principle of subsidiarity" (which, unfortunately, seems to have no value for the Church that proclaims it): what the closest bodies can do, the most distant ones should not:

37. This state intervention that encourages, stimulates, organizes, protects and completes, rests on the principle of subsidiarity, established by Pius XI: "it remains standing and firm ... that grave immovable principle ...: as it cannot be taken away from individuals what they can do with their own ingenuity or effort, and give it to the community, is not fair either, but constitutes a serious disturbance ... that is

removed to the lower or lower communities what they can do and get , to give it to a higher instance, since every action of society, by its very strength and nature, must help the members of the social body, but not destroy or absorb them (MM 53, QA 79).

- "Empower without destroying". One of the great difficulties for all this, at the present time, is the tremendous interdependence of all economies and the conversion of such an appallingly unequal world into a "global village."

38. It is the State that must carry out a fair labor policy. However ... within the current system of economic relations in the world, there are multiple connections between states ... for example, in the processes of import and export ... These relations in turn create reciprocal dependencies and, consequently, it would be difficult to speak of full self-sufficiency ... as regards any State, even if it is the most powerful in the economic sense.

Such a system of reciprocal dependencies is normal in itself; however, it can easily become an occasion for various forms of exploitation or injustice, and in this way influence the labor policy of the States and ultimately the worker who is the subject of work (LE 17).

-This leads us to the need to consider international relations also in the field of economics. The SRS, written as a result of the anniversary of the PP, began by pointing out that what has changed the most since that encyclical until today is precisely the globalization of the economy that highlights, at the same time, new irrationalities and injustices, together with undeniable difficulties to solve them at particular levels. This brings us to a new chapter in this anthology.

## 6. INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

39. While on the one hand important natural resources remain unused, there are other groups of unemployed or underemployed people and a host of hungry crowds, a fact that undoubtedly attests to the fact that, within the political communities as well as in the existing relationships at a continental and global level, with regard to the organization of work and employment, there is something that does not work and, specifically, in the most critical and socially important points (LE 18).

40. But perhaps the greatest problem of our days is that which concerns the relations between the economically developed nations and the countries in the process of economic development: the former enjoy a comfortable life; the second, however, suffer from severe shortages. Social solidarity, which today groups all men into a single family, imposes on nations that enjoy abundant economic wealth the obligation not to remain indifferent to countries whose members, oppressed by

innumerable internal difficulties, are exhausted by the misery and hunger and do not enjoy, as is proper, the fundamental rights of man. This obligation is augmented by the fact that, given the progressive interdependence currently felt by societies, it is no longer possible for a lasting and fruitful peace to reign among them if the economic and social differences between them are excessive (MM 157).

-The promoters of the 0'7 platform said that it was only a first step. John XXIII adds a reason for this way of seeing: "res nostra agitur!" We play our own lasting and fruitful peace. The first consequence of the "global village" is the need for equality among nations:

41. The mutual relations between the political Communities must be regulated by the truth. Which demands first of all, that these traces eliminate all traces of racism; and that, therefore, it is recognized as a sacred and immutable principle that political communities, by dignity of nature, are equal to each other; from which follows the same right to existence, to the development itself, to the means necessary to achieve it so that each one is the first responsible in the performance of its programs ... (PT 80).

- It leads to proclaim the need and functions of a world authority:

42. Should this authority carry out its office effectively, it should be equal with all, exempt from all partiality and oriented towards the common good of all people. If the most powerful nations impose this universal authority by force, we must rightly fear that it serves the benefit of a few or that it is on the side of a single Nation. In this way the strength and effectiveness of its action would be in danger. Nations, however much they disagree with each other in the increase of material goods and in their military power, tenaciously defend legal equality and their own moral dignity. That is why, not without reason, States submit themselves to a degree of power that is imposed on them by force, or whose constitution they have not contributed or to which they have not adhered spontaneously (PT 130).

