Let's rethink the importance of Participation
The Principles of the Social Doctrine of the Church

Given the conditions that today’s society faces, the Catholic has in the SDC a treasure that guides and helps in its daily walk.
By: Archbishop Ramón Benito de La Rosa y Carpio | Source: www.cscv.info

The social doctrine of the Church is that teaching born of the dialogue between the Gospel and the social-economic life of societies.

This doctrine seeks to illuminate the earthly realities and in it, the pastors of the Catholic Church are supported to guide in these matters.

The social doctrine of the Church has as its center the dignity of the human person and seeks at all times to defend it and to give principles that help its growth, its development.

There are seven principles, seven criteria that are very clear and I would like to remember them today. They are the key axes of this doctrine and are the axes also to be able to help every human being to grow, develop and progress, as it should be. These seven principles are the following:

1. The principle of the common good.
2. The universal destiny of the goods.
3. The principle of subsidiarity.
4. The principle of participation.
5. The principle of solidarity.
6. The principle of values, fundamentally these four: truth, freedom, justice, love.
7. Finally, the latter, love, is the main value, because it must be the one that gives UNITY to the other values.

We see them as a whole because they enlighten us, but I would like to look back on each one of them. But let us remember that for the doctrine of the Church, the teaching of the Church, for Jesus Christ, as well as for all that is humanistic
philosophy, the main thing is the human person, his dignity; and everything else must converge to help, support, progress of every human being and all human beings.

1. The common good: The principle or criterion of the common good is a fundamental principle in what human life is and which the relationships of human beings are. For the social doctrine of the Church, the principle of the common good is the first of all principles: all the goods that exist are goods for all human beings.

The conception is clear: God created everything that exists for all human beings, not for just one person. Hence, the principle of the common good wants to look not only at an individual but at all individuals, not at a person but all people.

That is why this principle of the common good is a task that belongs to all of us, and that is why the goods that exist on earth must reach all human beings. For us, it is a criterion that must always be clear and is the criterion required in the conduct of political life; for that reason, a politician is one who must work the common good and collides with that principle when he seeks his interests, his goods or the private good; and the goods that exist in a nation, if we look at them well, are for all and that is why there is an equality in the distribution of goods.

Reflecting again and again on the common good places us and places us in a key principle in the development and progress of every human being and of all human beings.

2. The universal destiny of goods: The principle of the common good that guides the social doctrine of the Church is closely linked to the principle of the universal destiny of goods. This principle reminds us that everything that exists has a universal dimension. We talk about property rights.

The right of private property also makes sense. Private property helps people to have a minimum of space to live, so that their freedom is respected; however, when private property is exceeded and violates the universal principle of goods, then the private property must be subject to what is this universal principle of goods. Pope John Paul II repeated that: "On all private property, there is a mortgage on the goods that must reach everyone."

And that reaching everyone is to reach every human being and all human beings and we have to repeat it continuously: God created all things, not for a group, but all. In such a way, it is necessary to look for ways for a just distribution of goods and wealth, whatever they may be.

3. Subsidiarity: In the search for progress and development of every human person, of every human being, of their dignity, there is a principle that is not often taken into account and that we must also remember it frequently and return the thought and the look towards it. It is the principle of subsidiarity, a word that is not
easy to pronounce, but which is extremely important. We human beings must produce what we must produce. Each human being has a responsibility, to himself and others, as each group, as each society, but there are limitations that we have, and that is where subsidiary support is needed.

Come in support of families that cannot reach the goals they must reach, of individuals, of people, of groups, whatever they may be. Therefore, the State has the responsibility to take care of, to ensure that each of us does what we have to do, but that we can also receive support in what we cannot do. This principle of subsidiarity helps the people to progress and the groups can move forward. And this must be said not only at a national level; it must be said, also, at a universal level: we have to accompany each other, and even if this was not requested by God, nor requested by the social doctrine of the Church, the common sense and the reason ask for it. We have to support anyone who cannot give everything he wanted or could give.

