

## THE CHURCH AS DEFENDER OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND DIGNITY

In these times of economic uncertainty, political campaigning and overall anxiety, it is fitting to describe the timeless wisdom of the Church on matters of how the political and economic systems should support the family and the human person. The Church has historically used statements on such issues as care for the poor, the right of property, and the condemnation of usury. See, e.g., Catechism of the Council of Trent, Part III, sections 6, 9 (1566); Pope Benedict XIV, Vix Pervenit (1745); Pope Leo XII, Charitate Christi (1825); Pope Pius IX, Quarto Cura (1848). However, starting with Pope Leo XIII's 1891 encyclical letter Rerum Novarum (Of the New Things), the Church has set forth with increasing clarity an overall vision of the roles of the economy, the government and other institutions in supporting a culture and family life that in turn makes people more able to fulfill their missions and goals in life. That encyclical has been followed by other statements on the social order, such as Pope Pius XI's 1931 encyclical Quaragesimo Anno (On the Fortieth Year of Rerum Novarum), Blessed Pope John XXIII's encyclical Mater et Magister (Mother and Teacher), the Vatican II document Gaudium et Spes (The Church in the Modern World), Pope Paul VI's encyclical Populorum Progressio (On the Progress of Peoples), and Blessed Pope John Paul II's vast contributions in the encyclicals Laborem Exercens (On the Dignity of Human Labor), Sollicitudo Rei Socialis (The Anxiety of Social Affairs), and Centissimus Annus (On the Hundredth Year of Rerum Novarum.) Pope Benedict XVI's most recent encyclical Caritas in Veritate (Charity in Truth) brings this wisdom together and applies it to the twenty-first century. Parts I will describe Rerum Novarum, which has often been called the "Magna Carta" of the Church's social teachings. Parts II – IV will discuss this development of Catholic wisdom through the reign of Blessed Pope John Paul II. Part V will then describe the application of these teachings in Pope Benedict's encyclical to the opportunities and struggles the world faces in the new millennium. Having read this article, I would strongly advise the faithful and all people of good will to read the encyclicals themselves, which are easily obtainable in bookstores or online, e.g. at [vatican.va](http://vatican.va). I would also recommend Karl Anderson's 2008 book A Civilization of Love, which applies these teachings to daily life. Together, the teachings of these great Popes provides a wisdom which if understood and carried out would change the world and make it indeed a place where each person can become the son or daughter of God that divine Providence calls for him to become.

### I. Rerum Novarum and the Timeless Wisdom of Heaven in the Midst of a Changing World

Pope Leo XIII composed his landmark encyclical Rerum Novarum, which subsequent Popes and commentators have called the "Magna Carta of Catholic social thought," in the context of the Industrial Revolution. See, e.g., Blessed Pope John XXIII, Mater et

Magister (1961) 26; Carl Anderson, *A Civilization of Love* (2008) 95; George Wiegel, "*Caritas in Veritatis* in Gold and Red", National Review Online (July 7, 2009). That revolution was bringing about such new realities as large corporations and unions, the increasing importance of capital, the benefits of great wealth, innovations and opportunities, and the curses of great poverty, oppressive working conditions and class conflict. There were also many theories bandied about, from socialism to *laissez faire* capitalism and there was overall an excessive concern about material wealth and consumption, to the neglect of our spiritual destiny. In this context, Pope Leo XIII brought the focus back to what was being forgotten by the popular theories, the dignity of the human person as one called by God to pursue virtue and truth, whose goal is everlasting life. Socialists would subordinate that dignity to government; *laissez faire* capitalists would likewise subordinate peoples unrestrained markets to economic forces; and materialism in general would elevate consumption and technology above all else. Pope Leo argued that government, economics, and all other forces should support the human person and those institutions that are closest to the person, in particular the family, the churches, and other intermediate institutions.

In particular, the encyclical strongly defended the right to private property as necessary for justice and the freedom of the family, the church, and other private groups; and he thus condemned socialism. But he also argued that precisely because private property is important, all peoples, including those at the lower rungs of society, should have access to it. Thus, for example, he strongly defended the right to a just wage (i.e. a wage enough to support oneself and one's family.) He also argued that work should be in dignified conditions and limited to decent hours, lest it infringe upon each person's ability to develop a family, faith and a role society. And in general, he argued that we should not view the world in terms of class conflict, but rather that the different classes "should be united not only in the bond of friendship but also in the bond of brotherly love."