-But all the above will be useless if, both international relations and world authority, are vitiated by the original sin of unjust economic relations, such as those of international trade, denounced by Paul VI in famous paragraphs:

43. The efforts that have been made to help developing countries will be illusory if their results are partially annulled by trade relations between rich and poor countries. Their confidence will be broken if they have the impression of one hand giving them what the other hand takes from them. The industrialized nations export mainly processed products, while the underdeveloped economies do not have to sell more than agricultural products and raw materials. Thanks to technical progress, the first ones increase quickly in value and find enough market. On the contrary, the primary products that come from the underdeveloped countries suffer wide and abrupt price variations, very far from this progressive surplus value. This is the reason why the latter have great difficulties when they have to

rely on their exports to balance their economy and carry out their development plan. Poor people always remain poor and the rich get richer and richer (PP 56.57).

In this regard, I would like to recall in particular: the reform of the international trading system, mortgaged by protectionism and the growing bilateralism; the reform of the world monetary and financial system, recognized today as insufficient; the issue of exchanges of technologies and their proper use; the need for a revision of the structure of existing international organizations within the framework of an international order (SRS 43).

- Progressive valuation for some and "handicap" regressive for others. These words have been painfully prophetic. Many underdeveloped societies have been forced to substitute subsistence agriculture (corn, rice, etc.) for export crops (flowers, coloring plants ...) that by no means reach the subsistence of the peasants. This way they do not have more than two exits: either the crazy emigration to the horrible megalopolises of many countries of the third world or the cultivation of drugs. In view of these facts, Paul VI continued:

44. The rule of free trade cannot continue to govern international relations on its own. Its advantages are clear only if the parties are not in very unequal conditions of economic power ... But it is no longer the same when the conditions are too unequal from country to country: prices that are formed "freely" in the market can bring with it inequitable results. The fundamental principle of liberalism as a rule of commercial exchanges is therefore questioned here ... An exchange economy can no longer rest on the single law of free competition, which too often engenders an economic dictatorship (PP 58.59).

In effect: the same countries that proclaim the excellence of trade liberalism, then have means to introduce forms of tariffs or "camouflaged protectionism" in their trade relations with poor countries. In this way, the ideal that Paul VI defined as "to convince them to carry out their own development and progressively acquire the means to do so" will never be possible (PP 55).

And after this kind of "doctrinal body," we only need to pay attention to some specific points or problems. For example, those referring to emigration, women, strike or property.

## 7. CONCRETE PROBLEMS

### The right to emigration

45. There is an inadmissible delay in the abundance of goods and services available in some parts of the world, especially in the developed North, and it is precisely in this geopolitical area where the majority of humanity lives.

Leaving aside the analysis of figures and statistics, it is enough to look at the reality of a huge crowd of men and women, children, adults and the elderly, in a word, of concrete and unrepeatable human persons, who suffer the intolerable weight of misery. There are many millions who lack hope due to the fact that, in many places on earth, their situation has worsened significantly (SRS 14 and 13).

- "It's enough to look". The biggest sin in terms of poverty and injustice is the habit of not looking, of closing our eyes. If you face data such as those cited, it is easy to wait for the conclusions:

46. Every man has the right to freedom of movement and residence within the political community of which he is a citizen; and also has the right to emigrate to other political communities and establish themselves in them when so advised by legitimate interests. The fact of belonging to a certain political community does not in any way prevent being a member of the human family and belonging as a citizen to the world community (PT 20).

47. Well, among the rights of the human person, it is also counted that each one can immigrate to the nation where he hopes to better serve himself and his family. Therefore, it is the duty of the public authorities to admit foreigners who come and, as far as the true good of that community allows, to favor the attempts of those who intend to join it as new members.

We take this opportunity to approve and publicly praise all initiatives of human solidarity or Christian charity, aimed at alleviating the suffering of those who are forced to emigrate from their countries (PT 101).

## 2. Discrimination against women

48. A fact of all known (is) the entry of women into public life. In women, an awareness of their own dignity becomes clearer and more effective. She knows that she cannot consent to be considered and treated as an instrument (PT 35).

49. In many countries, it is subject to studies and sometimes to living demands, legislation on women that will stop this effective discrimination and establish relations of equal rights and respect for their dignity. We do not speak of a false equality that would deny the distinctions established by the Creator himself, and that would be in contradiction with the specific function, so capital, of the woman in the heart of the home and in the heart of society. The evolution of legislation must, on the contrary, be guided in the sense of protecting the specific vocation of women and, at the same time, recognizing their independence as persons and their equal rights to participate in economic, social and cultural life and politics (OA 14).

