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Research Paper

THE SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC SPHERE OF SOCIETY: PART 5

Maria Imelda Pastrana Nabor, Ph.D¹

¹Associate Professor 3, Department of Language, Culture, Humanities and Information Technology, Aklan State University, Banga, Aklan, Philippines

ABSTRACT

This study explores the anatomy of superstructures in society and the present state of the Church in the Philippines. The Philippine Bishops recommended “inculturation”. Pope John Paul II describes inculturation as “the intimate transformation of authentic cultural values through their integration in Christianity and the insertion of Christianity in the various human cultures.” In the process of inculturation the church and the culture of a people interact. The church introduces the Gospel into the life of the people. It requires evangelizers to immerse themselves in the cultural milieu of those to whom they are sent. It requires evangelizers to understand, appreciate, foster, and evangelize the culture of the people while equipping themselves to communicate effectively with it [Cf. PCP 11]. This study also explores the Dimensions of Social Justice and The Situations of Injustice: Poverty, Powerlessness and Underdevelopment

KEYWORDS: *inculturation, justice, poverty, powerlessness, underdevelopment*

INTRODUCTION

My question is: In our Post-modern existence, How does the Church using the Papal Encyclical’s vision give witness to the kingdom?

The Central Hypothesis: A major implication of what I propose here is that the most indispensable compulsion people face is predicated on the assumption that economic relations can be developed only if the industrialized countries share the fruits of the international capitalist system more equitably. Proposition 1: Underdevelopment was caused by a lack of capital. Therefore, it is necessary to contribute to economic growth by an infusion of capital and adopting an integral social, political and cultural transformation to boost technological advancement and prosperity. Proposition 2: The cause of massive poverty is the unsatisfactory distribution of the world’s riches. Industrialized countries forged internal political alliances through repressive measures and dominated the

economies of developing countries. Proposition 3: The pivotal role of women was ignored in the process of designing policies, plan, strategies and development. Proposition 4: Reforms in international relations and collective action must be developed and be predicated on the fundamental option for the poor. Thus, the demands of solidarity, pluralism, human development, social, institutional, cultural, political, modern technology, and economic self-sufficiency as well as equitable redistribution of wealth and power, and willing sacrifice among nations can be attained. The justice of international networks can bring us proper balance. Proposition 5: The explosion of solidarity, justice, and charity in the Church represents a profound spiritual transformation a new experience of God, a renewal and growth of fidelity to the Gospel. The Church must remain a model of collaboration and participation.



SOCIAL ANALYSIS: THE ANATOMY OF THE SUPER STRUCTURES OF SOCIETY

Social Analysis is the scientific observation of the economic, social, political, cultural, and religious circumstances of any given context [Gorospe, 9]

Value or Use of Social Analysis [Gorospe, 9-11]

1. It offers an aspect of an overall direction to events.
2. It inspires a reinforced assessment to assume the role of becoming agents of social transition.
3. It offers direction in unfolding a vision for society or community, geared towards ultimate components for a society.
4. It challenges one's competence to explore and asks pertinent questions about human experience.

Limitations of Social Analysis [Ibid., 10-11]

1. It does not offer an immediate answer or reaction to the question posed. It does not impel us to critically think on a specific response we ought to do. It entails that it is not a blueprint for action.
2. It does not offer the necessary resolve, prescriptions, and cure.
3. It is not purely an academic or esoteric exercise. It is simply a direction to action for the sake of justice.
4. It is not value free. There are judgments established in a form of social assessment one does.
5. The assessment on social and cultural structure falls short. It is a radical composition envisioning the economic structure as the base of the political and social structures.
6. Social realities cannot be something being desired as if it is not attainable. The material and temporal sphere of social realities can neither be over-spiritualize nor absolutize.
7. Social realities focused on the necessity of mediation on its reflection and critical thinking.

PRESENT STATE OF THE CHURCH IN THE PHILIPPINES

A. Evangelization [PCP 11, 10-17, 154-400]

The faith was inculcated profoundly to us in an era, which glorified the fusion of cross and sword. Faith established us as one people and one nation despite diverging geography, cultural traditions, languages, and

ethnic origins. We enrich and enhance the outward symbols of our faith.

At the turn of this century, we repudiated the sword and valued the cross. We embraced the faith not only qualitatively but also quantitatively. This is evident in our external rites and celebrations especially many feasts that reinforced those traditions.

Today, majority of the people centered their faith on the practice of the rites of popular piety. The unchurched lack knowledge and formation in the faith. What authentic religious messages, values, and deep of faith they hold constitute a solid ground regarding transition and renewal. The church encourages more vocations to be of service to the church. An intensifying involvement of the laity revitalize the life and practices of popular piety with an amplified use of scripture, liturgical worship, the formation of faith community, and participation in social contentions.

B. Socio-Cultural Context [Gorospe, 27-28; PCP 11, 18-22]

The Philippine society is largely divided into social classes: upper, middle, and lower. The basic masses comprise 90% of the population. The people practices pluralism. Our pluralist society indicates the diversity of our cultural heritage. Three centuries of Spanish colonial rule influenced the cultural heritage of the people. The Muslims were influenced by Islamic traditions, while the rest of the country retained their pre-Spanish features. Despite diverging social-ethnic groups, there is a common structuring of social engagements grounded on the family. Philippine society has some sound values such as sensitivity to personal needs, strong regard for the family such as loyalty, security, heightening authority and respect for elders, etc., and resiliency in the days of hardship. Simultaneously, the Philippine society is heavily influenced by colonial mentality, excessive Personalism and family centeredness, patriarchy, pre-scientific world view, and escapism. To this day, most Filipinos still measure their worth in conformity to the internalized standards of foreigners, including the most superficial and senseless fads. All of these are supportive of the sociological fact. Hence, there is a common culture and social structure that we can genuinely call Filipino.

An escalating concern for extensive transition in social structures was inadequate without transition in cultural values. It is necessary to assess the values from our Christian faith can intensify the good in our cultural values.

A dysfunctional patriarchal liberal democratic framework dominated by “traditional politicians” governs Philippine society. The so-called liberty and equality of liberal democracy ends up producing wanton privilege for the wealthy few and constraints and disadvantages for the poor majority. It is content with equal formal rights but does not stressed equal social power. All this is worsened by the lack of authentic politics and the preponderance of “traditional politicians.” On top of this, bureaucrat capitalists and landlords exercise undue influence on the government while crafting and implementation of public policy.

The area of economics and politics mirror our socio-cultural conditioning. Its negative aspect leads to inequalities. On the economic pole: poverty is evident in contrast to the luxuries of a few families. On the political pole: power and restraint are also elitist establishing political dynasties. A few decades ago concerned citizens and non-government organizations endeavored for the common good on areas such as ecology, health, livelihood projects, national sovereignty, non-traditional politics, gender equality, protection / rights of children and the disabled, peace and conflict resolution, gun control, human rights, etc. It is empowering the powerless to act for the good of all. Obviously, it is solidarity and love of preference for the poor. Affirmatively, the culture of people is a mode of being human, a mode of living their common meanings and values. It evolves on the mode a people affirms or repudiates a religious engagement with God. Culture is basically historical and a social reality. It unceasingly forms and renews the ongoing life and historical experiences of the people. It demands freedom for its flourishing and is subordinated to the perfection of the human person and the common good of the entire society.

In *Gaudium et Spes*, the advancement of culture will make the conditions of life more favorable for all. Culture is defined as human effort to bring the world itself under his control by his knowledge and his labor. Culture is what humans create and culture in turn creates humans. Culture and the church exist in reciprocal relationship, mutually requiring the other. It is crucial that all should participate in public affairs, education, and other activities of culture. Cultural pluralism and the historical-social boundedness of culture and the church’s role within culture are affirmed. In order to understand God’s activity in the world, the church must understand its own “specific historical environment.” The council Fathers urge development of expertise in

the human sciences as part of Christian obligation. A historical-critical approach to religious self-understanding is implied as well as an opening for the later development of theologies of inculturation.

For faith to mature, it must be interiorized. Church teachings and practices must be appropriated by us with our own particular cultures, and ways of thinking and valuing. Faith must take root in the matrix of our Filipino being. Hence, faith is transmitted and expressed through our people’s culture or cultures.

Pope John Paul II describes inculturation as “the intimate transformation of authentic cultural values through their integration in Christianity and the insertion of Christianity in the various human cultures.” In the process of inculturation the church and the culture of a people interact. The church introduces the Gospel into the life of the people. It requires evangelizers to immerse themselves in the cultural milieu of those to whom they are sent. It requires evangelizers to understand, appreciate, foster, and evangelize the culture of the people while equipping themselves to communicate effectively with it [Cf. PCP 11].

