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**POPE SAINT JOHN PAUL II ON SOCIAL JUSTICE IN
HUMAN WORK**

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ABSTRACT

In contemporary societies, the issues of industrialization and successive globalization have been affecting deeply the reality and true meaning of human work. The objective dimension of work became more important than the subjective. In contrast, Pope Saint John Paul II affirms that man is “the subject of work” and not merely an object. The human person “performs various actions belonging to the work process; independently of their objective content, these actions must all serve to realize his humanity” (*LE. 6*), which refers to the eminent subjective dimension of work rooted in the dignity of the worker as person. A lot of research and many interpretations of Pope Saint John Paul II’s innovative teaching in this regard have been proposed and discussed. This study presents how he responded to the signs of his time, by deepening and further developing theology of work that is fundamentally grounded in Scripture, Tradition, and the Social Teaching of the Catholic Church. He demonstrates in depth and extent in his teaching the relevance of social justice as a moral principle by fully respecting human dignity in work, for human beings as subject of work are fundamentally understood as being created in the image and likeness of God.

Keywords: Scriptures, Tradition, Social Justice, Pope Saint John Paul II, Work, Human Rights, Human Dignity, Responsibility, Globalization, Industrialization, Decent Work, Migration, Family, Fair Trade Movement, Consumption, Leisure.

DEDICATION

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In Saint Dominic,

it is my deepest gratitude

to dedicate this work to my brothers,

The Dominican Friars of Our Lady of The Rosary Province,

in particular to my brothers of the Saint Dominic Convent in Macau.

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“I will give thanks to you, Lord, with all my heart;

I will tell of all your wonderful deeds.”

Psalm 9:1

I praise and give thanks to the Holy Trinity for His abundance grace upon me.

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I pray to the Lord that He may reward all worthily!

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ABBREVIATIONS

BBC	British Broadcast Corporation.
CV	<i>Caritas in Veritate</i>
CA	<i>Centesimus Annus</i>
CBCP	Catholic Bishops’ Conference of the Philippines
CCC	<i>Catechism Of The Catholic Church</i>
<i>cf.</i>	Confer, see
CSDC	<i>Compendium of The Social Doctrine of The Church</i>
CTS	Catholic Social Teaching
CWR	The Catholic World Report
DD	<i>Dies Domini</i>
DR	<i>Divini Redemptoris</i>
ed.	edition; edited by; editor (pl. Eds.)
EN	<i>Evangelii Nuntiandi</i>
et al.	<i>et alii</i> , and others
e.g.	<i>exempli gratia</i> , for example
etc.	<i>et cetera</i> , and other things

GS	<i>Guadium et Spes</i>
Ibid.	<i>Ibidem</i> , in the same place
JM	<i>Justicia in Mundo</i>
LE	<i>Laborem Exercens</i>
LS	<i>Laudato Si'</i>
MM	<i>Mater et Magistra</i>
MWP	Message To The World Day Of Peace
no.	Number
NA	<i>Nostra Aetate</i>
NT	New Testament
OA	<i>Octogesima Adveniens</i>
OT	Old Testament
P	Page
PT	<i>Pacem in Terris</i>
PP	<i>Populorum Progressio</i>
QA	<i>Quandragesimo Anno</i>
RN	<i>Rerum Novarum</i>
RH	<i>Redemptor Hominis</i>
SRS	<i>Sollicitudo Rei Socialis</i>
Summa.	<i>Summa Theologica</i>
tran.	translator; translated by (pl. Trans)
VS	<i>Veritatis Splendor</i>
vol.	Volume
VR.	Vatican Radio

INTRODUCTION

It was all inspired by the researcher's pastoral work. Serving the Catholic Migrant Workers in Macau, the researcher got chances to meet various migrant workers who come from different Asian countries. Each time meeting and talking to them, the major topic, that always came up, was about work: how to get a job, the conditions of work, the working hours, the wages, and so forth. The researcher listened attentively to their different life and work experiences, and reflected on such questions: what is the view of the Church and her teaching on human work? How can the Church in a given society contribute positively to improving work conditions? Thus, when the requirement approached to write a Practicum Paper he was inspired and challenged to do his research on this very questions in the light of Catholic Church Teaching.

As a result of much discernment, this topic was settled down and agreed on. The researcher believes that, on the one hand, this topic gives him an opportunity to dig deeper into studying the Church Teaching on Human Labor. Another interesting aspect of this topic is, that one of the characteristics of the Church is her stable Tradition, while the modern society is changing unceasingly. So, how does this go together and how can the Church contribute to the contemporary world without losing her own Tradition? The given task it is also challenging because the researcher is required to search for an analytical method that he can employ for this theme. Today, Religious questions necessitate philosophical, anthropological, sociological, and theological explanations. Accordingly, this study will pay a special attention to Human Work in the teachings and writings of Pope Saint John Paul II. He is a Saint of our time and was canonized by Pope Francis on April 27, 2014.

Another important aspect for the researcher is that the chosen topic is not merely informative; it has transformative capacities benefiting to his spiritual life. Work, when

properly understood, can lead us to God/Christ and His creation. Work is an integral dimension of human existence. It is both a fundamental obligation and a right. Pope Saint John Paul II affirms in his Encyclical *Laborem Exercens*, “Work is one of the characteristics that distinguish man from the rest of creatures” and “only man is capable of work, and only man works, at the same time by work occupying his existence on earth.”¹ In the past, work was primarily understood as an agrarian-artisan activity, that is, “using bodily energy to change the physical world in order to provide for basic needs.”² Today, however, work also includes “intellectual research and the provision of social services.”³ Hence, Pope Saint John Paul II confirms that work can mean “any activity by man, whether manual or intellectual, whatever its nature or circumstances.”⁴ Work includes everything that humans do and engage in as free and responsible subjects and agents.

To achieve the intended research goal, the researcher divides the paper into four chapters: The first chapter takes a look at the biblical understanding and main messages related to work and justice. The Bible is the source and soul of all theology according to Second Vatican II (1962-65). Thus, what is the view of work and justice in both the Old and New Testament? Chapter two presents the theology of work in the context of the theory on justice according to Saint Thomas Aquinas. The reason to choose Saint Thomas Aquinas teaching at this point of my research is that, as Jove Jim S. Aguas comments on Pope Saint John Paul II, “his philosophical anthropology, his ethics is grounded on Thomistic ethics, having influenced

¹ See the preface of Pope John Paul II, *Laborem Exercens*, http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_14091981_laborem-exercens.html (Accessed on October 22, 2016).

² Edward Collins Vacek, SJ. “Work,” *The New Dictionary of Theology*, eds. Joseph A. Komonchak, Mary Collins & Dermot A. Lane (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1990), 1098-1105, esp. 1098.

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ See the preface of Pope John Paul II, *LE*.

by the philosophy of St. Thomas.”⁵ Truly, “John Paul was a Thomist.”⁶ The Saint himself comments: “The great principles set forth by St. Thomas in his philosophy and theology have not perhaps been utilised in the area of morals as much as the times have demanded and that such use of his principles would have provided a metaphysical base giving greater organic unity and vigour.”⁷ The principal theory of justice, which St. Thomas Aquinas developed in his teaching, will be clearly seen in this chapter.

In chapter three, the researcher reviews briefly issues on Social Justice and Work before Pope Saint John Paul II’s period. In this part, the researcher shall focus on two periods: From the beginning of explicit Catholic Social teaching under Pope Leo XIII to Pre-Vatican Council II, and From Vatican Council II to Pre-Pope Saint John Paul II. Due to the fundamental transformation of societies during that period, the Church developed her own social teaching corresponding to the new situation of societies. She is particularly concerned with the role of the human persons in the time of industrialization. Finally, chapter four deals specifically with the teaching of Pope Saint John Paul II on human work and especially with his theology of work. The development of the Saint’s teaching on human work can be understood as his response to the signs of the time. He brought the social teaching of the Church up onto a new level, at which it never lost its original and inspiring spirit through-out the decades.

⁵ Jove Jim S. Aguas, *Person, Action and Love: The philosophical Thoughts of Karol Wojtyla (John Paul II)* (Manila: UST Publishing House, 2014), 266.

⁶ Richard M. Hogan, *The Theology of the Body in John Paul II: What It Means, Why It Matters* (Maryland: The Word Among Us Press, 2006), 22.

⁷ John Paul II, *Address to the Eighth International Thomistic Congress—13th September 1980*, no. 6. http://www.superflumina.org/johnpaul_on_stthomas.html (Accessed October 19, 2016).

Chapter One

THE BIBLICAL FOUNDATION OF WORK AND JUSTICE

I - Introduction

The objective of this very first chapter is to look at the biblical foundation of work and justice. Any sound theology of work or justice must begin with the Scriptures, the soul of theology. What does the Bible, both Old and New Testaments, say about the issue of work and justice? This chapter, more importantly related to the theme of the research, will speak both about work and justice. However, the emphasis will be more on the issue of work.

Accordingly, at the very outset, it is worth stating that “the Bible has no one view of work.”⁸ Work in the Bible can mean a lot of things, which includes effort, toil, service, and worship. It could include “God’s activity in creation and the slave’s labor in the fields.”⁹ To understand better the view on Work in the Bible, the researcher shall start first with the terminology related to work.

Due to the fact that the Scriptures came down to us in Hebrew (OT) and the Koinē Greek (NT) language, it is first necessary to examine the terminology of “work” in these two biblical languages.

In the Hebrew Bible two words are employed to refer to “work”: עֲבֹדָה (*avodah*) and מְלָאכָה (*melakha*). The former is a general term for work, while the latter has a very precise *halachic* meaning. The word עֲבֹדָה (*avodah*), which occurs 141 times in the OT, has three meanings:¹⁰

⁸ Vacek, “Work,” 1099.

⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰ Gary D. Pratico and Miles V. Van Pelt, *Basic of Biblical Hebrew: Workbook*, 2nd edition (Michigan: Zondervan, 2007), 51. See also for further grammatical explanation from the same author, the book entitled: *Basic of Biblical Hebrew: Grammar*, 2nd edition (Michigan: Zondervan, 2007), 172.

(1) “Service,” where one submits himself/herself to the allegiance of another, such as a slave to a master (Exodus 21:6), a son to his father (Malachi 3:17), a subject to a king (2 Samuel 16: 19).

(2) “Worship,” either the worship of YHWH (Joshua 24: 14-15; Ezekiel 20:40) or worship of idols (Exodus 20:5; Psalm 97:7).

(3) “Work-labor,” used in both secular (Exodus 5:18; Ezekiel 29:18) and sacred sense (Exodus 13: 5; Joshua 22:27). To clarify the third commandment regarding the Sabbath, God stipulated: “Six days you shall work (*avad*), but on the seventh day you shall rest; even the plowing season and harvest you must rest” (Exodus 34:21). Psalm 104:23 writes: “People go out to their work (*avodah*), to their labor until evening.”

In short, *avodah* connotes work, service and prayer. Perhaps, the word suggests that our work can be a form of worship where we honor God while at the same time serving our people. Work, then, becomes not only a necessary part of human existence, but it is likewise a form of service to the world and to God. This shows that the ancient Hebrews had a comprehensive understanding of how faith and work relate in their lives.¹¹

The Hebrew word *melakha* (מְלָכָה) has a very precise meaning as it refers to the activities prohibited to be performed on the day of *Shabbat* (Sabbath), foremost of which are lighting a fire and carrying loads. Genesis 2:1-3 reads:

Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all their multitude. And on the seventh day God finished the work (*melakha*) that he had done, and he rested on the seventh day from all the work (*melakha*) that he had done. So God blessed the seventh day and hallowed it, because on it God rested from all the work (*melakha*) that he had done in creation.

¹¹ See Austin Burkhardt, “‘Avodah’: What It Means to Live a Seamless Life of Work, Worship, and Service,” <http://www.madetoflourish.org/avodah-what-it-means-to-live-a-seamless-life-of-work-worship-and-service>, (Accessed on March 5, 2016).

On the seventh day, God ceased from “creation” or “creating”. In Exodus 31 where *melakha* is likewise used, the word refers to the activities which were necessary for the construction of the *Mishkan*, the traveling sanctuary which the Jews took with them throughout their desert wanderings (Exodus 31:1ff). Towards the end, Moses reminds them about the importance of the *Shabbat*. The Mishnah mentions about thirty-nine different activity categories of *melakha* that went into the building of the *Mishkan*. The word *melakha* is usually translated as “workmanship”, which has a strong reference to “creation” and “creativity.” It represents the constructive, creative effort, demonstrating human mastery over nature. To refrain from *melakha* on Sabbath signals our recognition that, despite our human creative abilities, God is the ultimate Creator and Master of our life, history and world.

In brief, *melakha* “denotes God’s creative work and includes his presence within human history in carrying out his divine plan.”¹² Commenting on the Hebrew words, Fr. Marie-Dominique Chenu observes, “the [two] words overlap; and work has the paradoxical connotations of inexorable constraint and joyful expressiveness, unremitting compulsion and liberating self-fulfillment.”¹³

There are several Greek words associated with the idea of work (as used in both the LXX and the NT), but the most commonly used Greek expression for work is ἐργάζομαι, a verb form of ἔργον (nominative singular neuter noun).¹⁴ The verb ἐργάζομαι means “to work,

¹² William E. May, “The Theology of Work,” in *The New Dictionary of Catholic Social Thought*, ed. Judith A. Dwyer (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1994), 991-1003, esp. 992.

¹³ Marie-Dominique Chenu, “The Theology of Work: An Exploration,” *Sacramentum Mundi*, Vol. 6, ed. Karl Rahner (London, 1970), 369.

¹⁴ The English word “ergonomics” (the study of work and motion) comes from this Greek root. The verb ἐργάζομαι appears in the NT 41 times, 17 of which occur in the Pauline epistles. See R. Heiligenthal, “ἐργάζομαι κτλ.,” *Exegetical Dictionary of the New Testament*, vol. 2, eds. Horst Balz & Gerhard Schneider (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1991): 48-49, esp. 48.

labor,” “to trade.” The noun ἔργον “means anything done or to be done; a deed, work, action.”¹⁵ We are told in First Thessalonians that Paul works (ἐργάζομαι) day and night for his sustenance (2:9). Paul reminds the Ephesians, “For we are what he has made us, created in Christ Jesus for good works (ἐπὶ ἔργοις ἀγαθοῖς, Eph 2:10). Acts 7:41 writes: “At that time they made a calf, offered a sacrifice to the idol, and reveled in the works (ἐν τοῖς ἔργοις) of their hands.” A related noun for “work, employment, profession or trade” is ἐργασία (Acts 16:16; 19:25). An ἐργάτης is a “workman, laborer” worthy of his food or payment (e.g., Matt 9:37, 38; 10:10; 20:1, 2, 8). Another word for “fellow-worker” is συνεργός (Col 4:11; 1 Cor 3:9). A carpenter or artisan is called τέκτων. Jesus in Matt 13:55 is designated as ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ τέκτονος (“the son of the carpenter”). “Apostles and teachers can be described as *workers* in a figurative sense.”¹⁶ Believers are called “God’s fellow-workers.”

Besides ἐργόν, the Greek Bible (LXX) uses two other words for our English word “work”: ποιέω and πράσσω. Ποιέω can “refer to every kind of action”; while πράσσω “almost always refers to negative actions and in the NT is never used with God or Christ as subject.”¹⁷ Ποιέω, means “to do or make” and appears 3200 times in the LXX and 565 times in the NT, it is used to describe God’s creative, historical, and future eschatological action.¹⁸ It is also used to designate the activity of human beings, especially regarding acts of religious significance. Paul tells the Corinthians. “Whatever you do, do all for the glory of God” – εἴτε τι ποιεῖτε, πάντα εἰς δόξαν θεοῦ ποιεῖτε (1 Cor 10:31).

¹⁵ Wesley Perschbacher, *The New Analytical Greek Lexicon* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1990), 171.

¹⁶ Heiligenthal, “ἐργάζομαι κτλ.,” 49.

¹⁷ W. Radl, “ποιέω,” *Exegetical Dictionary of the New Testament*, vol. 3, eds. Horst Balz & Gerhard Schneider (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993): 123-126, esp. 124.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 123.

II – Theology of Work in the Old Testament

“Fill the earth and subdue it; have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth” (Gen 1:28)

It is our firm conviction that the foundations for a theology of work ought to be rooted in a study of the Scriptures. But the books of the Old Testament provide us with the most disparate views on human work. While the OT portrays God at work, it likewise shows God empowering humans to co-operate in his creative activity. What lessons and values can be learned from the Old Testament in view of human work?

A. The Prelapsarian View on Work

The Book of Genesis represents creation as God’s work: “And on the seventh day God finished the work (מְלָאכָה - *melakha*) that he had done, and he rested on the seventh day from all the work (*melakha*) that he had done” (Gen 2:2). Even in the state of original happiness, that is, before the Fall, there was work to be done. Work is thus clearly seen as a blessing or gift from God. It is part of God’s design for the salvation and sustainability of humankind and the cosmos. As the moral theologian Karl H. Peschke writes, “Work pertains to the original order of creation.”¹⁹ Work, therefore, is fundamentally and intrinsically good because it begins with God. “In the beginning, God created” is the foundation of all thoughts about work. God inspires work because he is a God of action. In God work and word go hand in hand.