-The presence of women in public life, and not only in the home, is a sign of the

times that deserve to be welcomed in an effort towards full equality. The fact that the sign of the times can be falsified in movements that confuse full equality with the lack of respect for differences does not invalidate the fairness of the cause. The Church has not fallen here into the easy mistake of disavowing a holy cause by relying on those who defend it badly.

50. The Church has always defended the principle that the working woman owes her, for equal work and in parity of performance, the same retribution as the worker. It would be unjust and contrary to the common good to exploit the work of women without consideration, for the sole reason that it is achieved at a lower price, with damage both from the worker and from the worker, which would thus be exposed to the danger of unemployment. (Pius XII, Assai numerous, address of August 15, 1945).

-Today, inequality of wages is often the subject of comments and not infrequent complaints. In Spain, the salaries of women are around 20% lower. That is why we have chosen the previous words that are from more than fifty years ago.

### 3. The problem of the strike

51. In the case of socio-economic conflicts, efforts must be made to find peaceful solutions. Although it is always necessary to first resort to a sincere dialogue between the parties, however, in the present situation the strike can continue to be necessary, although extreme, means for the defense of rights and the achievement of the just aspirations of the workers. Search as soon as possible ways to negotiate and to resume the conciliatory dialogue (GS 68).

-The strike is legitimate but it must be a last resort to which one goes when the previous dialogue has failed. It is a right "for the just aspirations of the worker". It is very difficult to justify with these words some types of corporatist strikes of those who already earn a lot but intend to earn even more, or seek to sink the company to take ownership of it.

### 4. The problem of property

52. God has destined the Earth and what it contains for the use of all men and nations. Whatever the forms of property are, adapted to the legitimate institutions of the people, this universal destiny of goods must never be lost sight of. Man ... should not have the exterior things that he legitimately possesses as exclusively his but also as common, in the sense that they do not take advantage of him only, but also others (GS 69).

-The property is not a last and absolute right, but a secondary right, subordinated to the fulfillment of the universal destiny of the goods. The other teachings derive from this fundamental principle.

53. If the Earth is made to provide each one with the means of subsistence and the instruments of his progress, every man has the right to find in it what he needs. All other rights, whatever they are, including property rights, are subordinate to it. [The property] does not constitute for anyone an unconditional and absolute right ... The common good sometimes demands expropriation if, due to its extension, its deficient or null exploitation, the misery that results to the population, of the considerable damage to the interests of the country, some possessions serve as an obstacle to collective prosperity.

The Council recalled ... no less clearly, that disposable income is not something left to the free will of men; and that selfish speculations must be eliminated. Of course, it could not be admitted that citizens with abundant incomes, coming from resources and national activity, transferred them in considerable part abroad, for pure personal gain without worrying about the obvious damage they would inflict on their own country (PP 22.23.24).

54. Property, according to the doctrine of the Church, has never been understood in such a way that it can build a reason for social conflict with work ... Property is acquired primarily through work, so that it serves the work. This refers in a special way to the ownership of the means of production: considering them in isolation as a set of separate properties, to counterpose them to work, in the form of "capital", is contrary to the very nature of these means and of his possession. These cannot be possessed against work, they cannot be possessed, because the only legitimate title for their possession is that (in the form of private or public property) they serve the work...

The recognition of the just position of work and of the worker within the productive process requires several adaptations in the field of the right to ownership of the means of production (LE 14).

-If the ownership of the means of production is acquired mainly through work, it follows that when the worker is "moderated" below the salary, to invest in production, the means acquired with those measures belong, at least in large part, to workers and not to capital. This had already been hinted at by Leo XIII and Pius XI:

55. Consider the rich and entrepreneurs who oppress the needy and destitute for their profit and extract their benefits through the poverty of others, neither divine nor human laws permit it (RN 14).

-The divine laws can. The human ones are not so much because they are usually made by the same ones who seek this oppression for their benefit ... In any case, the doctrine of the Church has been evolving at this point and has recovered lost elements of the Holy Fathers and the primitive tradition. The first documents, in this point, were too infected by "the figure of this world" (Rom 12, 2) and by the

fear of certain communist slogans, before which there was no serene "discretion of spirits".

