



Article 3, Social justice

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THIRD PART
LIFE IN CHRIST
FIRST SECTION
THE VOCATION OF MAN:
LIFE IN SPIRIT
SECOND CHAPTER
THE HUMAN COMMUNITY
ARTICLE 3
SOCIAL JUSTICE

1928. Society ensures social justice when it makes the conditions that allow the associations and each one to get what is owed to them according to their nature and their vocation. Social justice is linked to the common good and the exercise of authority.

I. The respect for the human person

1929. Social justice can only be achieved based on respect for the transcendent dignity of man. The person represents the ultimate end of society, which is ordained to man:

The defense and promotion of human dignity have been entrusted to us by the Creator, and of which men and women are rigorously and responsibly responsible for each juncture of history (SRS 47).

1930 The respect of the human person implies that of the rights which derive from his dignity as a creature. These rights are prior to society and are imposed on them. They founded the moral legitimacy of all authority: belittling or refusing to

recognize them in their positive legislation, a society undermines its moral legitimacy (cf PT 65). Without this respect, an authority can only rely on force or violence to obtain the obedience of its subjects. It is for the Church to remember these rights to men of goodwill and to distinguish them from abusive or false claims.

1931 Respect for the human person goes through the respect of the principle: 'That each one, without any exception, should regard the neighbor as "another self", taking care, in the first place, of his life and of the means necessary to live it dignifiedly' (GS 27, 1). No legislation could by itself dispel fears, prejudices, arrogance, and selfishness that hinder the establishment of truly fraternal societies. These behaviors only cease with the charity that sees in every man a 'neighbor', a brother.

1932 The duty to become a neighbor of others and to serve them actively becomes even more pressing when they are most in need in any sector of human life. 'What you did to one of these younger brothers of mine, you did to me' (Mt 25, 40).

1933 This same duty extends to those who think and act differently from us. The teaching of Christ requires even the forgiveness of offenses. It extends the commandment of love which is that of the new law to all enemies (cf Mt 5, 43-44). Liberation in the spirit of the Gospel is incompatible with hatred of the enemy as a person, but not with hatred of evil that it makes as an enemy.

II Equality and differences between men

1934 Created in the image of the one God and endowed with the same rational soul, all men possess the same nature and the same origin. Rescued by the sacrifice of Christ, they are all called to participate in the same divine bliss: everyone enjoys the same dignity.

1935 Equality between men is essentially derived from their dignity and the rights emanating therefrom:

It is necessary to overcome and eliminate, as opposed to the plan of God, any form of discrimination in the fundamental rights of the person, whether social or cultural, for reasons of sex, race, color, social condition, language or religion. (GS 29.2).

1936 In coming into the world, man does not have all that is necessary for the development of his physical and spiritual life. He needs others. Certainly, there are differences between men in terms of age, physical capacities, intellectual or moral aptitudes, to the circumstances that each one could benefit, to the distribution of wealth (GS 29, 2). 'Talents' are not equally distributed (cf Mt 25, 14-30, Lc 19, 11-27).

1937 "These differences belong to the plan of God, who wants each one to receive from another what he needs, and that those who have particular 'talents' communicate their benefits to those who need them. Differences encourage and often force people to magnanimity, benevolence, and communication. They encourage cultures to enrich each other:

I do not give all the virtues equally to each one... many distributed in such a way, this to one, that to another... To one the charity, to the other the justice, to this the humility, to that one a living faith... As for the temporal goods the things necessary for the human life I have distributed them with the greatest inequality, and I have not wanted that each one possesses all that it was necessary so that the men have thus occasion, by necessity, to practice the charity with each other. .. I wanted some people to need others and to be my servants for the distribution of the graces and the liberalities they have received from me. (S. Catalina de Siena, dial. 1, 7).

1938. There are also scandalous inequalities affecting millions of men and women which are in open contradiction with the Gospel:

The equal dignity of people demands that a more human and fairer life situation be reached. The excessive economic and social inequalities between the members or the members of a single human family are scandalous and oppose social justice, fairness, the dignity of the human person and also social and international peace (GS 29, 3).

III Human solidarity

1939 The principle of solidarity, expressed also with the name of friendship or social charity, is a direct demand of the human and Christian fraternity (cf SRS 38-40; AC 10):

A mistake, "now widely extended, is the oblivion of this law of human solidarity and of charity, dictated and imposed by both the community of origin and the equality of rational nature in all men, whatever the people they belong to, as by the Sacrifice of redemption offered by Jesus Christ on the altar of the cross to his father of heaven, in favor of sinful humanity (Pius XII, Enc. "Summi pontificatus").

1940 Solidarity is manifested in the first place in the distribution of goods and the remuneration of work. It is also the effort in favor of a more just social order in which tensions can be better resolved, and where conflicts find their negotiated solution more easily.

1941 Socio-economic problems can only be solved with the help of all forms of solidarity: solidarity of the poor among themselves, of the rich and the poor, of the workers among themselves, of the employers and the employees, solidarity between the nations and among societies. International solidarity is a demand for

moral order. To a large extent, the peace of the world depends on it.

1942 The virtue of solidarity goes beyond material goods. By disseminating the spiritual goods of faith, the Church has at the same time favored the development of temporary goods, which has often opened up new ways. Thus have the words of the Lord been verified over the centuries: "Seek first his Kingdom and his righteousness, and all those things shall be given unto you in addition" (Mt 6, 33):

For two thousand years lives and perseveres in the soul of the Church that feeling that has propelled and still drives souls to the charitable heroism of the farmer monks, the liberators of slaves, those who serve sick, the messengers of faith, of civilization, of science, to all the generations and to all the peoples in order to create social conditions able to make possible to all a life worthy of the man and the Christian (Pius XII, speech of 1 June 1941).

Summary

1943 Society ensures social justice by seeking the conditions that allow associations and individuals to obtain what is owed to them.

1944 The respect of the human person regards the neighbor as "another self". It implies respect for the fundamental rights that derive from the intrinsic dignity of the person.

1945 Equality between men is linked to the dignity of the person and the rights derived therefrom.

1946 The differences between people obey the plan of God who wants us to need each other. Such differences should encourage charity.

1947 The equal dignity of human persons demands the effort to reduce excessive social and economic inequalities. It drives the disappearance of wicked inequalities.

1948 Solidarity is an eminently Christian virtue. It is the exercise of communicating spiritual goods even more than communicating material goods.