The origin of all human work is clearly described and theologically explained in the book of Genesis. From the very first sentence of this account we already see God (*Elohîm*)

¹⁹ Karl H. Peschke, *Christian Ethics: Moral Theology in the Light of Vatican II: Special Moral Theology*, Newly Revised Edition (Bangalore: Theological Publications in India, 2013), 678.

portrayed as the primary worker busy with the creation of the natural world: “In the beginning when God created the heavens and the earth” (Gen 1:1; 2:4). In fact, the first two chapters of Genesis describe God’s creation of this beautiful world “out of nothing,” or *ex nihilo*. The Priestly creation account of Genesis 1 narrates that out of original chaos (“*tōhû wābōhû*” – תֹהוּ וָבֹהוּ) Elohim created an orderly world. This means that God imposed a design on formlessness and chaos. Moreover, the first creation account in Genesis 1 portrays creation by the powerful spoken word of Elohim expressing his absolute sovereignty: “And Elohim said, “let there be....” As Richard J. Clifford and Roland E. Murphy explain, “Creation follows effortlessly from God’s mere words.”²⁰

God’s creation of the material, temporal, and spatial realities are portrayed in a sequence of six days climaxing with the creation of humankind, made in his image and likeness. According to Miguel de la Torre, “Theologians have distinguished the first three days of creation from the last three days. *Opus divisionis* (work of division) during the first three days creates symmetry with the *opus ornatus* (work of ornamentation) of the last three days.”²¹ The solemn divine declaration in Genesis 1:26-27 “emphasizes humanity’s supreme place at the climax of God’s creative work.”²²

Genesis 1 mandates humans to work, a mandate that is intimately related to their identity as being created in the image of God. As image of God, humans are called to subdue (Heb. *kavash*) and to have dominion (Heb. *radah*) over the earth. How? Through responsible work! The dominion given to humans is “not unlimited power and license to exploit nature for

²⁰ Richard J. Clifford & Roland E. Murphy, “Genesis,” in *The New Jerome Biblical Commentary*, Student Edition, eds. Raymond E. Brown, Joseph A. Fitzmyer, & Roland E. Murphy (New York: Geoffrey Chapman, 1993, repr. 1999), 11.

²¹ Miguel A. De La Torre, *Genesis, Belief: A Theological Commentary on the Bible*, gen. eds. Amy Platinga Pauw and William C. Placher (Louisville, KE: Westminster John Knox Press, 2011), 17.

²² See Bruce M. Metzger and Roland E. Murphy (eds.), *The New Oxford Annotated Bible: New Revised Standard Version with the Apocryphal / Deuterocanonical Books* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), 3.

their own use.”²³ Humans are God’s benevolent and responsible representatives in creation. “Dominion must be understood as the same kind of rule God would exercise in the natural world, a world God created good in all of its parts.”²⁴ By working human beings replicate the divine likeness by exercising stewardship and dominion over creation. Through work, humans are called to *imitatio Dei* (imitation of God). Human work is, therefore, participation in the creative activity of God. Any legitimate work, whether manual or intellectual, is seen positive and honorable because it is man’s response to the divine will and likeness. This hints already towards a fundamental difference of the Judeo-Christian view and understanding of human work as distinguished from understandings in other cultures and religions.

With everything now finished and ready, according to the Priestly creation account, Elohim declared the fruit of his labor as being “very good” (v. 31 “Elohim saw everything that he had made and indeed, it was very good” עָרַב מְאֹד). Elohim was exceedingly satisfied with his creation. “There is no evil, only beauty, in the world that God makes.”²⁵ Because work has its origin in the Creator, work is therefore good. “For everything created by God is good” (1 Tim 4:4). On the *seventh* day, after work has been completed, Elohim rested, and he blessed and sanctified that day of the week.²⁶ According to the priestly creation account, the *seventh* day of the week has been established as a sacred day of rest, modeled after God’s own behavior at creation. According to Peschke, “the sequence of six days of creation and day of rest is set before the people of God as a model and incentive for their own rhythm of week-long labor

²³ Thomas Hiebert, “Genesis,” in *The New Interpreter’s Study Bible: New Revised Standard Version With the Apocrypha* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2003), 8.

²⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁵ See Clifford & Murphy, “Genesis,” 11.

²⁶ Edwin M. Good, *Genesis 1-11: Tales of the Earliest World* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2011), 19. Since the Hebrew verb to rest is *šabat*, thus the seventh day of the week (i.e., Saturday) is called in Hebrew *shabbat*, Sabbath, the “resting.”

and Sabbath rest.”²⁷ It is interesting to note that the OT has specifically stipulated that the day of rest is a privilege not only of the free man. All human beings, including women and the slaves, are entitled to this rest and repose (Exod 20:10); even the animals were allowed to rest (Deut 5:12-15). Marie-Dominique Chenu was correct when he affirmed that “the first chapter of Genesis has been and still is the epic symbolism and imagery which inspire all theology of work.”²⁸

In the second older and more anthropomorphic creation account of Genesis (2:4b-25), where the focus is more stressed on the creation of humanity, God (Yahweh) formed the human (*adam*) from dust from the ground (*adamah*) and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the human became a living being (v. 7). Here God is depicted as a potter and a builder crafting the human race.²⁹ God planted a garden in Eden and there he placed the human being whom he had formed. God commanded the first human to cultivate (*'abad*) the land. The Hebrew word *'abad* literally means, “to serve.” To be fully human one needs to be in relation to others who correspond to oneself. So, God concludes the second creation account with the creation of the woman (Gen 2:23). The woman is a *helper* (*'ezer*), not in a relationship of subordination or inferiority, but of mutuality and interdependence. The man (*'ish*) and the woman (*'ishshah*), created with equal status, are tasked by God together to cultivate the earth and classify the various species of wildlife (Gen 2:20). This responsible work of governance has been part of human vocation since the beginning.

²⁷ Peschke, *Christian Ethics*, 678.

²⁸ Marie-Dominique Chenu, “Work,” in *Sacramentum Mundi*, Vol. VI, eds. Karl Rahner, Cornelius Ernst & Kevin Smyth (New York: Herder and Herder, 1970): 368-373, esp. 369.

²⁹ See Stephen G. Dempster, “Work,” <http://www.biblestudytools.com/dictionaries/bakers-evangelical-dictionary/work.html>, (Accessed on March 2, 2016).

In these creation accounts from Gen 1-2, we see God conferring a sanctity upon work. God is the origin and prime example of all work. He was the first to do work on earth. God did not create a finished universe to which humans were brought in. God has called humankind to be “his co-worker in the progressive organization of a universe in which he is to be the image of God.”³⁰ Human beings have the responsibility to imitate the works of God. Any legitimate work is inherently good and reflects the activity of God. The recognition of the basic goodness and obligation of human work is therefore deeply rooted in the Jewish tradition.³¹ The Jewish father was considered neglectful if he did not teach his son a trade. Even the rabbis pursued a trade. Indeed, work is an essential part and expression of humanness. Never according to Gen 1-2 can we understand work as coming from evil or sin. Work is not the result of evil or from sin. When God took man and put him into the garden of Eden to till and keep it (*avodah*), that happened before the Fall. Moreover, the passages in Genesis 1-2 do not regard work as low and degrading. This is Israel’s difference with the surrounding pagan nations in the Ancient Near East. In those cultures, work was primarily regarded to be a tedious burden. The pagan gods of these nations (esp. Mesopotamia) made and understood the human race as their slaves to provide themselves relief from the labor and burden of running the universe. The same is true with the gods of the Greco-Roman mythologies in which the gods absolve themselves entirely from work.³² Humans were regarded to be “the cattle of the god.”³³ In the Judaeo-Christian belief, work instead has its deepest origin in God himself. As one book title of Gerhard Von Rad indicates: *God at Work in Israel*.³⁴ The Judaeo-Christian God is also

³⁰ Chenu, “Work,” 371.

³¹ E. J. Dillon, “Work,” in *Encyclopedia of Dictionary of Religion*, Vol. O-Z, eds. Paul Kevin Meagher, Thomas C. O’Brien & Sister Consuelo Maria Aherne (Washington, D.C.: Corpus Publications, 1979), 3773.

³² See D. H. Jensen, *Responsive Labor: A Theology of Work* (Louisville, KE: Westminster John Knox Press, 2006), 22.

³³ Dempster, “Work,” *ibid*.

³⁴ Gerhard Von Rad, *God at Work in Israel*, tran. John H. Marks (Nashville: Abingdon, 1980).

continually working himself. As Jesus pointed out: “My Father is still working, and I also am working” (ὁ πατήρ μου ἕως ἄρτι ἐργάζεται καὶ γὰρ ἐργάζομαι, John 5:17).

Psalm 19 reminds us that all creation is called to proclaim God’s glory. God reveals himself to the world by his wondrous work: “The heavens are telling the glory of God and the firmament proclaims his handiwork” (v. 1). When one is awed by natural revelation, God’s existence is made known. The prophet Isaiah tells us that God created humans for his own glory (43:7). In Isaiah 43:21 states: “the people whom I formed for myself so that they might declare my praise.”

B. The Postlapsarian View on Work

The Fall of humankind, depicted in Genesis 3-4, somehow transformed the idea and nature of work. In response to Adam’s sin, God pronounced several judgments in Gen 3:17-19 that affects the material world:

¹⁷ And to the man he said,
“Because you have listened to the voice of your wife,
and have eaten of the tree about which I commanded you,
‘You shall not eat of it,’
cursed is the ground because of you;
in toil you shall eat of it all the days of your life;

¹⁸ thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you;
and you shall eat the plants of the field.

¹⁹ By the sweat of your face you shall eat bread
until you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken;
you are dust, and to dust you shall return.”

Adam and Eve were expelled from the garden of Eden. God cursed the ground. From then on, man would be eating from the produce of the field, not the garden.³⁵ J. Illanes Maestre, however, states, “it is worth noting that God’s curse falls directly not on man nor on his work,

³⁵ The garden is symbolic of an earthly paradise made by God as a safe enclosure. It symbolizes purity and innocence. The field, on the other hand, represents an unbounded, unprotected space.

but on the earth, which brings forth thorns and thistles. It is only indirectly that the curse affects human work, insofar as, being exercised over a hostile earth, it is made difficult and harsh.”³⁶ Work is still basically good, but as a consequence of sin and the Fall, it had become a painful drudgery. “From the sweat of his brow, he shall eat” (Gen 3:19). The pleasant engagement in work in paradise was lost and became a *toil* on the soil, implying various difficulties, exhaustion, sweat, and struggle. Humans have become now exposed to the mercy of the elements of nature. The work environment can be hostile to humans. Workers can be abused and deprived of just wages because of the greed of owners. Slaves had to do laborious and servile work. These are some of the ways where sin makes its inroad into human life and work. Consequently, laziness and lethargy have become responses to work.

Also because of the Fall, humans had neglected God and looked on themselves and their own work as autonomous products. Work, separated from God, frequently becomes an occasion of enormous pride and folly (see Gen 4:17-24). As May notes, “Humans have a propensity to worship the work of their hands, forgetting God and ordering their lives independently of him (see Isa 2:20; 31:7; 44:9-20; Pss 112:12-16; 114:8; 134:15-18).”³⁷ In short, the postlapsarian view of work “has cosmic as well as human bearing: the world will not yield, and human toil is marked by sweat (Gen 3:17-19; 4:12).”³⁸ Work became burdensome; pain and suffering became inevitably associated with it.

Summing up: We have seen in the OT that work begins with God who created the whole world with his word. If this is the case, then the whole cosmos is the Lord’s. The whole of creation proclaims God’s handiwork. God has tasked humankind to participate in God’s

³⁶ J. Illanes Maestre, “Trabajo, humano. VII. Teología,” *Gran Enciclopedia Rialp*, vol. 22 (Madrid, 1975): 654-659, esp. 655; cited in William E. May, “Theology of Work,” *The New Dictionary of Catholic Social Thought*, ed. Judith A. Dwyer (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1994): 991-1003, esp. 992.

³⁷ May, “Theology of Work,” 992.

³⁸ Vacek, “Work,” 1099.

creative activity. Believers are called God's fellow-workers. Human work is part of God's plan of creation and redemption. Work has become an obligation for humans. It is an activity proper and fitting to human beings. In the Wisdom literature laziness is condemned and tainted with ill effects that arise because of it (e.g., Prov 24:30-34; Sir 33:25-32). The Book of Proverbs tells us that a lazy person hates work: "The craving of the lazy person is fatal, for lazy hands refuse to labor" (21:25); he loves sleep: "As a door turns on its hinges, so does a lazy person in bed" (26:14); he wastes time and energy: "One who is slack in work is close kin to a vandal" (18:9).

III – Theology of Work in the New Testament

A. Work as Manifested in Jesus of Nazareth and in his Disciples

Jesus of Nazareth himself was a man of manual work. He spent the greater part of his earthly life as a carpenter (τέκτων) (Mark 6:3). He must have inherited this trade from his carpenter foster father, Joseph: "Is he not the carpenter's son" (Matt 13:55).³⁹ Jesus was very likely His foster father's apprentice. Is it not strange to think that God Incarnate was taught to build things like human man? Or can this be the beginning of the fulfillment and dignity of human work? As in all other aspects of his earthly life, Jesus submitted himself to the humility of being fully human (Phil 2:6-8), and hence, entered into the world of human work. The Greek word used for "carpenter" (τέκτων) could also be translated more broadly as "artisan," "contractor," or "handyman." It is probable, therefore, that Jesus and Joseph were the sort of men one calls when something needs to be fixed—be it made of wood, stone, or something else. Tradition tells us that the foster father, Joseph, died before Jesus started his public ministry.

³⁹ Is it not interesting that church tradition made St. Joseph as the patron saint of workers? It was not until 1955 that Pope Pius XII established the Feast of "St. Joseph the Worker" to be celebrated on May 1. This is also May Day (International Workers' Day) and reflects Joseph's status as the patron of workers. See, "St. Joseph," http://www.catholic.org/saints/saint.php?saint_id=4. (Accessed on April 15, 2016).

It can be surmised that Jesus continued his father's work to support himself and his mother. The human Jesus, then, was not at all foreign to human work. He was known as the worker from Nazareth. But Jesus was not only concerned about physical, manual work. He was sent and preparing himself for another kind of work: the work of salvation. Both are interrelated and meaningful connected.

The Gospel of Luke tells us, "Jesus was about thirty years old when he began his work" (3:24). This is the work proper that God the Father has sent him to do, i.e., to proclaim the Good News of Salvation for all, beginning with the Jews. The immediate disciples, whom Jesus called to become his co-workers in his public ministry, were mostly simple and ordinary workers, earning their living by manual work (e.g., fishermen, Matt 4:18-22; Luke 5:1-11). The many parables that Jesus taught were mostly inspired by ordinary life circumstances, like manual work (e.g., shepherd, farmer, women doing household chores, vineyard owner, hirelings, and servants). The industrious servants are praised and rewarded as faithful and good stewards, while the servant who simply buried his talent in the ground was considered lazy and wicked (Matt 25:45-51; Luke 19:12-27).

John the Baptist, as he prepared the way for the Messiah, called the people to repentance. He challenged those whose professions/work were notorious for graft and extortion to abandon their jobs and change their ways. The tax collectors the Baptist exhorted to "collect no more than the amount prescribed" (Luke 3:13); the soldiers he reminded: "Do not extort money from anyone by threats or false accusation, and be satisfied with your wages" (Luke 3:14). Any kind of work, as long as it is done with honesty and dedication, pleases the Lord. The issue of justice in work seems to be of special importance for John the Baptist. To work, therefore, is the followers' vocation. It is a service to the reign of God on earth. All work/labor must be motivated by the love of God and the love of neighbor. Only then will human labor be free from anxiety, idolatry, laziness, and corruption.

At the same time, the New Testament teaches that humans should avoid worshipping their work as though it created idols or gods. The sinful human heart has a strange and offensive fascination with the work of his/her own hands (cf. Isaiah 2:8). He has the tendency to worship his own products of work. But Jesus says, “Seek first the Kingdom of God and his righteousness,” (Matt 6:33) and all of our physical, material concerns (e.g., work) shall be given us as well. The justice of the Kingdom of God is deeply related to work. Work and its products cannot be the ultimate *end* of human life’s pursuit (but just the *means*). In Luke 12:13-21 Jesus employs the story of the rich fool as a warning for those who focus on gaining and storing excess riches for their own exclusive use. “So it is with those who store up treasures for themselves but are not rich toward God” (v. 21). Human activity and work has to be open for God’s justice and the righteousness of the Kingdom of God. When human work becomes corrupted by selfishness, power, injustice, and the desire to be recognized by others, then it becomes evil. Did not Jesus categorically say, “You cannot serve both God and mammon” (Matt 6:24)? If work inhibits one from following and doing the will of God, then humans are on the wrong track. Our human work must glorify God and be an instrument for building up his Kingdom on earth.

At the right time, Jesus left his manual work in order to fulfill completely the work which the Father in heaven wanted him to do. He followed the Father’s will: “My food is to do the will of him who sent me and complete his work” (John 4:34). Work must be done always in obedience to God’s will. People who use their work as an excuse for not following the Lord Jesus Christ are condemned (see “The Parable of the Great Dinner” in Luke 14:15-24). When Jesus called his first disciples, they immediately left their manual work and gladly followed him in order to do the work of the Gospel. He invited his would-be-disciples to leave their work to fish for human beings. In doing so, Jesus exhorts his followers to “work not for perishable food,” since only the bread that comes down from heaven can truly give life (John 6). Instead

of worrying about livelihood, Jesus taught them to trust fully in God (Matt 6:19-34; Luke 12:13-41).

Believers are called to be “co-workers with God” (1 Cor 3:9; 2 Cor 8:1; Mark 16:20) in planting and nourishing the faith of the community. They are called to participate in Christ’s redemptive work. The Parable of the Laborers in the Vineyard (Matt 20:10-16) gives the impression that the Lord has a job/work for everyone. He is in the business of hiring unemployed workers for his vineyard even at the last hour, yet everyone is paid the same wage. This is very promising and hopeful. The Lord is calling everyone to work. Human work is a means to participate with Christ in the work of redemption. Towards the completion of his work of public ministry, Jesus told his Father in heaven: “I glorified you on earth by finishing the work that you gave me to do” (John 17:4).

After his death and resurrection, Jesus passed on to the disciples the work of proclaiming the Kingdom of God on earth: “And they went out and proclaimed the good news everywhere, while the Lord worked with them and confirmed the message by the signs that accompanied it” (Mark 16:20).

In brief, work is considered by Jesus as a natural, integral, and important part of human life. He did not disdain practical work himself. But Jesus’ real work accomplishment is the proclamation and witnessing of the gospel: “My Father works even until now, and I work” (John 5:17).⁴⁰ For the Gospels, “the work of Jesus is not his work as a craftsman but his work as Redeemer of the world.”⁴¹ Jesus says, “My food is to do the will of him who sent me and to complete his work” (John 4:34).