Inculturation means inserting the gospel into a culture and expressing it through the elements of that culture. In the process, the gospel will affect and upset that culture’s criteria of judgment, determining values, points of interest, lines of thought, sources of inspiration and models of life, which are in contrast with the word of God and the plan of salvation. The Gospel will bring about a beneficial transformation of cultural values [Cf. PCP 11]. Inculturation is necessary for the sake of the church itself. It enriches the Church. Unless the church participates in this process of inculturation it will not be able to respectfully draw the good elements within the culture, renew them from within and assimilate them to form part of its catholic unity. The catholicity of the church is more fully realized when it is able to assimilate and use the riches of a people’s culture for the glory of God [Ibid.].

For Pope John Paul II: ..Inculturation must involve the whole people of God, and not just a few experts, since the people reflect the authentic “sensus fidei” which must never be lost sight of. Inculturation needs to be guided and encouraged, but not forced, lest it give rise to negative reactions among Christians. It must be an expression of community’s life, one that must mature within the community itself, and not be exclusively the result of erudite research. The safeguarding of traditional values is the work of a mature faith [Ibid.].

When the people believed in the good news, the gospel becomes incarnate among the people and assumes their culture. Gospel and culture are not synonymous but there exists a harmonious relationship between them. The identity of a given culture is not being a Christian. It is life shared by Christ to the believers. When the word of God takes root in the culture of the people, it corrects what is sinful in the culture purifies the wrong values and foster authentic values present in the culture [Ibid.].

“In order to be able to offer all men the mystery of salvation and the life brought by God, the Church must become part of all these groups for the same motive which led Christ to bind Himself, in virtue of His Incarnation, to the definite social and cultural conditions of those human being among whom he dwelt

[*Ad Gentes* 10].

The basic analogy used at Vatican II is that of the Incarnation.

“In his self-revelation to his people culminating in the fullness of manifestation in his incarnate son, God spoke according to the culture proper to each age. The church has existed through the centuries in varying circumstances and has utilized the services of different cultures in its preaching to spread and explain the message of Christ, to examine and understand it more deeply, and to express it more perfectly in the liturgy and in various aspects of the life of the faithful [GS58,AG1].”

The word inculturation is first used to mean the church’s mission is that of incarnation. The use of the word is the consequence of two basic characteristics of the Vatican council:

1. Its emphasis on the church’s mission to the world.
2. The role and importance of culture.

This concern with culture led to a more specific understanding of the church’s mission. For the first time, the church has been led to envisage social and cultural life as a whole, as the central meeting point of all its problems – economic, political, domestic, philosophical, religious. The church claims for itself a culturally redemptive presence in the world. “The good news of Christ continually renews the life and culture of fallen man” [GS58].

Paul VI in *Evangelii Nuntiandi* affirms that culture must be the chief concern of the church’s missionary activity, for ‘what matters is to evangelize man/woman’s culture and cultures’ [EN20]. When used to describe

the church’s mission, the word “inculturation” has meant basically the continuation of the mystery of the incarnation. Viewed from the perspective of the social sciences, the term “inculturation” is tied to the concept of culture.

Culture is the result of man and woman’s ability to communicate and construe reality. It pertains to the development of man and woman perceived as social beings. Etymologically, the word comes from the Latin “colere”, which means, “to till the fields,” and analogically and by extension man and woman’s mind and mental faculties.

Individuals and societies are deeply affected by culture. The social and anthropological sciences described the interaction of individuals and societies with culture. In cultural anthropology, the word “enculturation” describes the process through which one is integrated and achieves competence in one’s own culture. Here the emphasis is on adaptation, nurturing and growth.

The process whereby an individual is integrated into a particular society and achieves competence in its culture can also be called socialization. Socialization provides for the internalization of the meaning of a culture and the process of self-interpretation. Socialization involves the process of being inserted into a social cultural environment, which in fact produces one’s self-identity. That process of insertion demands the internalization of a culture’s self-understanding, self-image, and valuing. The word “acculturation” is used to describe the process wherein two cultures come into contact and the necessary changes and transformation that ensue.

The word “inculturation” can mean both socialization and acculturation. It connotes the process of integration and of encounter, of being transformed and of transforming. When used in church documents the term combines the meaning of “enculturation” and “acculturation”. It implies that the church as an embodied reality must, in its mission of evangelization, insert itself in various cultures. In that process the church will transform a culture but it will also be transformed [Cf. AG22].

A true process of inculturation demands an ongoing and living exchange between the church, which is also a specific culture, and other cultures. Authentic inculturation demands on the part of the church a willingness to dialogue withal cultures. Dialogue means concern, respect, and hospitality toward the other; acceptance of the other’s identity, modes of expression,

and values. True dialogue does not invade; it does not manipulate, for there can be no such thing as dialogical manipulation. Dialogue achieves a communion of horizons, which leads to self-disclosure and self-understanding. The task of the church in the coming decades is to be faithful to its mission of preaching the Christ event in such a way as to transform and penetrate the various existing cultures but to do so in such a manner as to be open itself to transformation.

C. Economic and Political Context [Gorospe, 26; Ibid., 23-27]

The basic economic structure of Philippine society is a combination of both a patriarchal and the neo-liberal capitalist system with remaining areas of feudalism. Patriarchy is a system of social organization grounded on husband-father dominance where superiority is attributed to whatever is perceived as masculine and inferiority to whatever is perceived as feminine. Neo-liberal capitalism advocates for free enterprise unregulated by government where market forces determine the common good, i.e., consumers getting the best products at the cheapest prices and producers gaining more profits. The Philippine economy is heavily dependent on the highly developed capitalist economies of the industrialized countries and so it is backward, “disarticulated”, and unevenly developed. Backwardness means mass poverty due to lack of access to capital and state-of-the-art technology as a consequence of low productivity. Disarticulation means not being able to carry out with one’s own resources all the steps in the production from raw materials to finished product. Uneven development means that only a few benefit while the large majority suffer from economic flourishing. This is even more evident in the rural in contrast to the urban sector. In brief, the Philippine economy is always in crisis or on the verge of crisis.

A dysfunctional patriarchal liberal democratic framework dominated by “traditional politicians” governs Philippine society. The so-called liberty and equality of liberal democracy ends up producing wanton privilege for the wealthy few and constraints and disadvantages for the poor majority. It is content with equal formal rights but does not stress equal social power. All this is worsened by the lack of authentic politics and the preponderance of “traditional politicians.” On top of this, bureaucrat capitalists and landlords exercise undue influence on the government while crafting and implementation of public policy.

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Statistics presents that 80% of the country’s riches are owned by 20% of the population and the remaining 80% constitute the poor. The poor gets poorer and the rich, richer. The nature of the dynamics of our economy constitutes an increased account specialization of the economic functions, monetization of transactions, and homogenization of goods and services. In specialization, a number of economic activities are done by the diverging sectors of the economy separately. A specific manufacturing firm would focus on garments and another on food processing, and so on. A group of producers diverged from others and consumer groups as well. There are cases wherein the producers are also the consumers.

Concerning monetization, in the dynamics of economy, money is considered as the sole medium of exchange of goods and services. In an amplified way, money becomes the ultimate measure in the entire economic cycle such as in production, distribution and consumption of goods and services.

In the modern economic system, labor is considered as one among commodities in the market and is subjected to monetization. Salary is not viewed as remuneration for the endeavor done by the creative subject or worker but gradually becomes as a price per unit of work done totally unmindful of the necessities of the person performing it. This is known as commodification of labor.

The modern economic system also adhered to the so-called homogenization wherein goods and services tend to constitute similarity in price, quantity, and quality in the entire economic system as the account of specialization and monetization of transactions gradually increased. It follows that homogenization constitute the creative power of consisting uniform

pattern of consumption. The goods dictate the tastes and behaviors of consumers.

In the structural assessment, any economic system can be determined by exploring the numerous functions of its parts or structure. Economic activities revolve around the production, distribution and consumption of goods and services. Production involves capital (in the form of money, machines and technology), labor, and natural resources.

In assessing the capitalist economy, the sole intention concerning production activities is surplus value or profit. The capitalist, the owners of the infrastructures of production, considered the satisfaction of human needs and wants as merely a precondition of gaining profits. On the sphere of distribution, the big capitalist dominate the wholesalers. In this framework, the economic elite constitutes boundless powers over production, distribution and pricing of goods and services. It entails that the economic discretion process is totally in the hands of the capitalists.