## II. From *Rerum Novarum* to the Vatican II Council, Progress in Good Times and Struggles

Forty years later, as the world was plummeting into the Great Depression, Pope Pius XI took up the theme of economic renewal again in *Quadragesimo Anno*, whose name means On the Fortieth Year of *Rerum Novarum*. He noted positively that the principles of *Rerum Novarum* had begun to be put into effect, with increasing protections of workers, the establishment of voluntary associations for mutual assistance, and the denunciation of the violence of class conflict that had marked much of earlier relations. However, he also noted that widespread economic distrust, selfishness and alienation had led to great distress. In that context, he especially called for

cooperation between the owners of capital and workers, seeing them as partners, rather than opponents. Along those lines, he encouraged employers to give employees more income and opportunity to acquire an interest in capital and to include them in decision making. On the workers' side, he called for dedicated labor and thrift so that they would be able to invest in capital. And he encouraged workers to form associations that would foster not only economic interests, but even more importantly assist moral and charitable goals. He also argued again for the need to protect workers from oppressive conditions and poverty, but said that this goal should be achieved at the most local level possible, for "it is an injustice and . . . a grave evil to transfer to a large and higher collectivity functions which can be performed and provided for by lesser and subordinate bodies." Pope Pius XII argued that society can and should achieve such goals when people recognize that wealth above what is needed for a family is owned in trust for God and should be used with His goals in mind. Overall, he warned that the ship of society would navigate between the rocky shoals of collectivism and individualism only by recognizing that all earthly goods are meant to serve faith, family and man's final goal, the cultivation of talents that he might have for "not only temporal but eternal happiness." We must "draw away men's eyes, fascinated by and wholly fixed on the changing things of the world, and raise them toward Heaven."

In the more optimistic year 1961, Blessed Pope John XXIII published Mater et Magister (Mother and Teacher), which dealt largely with the theme of development and progress. In that letter, he noted positively that innovations, education, and means of communication had led to great potential for the elimination of poverty and increased participation in social, economic and political life. However, he also noted the displacements caused by industrialization, the vast difference in wealth between nations, and the decline of personal charity. Central to all of the problems is the fact that often "Spiritual values are ignored, forgotten or denied, while the progress of science, technology and economics is pursued for its own sake, as though material well-being were the be-all and end-all of life." Pope John argued strongly that the availability of government programs should not replace personal relationships, whether in employment or charity, and that each person must be seen as an individual not a cog in a machine. He argued strongly for universal access to technology, education, and public works, and said that wealthier nations should help provide such things to poorer ones, but without suppressing each nation's uniqueness. Overall, he concluded, "Let men make all the technical and economic progress they can, there will be no peace nor justice in the world until they return to a sense of their dignity as creatures and sons of God."

Pope John then followed up this work with his 1963 encyclical Pacem in Terris (Peace on Earth), which as the name implied was a commentary on what makes for true peace, namely respect for the order of heaven, which leads to the rights of man. In that letter, Pope John XXIII said that the social and political order should look toward the order of heaven for "Peace on Earth . . . can never be established, never guaranteed, except by the diligent observance of the divinely established order." Upholding this order involves recognizing that each individual "has rights and duties, which together flow as a direct consequence from his nature." In particular, God

calls us to perfections, such as worship, the pursuit of truth, the development of families and vocations, and creative work. And human rights, such as freedom of religion, speech, and the family, and economic rights are based upon the call to develop these perfections. In an era in which people speak much of their rights, it is helpful to ask them where these rights come from. Through Pope John, the Church, the Bride of Christ, declares that these rights come from and entail a responsibility based upon human nature. Thus, such freedoms as that of religion, speech, political participation, and employment have a basis in the divine order, while other claimed rights, such as the claimed right to abortion, decadent entertainment, or excessive pleasures involve no such duty and no connection to that greater realm. To the contrary, they are enemies of real order and therefore any true peace. Overall, Pope John argued that "to safeguard the inviolable rights of the human person, and to facilitate the performance of his duties, is the principal duty of every public authority" and that authorities achieve this goal not only by laws but also by being "before all else a moral force" and appealing "to the individual conscience, to the duty which every man has of voluntarily contributing to the common good."