⁴⁰ It is interesting to note that the evangelist John made no mention of the fact that Jesus was a worker.

⁴¹ Johannes B. Bauer, “Work,” *Sacramentum Verbi: An Encyclopedia of Biblical Theology*, Vol. 3, ed. J. B. Bauer (New York: Herder and Herder, 1970): 995-1001, esp. 996.

B. Work as manifested in Paul

The great apostle to the gentile world, Paul, is another exemplar of the high value of work in the New Testament. While Paul received from the risen Lord the special ministry to the Gentiles, he did not abandon his specific own trade: tent making. Through his professional occupation, he not only support himself and others to proclaim the Good News of the redemption in Christ, but also won friends, partners in the same trade (e.g., Aquila and Priscilla – Acts 18:3). Even as a preacher of the gospel he did not insist on the right to be supported by the congregations, but he worked in his own profession in order to provide for his living: “You remember our labor and toil, brothers and sisters, we worked night and day, so that we might not burden any of you while we proclaimed to you the gospel of God” (1 Thess 2:9); “For you yourselves know how you ought to imitate us; we were not idle when we were with you, and we did not eat anyone’s bread without paying for it; but with toil we worked night and day, so that we might not burden any of you” (2 Thess 3:7-8).⁴²

Reading the Pauline letters gives encouragement to be co-workers with God: “For we are God’s servants, working together; you are God’s fields, God’s building” (1 Cor 3:9). Paul calls believers “to participate in God’s redemptive work, making up in their own lives what is lacking in Christ’s afflictions so that his body, the church, can be built up (Col 1:24).”⁴³ But how do Christians have to do it? Do they have to abandon their own work/profession? No! In fact, in the First Thessalonians the Apostle exhorts, “We urge you, beloved, to do so more and more, to inspire to live quietly, to mind your own affairs, and to *work* with your hands, as directed you...” (1 Thess 4:10-11). May explains, “Christians are to do this ‘work’ in the midst

⁴² See also 1 Cor 9:3-15 Paul arguing that although he could enjoy the right to be supported by the community (vv. 4-6, 12, 18), yet out of consideration for others he chooses not to make use of it.

⁴³ May, “Theology of Work,” 993.

of their ordinary workaday lives: ‘Everyone ought to continue as he was when he was called’ (1 Cor 7:20).”⁴⁴ Our everyday’s work must be fully integrated into our Christian existence.

Paul has made the Christian work ethics manifestly clear. In 1 Timothy, Paul writes, “If anyone does not provide for his own, and especially those of his own household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever” (5:8 *King James Bible*). Paul does not condone lazy bodies. He told the Thessalonians, “For we hear that some of you are living in idleness, mere busy-bodies, not doing any work. Now such persons we command and exhort in the Lord Jesus Christ to do their work quietly and to earn their own living” (2 Thess 3:11-12). It becomes clear, then, that for Paul work is a general and highly relevant obligation. Idleness is a form of disorderly life not fitting for a Christian. In fact, work makes it possible for Christians to exercise charity and be of special service, especially to the needy. Paul’s letter to the Ephesians makes this point very clear: “Thieves must give up stealing; rather let them labor and work honestly with their own hands, so as to have something to share with the needy” (4:28). Work helps in the building up of the body of Christ in love and service. In whatever we do (whether as slaves [Col 3:22-24]), the most important thing is faithfulness to God. “Render service with enthusiasm, as to the Lord and not to men and women, knowing that whatever good we do, we will receive the same again from the Lord, whether we are slaves or free” (Eph 6:7-8). In brief, as Paul reminds, “Whatever you do, do all for the glory of God” (Col 3:17). Work is an expression of submission to God where he had placed one.

⁴⁴ May, “Theology of Work,” 993.

C. Work as manifested in James

While human work is an obligation and is endowed with dignity, workers cannot be abused or their rights be violated. The Letter of James remind us of its warning to rich oppressors:

Come now, you rich people, weep and wail for the miseries that are coming to you. Your riches have rotted, and your clothes are moth-eaten. Your gold and silver have rusted, and their rust will be evidence against you, and it will eat your flesh like fire. You have laid up treasure for the last days. Listen! The wages of the laborers who mowed your fields, which you kept back by fraud, cry out, and the cries of the harvesters have reached the ears of the Lord Jesus (5:1-4).

Our creator God is not blind and deaf regarding abuses committed to simple and powerless workers.

To conclude our treatment of work in the New Testament: May is of the conviction that two major aspects permeate the NT: the *soteriological* and the *eschatological* dimension. The gospel (Greek: Εὐαγγέλιον) proclaims that God has personally visited his people in the incarnation of Jesus Christ who brought about our redemption from sin (soteriological theme). With Jesus' first coming, God's reign (βασιλεία τοῦ Θεοῦ) has definitely begun and is already in our midst, although the fullness of its realization will only come with Jesus' second coming in glory to judge the living and the death (eschatological dimension). The ordinary work of Christians has both soteriological and eschatological significance. May concludes, "All human existence, including the reality of human work, is to be seen in the light of these [two] themes."⁴⁵

⁴⁵ May, "Theology of Work," 993.

IV – Justice in the Old Testament

The understanding of justice in the Bible, in general view, is very much related to the issue and descriptions of justice and righteousness of God to his people. The two concepts *Justice* or *Righteousness* are central and rich biblical theological terms, such as, the righteousness of God or, grace, holiness, etc. and therefore, many-sided and difficult to define.⁴⁶ The two key Hebrew words מִשְׁפָּט “*mishpat*” (righteousness) and צְדָקָה “*sedaqah*” (justice) give us a closest meaning of the concepts justice and righteousness in the OT.⁴⁷ The biblical idea of justice can be generally described as fidelity to the demands of a relationship between partners.⁴⁸ This relationship could be a relationship between God and his people with justice, or between men/individuals. In the following let us look closer into these two levels.

A. The Justice of Yahweh/God

In the whole OT, Yahweh is proclaimed as being Just (2 Chronicles 12:6; Psalm 7:9; Jeremiah 9: 24; etc.). Justice of Yahweh denotes the aspect of judgment, the judgment on the sins of the people. The Book Isaiah writes: “I will make justice the line, and righteousness the plummet” (Is. 28:17). The God of Israel is the God who loves justice and hates evil (Isaiah 10), for He is a “lover of justice” (Psalm 99:4). He gave to Israel the book of life (Torah) and “He will judge the world with righteousness, and the peoples with equity” (Psalm 98: 9; cf. Amos 2; 3). Truly,

The commandments are given by the “just” God to establish justice and equality among the people. The Law speaks also of “just” judgments (Ps 7:9; 17:1-5; 18:22-24; 26:1-6), and unjust judges (Zp 3:5 ff). In reality only God is truly just (Ps 143:2), with a justice that punishes the unjust, but which is also, and mainly,

⁴⁶ Friedrich Nötscher, “Righteousness (Justice),” *Sacramentum Verbi: An Encyclopedia of Biblical Theology*, ed. Johannes B. Bauer, Vol. 2, Humility – Righteousness (New York: Herder and Herder, 1970): 780-785, esp. 780.

⁴⁷ Gary D. Pratico and Miles V. Van Pelt, *Basic of Biblical Hebrew*, 172.

⁴⁸ Klaus Berger, “Justice,” *Sacramentum Mundi: An Encyclopedia of Biblical Theology*, vol. 3, *Habitus to Materialism* (New York: Herder and Herder, 1969): 231-235, esp.231.

a merciful justice (see Gen 18: 20-32). In God, penal justice coexists with merciful justice (Ex 20:5 ff).⁴⁹

Furthermore, the justice of Yahweh is also expressed as liberal justice and God is the Liberator. In the book of Exodus, God liberated his people from an unjust society, and freed them from slavery (Gen. 12). Therefore, God is the defender of the poor, the weak and the oppressed. God himself takes a clear option for the poor. The Book of Amos 5: 2-24 is about God's judgement against the exploiting rich, and unjust behavior; and "the Lord works vindication and justice for all who are oppressed" (Ps 103: 6; *cf.* 113:7-8; 140: 12; Jer 9: 24).

B. The Just Individuals

In the OT, the justice perspective includes the relationship between God and his people, as well the relationships among the people which should be just. The book of Job portrays an image of a just man who trusts in the justice of God (Jb 1:1). In the same manner, Friedrich Nötscher writes: "God can communicate his righteousness also *to men—either to Israel or to the individual—as a gift* (Is 45: 8; 61: 11)."⁵⁰ And yes, in the field of human work, the just man is the one who knows how to be a good steward of the land and to care properly about relationship with the workers in harmony and peace (*cf.* Jb 31:13). A practical example in Job who trusts and has confidence in the judgment of God for if he violates others, particular unfortunate people (see Jb 31: 14-22). That is to be understood, the expression of the love of God is through human behavior. Karl H. Peschke writes: "The content of love consists above all is just and upright conduct towards one's neighbor, which refrains from doing wrong. 'Thus says the Lord of hosts, Render true judgments, show kindness and mercy each to his brother,

⁴⁹ Fausto B. Gómez, *The Journey Continues: Notes on Ethics and Bioethics* (Manila: University of Santo Tomas, 2009), 112-113.

⁵⁰ Nötscher, "Righteousness (Justice)," 783.

do not oppress the widow, the fatherless, the sojourner, or the poor' (Zech 7:9f; cf. Deu 10: 18f; Sir 35:1-3; Mic 6:6-8).”⁵¹

V – Justice in the New Testament

The teaching on justice in the NT is not far from the OT. The NT concepts of justice continues from the OT; ancient philosophy (Judaism and Greek) are connected in Jesus teaching and is presented clearly in the Christian history since the time of the Second Temple period (530 BCE - 70 CE). Accordingly, justice is at the center of the teaching of Jesus. In the Gospel of Luke 18: 1-8 or in Matthew 12: 17 is about the fairness of justice when Jesus speaks about “Eye for eye, and tooth for tooth” of people in society, or "Give back to Caesar what is Caesar's and to God what is God's." This teaching as we know today is commutative justice. Moreover, in the teaching of Jesus, justice and mercy are essentially connected. The parable in the gospel of Matthew 20:1-16 is about “The Laborers in the Vineyard.” He provides justly to the workers according to the contract and he even grants them more compared to their worthiness of work done. Undoubtedly, Jesus is the proclaimer of justice of the Kingdom of God. He strongly and directly condemns those who act unjustly, as He says, "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you tithe mint, dill and cumin, and have neglected the weightier matters of the law: justice and mercy and faith" (Matt 23:23).

The teaching of Jesus on justice continues in the teaching of His disciples as is also manifested clearly in St. Paul’s teaching. Klaus Berger notes that, for Paul “man can obtain this justice by deciding to embrace the message of Jesus and the community belong to him. For this is the community of the just.”⁵² That is, “Paul felt nearer the poor, weak and ignorant, because these were the ones chosen by God (1Cor 1:28); likewise, he asked Jesus’ followers

⁵¹ Peschke, *Christian Ethics*, 198.

⁵² Berger, “Justice,” 233.

to share what they had with those in need in God's household (Rom 12:13), to be generous (2Cor 9:10-11), to have a simple life style."⁵³

VI – Conclusion

On the whole, the meaning and purpose of work and justice according to the Scripture presented above are cleared. Regarding the aspect of human work, it has a great dignity in God's creation. The Old Testament proved the understanding of work founded in God and the human race inherited it from the Creator. Work existed before the human fall and was basically positive. Therefore, work is in principle not a curse. Work has been continuing important as a useful instrument for human existence on earth. The New Testament contributes and enriches by deepening the meaning of work through the praxis and teaching of Jesus, who worked himself for a long period. The disciples, as the witnesses of God, continue to spread the work of the Creator on earth. In the aspect of justice, justice belongs to the nature of God. Throughout the human history and history of salvation, justice is the crucial element on the way to God. Therefore, Nötscher was right when he concludes that, the justice of God works naturally and is not just a favor of the people of Israel, but for all people.⁵⁴

For the Church Teaching, Scripture is the source. "The whole Bible is spanned by the narratives of the first creation (Genesis 1-3) and the vision of a restored creation at the end of history (Revelation 21:1-4)."⁵⁵ Hence, the work of human hands goes together with justice in human lives, if in accordance with the will of God, so that the Kingdom of God on earth is

⁵³ Gómez, *The Journey Continues*, 131.

⁵⁴ Nötscher, "Righteousness (Justice)," 782.

⁵⁵ National Conference of Catholic Bishops of Washington, Dc, *Economic Justice For All: Pastoral Letter on Catholic Social Teaching and the U.S. Economy*, no.53 (Washington, DC: United States Catholic Conference, 1986), 29.

proclaimed. Therefore, importantly for us as Christians, “work must be seen as something that brings together the people of God in order that they may be let into glory.”⁵⁶

⁵⁶ E.J. Dillon, “Work,” *Encyclopedic Dictionary Of Religion*, eds. Paul Kevin Meagher, Thomas C. O’Brien, Sister Consuelo Maria Aherne, vol. O - Z (New York: Corpus Publications, 1979), p. 3773.

Chapter Two

PERSPECTIVE ON WORK AND JUSTICE IN ST. THOMAS AQUINAS

I - Introduction

The English word “justice” is derived from the Latin *iustitia* meaning righteousness or equity. The Latin *iustus* means “upright, just”; *ius*⁵⁷ means “right.” Justice is the state or characteristic of being *just* or *fair*. There are two ways of looking at justice. First, justice can be understood in the sense of moral virtue and is determined by rules of human conduct. The virtue of justice governs our relationship with others. Thus, the Gospel of Matthew describes St. Joseph as a just man (Matt 1:19). Second, justice can also be regarded in the sense of “proportionate fairness” founded on the principle of equality. It is concerned with the proportionate ratio of commensurable goods. Hence, a just wage is a wage proportionate to the type and amount of labor invested. Justice as equality denotes the willingness to render to each person what he or she fairly deserves, free from favor or bias towards any or either side.⁵⁸

Important here to note is that, from this principle theory of justice is projecting to understand the network of theology on human work. Therefore, in this present chapter, we shall mainly focus on Saint Thomas Aquinas, the thirteenth century Dominican theologian, and on his understanding on work and justice. The influence of Plato and most especially Aristotle on the Angelic Doctor Aquinas is presupposed.

⁵⁷ This word in Latin has two positions of meaning:

(I) Lit. (class; in *plur.* Very rare, except in *nom.*, and *acc.*), *that which is binding or obligatory*; that which is binding by its nature, *right, justice, duty*.

(II) Transf. (A) *A place where justice is administered, a court of justice*; (B) *Justice, justness of a thing*; (C) *Legal right, power, authority, permission*. Charton T. Lewis, *A Latin Dictionary: Founded on Andrews' edition of Freund's Latin Dictionary* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1879), 1019.

⁵⁸ Paul Steidl-Meier, *Social Justice Ministry: Foundations and Concerns* (New York: Le Jacq Publishing, 1985), 75.

II - Nature of Justice

Aquinas situates his treatment of the concept of justice within the larger context of virtue. According to Fr. John A. Hardon, S.J., “Etymologically, Aquinas derived ‘virtue’ from the same root as the Latin *vir* [man] and *vis* [power], suggesting that in its primitive sense virtue implied the possession of such masculine qualities as strength and courage and, in the moral order, of goodness and human perfection.”⁵⁹ Agreeing with Aristotle, Aquinas sees virtue as the habit of doing good to others. It is “a good habit bearing on activity,” or a good faculty-habit (*habitus operativus bonus*). “Virtue ensures the conformity of a concrete action with the human good.”⁶⁰ Aquinas states, “the virtue of a thing must be regarded in reference to good. Therefore, human virtue which is an operative habit, is a good habit, productive of good works.”⁶¹

Aquinas further notes that there are three kinds of virtues: intellectual, moral, and theological virtues. We will limit our focus here on moral virtues which includes also the intellectual virtue prudence or practical wisdom (*phrónesis*). Francis Selman in his studies on the work of Saint Thomas Aquinas, states, “The moral virtues regulate the passions and only concern the appetites. Thus, we have justice for the rational appetite; the will; courage for the irascible appetite; and temperance for the desiring appetite.”⁶² But the governing and first virtue of moral life is prudence. Aquinas underlines that justice is a moral virtue.⁶³ The constant

⁵⁹ Fr. John A. Hardon, S.J., “Meaning of Virtue in Thomas Aquinas,” <http://www.ewtn.com/library/SPIRIT/MEANVIR.TXT>, (Accessed November 15, 2016).

⁶⁰ Romanus Cessario, O.P., *Introduction to Moral Theology* (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2001), 199.

⁶¹ *Summa Theologica*, I-II, 55, 3.

⁶² Francis Selman, *Aquinas 101: A Basic Introduction to the Thought of Saint Thomas Aquinas* (Indiana: Christian Classics, 2005), 119.

⁶³ St. Thomas develops the study of justice (*Summa Theologica* II-II, questions 57-122) thus: (1) Justice in Itself (questions 57-60); (2) Justice in Its Parts (questions 61-120); (3) The Gift of Justice, that is, Piety (question 121); (4) The Precepts of Justice (question 122). St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica: Complete English Edition in Five Volumes*, trans. Fathers of the English Dominican Province, Vol. 3: IIa IIaeQQ. 1-148 (Texas: Christian Classics, 1981).

repetition of doing good actions becomes a good habit; “for a man’s act is made good through attaining the rule of reason, which is the rule whereby human acts are regulated. Hence, since justice regulates human operations,”⁶⁴ in relationship to others performing prudently just acts repeatedly towards others results in acquiring the virtue of justice.