Capitalism is a form of economic organization that is based on philosophical principle of liberty and implemented by preconditions such as individuals may freely acquire or use private property; money or some other generally recognized medium is utilized for exchange; voluntary concurring may be entered to exchange labor, property, and money. These agreements are enforceable at law. Coercive agreements are unlawful; and finally, competition is the dominant industrial structure.

The liberty principle demands that individuals be free to pursue their self-interest without control in such a way that they do not limit the freedom of others to do the same. Self-interest consists of the whole spectrum of religious, aesthetic, social, economic, and personal intentions that individuals set for themselves. Competition is the structure of economic exchange and activity that exists when there are no legal limitations placed upon relative prices, the generation and flow of information, or the mobility of labor and property, and, when no single economic entity is huge, relative to the size of its industry, to restrict the prices of goods or resources. Individuals and organizations are forbidden by law to restrain prices by concurring.

Labor is a significant factor in the production. But it has been considered as a commodity disengaged from the person performing it. Laborers or workers have no power to dictate the price of labor insofar as their work is subject to the law of supply and demand. The

capitalists in this sort of framework restrain everything even labor power. Labor is the only commodity that establishes value. Labor assesses the use value of every generated product because it is the only input in the production sphere that constitutes the competence to generate known as creative input.

Use value is a value adjunct to a specific raw material transformed by work that assessed its usefulness. The usefulness of a pen as a tool for writing, for instance, is its use value. The use value of a commodity is analyzed by the amount of creative endeavor involved in the production process. Work assessed the use value of a commodity. Surplus value or profit is impossible if labor is paid for its true worth. Use value is different from market value (price). The latter is subject to speculation, the law of supply and demand and other market variables. Market price cannot be used as a ground for analyzing the use value of a commodity. Only labor analyzes use value. When laborers are paid unjustly, then it is a crime.

It is commendable that the proper goal to pursue is not economic advancement, but vitality in local communities and environments. This means qualitatively “good work” and not merely jobs. In this line of reasoning, power indicates that the goal must be the availability of useful and satisfying work for members of a community, secure access to biological and social necessities, stability in the community, access to the qualities that make life varied, stimulating, and satisfying, and a thriving, vital community. These economic goods cannot be attained solely by commercial markets for it is qualitative goods.

Politics is deduced from the word *polis* meaning city, town or a population center. Politics is a web of relationships in a given city or community. It alludes to as the big *P* or politics in the generic plane. In the communitarian plane, power must be grounded on service. In our society, however, power relationship is politics. This sort of engagement is about who holds power over whom and over what resources (natural or monetary). Power over resources breeds power over people and vice versa. Partisan politics is very popular among the political leaders. Leadership in this aspect is visualized merely as power to restrain the economy and the political machinery rather than motivated by service to the community.

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equality of liberal democracy ends up producing wanton privilege for the wealthy few and constraints and disadvantages for the poor majority. It is content with equal formal rights but does not stressed equal social power. All this is worsened by the lack of authentic politics and the preponderance of “traditional politicians.” On top of this, bureaucrat capitalists and landlords exercise undue influence on the government while crafting and implementation of public policy. The area of economics and politics mirror our socio-cultural conditioning. Its apophatic aspect leads to inequalities. On the economic pole: poverty is evident in contrast to the luxuries of a few families. On the political pole: power and restraint are also elitist establishing political dynasties. A few decades ago concerned citizens and non-government organizations endeavored for the common good on areas such as ecology, health, livelihood projects, national sovereignty, non-traditional politics, gender equality, protection / rights of children and the disabled, peace and conflict resolution, gun control, human rights, etc. It is empowering the powerless to act for the good of all. Obviously, it is solidarity and love of preference for the poor.

Political institutions are alluded to as the government. The system of governance has three basic three branches such as the executive branch, the legislative branch and the judiciary branch. Elected officials, except those in the judiciary, are running the entire system. The acquisition of political power is through elections. In our electoral history, widespread news proliferated saying that the electorate have been bribed, threatened, and fooled and misled to vote for the influential and powerful candidates having what they called “the election machinery.” Our political history indicates that those who ran for government offices basically stems from two elite classes: the landed gentry and the business or industrial elites. Landlords owning extensive haciendas yield power in the country sides and the business elite retrains the workers and wage earners in the urban and industrial zones. Powerful candidates depends on their influence, their private armies, and their gold to amassed the votes of the poor and the innocent people. Business mogul uses his money and the media to win in the electoral race. In this framework, an ordinary wage earner will never run for office for it is simply inconceivable. They neither have money nor influence.

Political candidates also relied on political power brokers. They hold political office and extracts a

great deal of resources. They restrained the votes of thousands of people comprising area leaders who would ensure votes. Business power brokers is not capable of giving solid votes. They offer money and other resources for the electoral campaign. Funds are deduced from many sources such as the tycoons, financiers, cronies, big businessmen, low corporate contributions, and so forth.

Recently, elite groups such as high-ranking military officials and popular personalities in the entertainment industry joined the political scene through traditional politics, popularity and media exposure. In the partisan political aspect, election is a competition for business and not for public service. If election is a money making venture, political violence is a logical outcome in the scramble for power and riches.

In the affirmative perspective, the social nature of man must form political communities to accomplish as a group what individuals alone cannot accomplish such as securing the justice and freedom of the poor and the oppressed. Public authority must collaborate with the church to advance the needed reforms and its quest for effective resolves to contentions and problems befogging the people. The goal and function of the civil community must be in concurrence to engagement to the work and plan of God. People must live under a form of political organization known as theocracy (God ruling). The basic features of the political society are as follows: first, to pursue eternal happiness, God allowed the society to fulfill its goal to heighten the temporal welfare of man. The means to this goal is authority because God is the source of all authority and the state shares in such authority (Cf. Rom 13:1). The civil society exists for the attainment of the common good such as safeguarding the rights of the citizens and fostering their rights to fulfill their duties in every sector of social life. Civil authority must foster both the material and the spiritual welfare of the people. Members of such political community must share in the common good in conformity to their tasks, merit and conditions. Members must commit a special share of accountability for the realization of the goals and values the community is committed. At the heart of the community is altruism. It also entails the respect on the ethnic features of a number of groups.

The state may make laws for the common good, enforced these laws justly, the assistance of the people in defense of the country, and the recipient of the faithfulness, obedience and assistance of its people. If

the laws legislated are against the will of God, the laws are not binding in conscience and cannot enforce moral accountabilities.

D. Religious Context [Ibid., 28-33]

The socio-analytic encounter with reality evokes in the religious a reading: poverty is the fruit of a situation of social sin; an oppressive dependency is not neutral, but is an outcome of exacerbated selfishness. What does it mean to bear witness to God and to Christ, to his grace and love, in a world of hunger, marginalization and the violation of the basic rights of the human person?

How faith must be practiced? As religious, inadequacy of our attestation to the message of the consecrated life affects us. As laity, we are conscious on the transitions and its demands. Despite our failures, we are blessed with abounding heritage and recipient of faith. We even opted for the late vocation that could be of service to the Church. The purpose is renewal aiming to unite all in Christ, all dichotomies and divisions that impeded us from living the Gospel.

Religious life carries within itself a number of priceless values. This is participation in society that comes from the religious life and identity as a concrete answer to the challenges that stems from a suffering and marginalized world that is calling out for help and solidarity in the process of its liberation.

The identity of religious life constitutes experiencing God by imitating Jesus Christ, total consecration to God to a life of brotherhood, a life that is prophetic sign of the future promised to all by God; and a life inserted into the world.

Life becomes more meaningful as a consequence of religious experience. Conversion is a form of religious experience. Nature is another experience that heightens religious faith as gradually nourished and nurtured through circumstances in life and religious education. Religious experience is mystical, and ecstatic. Mysticism is a complete surrender to or in union with the divine. It involves negation of self, others, and the world. The basic features of mysticism are: first, ineffability – it is something that cannot be imparted to others. Second, noetic quality – this involves illumination and indispensability of disclosure. Third, transiency, it is something that occurs for a short period for it cannot be sustained for long. Finally, passivity, the feeling that his own will were apprehended by a superior power.

The religious life is striving to perfection according to the evangelical counsels. There are three

elements constant in religious life such as separation from the world, common life, and acceptance by the larger Church. *Lumen Gentium* points out that religious life is not an intermediate state between clerical and lay, but rather a way of life open to both. *Perfectae Caritatis* established the principles for the renewal of religious life and insisted that such renewal must be both internal and external: a continuous return to the sources of all Christian life and to the original inspiration behind any given community, and an adjustment of the community to the changed conditions of the times.

I – Poverty, Justice and Development The Dimensions of Social Justice [McBrien, 943ff.]