4. Participation: Another clear principle in the social doctrine of the Church is the principle of participation. It is a subject that we come back to again and again. Participation, as something inherent to the human being, is part of our existence.

We want to participate and that participation makes us show a duty, the duty that all human beings have to participate in life, in development, in the progress of societies.

Therefore, a person who does not participate in the expenses of a town, with his taxes, is a person who is not fulfilling his duty. A person who does not participate in elections, for example, is a person who feels limited in what is their right to participate in the election of those who direct them. This dimension of participation shows a right, but also shows a duty. Right and duty, the right to participate and the duty to participate. Therefore, when people cannot participate as much as they can in national life, they feel limited.

Dictatorships limit participation, but participation also becomes a disorder when it is not regulated.

Let's go back again and again to the mind about participation, about our duty to participate in family life, in social life, in neighborhood life, in national life, in international life. Think of participation, as a right and a duty.

5. Solidarity: Solidarity is one of the great principles, or if you will, one of the great values that is most discussed in the world today. We have come many times on this subject and we must continually return to it. Solidarity is showing us how humanity is one and how it has to support each other. The solidarity that moves us to see ourselves as solid in one tells us that the peoples cannot exist if they are not in solidarity with each other and that humanity is also like that, and this is seen in a very clear way in the crisis and the problems. We are supportive, we must be
supportive, we want or we do not want, but we must do so consciously.

The richest countries need to be in solidarity with others and poor countries must also be aware of this. Amazon does not already belong to Brazil or the countries of the Southern Cone; it is good of all humanity because what happens there affects humanity. We are supportive, and human beings are like a bunch of bananas: either we walk together or we perish, but we have to be together. The principle, the criterion, the value of solidarity is thematic on which we must think and return again and again because not only must we expect solidarity from others, but each of us must do our bit on the road and in the construction of a solidary world.

6. Core values: The issue of values is on the table. It is a subject on which we have to return again and again, and we can ask ourselves about the many values that exist, and we can enumerate dozens of values: what are the fundamentals? which are the most important, those necessary for it to work society and that is also key for the progress of the peoples?

The four great values are these: Truth, freedom, justice, and love.

And I am going to refer now to the first three because love, which unites us to others, needs special treatment.

The truth: without the truth, no people can move forward. Jesus Christ said, and it is the motto of the Dominican people: "You will know the truth and the truth will set you free."

Truth and freedom: freedom, which we Dominicans enjoy after so many dictatorships, also turns into disorder and debauchery when we do not know how to use it. Freedom manifests itself in democracy, but we need freedom wisely used. Therefore, turning our minds and our eyes on freedom is essential, and especially in these times when we enjoy freedom, not to return to dictatorships, but also so that freedom becomes an enemy for us. And the dimension of justice: if you want peace, work for justice. If we want to keep relationships as they should be, is key and fundamental, who can deny it?

The value of justice. We know that we have many disorders when lies, libertinism, and injustice prevail. Therefore, in the social doctrine of the Church, these three values are fundamental and the key to the life of any society.

7. The way of love: We can talk about and touch on issues such as this: the common good, the universal destiny of goods, participation, solidarity, the values of truth, justice and freedom. But we have to say that the bond that unites all this is love. Without love, we cannot get to what we want: to a greater distribution of wealth, to a world where truth, justice, freedom prevail; where the goods are common, where the common good is sought.
We cannot ask politicians to worry about seeking the interests of the Dominican people and not their interests if they do not have love. We can ask for it in the name of justice, in the name of respect for others; love is necessary for all this. We can ask a judge to do justice, but if that judge does not respect the human person, if that judge does not love the human being and does not love the Dominicans, it will be unfair. The values that we need to put into practice and all are necessary, need a foundation, a guide, which is love. Therefore, the progress of society, the well-being of the people, the better distribution of wealth, everything that we desire will not be given in fact and truth, if human beings are selfish. Hence, the path of love, the way of love, is and will continue to be the path of the development of peoples, respect for people and human rights.

* Taken from "Un Momentum", short articles that Monsignor publishes daily on TV, Radio and the Press.