Saint Thomas Aquinas defines justice as “a habit whereby a man renders to each one his due (*suum cuique*) by a constant and perpetual will.”⁶⁵ Justice, then, is the specific moral virtue which relates a person towards other members of the community and towards the whole community. The “other,” thus, can be another person, or group, or the whole society. Today there is increasing talk also about intergenerational and environmental justice. Hence, following the division of justice by Aristotle in Book V of the *Nicomachean Ethics*, Saint Thomas concludes that, there are basically three different kinds of justice. The first one is called legal or general justice, and the second is particular justice, which is further divided into two: commutative and distributive justice.

⁶⁴ *Summa Theologica*, II-II, 58, 3.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, II-II, 58, 1.

with individual benefits but with the overall community welfare as understood and expressed in the common good. Legal justice has to do with “determining the responsibility of individuals to the groups to which they belong to, and it also treats the responsibility of smaller groups to larger groups of which they are a part.”⁶⁷ The object of this relationship and form of justice is to promote and preserve the common good (*bonum commune*) which “is the end of each individual member of a community, just as the good of the whole is the end of each part.”⁶⁸

Following the theory of Saint Thomas Aquinas, legal or general justice is a general and a specific or concrete virtue. He explains this in two ways: the first one is the “form” that is part of the things in relation to which it is general, and the second one is “the universal cause”; the universal cause is general in relation to all its effects.⁶⁹ Therefore, we may look at legal or general justice in two different ways.

Firstly, an individual person is part of the community. Hence individual persons must submit to the proper authority of the whole society by obeying just laws, who do not contradict the natural justice or natural law. For this purpose Saint Thomas confirms: “In relation to certain other individual persons, is referable to the common good, to which justice directs: so that all acts of virtue can pertain to justice, in so far as it directs man to the common good.”⁷⁰ That is why Saint Thomas (following Aristotle) calls this kind of justice “legal justice.” Rightly in the sense that, “the concrete justice that depends on a certain state or ruler for its

⁶⁷ Steidl-Meier, *Social Justice Ministry*, 80.

⁶⁸ *Summa Theologica*, II-II, 58, 9, ad.3. See the famous definition of the common good in GS 26, “the sum total of social conditions which allow people, either as group or as individuals, to reach their fulfilment more fully and more easily” (GS 26).

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, II-II, 58, 6.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, II-II, 58, 5.

establishment is a matter of virtue only for those who are subject to the jurisdiction of that state or ruler.”⁷¹

Secondly, an individual person who serves other persons that belong to the same community is in the service of the whole. In doing that he or she directs his or her service to the common good, and at the same time for his or her-own benefit. Therefore, whatever good or bad of a part is directed to the good or bad of the whole. The purpose of legal justice is to govern human actions according to the common good which is the end of individual persons and simultaneously the end of the community. “The common good requires every individual to be good.”⁷² As a result, the overall benefits and welfare of the community will increase. Thus understood, Saint Thomas Aquinas considers legal justice to be called a form of “general virtue.”

One more point has to be considered here. Saint Thomas Aquinas states: “Legal justice is said to be a general virtue, in as much, to wit, as it directs the acts of the other virtues to its own end, and this is to move all the other virtues by its command.”⁷³ Therefore, “legal justice is ‘all virtues’ (the particular good of every virtue is referred to the common good of justice); its integrated parts are ‘to do good’ and ‘to avoid evil’ regarding the common good.”⁷⁴ So, the common good is above the personal good; for the sake of it, individual persons as part of the whole must work for the common good. And of course “it would be preferable if law and justice went hand in hand, and the moral obligation of every citizen is to strive toward that goal.”⁷⁵

⁷¹ Vernon J. Bourke (ed.), *The Pocket Aquinas: Selected from Summa of Theology and more than thirty other writings of St. Thomas Aquinas* (New York: Washington Square Press, 1960), 194.

⁷² Josef Pieper, *The Four Cardinal Virtues* (Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 1966), 59.

⁷³ *Summa Theologica*, II-II, 58, 6.

⁷⁴ Gómez, *The Journey Continues: Notes on Ethics and Bioethics*, 147.

⁷⁵ André Comte-Sponville, *A Small Treatise on the Great Virtues: The Uses of Philosophy in Everyday Life*, trans. Catherine Temerson (New York: Henry Holt, 2001), 65.

Furthermore, Saint Thomas claims that legal or general justice is a general virtue that is a cause of all acts of other cardinal virtues which are prudence, fortitude, and temperance. Obviously, all virtues are concerned with the common good. However, legal or general justice is different from the rest, and it inspires other virtues in order to obtain the end which is the common good. Hence, “whereas legal justice concerns the common good, prudence concerns commanding action, temperance concerns curbing concupiscent passion, and courage concerns strengthening irascible passion against fear.”⁷⁶ Therefore, the virtue of justice is mainly about doing something good, not only of knowing something good. To deepen this understanding: Justice denotes the act which indicates the will, and the will in which a man wills to do a certain thing. The act can be done only when the establishment of an internal will and an external effect directed to another are met. As a result, all the virtues are at the purpose to make man to become a good person or citizen; that is what legal or general justice is all about.

Following the flow of the discussion, Saint Thomas Aquinas brings legal justice to a higher level which relates to God while he compares legal justice with charity. He explains: “For just as charity may be called a general virtue in so far as it directs the acts of all the virtues to the Divine good, so too is legal justice, in so far as it directs the acts of all the virtues to the common good.”⁷⁷ Saint Thomas speaks of justice in the perspective of reason (like Aristotle) and in the perspective of faith (like Saint Paul and Saint Augustine), which also manifested in his teaching on natural law.

Accordingly, in chapter one we have seen that all things/creatures were created by God and are subject to Divine providence and ruled by Him. Hence, Saint Thomas Aquinas argues:

⁷⁶ Shawn Floyd, *Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy, Thomas Aquinas: Moral Philosophy*, <http://www.iep.utm.edu/aq-moral/#H3>, (Accessed January 22, 2014).

⁷⁷ *Summa Theologica*, II-II, 58, 6.

“the rational creature is subject to Divine providence in the most excellent way, in so far as it partakes of a share of providence, by being provident both for it-self and for others.”⁷⁸ He also emphasizes that the rational creature is ruled by the eternal law, out from which the natural law derives, that is to do good and avoid evil. Saint Thomas distinguishes four laws: the eternal law (law in God, not accessible for human), the divine law (revealed law by God to humankind), the natural law (written in human heart/discovered by reason), and the positive or civil law (man-made/written by human beings). Natural law or natural justice was famously defined by Aristotle in his Book V of the *Nicomachean Ethics* (*NE*): “One part of the politically just is natural [=physei], and the other part is legal [conventional, positive, written down]. The natural has the same validity everywhere alike, independent of its seeming so or not....For the natural [just] is unchangeable and equally valid everywhere – fire, for instance, burns both here and in Persia.”⁷⁹

Pope Saint John Paul II writes: “Saint Thomas identifies it with ‘the type of the divine wisdom as moving all things to their due end.’ And God's wisdom is providence, a love which cares. God himself loves and cares, in the most literal and basic sense, for all creation (cf. *Wis* 7:22; 8:11).”⁸⁰ Truly, “for man has in his heart a law inscribed by God. His dignity lies in observing this law, and by it he will be judged.”⁸¹ (*Cf.* Rom 2: 14-15).

For that purpose, from the perspective of faith, religion is connected with justice. Alasdair MacIntyre writes:

On Aquinas’ view religion is a moral virtue, being that part of the cardinal virtue of justice concerned with what we owe to God in the way of honor, reverence, and worship. Since perfected obedience to the natural law requires the virtue of justice in full measure (S.T. IIa-IIae, 79,1), it is difficult to understand how

⁷⁸ *Summa Theologica*, I-II, 91.

⁷⁹ Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* V, 7 1134b19-30.

⁸⁰ Pope John Paul II, *Veritatis Splendor*, August 6, 1993, 43.

⁸¹ Vatican II, *Gaudium et Spes*, 16.

some-one who did not believe that God is and that his attributes make him worthy of honor, reverence, and worship could be perfectly obedient to the natural law. It is then important to my interpretation of Aquinas' positions that I understand his positions on practical knowledge and practical reasoning, let alone those on justice, as always presupposing the type of rational knowledge of God exemplified in the conclusions of the *Prima Pars*.⁸²

Legal justice is important, "a special virtue in respect of its essence, in so far as it regards the common good as its proper object;"⁸³ it helps us to be good citizens. But the people responsible for law and legal justice have to listen to and obey natural law. The concept of justice however cannot be fully understood convincingly if we talk only of legal or general justice. We need to talk about particular justice as well.

B. Particular Justice

Unlike legal justice, particular justice is about the interactions between individual persons or the whole to the part. Saint Thomas Aquinas writes:

Legal justice does indeed direct man sufficiently in his relations towards others. As regards the common good it does so immediately, but as to the good of individual, it does so mediately. Wherefore there is need for particular justice to direct a man immediately to the good of another individual.⁸⁴

Within particular justice, we can distinguish two kinds or species, namely commutative justice and distributive justice. Let us consider them more closely.

⁸² Alasdair MacIntyre, *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?* (Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 2003), 188.

⁸³ *Summa Theologica*, II-II, 58, 6.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, II-II, 58, 7, ad. 1.

1. Commutative Justice

Commutative justice is about the relationship between an individual person and another individual person or of a group of persons towards another group in view of a just exchange (see Aristotle, *NE V*, 5). Saint Thomas Aquinas clearly states that “there is the order of one part to another, to which corresponds the order of one private individual to another.”⁸⁵ The “equivalent moral agents must be fair.”⁸⁶ Commutative justice means giving to another person “what is his due” (*suum cuique*) in the sense of corresponding proper equality between individuals or groups.

According to Saint Thomas Aquinas’ theory on commutative justice, which follows in principle Aristotle, the acts of justice must be done in strict equality or the real mean of arithmetical equality which is gauged according to equal excess in quantity, ‘the notion of debt.’ Therefore, we may see commutative justice in three perspectives. Firstly, the fidelity in exchange of things between persons which does not go beyond what is owed (voluntary order in transactions). Secondly, it is about ‘usufruct’ in which agreements by a contract that justice in the transferring of things with the obligation of returning it to its owner (voluntary contracts).⁸⁷ And the third one is about restitution (voluntary corrective justice). Now we will go deeper to understand these three perspectives or dimensions of commutative justice.

In the first perspective, Saint Thomas reflects on a system of exchanges in which “justice is first of all and more commonly exercised in voluntary interchanges of things, such as buying and selling, wherein those expressions are properly employed.”⁸⁸ The value of things must be equal, measuring the mutual exchange in the relation of the persons in a given society.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, II-II, 61,1.

⁸⁶ Steidl-Meier, *Social Justice Ministry*, 81.

⁸⁷ *Summa Theologica*, II-II, 61, 3.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, II-II, 58, 11, ad. 3.

The mutual exchanges can be fulfilled only when the two parties are faithful to the principle of reciprocity (*antipeontos* from ἀντιπᾶσχω [*anti-páscho*] = to suffer in return), and “it involves the acknowledgement of the principle of equality between service and counter-service.”⁸⁹ Naturally, “the idea of equity is reflected in the symbol of the scale with its two trays in balance, as they should be.”⁹⁰ Justice of exchange is highly relevant today in the so-called Fair Trade Movement (will see in Chapter IV). Do workers (e.g. farmers) really get a fair share for their work? The issue of justice in exchange in modern consumer societies deserves more attentions, studies, and practical implementation (see also *RN* no. 45, and on page 46 of this thesis).

In view of the second perspective, commutative justice is about fidelity to agreements in which the obligation of returning things to its proper owner is important. In this view, Saint Thomas Aquinas considers also contracts, which can bear fruit; he uses the term of ‘letting’ or ‘hiring.’ Moreover, the contract or obligation must be carried out between two free individuals in a relation of mutual interdependence.⁹¹ In addition, “a contract implies a genuine obligation and tie, as well as an expressly affirmed restriction of one’s own interest by the other party’s interest.”⁹² Following this understanding, Saint Thomas explains: “the use of a thing gratuitously, it is called ‘usufruct’ in things that bear fruit; and simply ‘borrowing’ on ‘loan’ in things that bear no fruit, such as money, pottery, etc.”⁹³

The third perspective is about the involuntary case of restitution or corrective justice. The principle of this form of commutative justice is restoration which “denotes the return of the thing unjustly taken; since it is by giving it back that equality is re-established.”⁹⁴

⁸⁹ Pieper, *The Four Cardinal Virtues*, 78.

⁹⁰ Sponville, *A Small Treatise on the Great Virtues*, 67.

⁹¹ This can have some bearance in labor disputes between two parties.

⁹² Sponville, 78.

⁹³ *Summa Theologica*, II-II, 61, 3.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, II-II, 62, 2.

Moreover, the unjust actions of a subject to another subject must be considered in two aspects which are the object and agent in the sense of equally repaid for the previous action. Meaning to say, on the one hand, the object to be restored by the subject has to be somehow equal in value; on the other hand, the subject must be rectified through the judge. For instance, if person A injures person B, A must not only restore something of equal value to B's injury, but also something approaching the value of B until he/she is fully recovered, such as medical fee or other ways of care for B. However, specific cases have to be determined exactly by the judge and are also subject to general societal changes in a given society, e.g. the movement to abolish the death penalty. And yet, "the discussion of restitution is typical: returning something to its proper owner and/or making reparation for a loss or injury inflicted, so restoring the balance, *aequalitas* (ST 2/2.62)."⁹⁵

2. Distributive Justice

While commutative justice is concerned with the relation between individuals or groups of individuals, distributive justice is concerned with "the order of the whole towards the parts, to which corresponds the order of that which belongs to the community in relation to each single person."⁹⁶ That is the relation of the whole to the part or, the community represented by its authority to the individual person or respective groups (e.g. family) of a society.

The characteristic of distributive justice is that the equality is geometrical. In this case, each person will receive something according to the proper standards or positions within a community or given society. Meaning to say, the equality depends not on the quantity, but on merits or needs, because within a given community merits and needs can be diverse. Saint

⁹⁵ Fergus Kerr, *Thomas Aquinas: A Very Short Introduction* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 81.

⁹⁶ *Summa Theologica*, II-II, 61, 1.

Thomas explains following Aristotle: “This prominence in an aristocratic community is gauged according to virtue, in an oligarchy according to wealth, in a democracy according to liberty, and in various ways according to various forms of community.”⁹⁷

In the community, there are two subjects: one is the whole and the other is the individual person. The whole in this case refers to the individuals who are the legitimate rulers and who act in responsibility on behalf of the whole. Therefore, the act of distributing the goods and services of the whole to the individuals belongs to those who exercise authority over those goods and services. On the other hand, the individuals in this case refer to those who belong to that community; they have the right to it, and deserve to receive what is due to them, such as proper compensations, or honors, or social care if need be. Josef Pieper explains accordingly:

Taking part in the realization of that good in accordance with the measure of *dignitas*, capacity, and ability that is distinctively his, this is the share which ‘is due to’ the individual and which cannot be withheld from him by the person administering the *bonum commune* without violating *iustitia distributiva*, the justice proper to rulers.⁹⁸

Therefore, in distributive justice, a person in his or her dignity and as a member of a community has all the rights to participate accordingly in all things which belong to the common good; namely, the earth’s fertility, an economy’s productivity, healthcare, freedom of expression and religion, security social insurance or, even proper punishment. “Is it just for a judge to impose the same punishment on every defendant? Is it just for a teacher to give the same grade to every student?”⁹⁹ Obviously not. Punishments or grades should be proportionate to each case and merit. Another important point to be mentioned is the following:

Even those who have only helped minimally or not at all to create these public goods—the aged, the infirm, children—have a right, created by their mem-

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, II-II, 61, 2.

⁹⁸ Pieper, *The Four Cardinal Virtues*, 99.

⁹⁹ Sponville, *A Small Treatise on the Great Virtues*, 66.

bership in the human community, to share in the public good to a degree compatible with human dignity.¹⁰⁰

In this regard and the insurance in the case of unemployment has to be mentioned, and all help and options to find and to be trained in a new work. Within his treatise on justice, Saint Thomas speaks of a higher kind of justice that he calls *epikeia* or equity which is “a virtue that disposes the person not to be a slave of the letter of the law.”¹⁰¹ *Epikēia* is formulated upon the fact that, it is “not possible to lay down rules of law that would apply to every single case.”¹⁰² Also in this case, his considerations go back to Aristotle in his *Nicomachean Ethics*, Book V, 10 (decency, *epikeial*).

IV - Conclusion

All in all, the reflection of Saint Thomas Aquinas on justice provides us with a clear structure of the two main relations in which justice is relevant. Three kinds of justice occur in these two relations: one is the mutual relationship between the whole and individual: legal or general justice and distributive justice; another one is the relation between individuals and groups in a society: commutative justice.

Medieval Catholic social thought reflected this shift from a community focused on its own expression of love to one which shared responsibility for the preservation of civilization. In the work of saint Thomas Aquinas, Christianity found a synthesis that could embrace both the radical demands of the primitive gospel and the pressing responsibilities of a religious establishment. Aquinas defined society as a system of mutual exchange of services for the common good.¹⁰³

¹⁰⁰ Walter J. Burghardt, *Justice: A Global Adventure* (New York: Orbis Books, 2004), 6.

¹⁰¹ Gómez, *The Journey Continues*, 148.

¹⁰² *Summa Theologica*, II-II, 120, 1.

¹⁰³ David J. O’ Brien and Thomas A. Shannon, *Catholic Social Thought: The Documentary Heritage* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1995), 3.

Accordingly, in Christian social ethics today, beside commutative justice, Christian social ethics underlines more than Saint Thomas the protection of human dignity and rights as formulated especially in the documents of Vatican II. Christian social ethics and Saint Thomas Aquinas would agree in stating that its main principle is charity. It should be added that there cannot be charity without justice. And in the perspective of human work, this principle of justice is highly important and relevant. Whenever the network of work in human society is justly preserved, peace among people will dwell in. And yet, it teaches that the goal of social ethics and of the social doctrine of the Church is peace, and peace cannot be achieved without justice and proper care in human relations.