Christian Assessment on Justice

The virtue of justice is anchored with the notion of righteousness (Hebrew: *Sedeq*, and Greek, *dikaioisynē*). It is intimately linked with the covenant i.e., with the obligations of the Israelite to the community of Israel. A person is righteous insofar as he or she is conformed and faithful to the covenant. For Paul Christian righteousness is the state of vindication and deliverance gained through the death of Christ (2 Cor 5:21; Rm 5:16). The kingdom of God is “righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit” (Rom 14:17). Accordingly, perfect and complete righteousness is still an object of hope to be attained beyond history (Gal 5:5).

Christian righteousness demands that Christians themselves live in a way that is consistent with the death and resurrection of Christ and with the new life in the spirit that flows from Christ’s saving endeavor. The righteousness cannot be obtained by the observance of the law. It is a free gift of God, which reaches its fullness in the kingdom (Rom 3:30; 1 Co 6:11).

Justice is deduced from the Latin *iūs*, which means “right.” Justice is concerned with rights and duties, which correspond, to those rights. One’s duty to respect another’s bodily integrity flows from the others right to life in all its fullness. A right is a power that we have to do things, which are indispensable for attaining the end, or purpose for which we are destined is rational and free persons. A right is a person’s moral claim upon other persons or society in general to the means of reaching an end that is his or hers, and that he or she is accountable for reaching. In that aspect, rights flows from duties.

Among the principal human rights, as enumerated, for example in Pope John XXIII’s *Pacem*

in Terris (1963) are the following: to right to life regardless of sex, race, religion, or national origin, the right to freedom, in the pursuit of truth and in its expression and communication; the right to be informed truthfully about matters of concern; the right to a basic education; the right to worship God freely; the right to choose one's state in life; the right to gainful employment, to decent working conditions, to a proper compensation, to private property, to organize the right of meeting and association; the right to freedom of movement (emigration and immigration); the right to participate in public affairs and to contribute to common good (pars. 11-45). There is, however, a hierarchy of rights not only in terms of their relationship to the last end, but also in terms of their relationship to the rights of others.

Justice would not be possible unless we were separate from one another. Justice regulates relationships between strangers where there is perfect love and communion. The question between rights and duties becomes moot. They are completely fulfilled. Justice therefore mediates between the otherness, which arises from our exteriority, and the oneness, which arises from our interiority.

A correct construal of social justice demands, a correct apprehension of the distinction between society and state. Society is constituted by the total network of social, political, economic, cultural, and religious engagements, which are pertinent for full human advancement. The state is the center of coercive power in society. It is the civil authority by which the purposes of society are procured and preserved. The distinction between society and the state is presumed in John XXIII's *Pacem in Terris* and in Vatican II *Declaration on Religious Freedom*.

The extent to which the state should intervene in the life of its citizens is attended to in the Principle of Subsidiarity. 1st enunciated by Pope Pius XI in *Quadragesimo Anno* (1931). This principle seeks to establish and maintain balance between individual initiative and governmental assistance and direction. The principle holds that the presumption is always in favor of individual or small group action over against governmental intervention. The state should intervene only when lesser bodies cannot fulfill a given task demanded by the common good. In extensive terms, the Principle of Subsidiarity means that nothing should be done at a higher plane that can be done as well or better at a lower plane.

The principle has to be balanced off, however, by the process of socialization, 1st alluded to by John XXIII in *Mater et Magistra* (1961) as "the growing interdependence of citizens in society giving rise to various patterns of group life and activity and in many instances to social institutions established on a juridical basis (par. 59). Given the increased complexity of modern economic and political life, more intervention is demanded, without prejudice to the principle of subsidiarity. The two – subsidiarity and socialization – must be kept in creative compulsion.

The virtue of Justice is divided as follows:

1. **Commutative Justice** – relates to contractual obligations between individuals involving a strict right and the obligation of restitution (e.g., one person lends another person a sum of money; the 2nd person is obliged in conscience to return that money according to the agreement).
2. **Distributive Justice** – relates to the obligation of a government toward its citizens, by which the government regulates the burdens and benefits of societal life (e.g., a government is to tax its citizens fairly and according to their ability to pay, and to distribute those tax monies according to need; especially in the areas of housing, food, health care and education) and governs its relations with its members in accord to the distribution of social advantages (honors, remuneration, privileges, and assistance, etc.) and to its calls on these members.
3. **Legal Justice** – relates to the citizens obligation toward the government or society, without prejudice to the right or conscientious objection or even civil disobedience (e.g., citizens must pay their fair share of the taxes, the greater the wealth, the greater, the burden).
4. **Social Justice** – relates to the obligation of all parties to apply the Gospel to the structures, systems and institutions of society which are the framework in which all human relationships take place (e.g., an individual and or groups must take an active interest necessary in social and economic reform). On one pole, it demands respect for the natural rights of the members of the community so that they may be able to fulfill their duties, and functions in society. On the other pole, it is a virtue which influences citizens to render to

society that which they owe it so that society may be able to fulfill its mission towards the common good by giving everyone what he demands to advance his personality and fulfill his social function.

The basis of social justice (the elements of social justice)[Guerry, 165-166]

1. The social nature of man in the sphere that the individual can live and unfold fully only in a society which offers all that is indispensable for the physical, intellectual and moral life of man.
2. The organic concept of society. Society is not a conglomeration of individuals thrown together – it is a living body whose members should assist and collaborate with each other so all can effectively take part in the life of the human community.
3. The social end of the material goods to effectively serve the necessities in accord to the principles of a more just distribution of wealth.

The Components of Social Justice [Guerry, 168]

1. The universal domain of social justice is applicable wherever there is contention on the common good.
2. Social justice springs in particular, in engagements between workers and the community as a whole to complete whatever is due to the worker in strict “commutative” justice by the employer. Problems of family allowances, social insurance, protection and insurance against accidents, unemployment, sickness, disability, old age (homes and pensions) and, in a general way, vocational organization and collective agreements should all be resolved and balance maintained between wages and prices.
3. Social justice demands the organization of institutions and which will permit workers and citizens to carry out reforms.
4. Social justice overflows the national framework and expands to engagements between nations. It imposes the duty to collaborating to solve social problems

One of the structures of the Canadian conference of Catholic bishops is called “The National Episcopal Commission for Social Affairs.” Based on 1984-1985 CBCP report,¹ the commission considers three

major areas of study. The bishops reflected on Faith and Justice perspective such as those related to ethical perspective and social analysis on ecclesiology, evangelization, and human rights. They also reflected on the tremendous escalation on capital and technology over labor and the common good. The CBCP specified the specific justice contentions in Canada. They accentuated contentions on economic such as mass unemployment, the interests of workers, economic paradigms, and remedial strategies. They also heightened social policies, retrenchment in social services, public health policies and programs, the expansion and deepening of poverty, national security issues, resource advancement such as energy and land use and issues on environment (acid rain, noxious waste), the treatment of Native American Indians and migrant workers, etc. while not forgetting to reflect also on justice in the third world. The bishops articulated their concern on violation of human rights, critique of Canadian Immigration, Nuclear armament and arms trade with the third world and contentions on economic flourishing in underdeveloped countries.

The above contentions are so complex and demands meticulous study and energy to arrived at indispensable social transition and effectiveness of social and political action. In response, prior to CBCP contentions on justice, the 1971 Synod focused on love as the call to commitment on justice in the world. Love radicalizes the doing of justice. Thus, “action on behalf of justice” is a constitutive dimension for the Synod in proclaiming and giving witness to the Gospel on international level.²The poor are members of the national community equally with the rich; they are real component parts, living part, which make up the living body...Justice demands that their interest be watched over by the administration.³These words were spoken by Pope Leo X111 in *Rerum Novarum*, a document that opens the door for the Catholic Church’s teachings on social justice. Subsequent Popes proclaimed “issues on social justice” in their social encyclicals concerning the mission of the church.

The same social teachings were brought forth in a document called *Gaudium et Spes* wherein the Bishops reminded the people / faithful on Christian mission to dispel the power of evil so that this world might be renewed to God’s design. As a follow up to Vatican II’s documents, the 1971 synod were concerned also on the misery of the people who cries to the heavens for their afflictions brought about by injustice. Thus, the Bishops made justice a priority in their apostolic work.⁴

In the Scripture, St. Paul is led to define Christian life as the justice of God. He believes that justice of God comes down from heaven (R3,21) and that it comes to transform mankind.