### III. The Vatican II Council and the True Wealth of Nations

In his short but very active pontificate, Blessed John XIII also called the historic Vatican II Council, which was continued under his successor Pope Paul VI. In its constitution Lumen Gentium, on the Church in the Modern World, the Vatican II Council summarized Catholic social teaching up to that point. That document begins with the family, which comes from God, is based upon His eternal laws, and stands as the foundation of all societies. The constitution then proceeds onto a reflection upon culture, which rightfully develops differently in every place and time, but which should always "help humanity to reach a higher understanding of truth, goodness and beauty." The idea is that science, history, technology, art, music, and the like, while they have their own dignity, should not be merely academic exercises, means of acquisition, or ways to pass time, but should lead people to the greatest things, and finally to God. Then the constitution turns to the economic structure and argues that personal property and free initiative are necessary to give "each person an indispensable zone for personal and family autonomy" and are the "one of the conditions of civil liberty." But it also argues that impersonal laws of economics should not be the final arbiter. In particular, work should improve human dignity, both in compensation and conditions of labor; and individuals and nations with excess wealth have an obligation in justice to assist others to have a dignified life. Turning to the political realm, the constitution then said that, while societies rightfully have different political structures, all political power should act "above all as a moral force based on freedom and a sense of responsibility" upholding rights that are "based on human nature" and thus finally on "the order established by God."

After the Vatican II Council, there was an increasing concern that "progress" in a material sense was not leading to a truly more humane or moral world. And so, in Populorum Progressio, Pope Paul VI noted that, especially in the modern industrial and technological world,

with so much international trade, investment, immigration, and expansion, the social question has become international, while not ceasing to be local and national. The increased technology, industrialization and mobility have created a great potential for expanding opportunities and conquering much illness, famine, and poverty. But ironically, these material advancements have also left most people of the world behind, often in great poverty and alienation, and have led to a materialist mentality on the one hand and despair or violence on the other. There is great material poverty in under-developed and developing countries, and a great "spiritual poverty" in wealthier nations, where many people are "crushed by the weight of their own self-love." In this context, the Church as "an expert of human nature" offers the solution of God, which involves resisting materialism, despair, or the "deceit of would-be saviors" who offer salvation without God. He said that wealthier nations have an obligation to the poorer ones, and to themselves, to escape from mere self-interest, and offer to other nations, not only funds, but social, political and technological assistance that they may develop their own cultures. They should not look down upon poorer nations, nor try to dominate them, but recognize that those countries have a rich cultural history that should be preserved. There should be a dialogue, not only political and economic, but religious, cultural, and transcendent, among nations, a dialogue based not upon a narrow idea of progress as merely material, but rather upon a "full-bodied humanism, will enable our contemporaries to enjoy the higher values of love and friendship, of prayer and contemplation, and thus find themselves."

To recognize the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Populorum Progressio, Pope John Paul recognized and applied its principles again in Sollicitudo Rei Socialis. He argued that, as individuals should never see other people as mere objects, but rather as sons and daughters of God, so too nations should always sense God's love for the other nations, called by Him to join at "the banquet of life." He said that the increasing interdependence among nations is in itself positive because it leads people to realize that "the good to which we are all called and the happiness to which we aspire cannot be obtained without an effort and commitment on the part of all, nobody excluded, and the consequent renouncing of personal selfishness." However, it has also led to a suppression of local cultures in favor of "the imperialism of money" and often creates a situation where there is both underdevelopment and "overdevelopment," i.e. the tendency of wealth to "make people slaves of 'possession' and of immediate gratification." In this context, there should be both interdependence and self-autonomy in and among nations, and a use of all technology and wealth at the service of recognizing "man's divine likeness and his vocation to immortality." Such recognition is real progress that advances each person's and each culture's vocation and thus promotes the true wealth of nations.

#### IV. Blessed John Paul II, the Dignity of Labor and True Meaning of Freedom

Blessed Pope John Paul II had already in 1981 published another encyclical on the rightful understanding of work, entitled Laborem Exercens (On the Dignity of Human Labor.) In that encyclical, he developed what has been called a "creation theology," and application of the creation accounts of Genesis 1 and 2 to human labor. In particular, he argued that human labor is not primarily "a sort of merchandise that the worker sells to the employer" or only something that is necessary to get by. Rather, human labor is valuable above all else because it expresses human creativity and in fact a participation in divine creativity. He said that "the word of God's Revelation is profoundly marked by the fundamental truth that man, created in the image of God, shares by his work in the activity of the Creator." There is in fact a "spirituality of work," through which our labor can draw us closer to God. This spirituality stands in dramatic contrast both to socialism and to "strict capitalism," which are both based upon materialistic assumptions that fail to recognize the spiritual element in work. Blessed John Paul II of course recognized that many things in the labor environment are not conducive to such a spirituality of work and said that solving the problems of oppressive labor and elevating the value of work is "a key, probably the essential key to the whole social question." Thus, he recommends joining more closely the interests of employers and employees by, for example, promoting management responsibilities and even shareholding among employees. He defends the rights of employees, such as the right just wages, decent working conditions, and pensions. But he places the responsibility of creating just working conditions, not only on the direct employer, but on society at large. Thus, by such means as courtesy to laborers, charitable works, and an awareness of the conditions of workers, customers, neighbors, and society should also be involved in promoting the sort of work that leads to the ennobling of each person.

