Séverine DENEULIN, *Human Development and the Catholic Social Tradition.*
  Towards an Integral Ecology. Routledge: Abingdon 2021. Pp. 118. Hardback: £35.99,
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This short book serves to relate Amartya Sen's thinking on development to
Catholic social teaching. The author is well equipped to do this, having com-
pleted a doctorate in development studies on Sen, and has also long studied
Catholic theology since the Second Vatican Council 1962–1965. The book is
an admirable introduction to both partners in the dialogue. Sen's approach
through "capabilities", although of wider application, is particularly fruit-
ful for development. Catholic social teaching (CST) is the name given to the
evolving papal tradition on social economic and justice issues since Pope
Leo XIII in 1891, with recent milestones *On the Progress of Peoples* (1967), *On
Social Concerns* (1987), *Charity in Truth* (2009) and culminating (if that is not
too definitive a word for a work still in progress) with the encyclicals of Pope
Francis *Laudato Si': On Care for Our Common Home* (2015) and *Fratelli Tutti:
Brothers and Sisters All* (2020), with added reflections from the 2019 Synod
of Bishops on the Amazon (and this book privileges considerations from the
Amazon basin).

The book follows a simple structure: chapter one examines the concept
and meaning of development, the second the understanding of being human
underlying different concepts of development, the third practical ways for-
ward; a conclusion relates the preceding discussion to the 2020 Human
Development Report. Each chapter follows the same structure: firstly outlin-
ing Sen's thinking on the issue, then the relevant CST (alert to what CST might
add), and finally noting differences.

The first chapter discusses Sen's capability approach in some depth. Sen is a
dominant force in the move away from per capita GDP as the only measure of
development. He added considerations of what people are "able to be and do",
that is, their "capabilities", closely linked to their "functionings" or their con-
crete "beings" and "doings" such as enjoying good health, participating in the
community, eating adequately, deciding for oneself, interacting with others
and so on. These additional elements should also be factored in in determin-
ing human flourishing, with special attention paid to the condition of the mar-
ginalised. Of course, different peoples value "flourishing" differently, which
makes evaluation even more open-ended. This is where CST can introduce the
notion of "integral human development", introducing the element of interior-
ity or spirituality as necessary for a full human existence, as also love; and Pope
Francis has extended this love to the non-human creation, thus introducing

considerations of the ecosystem. This serves to anchor Sen, to focus his open-endedness. The chapter ends by noting the lack of attention CST pays to gender inequality, an area in which it could learn from Sen.

The second chapter on what is meant by living a human life argues that Sen is not guilty of the charge of excessive individualism, for his position is "fundamentally relational"; that is, people flourish together, by speaking, listening, empathising, reasoning with others, and consequently being open to self-criticism. CST adds the idea of relating not just to other humans but to the world around us, animals and plants, thus preserving nature for future generations, by for example a low-carbon lifestyle. CST is also more aware that human freedoms can be misdirected to the detriment of the common good. However, CST rather slides over the fact that gender inequality often means that women disproportionally suffer in areas of ecological deterioration.

The third chapter on practical activities that might follow from the preceding reflections considers some critiques of Sen, especially his optimistic assessment of the process of public reasoning and (closely related) power imbalances. It's all very well to talk of "the public (as) the agent of change", but one must be realistic. In a revealing aside, Deneulin cites Sen in a question and answer session admitting that the American election of 2016 and the UK Brexit referendum were "not examples of 'good' public reasoning processes". Indeed Deneulin seems to admit that Sen pays insufficient attention to the power of social media and the markets. CST perhaps can contribute here its emphasis on institutions, systems and structures, and moreover its stress on the common good, its "option for the poor", and the need for "change of heart". Where Sen could fertilise CST is this emphasis on public reasoning, for Catholicism is far from transparent in its discernment processes and remiss in its "listening as governance".

The conclusion relates previous material to the UNDP's 30th Human Development Report in 2020 which adds "people's interaction with nature" to its previous criteria of GDP, educational levels and life expectancy. It proposes an experimental index, the "Planetary Pressures-adjusted HDI", which adjusts the HDI according to a country's per capita carbon footprint. The new rethought HDI seems to have come round to restoring the balance between human and earth systems which the CST has advocated (does Deneulin on p. 97 half-suggest that Pope Francis had some influence on UNEP's head Achim Steiner?), and the book ends by suggesting that secular and at least this faith-based perspective are moving in the same direction.

The book is a remarkable introduction to both Sen and CST and, in comparing and contrasting, Deneulin raises many stimulating points. The book is

logically structured and jargon free, and Deneulin is a skilful and easily com-
prehensible guide through sometimes quite profound reflections. The book is
a worthy contribution to reflection on the role of religion in comprehensive
development.

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