Education for Justice is conscientization and constitutes several components [Hamel, 499]

1. A renewal of heart based on the recognition of individual and social expressions of sin.
2. The inculturation of a truly human way of life.
3. The awakening of the capacity to critique society and its values and to renounce those that violate justice.
4. A heightening awareness of concrete situations of injustice and the call to transform them.
5. An enabling of the less-developed countries to take their destinies into their own hands and to form truly human communities.

The Practice of Justice calls for International Action [Hamel, 499-500]

1. The recognition of an international order based on inalienable rights and the dignity of the person, and the adoption of and adherence to by all of the U.N. Declaration of Human Rights.
2. Support of the U.N. and other international organizations as the 1st step in addressing the multiple aspects of international compulsions.
3. Fostering the aims of the 2nd Development Decade, especially rich nations' sharing a percentage of their wealth with the developing nations, fairer prices for raw materials, opening the markets of the richer nations focusing more on manufacture goods from developing countries.
4. Creation of new institutional arrangements allowing developing nations an equal participation in discretion making especially in development.
5. Support for the specialized agencies of the United Nations that address areas on poverty and marginalization.
6. Encourage government to direct more their aid to multilateral channels.
7. Reduction of material consumption among the rich nations and the threat it poses to ecology.
8. Respect for cultural diversity in the pursuit of development, self-determination in structuring economic and social development, full and equal participation for all in attaining the common good.

Development

Development is the process of unceasing human flourishing, the integrated sum of human achievements and satisfactions, economic, social, political, cultural, and spiritual. Human development policies involve new approaches and new social priorities. The process of development moves beyond "band-aid" remedies to root out causes of human want; it moves beyond the "rich man's burden" mentality to a fraternal attitude of mutual support. This process opens new doors to participation is discretion making. Development policies set people free to seek a full life, each in his own way and at his own peace [Sheridan, 159].

In Christian perspective development is visualized as a continuation of creation, in which man has an increasing responsibility to "subdue the earth" to human service. For Christians, Jesus Christ exemplifies the fully human man who lived and died for others, in free obedience to the Father of all. The social imperatives of his new commandment are viewed now as primary. The glory of God is man fully alive [Ibid.].

Pope John XX111 Social teachings have been so critical of development policies injurious to the poor. In *Mater et Magistra*, Pope John XX111 defended the cause of the poor.

He urges industrialized countries to assume greater responsibility for those nations suffering from poverty, hunger and a lack of basic human rights.⁵

In *Pacem in Terris*, Pope John XX111 noted possible solutions on underdeveloped countries corresponding social development at a level commensurate with their dignity as human persons.⁶ *Gaudium et Spes* and Pope Paul VI's *Populorum Progressio* articulated similar standpoint and adjunct political, social, spiritual, and cultural advancement as an indispensable factor for the cause of authentic development.⁷ Paul VI called for:

1. A direct transfer of wealth from rich to poor nations [nn. 44-55].
2. Transitions in the structures of world trade to give more equitable return to developing lands for their primary products [nn. 56-61].
3. Effective participation of poor nations in the international community, free from economic and political pressures of powerful nations [nn. 61-65].
4. A world fund, provided from savings through reduction of armaments, to relieve the most destitute [nn. 51-55].

Close related to this viewpoint is Pope John Paul II's vision on development. He sees the necessity of overcoming evil mechanism's and structures of sin accountable for underdevelopment.⁸ He recommends reforms in international relations and the relevance of preferential option for the poor. Thus, development moves beyond the "rich man's burden" mentality to a sense of brotherhood.⁹

Spiritual and Temporal Order are Inseparable

For more than a decade ago, missionary work, of spiritual conquest, and of "going out to meet the world" became so popular. The Christian would seem to have awareness concerning the scandal of its disengagement and it is trying to move out of the ghetto. The Church faced squarely its problem of relationship to the real world. Karl Rahner commented in his book *The Christian Commitment* that: Christians are rediscovering a world that has often followed a path quite different from that of Christianity's marginal action.¹⁰

Vatican II was convinced that the outcome of disengaging the spiritual from the temporal was only a temptation, some kind of a dualism. Disengaging the things of God and those of the world. Spiritual-temporal dualism led the Church face to face with those dependent on temporal power. The Church sees the world as something they must face. In a summary of Karl Rahner's thought, he believes that:

The Spiritual and temporal are inseparable. This was the union Christ effected, being truly God, and truly man. The Christian cannot "go out to the world" for the simple reason that he is the world by virtue of his cultural behavior and cellular make up.¹¹

He added that: The Christian does not come from the moon to conquer the world. He is already present in the world in which he must give witness. This is why the problem of lay movements today is less a matter of conquest than of being present in the world.¹²

We, Christians, usually focus our attention to those people who gives witness. If the sign of charity is to be authentic then it must be radiated by people to those who are in need. Today, in our contemporary society, coordinated endeavor is indispensable on international level. Unity is not only indispensable but also essential for advancement especially in underdeveloped countries. As Cardinal Paul Emile Leger would put it: Christians form part of the real world. They make a free act of allegiance to a person, the Jesus of Nazareth who is truly God and truly human.¹³

Today, Christians are aware of what the technological world and, simultaneously, what our faith demands from us. Far from being evil, the "de-christianization" of the world means to exercise our freedom to freely choose or reject Christianity. Since Pope John XXIII's encyclical *Pacem in Terris*, subsequent Popes and bishops accepted pluralism as a necessity for the advancement of modern technology, liberty, and democracy.

II. The Concept of Sin

Breaking our engagements with God, neighbor, world and self constitutes sin. Sin disrupted the engagement with the neighbor. It is a transgression of the divine command, rebellion in opposition to God and God's authority. It is a turning away from God in the heart such as selfishness, greed, sloth, and revenge. It is idolatry that leads to sin of injustice and disintegration of the community. It is a personal, deliberate action plunging into darkness and a disengagement in the depth of our existence. Richard McBrien exemplify on the context of original sin as "originating" and "originated." [McBrien, 184-192]

1. Repudiation of the doctrine on the basis that it negates human freedom and entails exempts from accountability for the condition of the world and of human engagements.
2. Implicit acceptance of the doctrine by calling it the absurdity of human existence about which we can do nothing.
3. Equation with personal sin imposed upon us.

Injustice: The cause of inequality, poverty, and underdevelopment [Sheridan, 250-253]

The global family to which all of us belong is characterized by different histories, diverse cultures, and individual talents. In the uniquely personal quest for wholeness each individual is dependent on other members. In today's intricate technological age this interdependence increased tremendously that essential human relationships have become worldwide, in commerce, politics, in cultural life, in religion and in interpersonal affairs. This universal necessity to care, spare, and share is undermined by a major disorder found to some degree in every society. The prevailing social norm is not collaborative interdependence but rather competitive survival of the fittest, the law of the jungle. The jungle rule of "more for me, less for you", constructed into a number of economic, political and social structures, negates equal opportunities for human enhancement. Hence, numerous inequalities in daily

life are perpetuated. Furthermore, awareness of the human family's indispensable interdependence is undermined.

Unequal opportunities and their decisive consequences are evident on all sides. Such inequalities are the work of men and the politico-economic systems they fashion. Even as global interdependence accelerates, such inequities, now known universally through modern communications, appear to multiply. One root cause of this disorder is a too narrow pursuit of the goal "to do more, know more and have more," to be somebody. Our society is preoccupied with the material aspect of what it means to "be more." Many influential discretion makers and trend setters would have us believe that the way to be somebody is to acquire more, in order to consume more. This prevailing excessive consumerism challenges the Christian conscience.

In our society buying power has become a widely accepted symbol of social status. As a consequence, there is a psychological as well as a material gap between the rich and the poor, between those who succeed or fail. It is a gulf, which is difficult to bridge the social disengagement between people's of different languages and cultures. The uneven race to generate more wealth and consume more things fragments the human family at every sphere. This indifference is not the only result of the prevailing inclination to measure the worth of persons, their innate value, in terms of income level and buying power. Judgments grounded on such shallow criteria encourage social discrimination segregating the rich from the poor. Such inequalities are the evil harvest of individual fears and selfishness, reinforced by public policies and structures, which embody these human failings. Such inequalities mock the divine will, negate the fundamental dignity and equality of all members of the human family and betray aspirations for justice and peace.

The Situations of Injustice: Poverty, Powerlessness and Underdevelopment

The unhappiness and lack of peace in the world comes from each one's refusal to radiate Christ-like charity to others. There are sinful structures that impede development. It is a horrible nightmare that networks of evil can swallow us up if we are not alert. Evil becomes so organized, established, systematized that it takes on world-wide dimensions.

With the tremendous increase in unemployment, collapsed in the economy leads to

degradation of human species. The billows of the people's anger heightens men's baseness or their impotent insignificance and paranoia to what is going on around the globe.