Chapter Three

SOCIAL JUSTICE IN HUMAN WORK BEFORE POPE SAINT JOHN PAUL II

I - Introduction

The Social Teaching of the Church is deeply rooted in Scriptures and Tradition. The role of the Church in a society is fundamentally religious or spiritual, but also educational at the societal and even political level as *RN* clearly shows. That is, the proclamation of the “good news” (gospel) of salvation in Jesus Christ is comprehensive and integral, not dualistic. The offer of salvation of God to humanity is integral and holistic.¹⁰⁴ The *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church* states: “Salvation for all people and of the whole person: it is universal and integral salvation. It concerns the human person in all his dimensions: personal and social, spiritual and corporeal, historical and transcendent” (no. 38). This means that the salvation offered by God is one that embraces the whole being and the whole life and also all people and societies. Pope Saint John Paul II in his first Encyclical Letter *Redemptor Hominis* (1979) writes that the salvation provided by Christ is for us as whole persons, addressing the integrity of our personhood, but also on the societal or society level.

The Church does not tire of proclaiming the Gospel that brings integral salvation to “man considered whole and entire, with body and soul, heart and conscience, mind and will.” (*Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, 15). Although consisting of body and soul, man is one. Thus, salvation touches man in his two different characteristic dimensions: as a embodied being, linked to this world by his body, and as spiritual being, open to others, the environment and to the transcendence and to the discovery of ever more penetrating truths.

¹⁰⁴ See the establishment of the new Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development at the Vatican on August 17th, 2016.

Pope Paul VI's Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Nuntiandi* (1975) identifies three profound links that exist between evangelization and human advancement: (1) an anthropological order, i.e., the man who is to be evangelized is not an abstract being but is subject to social and economic realities and challenges; (2) a theological order, i.e., one cannot disassociate the plan of creation from the plan of redemption; (3) an evangelical order. i.e., the proclamation of the new commandment of love requires the promotion, in justice and in love, the true, authentic advancement and development of man (par. 31).

The 1971 Synod of Bishops, entitled *Justicia in Mundo*, states clearly: "Action on behalf of justice and participation in the transformation of the world fully appear to us as a constitutive dimension of the preaching of the Gospel" (par. 6).

In her duty of proclaiming the Gospel to the whole world, the Church defends and recognizes the true fundamental issue of human dignity with respect and honor, because being created in the likeness of God, the human person is innate bestowed upon with great dignity. Saint Thomas Aquinas writes in this regard: "To honor a person is to recognize him as having virtue, wherefore virtue alone is the due cause of a person being honored."¹⁰⁵ Therefore, the duty of the Church to be concerned about the human world is undoubted. Fr. Hervé Carrier, S.J states:

From the time of the Fathers of the Church, who were addressing the problems of their epoch, down to the modern Popes formulating Christian social teaching adapted to present situations, the Church has elaborated progressively a set of principles, a body of doctrine on basic issues like the dignity of the person, the role of the family, the function of the State, the private and social aspects of ownership, principles regarding work and industry, the conditions of peace, solidarity and development.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰⁵ *Summa Theologica*, II-II, 63, art. 3.

¹⁰⁶ Hervé Carrier, S.J., *Pontifical Council For Justice and Peace: The Social Doctrine of the Church Revisited: A Guide for Study* (Vatican City: Vatican Polyglot Press, 1990), 42.

This chapter – the presentation on Social Justice in Human Work before Pope Saint John Paul II's period – focuses on two periods: From Pope Leo XIII to Pre-Vatican Council II, and from Vatican Council II to Pre-Pope Saint John Paul II.

II - From Pope Leo XIII to Pre-Vatican Council II

The Industrial Revolution in the eighteenth century, that began in the United Kingdom, led to the invention of the steam machine and consequently the creation of factories. This development brought about a rapid urbanization. People left their rural farms and moved to the cities and urban areas to seek employment and make a living. It is undeniable that the developing factories had a great impact in the Industrial Revolution. In the 20th century mass production and the assembly line made products or items manufactured possible in an even shorter amount of time. People got greater accessibility to products when they were mass produced. Moreover, machines made it cheaper to make these things. In short, the Industrial Revolution brought increased production, wealth and power in Europe in the nineteenth and twentieth century. It opened up the door for manufacturing and industrialization in the world.

But we have yet to explore the effects of industrialization on societies, on the daily living and the working conditions of common people. What was the life like for the average industrial worker and his/her family? Firstly, these developments widened the gap between the “haves” and the “have nots”. The entrepreneurs, who opened the factories, became very rich during the Industrial Revolution; while the majority of people who worked for those entrepreneurs (known as the “working class”) stayed in general soul-crushingly poor. In a way, the Industrial Revolution led to depersonalization and dehumanization. The book by Jeanie Schmit Kayser-Jones entitled *Old, Alone, and Neglected*, describes the effects on human beings:

There is a fine distinction between depersonalization and dehumanization, and although both have detrimental effects, the latter is more serious. Whereas in depersonalization a loss of personality and individuality takes place, dehumanization, or treating a person as a nonhuman (perhaps as an animal or as

an inanimate object), is even more devastating.¹⁰⁷

The Industrial Revolution reinforced free-market capitalism, an economic system that upholds the tenet that governments should have no control over people's businesses. With no government regulation, the poor working classes became an easy prey and victims of inhuman, unjust labor conditions. Since the Industrial Revolution was something new at that time, there were initially no laws to regulate these new developing industries. There were no protective laws that prevented businesses from hiring even seven-year-old children to work full time in coal mines or factories; no laws regulated what factories could do with their biohazardous waste. Consequently, there was no social security for worker as they could be replaced anytime; there existed no work place safety nets, as machineries could easily operate unsafe and life threatening. Workers were forced to work for very long hours (up to 16 hours). Child labor was generally practiced because they required only little compensation. The general living conditions of workers were poor as they lived in crowded tenements with minimal sanitary facilities. The filthy slums, where the working class lived, became breeding ground for diseases, like cholera. All this was dehumanizing and depersonalizing. Because of these consequences and ill-effects of the Industrial Revolution, workers began to organize themselves in the form of trade unions, in order to demand and negotiate for better human working conditions and decent wages for their work and families.

This was the social setting for Pope Leo XIII's seminal Encyclical Letter, *Rerum Novarum* – “Of New Things” (1891) – as the Church's official effort of addressing the new issues facing European societies as a result of the Industrial Revolution. *Rerum Novarum* of 1891 shall become the starting and reference point of a series of papal Encyclical Letters on social ethical issues called the Social Teaching of the Church or Catholic Social Teaching.

¹⁰⁷ Jeanie Schmit Kayser-Jones, *Old, Alone, and Neglected* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990), 46.

The Encyclical Letter *Rerum Novarum* (*RN*) focuses on the basic rights of workers as well as duties of governments and citizens. The plight of the suffering workers and their manifold abuses were raised. Leo XIII expressed moral outrage at the disparity between “the enormous fortunes of some few individuals, and the utter poverty of the masses” (*RN*, par. 1). He showed deep concern for the protection of workers through the necessary regulation of working hours and of providing a just wage. The Encyclical letter states:

Let the working man and the employer make free agreements, and in particular let them agree freely as to the wages; nevertheless, there underlies a dictate of natural justice more imperious and ancient than any bargain between man and man, namely, that wages ought not to be insufficient to support a frugal and well-behaved wage-earner. If through necessity or fear of a worse evil the workman accepts harder conditions because an employer or contractor will afford him no better, he is made the victim of force and injustice.¹⁰⁸

While the Pope in the Encyclical letter expressed concern for the working class, he upheld at the same time the right to private property and rejected the Marxist belief in the necessity and inevitability of ‘class-struggle’. In upholding the dignity of human work, Leo XIII in *Rerum Novarum* laid down the basic principle of the priority of Labor (Work) over Capital. This principle means that people are more important than property and money and that everyone has a right to meet the basic necessities of life and receive a just wage (*RN*, 34) based on “natural justice” (cf. *RN*, no. 45). In *RN* no. 26 Leo XIII identified the role of the state to promote both “public well-being and private prosperity.” This role shall later be known as promoting the Common Good, understood as that which benefits the society as a whole, in contrast to the private good of individuals and mere sections of a society. In simple terms, the rights of one group cannot be set aside for the convenience of a minority. This is a consequence and obligation of justice, even of “natural justice”.

¹⁰⁸ Pope Leo XIII, *RN*, no. 45, cf. nos. 49, 52.

Leo XIII's Encyclical Letter *Rerum Novarum* shows finally the willingness of the universal Church to face and engage constructively with the rapid changes and new developments occurring in modern industrial societies. The Church is engaged with the world as she invites all people to live justly. *Rerum Novarum* states: "First of all, there is no intermediary more powerful (force) than religion (whereof the Church is the interpreter and guardian) in drawing the rich and the working class together, by reminding each of its duties to the other, and especially of the obligations of justice" (*RN*, 19). As the Church engages with the signs of the times, she at the same time draws on the riches of Catholic Tradition to identify the moral issues involved and to contribute positively to viable and just solutions.

Following the concerns of Pope Leo XIII on human work and private property, there were some doctrinal developments during the ensuing pontificates of Pope Pius XI and Pope Pius XII. Both popes developed the Social Teaching further and addressed various new social issues. Rooted in the foundation of faith in the mysteries of Christ, the Church proclaims the Good News and promotes peace in the world by supporting her mission in different parts of the world. For the Church's mission, the human person is the starting and reference point. The change of society during this time, particular at the work place, made the role of the Church to become even more important for protecting all creatures of God.

"Social justice" is a term coined by the Italian Jesuit Father Luigi Taparelli D'Azeglio (1793-1862); it appeared in an 1894 curial document and a 1904 encyclical. Later, Pope Pius XI (1922-39) made it part and parcel of the official Catholic social doctrine.¹⁰⁹ His Encyclical Letter *Quadragesimo Anno* (1931) is characterized by this term. The concept of *social justice*¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁹ Peschke, *Christian Ethics*, Vol. 2, 240.

¹¹⁰ This new term of "social justice" came to focus most clearly with respect to distributive justice, the impartial taxing and distribution of values, so as to achieve the common good. (Social Justice may also be concerned with equal treatment in three other forms of justice: commutative justice, which adjudicates conflicts between parties within the state; distributive justice, which is imposed by the state; and remedial justice, which requires the present redress of past injustice.)" (D. Rhoades, "Social Justice Issues in Pastoral Care," *Dictionary*

“refers to the economic welfare of social groups. As such it demands a proportionate share for the social partners in the fruits of their economic cooperation.”¹¹¹ Social justice “demands proportionate and equitable distribution of the wealth of a nation among the different groups and regions of a society.”¹¹² It is against social justice when the nation’s wealth and land ownership is in the hands of the few, while the majority of the people languish in poverty. It is social injustice when a few rich enjoy all natural resources of the land. Social justice demands that rich countries assist poorer nations, especially those frequently beset by natural calamities and climate change, so that they too can develop and live in a manner worthy of a human being. More than that, “social justice is a reflection of God’s respect and concern for each person and an effort to protect the essential human freedom necessary for each person to achieve his or her destiny as a child of God.”¹¹³

Pope John XXIII continued to promote Church Teaching in his time as a leader of the Catholic Church. Regarding human work, he spoke on the matter of justice in the workplace. This must be determined by the laws of justice and equity. Therefore, “workers must be paid a wage which allows them to live a truly human life and to fulfill their family obligations in a worthy manner.”¹¹⁴ Another point on which he wrote about is the common good which affects private property. For him, not only do all humans have individual rights, but all of us have

of Pastoral Care and Counseling, ed. Rodney J. Hunter et al., (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2005), 1189. See also, Pius XI, *Divini Redemptoris*, no. 51.

¹¹¹ Peschke, *Christian Ethics*, 240. See also, Pius XI, *Quadragesimo Anno*, no. 47, 110; Pius XII, *Sertum Laetitiae*, no. 37.

¹¹² *Ibid.*

¹¹³ Paul Roy quoted in his book from the National Conference of Catholic Bishops of The United States in 1978 on page 5 of the document entitled, “To Do the Work of Justice—A Plan of Action for the Catholic Community in the United States.” Paul Roy, S.J., *Buiding Christian Communities for Justice* (New York/Ramsey: Paulist Press, 1981), 107-108.

¹¹⁴ Pope John XXIII, *MM*, 1961, no. 18-26; cf., see also, *Summa Theologica*, II-II, 58, 7, ad 2 and 152, 4, ad 3.

responsibilities to make sure that the rights of others are upheld in order to improve the overall social life. He emphasizes:

...that men be guided by justice, respect the rights of others and do their duty. It demands, too, that they be animated by such love as will make them feel the needs of others as their own, and induce them to share their goods with others, and to strive in the world to make all men alike heirs to the noblest of intellectual and spiritual values.¹¹⁵

Following that line, Pope John XXIII in his Encyclical Letter *Mater et Magistra (MM)* (1961), calls all Christians to work for a more just world. He declares that the Church is “Mother and Teacher of all nations.”¹¹⁶ Therefore, the Church has the duty, in responsibility to care and guide God’s people. “The Catholic Church, in imitation of Christ and in fulfilment of His commandment, relies not merely upon her teaching to hold aloft the torch of charity, but also upon her own widespread example.”¹¹⁷ He challenges all people of good will, sons and daughters of Christ, to become and be true witnesses to a world that really cares for others.

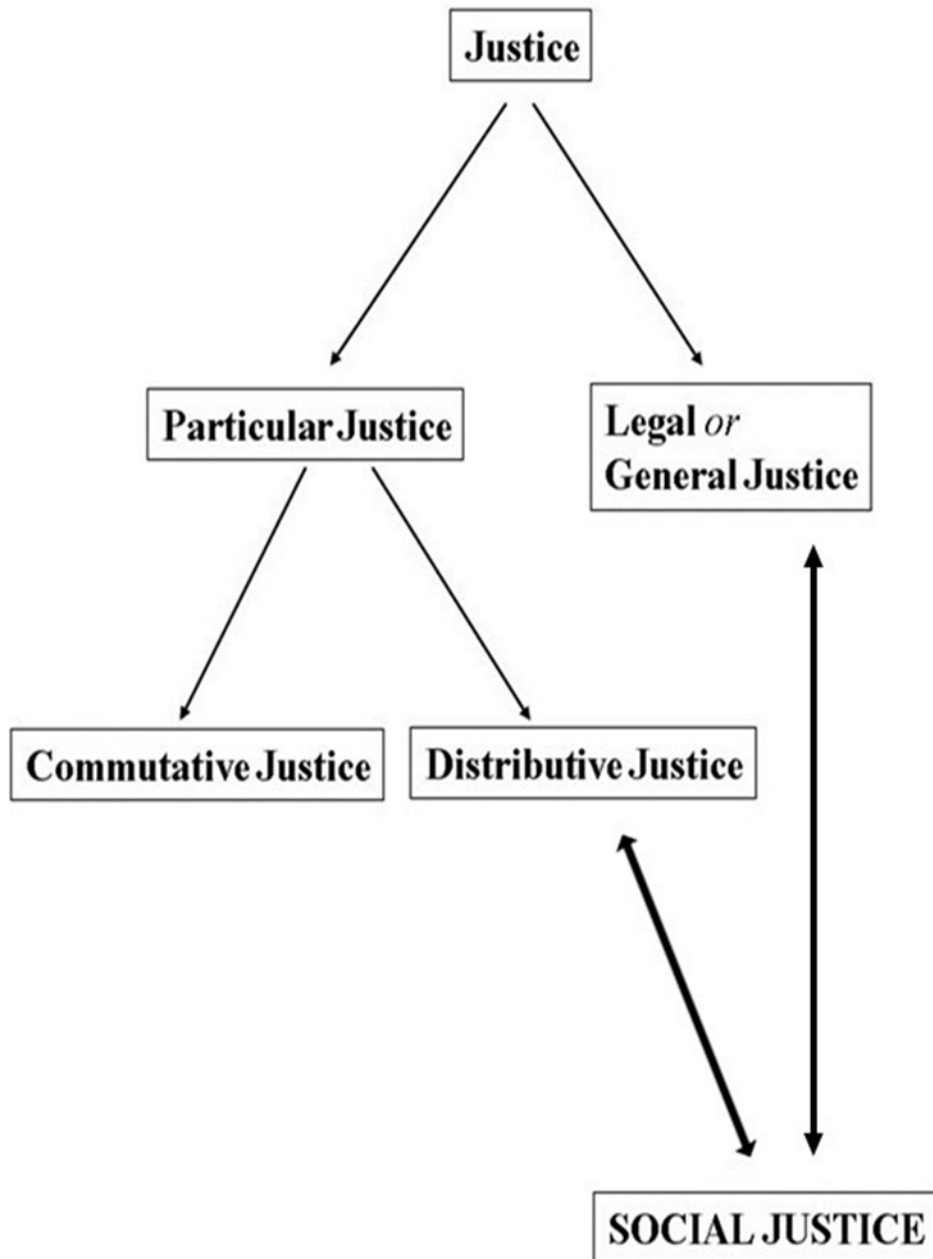
¹¹⁵ Pope John XXIII, *PT*, no. 35. See also, Pius XI, *QA*, no. 110: “...the public institutions of themselves, of people, moreover, ought to make all human society conform to the needs of the common good; that is, to the norm of social justice.”

¹¹⁶ Pope John XXIII, *MM*, no. 1.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, no. 6.

THE DIAGRAM ON SOCIAL JUSTICE

(The structure of building up the concept of Social Justice by the researcher)



III - From Vatican Council II to Pre-Pope Saint John Paul II

The Vatican Council II (1962-1965) tried its best to dialogue with the contemporary world and its challenges. This can be clearly seen in her Pastoral Constitution *Gaudium et Spes* (GS, 1965), which gives an overview of the Catholic Church's teachings about humanity and society, especially in reference to poverty, family, social justice, culture, science, technology, economics, politics, and ecumenism. The document declares "... the Church has always had the duty of scrutinizing the signs of the times and of interpreting them in the light of the Gospel" (par. 4). *Gaudium et Spes* is widely heralded as a landmark of Catholic social teaching. According to the document, "The best way to fulfill one's obligations of justice and love is to contribute to the common good according to one's means and the needs of others, even to the point of fostering and helping public and private organizations devoted to bettering the conditions of life" (GS. 30).