Ten years later, the situation had changed with the fall of the Soviet Empire and subsequent discrediting of Communism. In that era of the early 1990s, Blessed John Paul II published Centissimus Annus, whose title means On the Hundredth Year, i.e. the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Rerum Novarum. In that encyclical, he applied the principles of Pope Leo XIII's encyclical to that time, with its great hopes for freedom, and the apparent triumph of democracy and capitalism. In that context, he called for the world to focus its attention on what true freedom is and what role the government and the economy should play in defending and promoting rightful liberty. And in particular he raised the question of why freedom is important, and gave the answer that freedom is crucial to the human person because it allows him to seek the truth and make of his life a free gift of love. Without this pursuit of the truth and ability to give in love, freedom loses its meaning and becomes nothing but a pursuit of desires that are in turn dictated by biology, social fads, advertisements, and the like, and in the end die with time. As he argued, "A person who is concerned solely or primarily with possessing and enjoying, who is no longer able to control his instincts and passions or subordinate them by obedience to the truth, cannot be free: obedience to the truth about God and man is the first condition of freedom." In a situation where desire is dominant, man "is exposed to the violence of passion and to manipulation" by such things as social trends, entertainment, and popular opinion. The Pope argued that this call to a free pursuit

of truth and commitment in love needs a social frame work, "beginning with the family and including economic, social, political, and cultural groups which stem from human nature itself." And bringing out this ability of each person to make a free choice toward truth and love should be the final goal of every culture, supported but not dominated by an economic and political system.

In this context, the Pope said that "the Church values the democratic system" insofar as it: (1) allows wide participation in political choices; (2) gives the governed the ability to direct and hold responsible those in authority; and (3) provides for a peaceful transfer of power. However, he also reminded the world that, without clear moral values and a "correct conception of the human person" as one called to truth and love, democracy will disintegrate into a mere pursuit of pleasure and possessions and make such things as freedom, faith and family subject to material gains or popular fads. He argued, "As history demonstrates, democracy without values easily turns into open or thinly disguised totalitarianism," a poignant remark by one whose home country was overrun by the forces of Adolf Hitler, the democratically elected leader of Germany.

With reference to capitalism, the Pope drew a careful distinction. To the degree that capitalism means "recognizing the fundamental and positive role of business, the market, private property, and the resulting responsibility, for the means of production, as well as free human creativity in the economic section" it is good. However, he condemned the idea of capitalism that means "a system in which freedom in the economic section is not circumscribed within a strong judicial framework which places it at the service of freedom in its totality, and which sees it as a particular aspect of that freedom, the core of which is ethical and religious." Overall, he argued that neither the government, the market, nor material desires should dominate, but that all of them should support each nation's unique culture, which in turn should enable (although it cannot force) each family and each individual to live in truth and love, which is our final calling.

## V. Pope Benedict XVI and Charity in Truth

By 2009, the economic structure of the world seemed again to be in chaos as the debt and banking crises plunged the world into the deepest recession since the Great Depression. In that context, Pope Benedict XVI published his encyclical Caritas in Veritate (Charity in Truth), in which he tried brought together the Church's social teachings and applied them to the great issues of the modern world. This section will describe that encyclical's overall wisdom and its application to the notion of human progress, economic structures, and technology.