1. Economically – a state of being deprived of the goods one necessitates living a full human life (basic needs and opportunities to pursue higher human ends are not provided). Economic deprivation breeds psychological unfreedom. Economic poverty restricts social and individual freedom of persons.
2. Socially – when one is deprived of the chance to make his voice heard in discretion making processes in society; when one feels less dignified than others because he feels he is ill-educated, poorly dressed and has been living below poverty line/ or in want, when one suffers from a low self-esteem and lost self confidence because of material or psychological deprivation.
3. Individually – state of being unable to live a kind of life one wants (self-actualization or authenticity) because one is given only a few options or one is not free to explore other choices either because of material deprivation or of the absence of personal freedom.

HUNGER AND POVERTY

Hunger – the condition caused by lack of food. In the real world, it is the world of malnutrition and poverty, of suffering and deprivation, and at the most graphic level, the world of distended bellies and starving babies.

Food shortage – not enough food to sustain the population within a given region. Natural disaster, war or societal disruption lies at the heart of food shortage.

Food poverty – the food-poor hungry live in households that are unable to pay for food or that lack access to the resources needed to feed themselves even when food is generally available within their region. This poverty can issue from a variety of factors: insufficient land, low wages, unemployment or low prices for produce or manufacture, etc.

Food deprivation – all hungry people are food deprived. The individuals who lives in regions of scarcity or reside in food-poor households. This deprivation may result from ignorance, abuse or neglect.

Individuals are said to be in absolute poverty when they are unable to obtain at least a specified minimum of the food, clothing and shelter that are considered necessary for continued survival. In the countryside, the majority of the poor were tenant farmers

or landless agricultural workers. The landless, fishermen, and forestry workers were found to be the poorest of the poor. In some rural regions, the sugar growing region on the island of Negros – there was a period in which malnutrition and famine had been widespread. In urban areas, the incidence of urban poverty increased between 1971 and 1985 by 13%. The urban poor generally lived in crowded slum areas, often on land or in buildings without permission of the owner; hence, they were referred to as squatters. These settlements often lacked basic necessities such as running water, sewerage and electricity. According to a 1984 government study, 44 % occupied dwellings in Metro Manila had less than 30 sq. meters of living area. About 55 % of the poor were generally vendors or street hawkers.

In the global scale, problems of poverty, hunger and famine occurred in Bangladesh in 1974, in Ethiopia in 1972-1974, 1984, in Cambodia, late 1970's. A few years later it also occurred in Somalia, Rwanda, Zaire and some parts of Africa. Beyond the epicenters of mass suffering, sporadic starvation is part of a normal cycle of life in developing countries. World hunger is more intense in human misery and mortality. It is an episodic mass starvation. Poverty is also an issue in the developed world. In the U.S., 12.4 % are poor. Poverty means hunger, malnutrition, illiteracy, injustice, disease, brain damage, and agonizing death wherein to die is better than to live. Today over 1 billion people live in grinding poverty. Poverty is a kind of a test to both the rich and the poor, whether the rich will embrace solidarity or a question of authentic acceptance as a recipient of this situation on the side of the poor.

Poverty is the sum total of human needs and hungers. In this exemplified aspect, all of us are poor. The majority of mankind is negated even the basic necessities of existence. Under present priorities, arms before aid and money power before people's needs spell poverty. A number of people are enslaved by a conspiracy of situations, disengaged from sufficient opportunities to improve their lot. This human misery is indivisible. Our neighbor is every man whose necessities we know and whom we can help, whether he lives at home or abroad. In my observation, the degree of a person's involvement to see the needs of others depends on many factors wherein one is intensified to appropriate and live the value component of what he believes in. Our commitment to the Lord is subject to the depths of our maturity, to forces of compulsions as well as financial, biological, social and psychological orientation, culture and sociological background,

philosophical, anthropological, pedagogical, and theological reasoning. It depends heavily on our perspectives, dispositions, feelings, and motivations. We tend to assess our visions in reaching out to the outcast with Christ as the reference point. We seek to actualize the quality of our life on a perspective grounded on fundamental goodness. Our fidelity to Christ moves / impels us to involve ourselves in solidarity with others.

Moldez claimed that poverty is not God's original plan for man. Taking his cue on the creation account in Genesis, he asserts that God placed man in a paradise. In his standpoint, poverty is related to man's disobedience, and yet God was not only aware of the suffering and poverty of his people¹⁴, he liberated them (Ex 3:7-8). With reference to Psalm 113:5-9, Moldez explicated how compassionate God is to the poor and the outcast. He transforms the pauper to a prince. He exhorted us to extend solidarity to others, to treat the poor with kindness and fairness.

The observance of the covenant is an engaged care for the poor and the weak [Exod. 20:22ff.] stipulating the liberation of slaves. In Lev 25:23, no law may be enacted to oppress the poor. This was exemplified in Proverbs 14:31: if you oppress poor people, you insult the God who made them. Kindness to the poor is an act of worship. Prophets railed against the injustice that causes poverty. Class difference and poverty were denounced by Amos [2:7:4], for example. Prophets announced the word of God from the perspective of the poor. In Psalms, the poor person, helpless before the injustices of society turns humbly to God as their only hope. In the New Testament, we can read from both Matthew and Luke passages concerning the poor. There were corresponding woes that serve as antitheses of the beatitudes. They are paradoxical. Thus, there is a contrast. The fortunate ones are the poor, the hungry, and those who weep. They are blessed. The unfortunate ones are the rich, the well-fed, those who laugh, and with good reputation. Luke 6:20 are a radical passage claiming that wealth, status, and well-being will be repudiated. There is no boundary to happiness even up to the extent of poverty, hunger, mourning or hatred. The passage is also promising in the sense that it gives hope. The rich are exhorted to live lives of detachment and solidarity. The truly happy people are those who depend on God while earthly aspirations can lead us to despair.¹⁵ In an age of self-glory, *Mary identifies herself as a member of "the poor ones" of the Lord. She is a handmaid of low estate through whom God will do wondrous things. As always, it is God who is to be praised and glorified.*

Jesus speaks about poverty in Spirit as dependence on God. It is not only an economic and social condition, but it can also be an interior disposition, a spiritual attitude. Economically, the poor do not have the capacity to provide for themselves the essentials of life. In the Scripture, James accentuated that the poor are the blessed. "They are the chosen ones." Thus, the beatitude concerning the poor highlights God's siding with the poor against their afflictions.

The life of Jesus is one of self-chosen poverty. In his preaching and praxis he identifies himself with the marginalized. The poor, he proclaims blessed. Their privilege lies in the justice of God. In A2:44-45, Paul organized a collection for the poor. It is the measure of the genuineness of their love [2 Cor 8:8]. He demanded agape [1 Cor 10]. For James, the poor are the chosen ones and the rich are attacked [2:5-6]. In Revelation, the differences made between the rich and the poor indicate how the church lives according to the word of the Lord [2:9; 3:17].

What Christians can do to become a witness amidst poverty? Christian witness must practice to transmit the process of the kingdom of God to all humanity in love and humility. Our God becomes poor so that he can share in the poverty of our condition. The question is: Why does God favor the poor? What is the significance of the oppressed in the eyes of God? The biblical witness is very powerful and clear. If God does not act on behalf of the poor and wretched, no one will. The poor will perish if God does not hear them and respond to their need. The God of the bible is a God of justice.

In Latin America, liberation theologians²³ clarifies that the primary reason for massive poverty is the dependency of the third world countries on the economies of industrialized countries. Liberation theologians focused their attention on commitment rooted in base communities to assist the people alleviate the growing poverty in such place. Thus, they represent the most dynamic, growing sector of the Church in Latin America.

In his book *The Power of the Poor in History* Gutierrez focused his thoughts on the exodus. Thus, he regard the poor as the architects of their own liberation.¹⁷ Leonardo Boof sees the poor possessing a sacramental function. In them, he contends, we meet the Lord in a privileged way. Christ has identified himself with them, and his kingdom comes through them and their struggle.

Jon Sobrino, another liberation theologian, sees poverty as the consequence of structural injustice.¹⁸ Following Boff, he gives hope to the poor by building a sense of integrity in them. He contends that the otherness of God is disclosed on the otherness of the poor. Sobrino argued on the following: Class outlook is ambiguous. The poor are the people who understood the meaning of the kingdom best. Jesus reinforces his experience of the necessity for justice through his contact with the poor. Jesus service is concretized directly in his service to the poor. In his personal life, Jesus experiences poverty. He experienced class identity and the consequences of his fellowship with the group known as the poor.