According to the intention and spirit of *GS*, the Church pays great attention to matters of justice for the poor and poor countries and poor sectors of societies. This focus and option for the poor is highlighted in its opening proclamation: "The joy and hope, the grief and anguish of the men of our time, especially of those who are poor or afflicted in any way, are the joy and hope, the grief and anguish of the followers of Christ as well" (GS no. 1). "In this regard, the Second Vatican Council speaks of the role of the church insofar as the church becomes of sacrament of freedom in participation with God's historical process of humanization."¹¹⁸

Promoting social justice contributes positively to the situation of the poor as well it gives credibility to the preaching the Gospel. Accordingly, in economic life, especially in

¹¹⁸ Cardinal Gerhard Ludwig Müller, "Chapter 4: Liberation Theology In Context," in Gustavo Gutiérrez and Cardinal Gerard Ludwig Müller, *On the Side of the Poor: The theology of Liberation*, trans. Robert A. Krieg and James B. Nickoloff (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2015): 54-82, esp. 75.

relation to the significance of work and of sound economic development, the Church calls to the attention:

Although rightful differences exist between men, the equal dignity of persons demands that a more humane and just condition of life be brought about. For excessive economic and social differences between the members of the one human family or population groups cause scandal and militate against social justice, equity, the dignity of the human person, as well as social and international peace.¹¹⁹

The concept of social justice became again a topic of concern in the documents of the Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, particularly in the Declaration *Nostra Aetate* (*NA*), which is about the Relation of the Church with Non-Christian Religions. The Council exhorted towards a deep sense of dialogue between Christians, Muslims and members of other religions to “preserve as well as to promote together for the benefit of all mankind social justice and moral welfare, as well as peace and freedom.”¹²⁰

Blessed Pope Paul VI is “a pope of peace.”¹²¹ He continued to develop the teaching of Second Vatican Council and specifically the Church’s social doctrine. Well known in this regard is his Encyclical Letter *Populorum Progressio* (*PP*) from 1967. The pope asserted the connection between Christian faith and human and social development, as well the pursuit of economic justice for all. He wrote, "God intended the earth and everything in it for the use of all human beings and peoples. Thus, under the leadership of justice and in the company of charity, created goods should flow fairly to all."¹²² This expression manifests that, Pope Paul

¹¹⁹ Vatican Council II, *NA*, no. 29; see also nos. 63, 66.

¹²⁰ Vatican Council II, *NA*, no. 3.

¹²¹ Roy, *Buiding Christian Communities for Justice*, 110.

¹²² Pope Paul VI, *PP*, no. 22.

VI further proposes the notion of human beings who have a vocation, right, and duty in view of the development of human society on earth, in particular through work.

The Church has been developing her teaching on social justice unceasingly. From the fundamental standpoint of human dignity, then, to work is related to economics which is created by human beings in a society. In the document *PP*, with similar intentions as *NA*, Blessed Pope Paul VI called for a dialogue between nations to work for and achieve justice at every level. That is the requirement of social justice as Peschke summarized: “It imposes obligations upon nations in their mutual relations. It binds the economically advanced countries to assist nations in poverty and misery, so that they can live in a manner worthy of human beings.”¹²³ Regarding this matter, Blessed Pope Paul VI re-affirms the teaching of Pope Leo XIII as expressed in *RN*. He expanded the social question of *RN* and applied it now on international level calling for just economic and political relationships between peoples and nations. He writes:

The teaching set forth by Our predecessor Leo XIII in *Rerum Novarum* is still valid today: when two parties are in very unequal positions, their mutual consent alone does not guarantee a fair contract; the rule of free consent remains subservient to the demands of the natural law. (57) In *Rerum Novarum* this principle was set down with regard to a just wage for the individual worker; but it should be applied with equal force to contracts made between nations: trade relations can no longer be based solely on the principle of free, unchecked competition, for it very often creates an economic dictatorship. Free trade can be called just only when it conforms to the demands of social justice.¹²⁴

Finally in this part, the document of the Bishops Synod *Justitia in Mundo (JM)* (Justice in the World) from 1971 has to be mentioned. On the issue of justice in human work in societies, the

¹²³ Peschke, *Christian Ethics, vol. II: Special Moral Theology*, 235.

¹²⁴ Pope Paul VI, *PP*, no. 59; see also nos. 60-64: the Pope mentioned here the matters of standards, as well as of obstacles in the way of the pursuit of social justice among nations and was expecting a solution to nourish hope for the future.

Synod speaks about aspects of economic growth that can bring hope for human lives in view of a better world and also how it would be possible to feed the hungry. However, it was a vain hope. Why?

because of the rapid growth of population and of the labor force, because of rural stagnation and the lack of agrarian reform, and because of the massive migratory flow to the cities, where the industries, even though endowed with huge sums of money, nevertheless provide so few jobs that not infrequently one worker in four is left unemployed.¹²⁵

To solve this problem, the Synod addressed the level of international political and economic institutions and emphasized that development of societies depend very much on the implementation of justice in societies and on the global level.

Studying further this document, one could say, *JM* is a “call to action” rather than a doctrinal statement. And yet, the document analyzes the concrete realities and fundamental conditions in the world in the light of the Gospel. For that reason, the document speaks of the Church’s witness to the world in her teaching and practice of justice. The Synod of Global Bishops expressed the first time in history the view that, “the Church is bound to give witness to justice, she recognizes that anyone who ventures to speak to people about justice must first be just in their eyes.”¹²⁶ A witness for justice has to practice justice first in the own ranks in order to be credible to others.

To give witness to the world in the perspective of Christians, the Synod started from the individual person. That is, the requirement to the way of living day to day a life of individual believers, then to the family which is the most important place of educating for justice. Following that, it must reach the societal level, and in a society, the first is the government who

¹²⁵ Synod of Bishops, *JM*, no. 10.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*, no. 39.

has to give witness to justice.¹²⁷ In doing so, the desire of the Synod of Bishops is to obtain the goal by which “the radical transformation of the world in the Paschal Mystery of the Lord gives full meaning to the efforts of people, and in particular of the young, to lessen injustice, violence and hatred and to advance all together in justice, freedom, kinship and love.”¹²⁸

IV - Conclusion

All in all, from the time of Pre-Vatican Council II to Post-Vatican Council II, the Church got concerned more about matters of society, and one of these concerns is the matter of social justice in human work. As Paul Roy stated, “from Leo XIII to John Paul II, our leaders have taught that justice for all people is a special concern of the Church and that work for justice is part of the Church’s mission.”¹²⁹ Particularly, in this thesis within the context of social justice, justice specifically in human work is addressed. That is, “the popes have been led to discuss economic doctrines and affairs in the name of justice.”¹³⁰ In the network of human work, they speak of different duties in regard to justice which relate to relationships between individuals, between individuals and society, and between the leaders of a society and its members. In the next chapter we shall focus specifically on Pope Saint John Paul II’s teaching on the issue of justice in human work.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*, nos. 49-73.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*, no. 76.

¹²⁹ Roy, S.J., *Building Christian Communities for Justice*, 103.

¹³⁰ Jean-Yves Calvez, S.J and Jacques Perrin, S.J., *The Church And Social Justice: The Social Teaching of the Popes from Leo XIII to Pius XII* (Chicago: Henry Regnery Company, 1961), 133.

Overview on Social Issues on Work and official Response of the Catholic Church

(This table is a result of the researcher's note-taking from different sources)

Year/ Period	Social situational problems	Documents/Church response
1891	The European world was incredible societal political, and economical complex. It was in social turmoil, given the effects of the social, economic, and political transitions from late medieval feudalism to capitalism in the process of the Industrial Revolution.	<p>The Condition of Labor (<i>Rerum Novarum</i>) – Encyclical Letter, Leo XIII.</p> <p>Lays out rights and responsibilities of capitalistic factory owners (owners) and labor (workers). Describes the proper role of the government.</p>
1931	From the aftermath of World War I, to the consolidation of the Russian communist regime and the rise of fascism in Italy and Nazism in Germany, to the deterioration of the international economy into worldwide depression and accompanying political unrest.	<p>After Forty Years (<i>Quadragesimo anno</i>) – Encyclical Letter, Pius XI.</p> <p>The document on the fortieth anniversary of Pope Leo XIII's <i>Rerum Novarum</i>. Besides the issues on worker and work, <i>QA</i> was written and promulgated in a climate thick with economic and political challenges and tensions. It is famous to have clarified and formulated the principle of subsidiarity (<i>QA</i>, no. 79).</p>
1937	The problems of Atheistic Communism threatens Christian civilizations and is upsetting the social order. Human at work are just as a means of production.	<p>Of the Divine Redeemer (<i>Divini Redemptoris</i>) – Encyclical Letter, Pius XI.</p> <p>Human civilization should be marked by love, respect for human dignity, economic justice, and the rights of workers. A call to all industrialists and employers who do not adequately support their workers and causing a climate of discontent.</p>
1961	A trend of people moving away from farms toward cities was partly due to economic growth, but it also reflected depression in the occupation of farming and inadequate living standards in many rural areas. This problem manifested that the gap between the rich and the poor cities or countries was widening.	<p>Mother and Teacher (<i>Mater et Magistra</i>) – Encyclical Letter, John XXIII.</p> <p>Calls for Christians to work for a more just world. Pope John talks about the fundamental problem of society and the matter of productive efficiency between agriculture on the one hand, and industry and service economy on the other; and to ensure that in the agricultural sector living standards reach as closely as possible those enjoyed by city dwellers who draw their resources mainly from industries.</p>

1965	Problems of growing world poverty and threat of nuclear war. Many poor countries came under oppressive structures.	The Church in the Modern World (<i>Gaudium et Spes</i>) – Bishops of the entire world at Vatican II. Emphasizes dialogue with non-Christian religions & other Christian churches; States responsibility of Christians to work for changes in structures to give way to a more just and peaceful world. But this require also a change of hearts (<i>GS</i> no. 82).
1967	The problematic of economic justice had made-up the political mechanisms through-out the world on decries economic structures promoting inequality; meanwhile national labor unions and laws insufficient.	The Development of Peoples (<i>Populorum Progressio</i>) – Encyclical Letter, Paul VI. An attempt to formulate the relationship of faith. Affirms the right of poor nations for full human development. Calls for new international organizations and agreements. Sound development means the development of the <i>whole</i> person and of <i>all</i> persons.
1971	The desperate situation of the poor nations, in contrast the world's resources are controlled and consumed by the society's people who live in technologically advanced nations where most of the people are Christians.	Justice in the world (<i>Iustitia in Mundo</i>) – Synod of Bishops. Names action for justice as a constituent part of being a Christian. Calls the Church to model herself the justice she preaches, as the promotion of justice is an essential part of the mission of the Church and the Good News.
1971	The globalization of capital, many new nations come into being, often new multiethnic and multicultural constituencies for which previous state models were not appropriate, and for whom global economy did not provide basic justice.	A Call to Action on the Eightieth Anniversary of <i>Rerum novarum</i> (<i>Octogesima adveniens</i>) – The Apostolic Letter, Paul VI. An insistence that the dignity of human beings and their ongoing humanization requires a universal participation in politics especially of lay people broadly understood, specifically in participation in decision making processes towards the common good.
1975	Marxist analysis led to pressure and confusion. The different interpretations of the theology of liberation and the liberation theology movement was controversial at that time.	On Evangelization in the Modern World (<i>Evangelii Nuntiandi</i>) - Apostolic Exhortation, Paul VI. It teaches that human development is linked to the Good News in the anthropological, theological, and evangelical orders. Salvation is not just about changing the structures of society but is about eternal life. But both are deeply interrelated. (see Müller, “Liberation Theology in Context,” p. 80).

Chapter Four

POPE SAINT JOHN PAUL II ON SOCIAL JUSTICE IN HUMAN WORK

I - Introduction

Pope Saint John Paul II (May 18, 1920 - April 2, 2005), throughout his long papacy, has bequeathed the Catholic Church and the world with great treasures, not only through his compassionate advocacy for the poor and the downtrodden people, but also overall by his teaching and writings.¹³¹ As a long term leader of the global Catholic Church, he strongly promoted since the beginning of his papacy 1978 that “the dignity of the person is an integral part of the proclamation of the gospel, and the Church must stand committed to protecting true human freedom (*Redemptor Hominis*, no. 12).”¹³² This emphasis on the dignity of all humans finds resonance in all his teaching. As Keith Fournier emphasizes:

Like a lion in Peter's chair, he consistently and tirelessly lived what he boldly proclaimed with great courage. Unafraid, he traversed the globe, proclaiming freedom to the captives and truth to the victims of failed false ideologies that had ravaged the people of the twentieth century, the bloodiest in all of human history. He has not stopped passionately re-presenting the classical, unchanging, Christian message with a prophetic urgency, profound clarity and contemporary relevance.¹³³

As the vicar of Christ on Earth, Pope Saint John Paul II traveled around the world, visited 129 countries to spread the message of faith and peace, and “has been a strong advocate of justice and human rights, speaking forcefully on behalf of the poor.”¹³⁴ In his entire life, he

¹³¹ Pope John Paul II clarified in a letter to the Brazilian conference of bishops in 1986, “that the theology of Liberation is not only opportune but also valuable and necessary.” (Quoted from: Müller, “Liberation Theology in Context,” 56).

¹³² O’ Brien and Shannon, *Catholic Social Thought: The Documentary Heritage*, 348.

¹³³ Deacon Keith Fournier, “St. Pope John Paul II,” <http://www.catholic.org/pope/jp2/pope.php> (Accessed November 22, 2016).

¹³⁴ O’ Brien and Shannon, *Catholic Social Thought: The Documentary Heritage*, 347.

strongly supported and further developed the teaching of the Catholic Church on moral and social issues in view of promoting justice and peace in the world. Thomas Storck states, “John Paul II’s encyclicals and other writings have often been longer and more meditative than those of previous pontiffs. In a sense, he has created a body of work which is a consciously interrelated statement of the Faith.”¹³⁵ His emphasis on justice and peace is understandable having been “a Polish Christian who has suffered injustice, from a priest who has been a laborer, and from a pope who has so often declared (e.g., in Medellin, Colombia, July 6, 1986) that ‘no one can snatch from the hands of the Church the banner of justice.’”¹³⁶ Thus, from this it is reasonable to ask the question: what does justice mean in human work for Pope Saint John Paul II?

II – Basic Theological Social Principles as Understood and Taught by Pope Saint John Paul II

The affirmation that God created humans in his own image and likeness is not only found in Pope Saint John Paul II’s teaching but is consistent with Christian philosophy and theology. God is the creator of everything and he has called humankind to subdue and care responsible for the earth through work. Human labor, then, becomes an imitation of God’s activity. Through work, humans participate in the creative activity of God. Work is properly for humans; it is fundamental to the dignity of the human person and thus unemployment, especially of young people, is a grave social problem. Human beings, created in the image of God, are

¹³⁵ Thomas Storck, “Catholic Social Teaching: John Paul II, *Laborem Exercens*,” *Catholic Education Resource Center*, <http://www.catholiceducation.org/en/culture/catholic-contributions/catholic-social-teaching-john-paul-ii-laborem-exercens.html> (Accessed November 22, 2016).

¹³⁶ Luigi Accattoli, *When A Pope Asks Forgiveness: The Mea Culpa’s of John Paul II*, trans. Jordan Aumann, OP (Boston: Pauline Books & Media, 1998), 169.

responsible makers (*homo faber*) and stewards. Their capacity for innovation, invention, and creativity are reflections of being created in the image and likeness of God (see Chapter 1).

Following the Bible and Catholic Social Teaching, work is, for Pope Saint John Paul II, a very fundamental dimension of human existence. In the opening paragraph of his Encyclical Letter *Laborem Exercens*, the Pontiff writes:

Work is one of the characteristics that distinguishes man from the rest of creatures, whose activity for sustaining their lives cannot be called work. Only man is capable of work, and only man works, at the same time by work occupying his existence on earth. Thus work bears a particular mark of man and of humanity, the mark of a person operating within a community of persons.

Human dignity finds special expression in the dignity of human work. If the dignity of human work has to be protected, then the basic rights of workers must be upheld anywhere and anytime. Meaning to say, the human person must be at the center of all social concerns. Pope Saint John Paul II has been an ardent promoter of justice in human work. So, how to understand the challenges for the human person regarding social justice today, particular in relation to work and the work place? To understand the concept “Person” and how it is related to justice, the Pope begins with the philosophical notion of “being” and the beings are called and provoked by *the* Being, which is unquestionable God. Let us now look more deeply into these two aspects of his teaching, “person” and “being”.

A. The Dignity of the Worker as a human Person

Following the traditional Aristotelian and Thomistic philosophy, Pope Saint John II developed the concept of human being which is built and based on the Scriptures. To understand properly the concept of human being in contemporary Church Teaching, the Saint develops his teaching with the philosophical and anthropological discussion regarding the issue of being. According to him, the two notions of being are “object” and “subject.” The object is a being, an independent of things, and primarily an object is in it-self and more or less the same

as “entity.” The subject is also a being that includes personal beings and it is an “entity.” In the relation of these two elements of being, the object is a thing which is opposed to a subject or related to a subject.¹³⁷ And, “every subject also exists as an object, an objective ‘someone’ or ‘something’.”¹³⁸ Accordingly, the world in which we live is composed of many objects and, “the whole world of objects, in a purely subjective way, to deal with it only as it enters into the consciousness of a subject, establishes itself and dwells in that con-sciousness.”¹³⁹ Thus, the world, where we live, is the world of objects, which are people and things. A being that is, Pope Saint John Paul II had come to a conclusion that a *person*¹⁴⁰ “is an objective entity, which as a definite subject has closest contacts with the whole (external) world and is most intimately involved with it precisely because of its inwardness, its interior life.”¹⁴¹ That is, “the crucial factor is *the ‘actus,’* doing as such, the actual realization of the state of being: ‘*esse est illud quod est intimum cuiuslibet et quod profundius omnibus inest,* to be, the act-of-being, is the innermost thing for every being and that which is most deeply of all embodied in each.”¹⁴²

¹³⁷ Rocco Buttiglione, *Karol Wojtyla: The Thought of the Man Who Became Pope John Paul II*, trans. Paolo Guietti and Francesca Murphy (Cambridge: William B. Eerdmans, 1997), 86.