But even the document that has a more than debatable doctrine about property (surpassed by later documents) says that!

## 8. THE COMMITMENT OF THE CHURCH

56. The joys and hopes, sorrows and anguish of the people of our time, especially of the poor and of those who suffer, are both joys and hopes, sorrows and anguish of the disciples of Christ. There is nothing truly human that does not find an echo in his heart. The Christian community is made up of men who, gathered together in Christ, are guided by the Holy Spirit on their pilgrimage to the kingdom of the Father and have received the good news of salvation to communicate it to all. The Church therefore feels intimate and really supportive of the human race and its history (GS 1).

57. The Church is deeply involved in this cause because she considers it as her mission, her service, as a verification of her fidelity to Christ, in order to be truly the "Church of the poor". It is not up to the Church to analyze scientifically the possible consequences of such changes in human coexistence. But the Church considers it her duty to always remember the dignity and rights of men of work, to denounce the situations in which these rights are violated, and to help guide these changes so that real progress can be made by man and society ( LE 8 and 1).

58. Today more than ever, the Church is aware that her social message will be made credible by the testimony of the works rather than by her coherence and internal logic. This awareness also derives its preferential option for the poor, which is never exclusive or discriminatory to other groups (CA 57).

- We must ask if the members of the Church are aware of the extent to which the cited texts oblige us. There, the mission of the Church and its fidelity to Jesus Christ, who revealed God as a God of the poor, is at stake. That credibility is not so much a matter of coherent theories as of testimony of works. And all this even if the Church is not in possession of technical solutions, and her work should be rather "remember, denounce and contribute". In this contribution and that commitment of works, the Church's option for the poor and her commitment to be a "Church of the poor" must have a decisive place:

59. I want to point out here the option or preferential love for the poor. This is a ... special form ... in the exercise of Christian charity. It refers to the life of every Christian ... but it also applies to our social responsibilities and, consequently, to our way of living and the decisions that must be made coherently about the ownership and use of goods.

Today, given the global dimension that the social issue has acquired, this preferential love, with the decisions it inspires, cannot fail to encompass the immense crowds of hungry, beggars, homeless, without medical care and, above all, without hope of a better future. To ignore [this reality] ... would mean to resemble the "rich Epulon", who pretended not to know the beggar Lazaro, prostrate at his door (SRS 42).

-The action for the poor is not only personal or welfare, but "political". That in many members of the Church and society today is embodied the image of the "rich Epulon" of the parable of Jesus, who could deny it? And yet we Christians continue to sing "he is sick, he is imprisoned, he is naked, but he is going to judge us for all that" ...

60. Faced with so many new questions, the Church makes an effort to reflect on the hopes of men within its own field. The fact that problems today seem original due to their amplitude and urgency, does it mean that man is unprepared to solve them? The social teaching of the Church accompanies all its dynamism to men in this search ... It does not intervene to confirm with its authority a certain established or prefabricated structure, [but] it is not limited, however, simply to remember some general principles . [It is] a reflection matured in contact with changing situations of this world, under the impulse of the Gospel that becomes a source of renewal, from the moment in which its message is accepted in the fullness of its demands. It develops with the sensitivity of the Church, marked by the disinterested will of service and attention to the poorest; finally, it feeds on a rich multi-secular experience (OA 42).

-Despite this, the task of the Church is not to find technical solutions. But it can aspire that, after giving their own practice and not merely theoretical testimony, they feel stimulated in the search for solutions, both civil authorities and Christian communities:

61. Those responsible for nations and the same international organizations ... must not forget to give precedence to the phenomenon of growing poverty. Unfortunately, the poor, far from diminishing, multiply not only in the less developed countries, but also in the more developed countries, which is no less scandalous (SRS 42).

62. Faced with such diverse situations, it is difficult for us to pronounce a single word, as well as to propose a solution with universal value. This is not our purpose or our mission. It is up to Christian communities to objectively analyze the situation of their own country, clarify it through the light of the unalterable word of the Gospel, deduce principles of reflection, norms of judgment and guidelines for action according to the social teachings of the Church as they have been elaborated throughout history ... To these Christian communities it is necessary to discern with the help of the Holy Spirit, in communion with the responsible bishops,

today.