### A. The Overall Premise: The Importance of Love and Truth

The premise of the encyclical, and of the Church's entire social teaching, is that any good vision of society, the marketplace, and the public realm should recognize that the desire for love and truth is at the core of the human person. Near the beginning of the encyclical, the Holy Father states, as the Bible does, that "everything has its origin in God's love, everything is shaped by it, [and] everything is directed towards it. Love is God's greatest gift to humanity; it is His promise and our hope." However, he also notes that people often try to divorce this love from truth. And it thus easily degenerates into a mere sentiment and subjective desires that do not unite people, but rather encourage each person to pursue, not what God loves, but rather emotional, superficial or even sinful desires, with people often calling mere desire love. When love becomes this mere sentiment, it is "emptied of meaning, with the consequent risk of being misinterpreted, detached from ethical living" and, "easily dismissed as irrelevant for interpreting and giving direction to moral responsibility" in the world. There is also a tendency is to think that this love is a mere feeling, fine for the family and friendships, but not really fit for the supposed harshness of the marketplace, the impersonal fields of technology and globalization or the pragmatism of politics. Pope Benedict points out that, far from being irrelevant to these fields, true charity, which promotes the truth of each person's call to be God's glorious son or daughter, gives all other realms their final meaning. This charity, which presupposes and fulfills justice, is in turn both based upon faith and reason. Reason itself, including an objective view of the failure of materialist utopias to this very day, points to the need for the transcendent. And faith comes from above to give us that access to the God who answers these deepest longings, the longings for truth and love fulfilled finally in Jesus Christ. Until people in all fields, including economic, scientific, and political, recognize this need for charity and truth, for faith and reason, to guide them, all proposed solutions will deal at most with the surface level. In order there to be true human development, we must recognize in all fields the call to love and be loved by God and neighbor, the call for charity in truth.

## B. True Human Progress

The Pope then applied this insight to the notion of human progress. In the modern world about, we speak much of "progress" and refer to developed, developing and undeveloped nations. But rarely do people ask fundamental questions such what is progress and what is development. As Pope Benedict points out, in order to have any coherent notion of true development, one must understand what the human person is and what leads to his fulfillment and glory. People rarely consider such questions in the modern world, instead preferring to focus only on more "practical" issues. But nothing could be less practical than pursuing a goal without thinking about what that goal is, or why it is worth pursuing. Pope Benedict calls us back to these fundamental questions that we may have accomplish

"integral human development." Without this integral idea of the whole person, people focus only on lesser things such as short term material desires, the accumulation wealth, and use of technology, and leave unsatisfied the deepest longings of the human heart.

Central to any true development is the understanding that man is called to the transcendent and to eternal life. Quoting Pope Paul VI's encyclical Progressio Populorum from 42 years earlier, Pope Benedict states again, "Without the perspective of eternal life, human progress in the world is denied breathing space. . . . It runs the risk of being reduced to the mere accumulation of wealth; humanity then loses the courage to be at the service of highest goods, at the service of the great and disinterested initiatives called forth by universal charity." This calling to eternal life, to charity, and to the divine is comprehensible to all peoples, although, as the Pope points out, it is revealed in fullness by Christ, who shows us the Father's love and our own nature in perfection. Because it is understandable by all (although ignored by many), such a "transcendent humanism" that measures development by how much each nation and each person is open to the divine, does not involve the imposition of faith upon anyone. Rather, it calls for "a climate of responsible freedom." It is the failure to recognize this divine calling, the reduction of progress to the mere advancement of technology or wealth, which constitutes an artificial ideology that modern society imposes upon people.

The encyclical addresses the causes of underdevelopment and calls for a confident and faithful response. In poorer countries, the main causes are more obvious, such tyranny, terrorism, civil strife, and the lack of employment, infrastructures, and free and stable societies. But in so-called "developed" nations, the threat is more subtle and thus easier to hide. There is, for example, a "super-development of a wasteful and consumerist kind" that causes a "moral underdevelopment" and a "practical atheism" that "deprives its citizens of the moral and spiritual strength that is indispensable for attaining integral human development." Closely related to this practical atheism is a failure to welcome and respect new life, a failure of generosity, and a culture of death, which wealthy nations often call progress and attempt to impose on their own citizens and upon other, so-called less developed nations. In response to these threats, Pope Benedict calls for a renewed culture of trust in God and in each other and a new fraternity within and among nations that "will contribute to the building up of the universal city of God, which is the goal of history and of the human family."