¹³⁸ Karol Wojtyla, *Love and Responsibility*, tran. H. T. Willetts (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1993), 21.

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*, 21.

¹⁴⁰ The concept *Person* of its nature by the two different views: one is the philosophical view and the other is the biblical view. However, they are connected in the teaching of Pope Saint John Paul II. From the *Dictionary of Pastoral Care and Counseling*, eds. Rodney J. Hunter, et al., (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2005): 888 & 545. First, philosophical issue according to C. S. Evans: “A general term used primarily though not exclusively to refer to human being to demarcate their special status when compared to inanimate objects and lower species of animals. To call someone a person is to emphasize that this individual is not a mere ‘thing’ or ‘object’, but is in some sense a subject or self” (p. 888). Second, the Biblical view, according to R. S. Anderson: “The Bible does not suggest that human nature exists independently of the creaturely, historical, and social existence of human persons. In the OT, the human person is placed in a context of concrete historical and social existence under the determination of the divine Word, and endowed with the image and likeness of God. The human person is neither the soul in abstraction from the body nor the body as the repository of soul. As embodied soul and ensouled body, the human person exists as a unique duality of material and nonmaterial being with a positive orientation toward the other, the divine Creator, and the self. Human nature, therefore, is not a blind and deterministic creaturely force that must be tamed and made human, but it is only nature because it is first of all human. And being human, it is essentially personal and spiritual as experienced in a social and historical continuum of creaturely reality” (p. 545).

¹⁴¹ Wojtyla, *Love and Responsibility*, 23.

¹⁴² For Pieper’s study on the work of Saint Thomas Aquinas, see his book, Josef Pieper, *Guide to Thomas Aquinas*, trans. Richard and Clara Winston (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1991), 140.

Furthermore, Pope Saint John Paul II emphasized that a person (as a subjective entity) in this visible world is limited and imperfect in his/her-self. As an imperfect being he cannot be compared to the absolute Being, that is, God. But, the imperfect human being has a great value for the absolute Being. The *Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC)* explains:

Being in the image of God the human individual possesses the dignity of a person, who is not just some-thing, but some one. He is capable of self-knowledge, of self-possession and of freely giving himself and entering into communion with other persons. And he is called by grace to a covenant with his Creator, to offer him a response of faith and love that no other creature can give in his stead.¹⁴³

This conviction of Pope Saint John Paul II is also expressed clearly in the Encyclical Letter *Redemptor Hominis*. The dignity of human beings derives from the Creator himself (created in the image and likeness of God), but were damaged by the disobedience of the very first parents of humankind, called Adam and Eve, now restored and saved and becoming more important in this world through the covenant of love in which the Son of God became Man and “He who is the 'image of the invisible God' (*Col 1:15*).”¹⁴⁴ He lives and works among human beings (see chapter one). Pope Saint John Paul II argues:

Human nature, by the very fact that it was assumed, not absorbed, in him, has been raised in us also to a dignity beyond compare. For, by his Incarnation, he, the son of God, *in a certain way united himself with each man*. He worked with human hands, he thought with a human mind. He acted with a human will, and with a human heart he loved.¹⁴⁵

That is, a human person has a great dignity which is endowed to her/him by the Creator himself, therefore, “we must never treat a person as the means to an end.”¹⁴⁶ Pope Saint John Paul II

¹⁴³ CCC, no. 357.

¹⁴⁴ Pope John Paul II, Encyclical Letter *Redemptor Hominis*, March 4, 1979, no. 8, http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_04031979_redemptor-hominis.html (Accessed March 15, 2017).

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, no. 8.

¹⁴⁶ Wojtyła, *Love and Responsibility*, 27.

has confirmed that “the dignity of the human person, whose defense and promotion have been entrusted to humans by the Creator, and to whom men and women at every moment of history are strictly and responsibly in debt.”¹⁴⁷ That is, the Creator blessed humans and commanded them to be fruitful and multiply, fill the earth, subdue, and rule it (Gen 1: 28). This is the duty and responsibility of humans in this world. And all are equal in dignity in this regard. Therefore, all human beings are called to live together in solidarity under the same roof of mother earth by working for the good of all.

B. Solidarity, Common Good, and Social Justice

No human being is an island. We are totally interdependent with each other.¹⁴⁸ Our social connectedness can make our sense of solidarity become stronger. As one author writes, “We are drawn into solidarity and dialogue with others because we are inherently social being.”¹⁴⁹ All actions against human dignity, justice, and so forth are actions against solidarity and the values and reality of the Kingdom of God. These actions destroy the unity of individuals in the society; at the same time they affect and can even destroy the common good. Pope Saint John Paul II defines solidarity as “a firm and persevering determination to commit oneself to the common good; that is to say, to the good of all and of each individual because we are all really responsible for all.”¹⁵⁰ Solidarity for the common good is an obligation and an essential part of social justice. Social justice presupposes the combination of legal, commutative (like

¹⁴⁷ Pope John Paul II, *SRS*, no. 47.

¹⁴⁸ This is a main focus of the Encyclical Letter *Laudato Si'* of Pope Francis (2015).

¹⁴⁹ Margaret Lavin, *Vatican II: Fifty Years of Evolution and Revolution in the Catholic Church* (Toronto, Ontario: Novalis, 2012), 46.

¹⁵⁰ Pope John Paul II, *SRS*, no. 38.

decent wage = issue of justice in exchange), and distributive justice. Therefore, work for the common good must be pursued “in a spirit of solidarity, not class egoism.”¹⁵¹

On the matter of human work, as explained above, the human person is the subject of things, man stands over capital. However, the development of human civilizations, while it ushers in positive changes for human lives, also brings negative consequences with it. Social change, together with technology, tends to replace human work. The first victims of this development were industrial workers. They were profoundly challenged by situation at work, the exploitation which they experienced as a result of unfair labor practices, unjust wages, inhumane working conditions, lack of social security, and so forth. Basically, the liberal capitalist system and philosophy considers the human being to be merely a means for production and ever greater profits. Pope Saint John Paul II states:

The call to solidarity and common action addressed to the workers especially to those engaged in narrowly specialized, monotonous and depersonalized work in industrial plants, when the machine tends to dominate man was important and eloquent from the point of view of social ethics.¹⁵²

It is clear that Pope Saint John Paul II is protecting the voiceless, the poor, and the victims who are abused by the power of the capital and their owners. Individuals are fundamental for a society; in solidarity, each individual person is protected in mutual relationship with others, that is, for the good of one-self and at the same time for the good of the whole society. Hence, “the common good is the fruit of the mutual recognition which each person accords the other, the true expression of their equality of nature, while what we have to deal with here are the standards them-selves.”¹⁵³ Therefore, the call for solidarity is the call for a reaction against

¹⁵¹ Rodger Charles, “The Social Teaching Of John Paul II And Its Implications For Catholic Education For Life,” *John Paul the Great: Maker of the post-conciliar Church* (Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2005), 156.

¹⁵² Pope John Paul II, *LE*, no. 8.

¹⁵³ Jean-Yves Calvez and Jacques Perrin, *The Church And Social Justice: The Social Teaching OF the Popes from Leo XIII to PIUS XII*, 133.

unjust actions. For “the praxis of solidarity refers basically to activities geared to defend and promote human dignity, human rights, social justice and love among peoples and nations.”¹⁵⁴ As one example, Denis Goulet, commenting on the teaching of Pope Saint John Paul II on human work, writes: “John Paul II invites manager and workers to a loft vision of shared responsibility for promoting human welfare in society.”¹⁵⁵

The call for solidarity is the call for change in view of a better life for all in society, a just society where people treat each other with respect, love, and justice. In economic matters, Pope Saint John Paul II longed for a better world where people can live in peace and where the value of every human being and his/her dignity is fully recognized. So, how can this be accomplished? While there are many proposed solutions, “the conversion of heart alone is the answer to these; it leads to true solidarity; those with economic power should use that power justly, while those without it should do what they can for the common good.”¹⁵⁶ When people in a given society are of one heart and one mind seeking the common good, this is one positive sign to make for a change in a society.

Moreover, Christian solidarity is higher because of the demands of love of God and love of the neighbors, especially the poor. Meaning to say, the love of God must be reflected in the love of a person for his neighbors as in the sense of a transformation of the individual him/her-self, then of the relationships to others and to the world. Therefore, it is a duty of human persons to subdue and transform society so that it becomes a world of solidarity. To live in solidarity is to live and to love his/her neighbors. At the very beginning of creation, God

¹⁵⁴ Fausto Gomez, O.P., *The Praxis of Justice and Solidarity* (Manila: Social Research Center University of Santo Tomas, 1988), 181.

¹⁵⁵ Denis Goulet, “Economic Systems, Middle Way Theories, and Third World Realities,” *Reading In Moral Theology No. 5: Official Catholic Social Teaching*, eds. Charles E. Curran and Richard A. McCormick, S.J (New York/ Mahwah: Paulist Press, 1986), 360.

¹⁵⁶ Charles, “The Social Teaching Of John Paul II And Its Implications For Catholic Education For Life,” 157.

put the task of solidarity to humans. Humans are called to solidarity, especially Christians and the Church, as sons and daughters of God.

Following from that, the Church is a community and witness a civilization of love and justice. Every member of this community has a heavy weight to be a witness, to choose freely to do good and to love one another. The original idea of Christian morality is not first to change others, or to change the structures of the society, but the fundamental conversion of man. The world can be never changed, unless through the change of human hearts and persons in it. The standard of living of a society can also never be changed, unless there is a renewal or change of social structures following the change of hearts. In addition, Pope Saint John Paul II emphasized that, it is not the role of the clerical Church to intervene directly in political structures and the organization of social life, but to give witness to the liberating power of the Good News, which can and will transform hearts and societies in a long run. Of course, active lay people should be interested in politics and be open to take on even political offices and exercise them in a responsible and just manner, being inspired and guided by the treasure and insights of Catholic Social Teaching, and nourished by the presence of the Lord in their lives, e.g. in the sacraments.

Many problems exist in our contemporary societies. Although many people are trying to solve them, but often they fail. And when improvements or changes in a society can be achieved, soon new problems in a new form will emerge. As an example, in the past centuries, there were slaves, today we do not formally call people slaves any more; but practically slaves still exist today in many cases and surely at the work place as well. Or, in this modern world, often a just salary could be higher, but corruption is often stronger and hinders just improvements. On the occasion of the World Day Of Peace Message 2015, Pope Francis claimed:

Today, as in the past, slavery is rooted in a notion of the human person which allows him or her to be treated as an object. Whenever sin corrupts the human heart and distances us from our Creator and our neighbors, the latter are no longer regarded as beings of equal dignity, as brothers or sisters sharing a common humanity, but rather as objects.¹⁵⁷

Even though people tried many ways to make the world to become a better place, often in reality they could not succeed. Truly, to find an answer to the many social problems in contemporary societies is very difficult and it needs combined efforts and good teamwork. And if we are aware of our weakness and let us be filled with God's grace and help, we can certainly do better and more. Therefore for us, "with faith in God, and with co-operation between peoples and respect for human rights, solidarity and respect for our world,"¹⁵⁸ we can be open to answers. On the whole, in view of the common good "the solidarity that we propose is the path to peace and at the same time to develop,"¹⁵⁹ which brings about change from what is unjust in hearts, behaviors, and structures towards what is just and filling to the values of the Kingdom of God. That is the goal of solidarity. To live in solidarity means to be open for change and fight for justice in order to reach solidarity and peace. For instance, the respective human rights for workers must be honestly considered, effectively respected fully, implemented, and comprehensively protected by employers and the society in general.

C. The Human Rights of the Worker

Human dignity is the fundamental designation of every human person, and his/her human rights are derived from it. "The truth about man is that the primordial anthropology of

¹⁵⁷ Pope Francis, "No Longer Slaves, but Brothers and Sisters," *World Day of Peace Message 2015*, http://en.radiovaticana.va/news/2014/12/10/day_of_peace_message__%E2%80%9Cno_longer_slaves,_but_brothers/1114217 (Accessed 10, December 2016).

¹⁵⁸ Charles, "The Social Teaching Of John Paul II And Its Implications For Catholic Education For Life," 157.

¹⁵⁹ Pope John Paul II, *SRS*, no. 39, cf. No. 26, 42, and 48. http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_30121987_sollicitudo-rei-socialis.html (Accessed October 10, 2016).

Genesis does not accommodate the idea of him as a mere fragment of nature, for he is made in God's image."¹⁶⁰ A human person primary dignity by his or her nature, must lead to accept and protect the natural rights which were given to him or her by the Creator (here can be understood in terms of natural law. Cf. *Veristatis Splendor* 43). "The secondary rights belong to many different roles in society and are determined by custom and by law."¹⁶¹ Namely, the right to work, the right to free expression, the right of religious freedom, to engage in business, to worship God, and so on.

Accordingly, Church Teaching since Pope John XXIII emphasizes that, human rights are universal and based upon an objective moral order or natural law. This differs from the understanding and interpretation of civil positive rights which are formulated by the laws of the State and can be changed. Therefore, inasmuch as human rights are founded upon human nature, "they are present in all human beings, without exception of time, place, or subject."¹⁶² That is, these rights are not measured by man, but by God. To illustrate this point and as a declaration of the Church Teaching:

Respect for the human person entails respect for the rights that flow from his dignity as a creature. These rights are prior to society and must be recognized by it. They are the basis of the moral legitimacy of every authority: by flouting them, or refusing to recognize them in its positive legislation, a society undermines its own moral legitimacy. If it does not respect them, authority can rely only on force or violence to obtain obedience from its subjects. It is the Church's role to remind men of good will of these rights and to distinguish them from unwarranted or false claims.¹⁶³

¹⁶⁰ Wojtyla, *Love and Responsibility*, 153.

¹⁶¹ Benedict M. Ashley, *Living the Truth in Love: A Biblical Introduction To Moral Theology* (New York: Alba House, 1996), 284.

¹⁶² Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, *Compendium of The Social Doctrine of The Church*, no. 153.

¹⁶³ CCC, no. 1930.

Again, human dignity and human rights are rooted in a person. “As a person with the subjectivity that characterizes him,”¹⁶⁴ because it is due to him/her. Thus, every category of human rights is an expression of full respect for each individual person’s right. Convincingly, in the *Compendium of The Social Doctrine of The Church*, it is written: “The origin of social life is therefore found in the human person, and society cannot refuse to recognize its active and responsible subject; every expression of society must be directed towards the human person.”¹⁶⁵

The human person is always at the center of all earthly activities, because of his/her rights that are due to him/her. At all times these rights must be protected. By following this in the Church, Pope Saint John Paul II throughout his pontificate focused on the human person as one main point of his teaching. He wrote: “when I discovered my priestly vocation, man became the *central theme of my pastoral work*.”¹⁶⁶ Consenting to the Saint’s statement, Rodger Charles SJ comments: “The message of human rights and social justice has been at the heart of all his pastoral visits across the world while many of his other encyclicals and official documents touch on the same.”¹⁶⁷

From this fundamental principle, by the rights as a human person, the individual person is a subject of this objective world. Therefore, in the view of work, the human person must be the starting point of all goals, because work is not only a way to make a living; it is a form of continuing participation in God’s creative dimension. For that purpose, among other

¹⁶⁴ Pope John Paul II, *The Theology Of The Body: Human Love in the Divine Plan* (Boston: Pauline Books & Media, 1997), 38.

¹⁶⁵ Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, *Compendium of The Social Doctrine of The Church*, no. 106.

¹⁶⁶ Pope John Paul II, *Crossing The Threshold of Hope*, ed. Vittorio Messori (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1994), 199.

¹⁶⁷ Charles, “The Social Teaching Of John Paul II And Its Implications For Catholic Education For Life,” 154.

documents, *Laborem Exercens (LE)* (1981) is a well-known document of Pope Saint John Paul II, in which man as worker is the main topic.

III – Main Challenges of Work and Saint John Paul II Response

A. Decent Work in the time of Globalization

Justice for workers has to be seen in the broad context of human rights. In the view of the Catholic Church human rights are rooted in human dignity. Therefore, a human person can never be used as a mere means for an end. Man has always to be considered to be the subject of work; “his labor is the key for understanding man’s historical vocation and man’s social projects.”¹⁶⁸ To go further, in this part we may be unable to mention all matters of workers’ rights or justice to them. Instead, we will reflect only on some main issues which are related to workers. Such as, the right to work, the right to be protected at the work’s place, the right to earn a just wage, the right of regularly a day off, especially in view of family life and work-life-balance.

As a human persons, he/she has the right to work. The foremost issue, always to be clarified, is that, “as a person, man is therefore the subject of work.”¹⁶⁹ No one on earth has the authority to refrain work from any other human persons. Pope Saint John Paul II considered the right to work for every human individual, even for people with special needs (disabilities). As *LE* writes: “That disabled people may be offered work according to their capacities, for this is demanded by their dignity as persons and as subjects of work.”¹⁷⁰ Without work, a human person cannot experience a proper self-recognition in participating meaningful in a society. At

¹⁶⁸ Gregory Baum, “John Paul II’s Encyclical on Labor,” *Reading In Moral Theology No. 5: Official Catholic Social Teaching*, eds. Charles E. Curran and Richard A. McCormick, S.J (New York/ Mahwah: Paulist Press, 1986), 233.

¹⁶⁹ Pope John Paul II, *LE*, no. 6.