Concerning this matter, the bishops of Peru declared that overcoming poverty is a challenged to a society. It is an expression of solidarity as a denunciation of a non-evangelical circumstances... Thus, there is a need of socializing and integrating our material resources, our energies, our capabilities and possibilities, both individual and communal, in order to construct a more just and human society.¹⁹

The same presupposition was brought up by Cardinal Alfonso Lopez Trujillo who visualized poverty as a state of life and an attitude of approach and availability regarding the kingdom.²⁰

The question of poverty begins with Leo X111's *Rerum Novarum* (1891). He saw the condition of the urban proletariat. He demanded that "some remedy must be found quickly for the misery and wretchedness pressing so urgently on the majority of the working class [RN2]. *Rerum Novarum* upheld the principle of the just wage. It taught that when market forces oblige the worker to accept less than what is due, "he is made the victim of force and injustice" [34]. Leo denounced economic liberalism by teaching that if the contracting parties are too unequal, consent alone does not suffice to guarantee the justice of their agreement.

Pius XI in *Quadragesimo Anno* echoed the same moral outrage at the suffering of the poor [QA 59, 112]. He exhorted a reform of social institutions and the improvement of conduct [77, 97-98, 127]. He denounced the abuses of capitalism and its ideological basis: "the power ordering of economic life cannot be left to the competition" [QA88]. He visualized a vocationalism traversing class barriers [QA 82-85] and defended labor unions [30-35, 87].

Pius XI1 accentuated further on the rights of private property to the common good. He stressed the relevance of the equal distribution of goods [June 1, 1941].

Meanwhile, advocates of the modernization paradigm assume that development and economic expansion were synonymous. These theorists visualize that underdevelopment was caused by a lack of capital. The solution it entailed was to foster economic expansion by an infusion of capital, which would lead to industrialization and eventual prosperity. Underdeveloped nations would enter into a process of social and economic transformation whereby they would gradually gain economic maturity through technological advancement. Conversion to more modern values socially, politically, and culturally was envisioned as integral to such a transformation. The mood conveyed by this perspective was one of optimism and hope. The optimism spawned by the modernization paradigm was barely visible by the mid 1960s. Economic stagnation coupled with political and social unrest afflicted most 3rd world countries. Since Pope John XXIII, Catholic Social Teaching has underscored the fundamental necessities to construct a more just global economic system and has been critical of development policies and procedures that hurt the poor.

In *Mater et Magistra*, Pope John XXIII argued more on affirmative assessment of the escalation on “socialization of life with an increased state intervention as a means of overcoming poverty.”²¹ In *Mater et Magistra* and *Pacem in Terris*, Pope John XXIII assumed that economic relations can be improved only if the wealthier nations share the fruits of the international capitalist system more equitably. *Gaudium et Spes* acknowledges the escalating gap between the rich and poor nations and stresses the need for numerous socio-economic reforms and articulates certain principles of justice applicable to development.

John XXIII outlines the poverty of the working classes but alluded to industrial development as the solution [MM 68, 154, 163]. He insisted on a wider distribution of property [MM 115]. For John XXIII, the arms race and prestige projects in various lands impedes the elimination of poverty [MM 69, 198, 204, PT 109]. To overcome poverty, he recommended an affirmative analysis of the increased “socialization” of contemporary life with increased state intervention [MM 59-60; PT 62] demanded by the common good [MM 116-117]. Economic relations can be improved only if the wealthier nations share the fruits of the international capitalist system more equitably. He also accentuated on the distinction between “inauthentic philosophical theories” and “the historical movements” deriving from them [PT 159], which encourages dialogue.

Gaudium et Spes recognized the needs of the 3rd world [GS 69, 71, 86] such as the growing gap between the rich and the poor and demanded the right of all to share in the goods of the earth as well as the right of the poor to take from the rich in cases of necessity [GS69]. GS 63, 85-86 insisted on a new economic order allowing under certain situation the expropriation and redistribution of vast landed states [71]. The poorer nations need numerous socio-economic reforms and articulate principles of justice applicable to development.

Pope Paul VI, in his encyclical, *Populorum Progressio* raised the contention of disparity of wealth to a sphere of affluent countries versus developing countries. In a sphere of moral outrage Pius XI went beyond moral exhortation knowing he was facing “an unjust economic system.”²² In *Quadragesimo Anno*, Pius XI fought for a reform of social institutions and claims that the proper ordering of economic life cannot be left to free competition.²³

Paul VI in *Populorum Progressio* addressed the worldwide problem of poverty caused first by the imbalance of power [58-60] and the dominance of neo-colonialism in the form of chronic dependence on single crop export and the terms of trade that operate to make the poor nations poorer. He denounced the paradigm that regards material gain the key motive for economic progress, competition as the supreme law of economics, and private ownership of the means of production as an absolute right. It suggested a mixed economy [33] and proposed an international plan, financed by a world fund [48-81] as well as a restriction on naked competition [61], the establishment of an effective world authority [78] and arms limitation [53]. The paradigm of social change insists on consensus and the mobilization of the poor themselves [15, 25, 27].

In *Populorum Progressio* Paul VI envisions authentic development as more than mere economic expansion. It must include political, social and cultural development. Hence, it should foster the good of all persons. In *Iustitia in Mundo* the synod urges that national autonomy be respected and mutual collaboration be fostered to gain real and just development. This vision was reiterated by John Paul II in *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis* (SRC, 9, 15). John Paul II denounces the economic, financial, and social mechanisms that accentuate underdevelopment (SRS 16). The housing crisis, unemployed, underemployment and the initial debt crisis are examples of underdevelopment (SRS 17-19). For John Paul II, the resources those road-blocks to development persist are

political: the ideological opposition between East and West – between Marxism and Collectivism and Liberal Capitalism (SRS 20-23). The authentic development that John Paul II envisages transcends the deficiencies of underdevelopment and the excuses of super development. Describing development as both individual and a social duty, John Paul II sees it encompassing respect for cultural diversity, openness to the transcendent, and respect for human rights (SRS 27-32). Authentic development is inherently moral in character. This will demand individuals to acknowledge those “structures of sin” which rooted in personal sin give rise to immoral institutions (SRS 36). John Paul II stresses conversion to solidarity that is aligned with the virtue of charity that fosters gratuity, reconciliation and forgiveness, thereby overcoming those “evil mechanisms” and “structures of sin” responsible for underdevelopment (SRS 40).

The Latin American Episcopal Council [CELAM] conference at Medellin accorded poverty as stemming from a situation of injustice alluded to as institutionalized violence” [Medellin 2.16]. The very core of their proposal is that the church itself has become poor, assuming voluntarily and lovingly, the condition of the needy to bear witness to the evil it represents” [14.4]. The preference for the poorest entails we make ours their problems and their struggles [14.10]. Medellin opted for a dynamic action of conscientization and organization of the popular sectors [2.18]. The goal itself is the transformation of Latin America.

Paul VI in *Octogesima Adveniens* cited the political problems in the creation of a just society. He denounced the myth of progress [OA 41], the dominant paradigm of economic growth [42], and the political power of transnational corporations [44]. It suggests Christian communities to assess with objectivity the circumstance, which is properly to their own country, to shed on it the light of the Gospel’s unalterable words and to draw directive for action [4]. He negated a ready made solutions. He allowed several paradigms characterized by “a preferential respect for the poor” and “a permanent education in solidarity” [23].

In *Justitia in Mundo*, the poor is the voiceless victims of injustice [JM 20]. Poverty is the result of oppression and cannot be resolved by the paradigm of development. This injustice is institutionalized in the objective obstacles which social structures place on the way of conversion of hearts (JM 16). Poverty is basically the consequence of structural injustice, relationships and financial mechanisms either locally or globally. The

problem is the concentration of wealth, power, and discretion making in the hands of small groups [9]. An example of an unjust social structure is our political system ridden with cronyism and nepotism. Unjust financial mechanisms constitute international lending firms that charges high interest. The text suggests that the poor should form “new political groupings” [17], and an educational process awakening the critical sphere of injustice. The poor themselves have a privileged role in engendering liberation (JM 77), and this should influence the “modes of acting, of possessing, and life-style found within the Church herself” (JM 40).

In *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, the focus is a reminder that “only the kingdom is absolute making everything else relative [EN 8]. At Puebla, CELAM affirmed the necessity from conversion on the part of the whole church to a preferential option for the poor whose goal is integral liberation [Puebla 1134]. It awakens the church to see the face of Christ in oppressed individuals or groups. It exhorted the church to negate the mechanisms that engender poverty. It proposes to a commitment of further historical projects that meet the needs of a given moment [553]. John Paul II endorsed the preferential option for the poor.