### C. The Role of the Economic and Political Realms

The encyclical argues that charity and the recognition each person's call to immortal glory, should be the overriding "principle not only of micro-relationships (with friends, with family members or within small groups) but also of macro-relationships (social, economic and political ones)." The encyclical says the market is in itself a good, for it is "permits encounter between persons, inasmuch as they are economic subjects who make use of contracts to regulate their relations as they exchange goods and services of equivalent value

between them in order to satisfy their needs and desires." Likewise, the profit motive is not evil, but "useful if it serves as a means towards an end that provides a sense both of how to produce it and how to make good use of it." However, "once profit becomes the exclusive goal, if it is produced by improper means and without the common good as its ultimate end, it risks destroying wealth and creating poverty." The Holy Father thus calls for people to recognize that charity and a sense of the common good belongs to the market as much as anywhere else. Thus, for example, he calls for more cooperation between managers, consumers, investors, and employees. The encyclical criticizes the fact that business managers often run companies solely for short term profit, ignoring the interests of employees, consumers, or the economy at large. On the other hand, he also states that both buying and investing are moral acts and that such decisions should be guided not only by self-interests, but by the effect of one's actions on employees and the public interest. The Pope also says that employees should be encouraged to be creative and participate in management and should see their labor as a participation in God's creative goodness. Overall, in the market there should be a climate, not of anonymity but "of solidarity and mutual trust" that makes the economy both more efficient and more human.

Regarding the political realm, the Pope brings back the classical idea of a polis, a city in which each person can "take a stand for the common good." He reemphasizes the twin principles of solidarity and subsidiarity. Solidarity is the concern of people for each other, the nation, and the world, while subsidiarity is the recognition that decisions should be made at the most local level possible consistent with order and justice. These principles allow for a more personal and participatory government, and one that is not either isolationist or paternalistic, but rather fosters "emancipation . . . freedom and participation through assumption of responsibility." In an era in which people speak much about rights, the Pope affirms that the fundamental rights, such as that of religion, free speech, and the family, but reminds people that every right is based upon our duty to carry out our vocations and live in love and truth. Without so grounding rights in transcendent and permanent responsibilities, they become mere licentiousness and are subject to popular fashions or arbitrary government. Here, as elsewhere, the Pope calls for a morality that recognizes above all man's creation "in the image of God" and "the inviolable dignity of the human person."

#### D. The Role of Globalization and Technology

The encyclical states that ours is "the global era," marked by the "explosion of worldwide interdependence, commonly known as globalization." This interdependence creates great opportunities for societies to benefit from each other's gifts, for poorer nations to rise through trade and technology, and for wealthier nations to learn from the simple generosity and ancient wisdom of more traditional

societies. But modern times have also seen a "new colonialism" that occurs when wealthier nations subsume and destroy the cultures of poorer ones through "cultural leveling" or by making them dependent on assistance. The encyclical favors free trade and the exchange of technology, especially as a means for poorer nations to improve their production and bring it to the world stage. But it criticizes the tendency to water down protections for workers or consumers to gain a short-term influx of business. Rather each country should remember that "the primary capital to be safeguarded is man, the human person and his or her integrity." The letter also favors more assistance for poorer countries, not to make them more like richer countries, but rather to help them develop their own industries and abilities. Such assistance should be both transparent and involve the full participation of people at all levels, large and small, governmental cultural, economic, and religious. Likewise, the encyclical says that tourism and migration can rightfully lead to a great exchange of ideas and increased employment, but also sadly to for the sake of cheap, anonymous hedonism and the exploitation of workers. To bring out the potential good of globalization, while safeguarding against the dangers, the encyclical says, here as elsewhere, that there should be charity at all levels, from a strong international governing body to each individual person, a charity based upon the truth that each person has an infinite value based upon the truth of God's vision for us.

Regarding technology, the encyclical describes it as legitimately a part of our stewardship over nature. But an ideology that considers progress as synonymous with technological advances, which does not govern technology by moral thinking based upon human dignity, blinds people to the spiritual realm and thus to reduces real human happiness and freedom. Technology is a means, not an end, and we need faith and careful philosophical reasoning to understand the virtuous love that is our final end, types of thought often lacking in today's world. The encyclical notes, for example, the inconsistency in (rightfully) caring about the natural order of the environment around us, and yet violating the natural order of humanity with such things as unnatural means of contraception, unnatural in vitro fertilizations and unnatural marriages, which ignore the "grammar of human nature." Likewise, the encyclical notes that, when nations allow technology to violate human nature with such things as abortion, research on embryos and sterilization, it is hardly to be wondered that governments will likewise ignore human rights.

## E. Conclusion

Overall, the encyclical emphasizes over and over again that modern culture, with its growth in globalization and technology, and the rapidly

changing economic and political scene, can lead to a more humane world, but only if we who use such powers live in accordance with the truth about God and man, the truth that sets us free.