In *Laborem Exercens*, it recalled the principle of the priority of labor over capital” [LE 12]. It prevents structural injustice using the context of the indirect employer such as interstate links, transnational corporations and lobbies [17]. The text also teaches that the right to private property is inconceivable without responsibilities to the common good. Goods are meant for all. It demonstrates that justice for the poor is attained through struggle. The very core in this test is solidarity.

At the service of the human community is an ethical approach to the international debt crises emphasizes the values of interdependence, co-responsibility, and trust. The better-off must assume the larger share of the burden [SHC 1.4]. It acknowledges the International Monetary Fund as technocratic and authoritarian and insists in them so well as the World Bank to increase the representation of the poor countries on their bodies. Industrialized nations must consider the effects of their policies in the poorer nations and must evade erratic currency fluctuations. Leaders must not be corrupt and must adopt a lifestyle in accord to the situations of other countries. Creditors must find reimbursement circumstances compatible with a debtor’s ability to pay and convert loans to grants.

Sollicitudo Rei Socialis sketches the intolerable burden of poverty in the field of shelter, unemployment and debt [17-18]. The exacerbation of the problem is caused by the distorted media presentation and an unacceptably exaggerated concern for security [22], political such as the ideological opposition between East and West, between Marxist collectivism and liberal capitalism [SRS 20-23]. It accentuates the moral disposition of the political will necessary to overcome the all-consuming desire for profit and power. Affirmatively, it reawakens ecological concern as well as growth in solidarity among the poor themselves. It offers a preferential love of the poor and the emphasis that private property constitute social mortgage. John Paul II denounces the economic, financial, and social mechanisms that accentuate underdevelopment. *The housing crisis, unemployment, under-employment and the international debt crisis are examples of underdevelopment [SRS 17-19].* The authentic development that John Paul II envisages transcends the deficiencies of underdevelopment and the excesses of super development. Describing development as both individual and a social duty, John Paul sees it encompassing respect for cultural diversity, openness to the transcendent and respect for human rights [27-32]. Authentic development is inherently moral in character. This will require individuals to recognize those structures of sin, which rooted in personal sin give rise to immoral institutions [SRS 36]. John Paul stresses conversion to solidarity that is aligned with the virtue of charity that promotes gratuity, reconciliation and forgiveness, thereby overcoming those evil mechanisms and structures of sin responsible for underdevelopment [SRS 40].

Economic Justice for All is an application of the catholic teaching in the developed world of the America's economic life accentuating the human nature of work as significant than economism. Market forces alone are an insufficient to assess the common economic good. It stresses the three-fold bond of creation, covenant and community, which molds the moral framework of economic life. It also presents that trade and financial policies to foster justice failed.

Relieving 3rd world debt is an ethical approach to the debt crisis stressing that the source of the debt problem is "injurious lending of oil money" for often ill-conceived projects. Such approach questioned why the poor "who have received little or no benefit from it have to bear the greater burden of its payment. Repaying it would violate the minimal standards of social justice.

The debt is a manifestation of an unworkable and inequitable system and the obligation to pay must be modified especially in Africa. The U.S. government must modify the policies of the world bank and IMF.

Synthesis:

1. Poverty is the consequence of structural injustice.
2. The retrieval of the scriptural praxis of liberation.
3. The church must freely practice simplicity of life and participate into the struggle of the poor for justice.
4. The poor are architects of a renewed humanity.

NOTES

¹Information on the CCCB is drawn from CCCB report, 1984-1985, CCCB, Ottawa, p. 12. Tracy Early, "Nafta benefits few Mexicans" in *The Catholic Register*, Ottawa Archdiocese edition, February 10, 1997. To obtain a copy of world hunger, contact CONACAN, the publication service of the Canadian conference of Catholic Bishops, 90 Parent Ave., Ottawa, Ont. K1N1B1, Phone 1-800-769-1147. World hunger is also an issue in the developed world. In Canada and in the United States, the masses of people are not desperately poor. Majority do not personally faced with sheer survival in the midst of dire poverty. For data on poverty in Canada, see David P. Ross, *The Canadian Pact on Poverty* (Ottawa: Canadian Council on Social Development, 1983); David P. Ross, *The Working Poor: Wage Earners and the Failure of Income Services Policies* (Toronto: Loriner, 1981); see also "Poverty in the United States: Where do we stand now?" in *Focus* (University of Wisconsin: Institute for Research on Poverty, Winter 1984). The slowing of the economy push people into poverty. The cutbacks during the Harris government in various programs for the poor have contributed to the increase in poverty percentage.

²Synod of Bishops, *Justice in the World* (1971). In the words of the Bishops: "Love of neighbor and justice is inseparable. Love implies the absolute demand for justice, recognition of dignity and the rights of one's neighbor because everyone is the visible image of God." For similar analyses along these lines see *The Gospel of Peace and Justice: Catholic Social Teaching since Pope John* presented by Gremillion, (NY: Orbis Books, 1976), pp. 6-36.

³Leo XI11, "Rerum Novarum n. 27" in *Catholic Social Thought: The Documentary Heritage* by David O'Brien and Thomas Shannon (New York: Orbis Books, 1976), pp. 26-27.

⁴For the Bishops, the very foundation of justice is the dignity and equality of all persons. In *Rerum Novarum* Leo XIII denounced the callousness of employers.

⁵Pope John XXIII. "Mater et Magistra n. 157-160" in *Seven Great Encyclicals* (NJ: Paulist Press, 1963), pp. 252-253.

⁶Both in *Mater et Magistra* and *Pacem in Terris*, Pope John XXIII urges industrialized countries to reach out in compassion, charity, solidarity for the good of the poor people. He sees equal distribution of wealth as a solution to poverty.

⁷Pope Paul VI believed on the integration of development, peace, solidarity, technological advancement, humanistic relations with higher values of love and friendship, of prayer and contemplation as the key element to authentic development.

⁸Pope John Paul II. "Sollicitudo Rei Socialis" in *The Encyclicals of Pope John Paul II*, pp. 465-468.

⁹In Catholic Social Teaching, the value and dignity of the human person lies at the center of an economy based on justice. All persons have the right of the goods produced by the economy.

¹⁰Karl Rahner, *The Christian Commitment* (Sheed and Ward, 1963), chs. 2-6.

¹¹Ibid., chs. 5-8.

¹²Ibid.

¹³Cardinal Paul-Emile Leger, "The Christian in the Community," *Catholic Mind*, 64 (February 1966), p. 4.

¹⁴In Moldez thought, "to prevent poverty, God commanded people to give tithes for economic assistance to the needy and to restrict unequal distribution of wealth. The rich have an urgent duty toward the poor." Herman Moldez, "Christian Witness Amidst Asian Poverty" in *Evangelical Review of Theology*, 11-12 (1987-1988), p. 120.

¹⁵In my opinion, in times of economic prosperity, there is a great danger of having illusions about one's spiritual poverty. Material possessions must be renounced to which one must concur if he is to be disciple of Christ. Sometimes, poverty is a situation wherein the rich people are tossed by the rising tide of their pride and ambition thus losing themselves to moral outrage upon the troubled waters of scandal while the poor are staggering in the desert being abandoned and experiencing the mocking and incessant howling of the wind and could no longer endure the scorching fury of the sun.

¹⁶Gustavo Gutierrez, *A Theology of Liberation: History, Politics, and Salvation* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis, 1971), p. 291.

¹⁷Gustavo Gutierrez, *The Power of the Poor in History* (New York: Orbis, 1983).

¹⁸Jon Sobrino, *The True Church of the Poor* (London: SCM, 1983).

¹⁹Bishops of Peru, "Justice in the World" in *Liberation Theology*. Alfred Hennelly ed. (New York: Orbis Books, 1995), p. 134.

²⁰Cardinal Alfonso Lopez Trujillo, "Liberation, A Permanent Value: in *Liberation Theology*. Alfred Hennelly ed. (New York: Orbis Books, 1995), p. 167.

²¹Cf. "Divini Redemptoris 50" in *Seven Great Encyclicals* (NJ: Paulist Press, 1963). See also "Quadragesimo Anno 77, 87-88" in *Seven Great Encyclicals*, pp. 147-149.

²²Ibid. See also *Quadragesimo Anno* 97-98, 127, 30-35, pp. 152, 160, 132-135.

²³Ibid. See "Quadragesimo Anno 30-35, 77, 87-88, 97-98, 127" in *Seven Great Encyclicals*, pp. 132-135, 152, 147-149, 160. See also "Mater et Magistra 59-60", pp. 231-232.