¹⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, no. 22.

the same time, unemployment can harm one's life and family in the sense of the struggle to survive and making ends meet, but also in the long term a negative impact psychologically on the person and the whole of society. Unemployment can cause poverty and can have a severe negative psychological impact on individuals, families, and societies.¹⁷¹ Thus,

the poor appear under various forms; they appear in various places and at various times; in many cases they appear as a result of the violation of the dignity of human work: either because the opportunities for human work are limited as a result of the scourge of unemployment or because a low value is put on work and the rights that flow from it, especially the right to a just wage and to the personal security of the worker and his or her family.¹⁷²

Accordingly, considering the right to work of a human person, there are two dimensions to distinguish: the direct employer and the indirect employer. These two concepts describe the wider relationships of the two parties, which are the employers and the workers. It is important to distinguish these two aspects for discerning the level of workers' rights. These matters belong to the concept of legal or social justice. For that purpose, *LE* explains:

*The direct employer is the person or institution with whom the worker enters directly into a work contract in accordance with definite conditions, we must understand as the indirect employer many different factors, other than the direct employer, that exercise a determining influence on the shaping both of the work contract and, consequently, of just or unjust relationships in the field of human labor.*¹⁷³

¹⁷¹ According to the European Sunday Alliance on the World Day for Decent Work, especially for the Youth Unemployment, states: "Countering youth unemployment is one of the main challenges for the European Union in the coming years. There is the danger of a 'lost generation': More than 20% of job seekers under 25 in the EU are unable to find a job. Youth unemployment rate is twice that of the total work force in the EU. In some Member States, youth unemployment is even higher than 40%," European Sunday Alliance, *Call for Europe Wide Action World Day for Decent Work* – 07/10/2012, <http://www.europeansundayalliance.eu/site/worlddayfordecentwork?SWS=c604193d057322b1b9457f38fb7b7841> (Accessed March 15, 2017).

¹⁷² Pope John Paul II, *LE*, no. 8.

¹⁷³ *Ibid.*, no. 16.

Regarding the aspect of the direct employer, the conditions of the two parties are clear by their contract between the employers and the workers. They (workers) have the right to choose the job which is suitable for their abilities and they have to be also free to change when he/she unable to fulfill it. Obviously, the contract must be based on an ethically correct labor policy so that all conditions of work can be preserved. Thus, “this is not to absolve the direct employer from his own responsibility, but only to draw attention to the whole network of influences that condition his conduct.”¹⁷⁴ The situation of the indirect employer is different in this regard.

The matter of the indirect employer is of higher concern for Pope Saint John Paul II. The “indirect employer includes both persons and institutions of various kinds, and also collective labor contracts and the *principles* of conduct which are laid down by these persons and institutions and which determine the whole socioeconomic *system* or are its result,” and especially “it is the State that must conduct a just labor policy” (*LE*. 17). However, the negative or very challenging aspect of this issue is that a labor policy depends on many factors in which an individual employer or corporation owner lacks often the ability or capacities to control. These factors include government policies, the regulations of market and the related industries, unions, the power of the consumers and even foreign corporation and governments. All these factors are relevant and are part of what Pope Saint John Paul II calls famously the *indirect employer*. In this present time, concerning the rights of workers, Pope Francis expressed:

I think of the many men and women laborers, including minors, subjugated in different sectors, whether formally or informally, in domestic or agricultural workplaces, or in the manufacturing or mining industry; whether in countries where labor regulations fail to comply with international norms and minimum standards, or, equally illegally, in countries which lack legal protection for workers’ rights.¹⁷⁵

¹⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, no. 17.

¹⁷⁵ Pope Francis, “No Longer Slaves, but Brothers and Sisters,” *2015 World Day of Peace Message* (accessed 10, December 2016).

That is why Pope Saint John Paul II, is concerned in his teaching with those workers, who cannot find a job, or only an informal job without a contract, or falling victim of an injustice labor system, etc. They have to put up and live in often very fragile conditions at work and this also reflects the whole socioeconomic system of a country. At times, “they have no real freedom of choice.”¹⁷⁶ In the case of the indirect employer “the responsibility is less direct-but it remains a true responsibility: the indirect employer substantially determines one or other facet of the labor relationship.”¹⁷⁷ Pope Saint John Paul II called on the attention of the whole world, particularly of governments, companies, or employers, and so forth, that they should be more responsible in helping workers, and this could be really a solution of helping them, as he suggested:

The agents at the national and international level that are responsible for the whole orientation of labor policy, we must first direct our attention to a *fundamental issue*: the question of finding work, or, in other words, the issue of *suitable employment for all who are capable of it*.¹⁷⁸

Connected with this, wage is an important matter for workers and their dependent families. They deserve and need a just wage for their own lives and families. As Pope Saint John Paul II underlines: “the worker is resolved on the basis of the wage, that is through just remuneration for work done.”¹⁷⁹ The workers deserve to earn a just wage according to what they have accomplished; this is their fundamental right based on commutative justice, so that they can bring food home, they need their salary to support and build-up their families. Agreeing to this, Pope Francis also strongly confirmed: “Without job there is no dignity--the dignity to bring

¹⁷⁶ Peschke, *Christian Ethics: Moral Theology In The Light Of Vatican II, vol. II: Special Moral Theology* Revised Edition, 643.

¹⁷⁷ John Paul II, *LE*, no. 17.

¹⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, no. 18.

¹⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, no. 19.

bread home, which enables one to plan the future and decide to form a family.”¹⁸⁰ Thus, the employers must live up to the grave responsibility to pay workers just wages. That is, fairly to judge, also related to the entire labor policy of a country.

Justice for the workers has to be seen in the context of human rights properly understood. The rights are rooted in the human dignity. Consequently, any kind of action, which is against the human dignity, is considered as an unjust action. This action can harm any individual person who becomes a victim of it, which then affects his/her family’s life. To change this, the workers have the right to strike for a positive justified purpose to improve the general condition of human work. Unfortunately, in many countries, the problem of distribution of work does not meet the demand of justice and the citizens’ needs. This situation often leads to the problem of migration when people are looking for a job abroad to make ends meet for their families.

B. Migration, Family, and Work

There is no doubt on the issue that the Church at all times protects the migrants, refugees, the poor, and all those who are in the unfortunate conditions. Pope Saint John Paul II, at the time as the head of the Church, by all efforts tried to reach out to people, in particular to those who encounter miserable life situations. Acting on behalf of Christ on earth, the Saint embraced the experiences of his own life, he understood the pressure and situation of many migrants than ever, when he writes: “No one should be indifferent to the conditions of multitudes of immigrants! They are at the mercy of events, often with dramatic situations behind them.”¹⁸¹

¹⁸⁰ Vatican Radio, *Pope’s Solidarity with The Jobless*, http://en.radiovaticana.va/news/2014/10/25/pope%E2%80%99s_solidarity_with_the_jobless_%E2%80%8E/1109462 (Accessed 24, October 2014).

¹⁸¹ Pope John Paul II, *Message of the Holy Father John Paul II for the 90th World Day of Migrants and Refugees 2004*, no. 4. http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/messages/migration/documents/hf_jp-ii_mes_20031223_world-migration-day-2004.html (Accessed October 5, 2016).

Pope Francis writes, that migrants are “the most vulnerable people on the planet.”¹⁸² Why? Because they lack the opportunities which wealthier people have, they are often voiceless, they cannot find a proper job, no place to work to support their families, and so forth.¹⁸³ That is why they feel often quasi forced to migrate for looking for a better place to earn a living in order to support their families, to bring home income and food for their children. Cardinal Peter K.A. Turkson, President, Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, which was transformed 2016 into the office for integral Human Development, writes, “In our days, the family can easily suffer a double danger. Families may face a form of economic vulnerability due to an insufficient salary and even joblessness, or insecurity or dangers at work; and most horribly in our supposedly modern world, even trafficking and slavery.”¹⁸⁴ Moreover, to live as a human person is not a fault, to search for a proper job, or place to dwell is not a fault, but a basic human’s right. Migrant workers do not simply leave their country to find a job, but face many difficulties coming along their ways.

The case of migrants. They are often forced to leave their own country to find work, but frequently find the doors closed in their faces because of discriminatory attitudes, or, if they can enter, they are often obliged to lead an insecure life or are treated in an inhuman manner.¹⁸⁵

In reality, the labor and income of migrants can bring significant contributions to the country where they come from. Unfortunately, injustice oftentimes happens to them in various ways

¹⁸² Pope Francis, Encyclical Letter: *Laudato Si'*, no. 48, (Macao: Claretian Publications, 2015).

¹⁸³ *Ibid.*, nos.: 48-52.

¹⁸⁴ Peter K.A. Turkson, “World Meeting of Families: ‘Love Is Our Mission: The Family Fully Alive,’” *Cardinal Turkson at World Meeting of Families: Laudato Si' and Family*, http://en.radiovaticana.va/news/2015/11/19/cardinal_turkson_world_meeting_of_families_and_laudato_si_/1174346 (Accessed October 10, 2016).

¹⁸⁵ Synod of Bishops, *Justica in Mundo*, 1971, no. 21. <https://www.cctwincities.org/education-advocacy/catholic-social-teaching/major-documents/justicia-in-mundo/> (Accessed October 5, 2016).

and forms, even exploitation, abuse, and persecution.¹⁸⁶ In the same line of thought, Daniel G. Groody writes: “Unquestionably a difficult facet of the journey, the physical and emotional demands of migrating are only part of the sacrifice. Their long-term sacrifice is their labor, and the spirituality of the undocumented immigrant is grounded on work.”¹⁸⁷ To illustrate practically the contemporary situation of many migrant workers, the case at the Thai Union Factory in Samut Sakhon has been recorded in the *Macau Daily Times* as follows: “the Shed owners frequently break environmental, labor or safety laws.”¹⁸⁸ The article continues to quote the words of Mr. Win, who is one of the victims in that factory, saying: “They don’t treat us like humans. They treat us like dogs.”¹⁸⁹ We can see here the failure of proper protective regulations on the employer’s side, but there are obviously also failures to mention regarding the overall societal and political protective ramifications. Here also the responsibility of consumers comes into play and has to be deeper considered and evaluated. Also another migrant worker, who comes from Myanmar, expressed that he has to work for six years working hour shifts without a day off. It is true that in our world today, too many migrants are victims and suffering from grave injustice and violations. Due to a lack of oversight and interest of various sectors which Pope Saint John Paul II called the “indirect employers” of workers. This is a grave issue of further research.

For those reasons, Pope Saint John Paul II always paid a special concern to migrants, in order to protect their dignity as sons and daughters of God. Also Pope Francis comments:

¹⁸⁶ Pope John Paul II, *LE*, no. 23. In this number, Saint John Paul II addresses the issue of “work and the Immigration Question,” in which he again reminds, that human person is the subject of work.

¹⁸⁷ Daniel G. Groody, “The Spirituality of Migrants: Mapping an Inner Geography,” *Contemporary Issues of Migration and Theology*, Eds. Elaine Padilla and Peter C. Phan (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013): 139-156, esp. 144.

¹⁸⁸ Martha Mendoza, Samut Sakhon, “Thailand: Promises unmet as country tries to reform shrimp industry,” *Macau Daily Times* 23.09.2016 Fri.

¹⁸⁹ *Ibid.*

“Saint John Paul II stated that the special love of the Creator for each human being ‘confers upon him or her an infinite dignity.’”¹⁹⁰ Through this very dignity of human beings, all believers of Christ must show responsibility for neighbors. The responsibility for us to live in this world is granted by the Creator at the very beginning of time that, all people in all sectors of the society ought to take properly and responsible care of the people and of the earth. This earth is our common home, the place of all people to take care about. Granted, “Membership in the Catholic community is not determined by nationality, or by social or ethnic origin, but essentially by faith in Jesus Christ and Baptism in the name of the Holy Trinity.”¹⁹¹ We are thus one family, we live today more and more as one human family under the same roof of mother earth, and we are called to live in solidarity and virtuously. One important and often neglected dimension of the indirect employer today is the consumer. He bears a significant measure of responsibility in view of just working conditions in companies and societies.

C. The Fair Trade Movement and the Responsibility of the Consumer

Trade is an increasingly important element of modern economic development, however, often times, the situation of the free market in terms of economics is often reduced to “the thirst for gain.”¹⁹² By all means, the goal to achieve more productions from human work at time violates human dignity in the economical trade. However, the true meaning of fair trade is based on the principle of justice in exchange and on cooperation and mutual benefit that all people are respected in their dignity. Thus, Pope Saint John Paul II writes, “how can we fail to

¹⁹⁰ Pope Francis, *Laudato Si'*, no. 65.

¹⁹¹ Pope John Paul II, *Message of the Holy Father John Paul II for the 89th World Day of Migrant and Refugees 2003*, no. 2, http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/messages/migration/documents/hf_jp-ii_mes_20021202_world-migration-day-2003.html (Accessed October 5, 2016).

¹⁹² Pope John Paul II, *Message of His Holiness John Paul II For Lent 2003*, no. 2. https://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/messages/lent/documents/hf_jp-ii_mes_20030206_lent-2003.html (Accessed October 3, 2016).

see that the quest for profit at any cost and the lack of effective, responsible concern for the common good have concentrated immense resources in the hands of a few while the rest of humanity suffers in poverty and neglect?”¹⁹³ The issue of the human person, the poor, is always central to the Saint teaching.

Granted, in trading of goods, human person must be the final end and all things on earth are subordinated to the good of human lives. At this point, Pope Saint John Paul II corrects the understanding of socialism. “Socialism considers the individual person simply as an element, a molecule within the social organism, so that the good of the individual is completely subordinated to the functioning of the socio-economic mechanism.”¹⁹⁴ Truly, the proper recognition of the human person within the social and economic system is important.

Furthermore, one of the elements of fair trade is trading partnership. This kind of relationship should not be established by force, but has to become developed based on dialogue, respect and justice, which means for instance to seek to a greater equity in trade.¹⁹⁵ For that, Pope Saint John Paul II calls for the right of association or labor/trade union. Labor unions can improve the overall situation of workers to perform their work in their own profession, because his/her works is not simply understood to make a living, but more as vocation. That is why the Saint recommends, “Workers should be able to join free trade unions... This right is not given to us by the state. It is a right given by the Creator.”¹⁹⁶ Obviously he refers here to an aspect of natural law.

¹⁹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁹⁴ Pope John Paul II, *CA*, no. 13.

¹⁹⁵ Pope Paul VI, *Apostolic Letter: Octogesima Adveniens*, no. 43. http://w2.vatican.va/content/paul-vi/en/apost_letters/documents/hf_p-vi_apl_19710514_octogesima-adveniens.html (Accessed October 6, 2016).

¹⁹⁶ BBC News, “1983: Pope meets banned union leader Walesa,” *On This Day 1950-2005*, http://news.bbc.co.uk/onthisday/hi/dates/stories/june/23/newsid_4002000/4002537.stm (Accessed October 3, 2016).

In addition, as a matter of exercise in view of the preferential option for the poor, who work to produce fair trade products, Pope Saint John Paul II is also concerned to a bigger aspect which is the level of nations in term of trading partnership. Of course, to obtain a fair trade “one must denounce the existence of economic, financial and social mechanisms which, although they are manipulated by people, often function almost automatically, thus accentuating the situation of wealth for some and poverty for the rest.”¹⁹⁷ It is a fact that, the economic system of many poor or developing countries is affected by national or international trade rivalries in view for the highest benefit, without proper interest and concern for the common good of the people. Here the question of an ethics of consumption in societies and the economic system comes up.

D. Ethics of Consumption and Work

Positively, the fruit of work is the production and, it will serve according to human needs. Also in view of consumer ethics for Pope Saint John Paul II, “the human person is the starting point of his analysis and primary criterion of his evaluation.”¹⁹⁸ He also notes that, a human being has both potentials of being a producer and being a customer, but the anthropological issue is of primary importance. Thus, he says, “to ‘have’ objects and goods does not in itself perfect the human subject, unless it contributes to the maturing and enrichment of that subject's ‘being,’ that is to say unless it contributes to the realization of the human vocation as such.”¹⁹⁹ Truly, the fruit of human labor is from their creative work; they have the

¹⁹⁷ Pope John Paul II, *SRS*, no. 16.

¹⁹⁸ Raymond J. de Souza, “John Paul II and the Problem of Consumerism,” *Action Institute for the Study of Religion and Liberty*, <http://www.acton.org/pub/religion-liberty/volume-9-number-5/john-paul-ii-and-problem-consumerism> (Accessed October 10, 2016).

¹⁹⁹ Pope John Paul II, *SRS*, no. 28.

right to enjoy the fruit of their labors and are invited to do better, as well to experience their personhood in an authentic and concrete way.²⁰⁰

However, Pope Saint John Paul II argues: “It is not wrong to want to live better; what is wrong is a style of life which is presumed to be better when it is directed towards ‘having’ rather than ‘being’, and which wants to have more, not in order to be more but in order to spend life in enjoyment as an end in itself.”²⁰¹ The behavior of man as consumers towards material things can harm human beings themselves, can abuse particularly the poor, as well as the environment in terms of pollution. This problem is discussed in detail in the writings *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis*, and *Centesimus Annus* of Pope Saint John Paul II, and later on also in *Laudato Si’* of Pope Francis.²⁰² Today, “the so-called culture of ‘consumption’ or ‘consumerism,’ involves so much ‘throwing-away’ and ‘waste.’”²⁰³ The wealthier have more chances to buy new things, and the poor suffer or use just the “left-overs,” and end up often to be “disposed.”

More dangerous is that, when in work, the owner tries to maximize his profits without concern for the dignity of the worker through his/her own labor, but uses him/her just as means. The danger of turning human beings into slaves for trade, economic development and consumerism. That is why Pope Saint John Paul II “regards consumerism as a threat to the freedom of the human person to live according to the higher demands of love rather than to the lower pull of material desires.”²⁰⁴ One very famous case in this matter, is the Sam Sung Galaxy Note 7 scandal. “Samsung recalled 2.5m phones in September 2016 after complaints of

²⁰⁰ Pope John Paul II, *CA*, no. 48.

²⁰¹ *Ibid.*, no. 36.

²⁰² Cf. *Laudato Si’*, nos: 43-47. Pope Francis expresses the danger problems of consumption or consumerism as “the throwaway culture.”

²⁰³ Pope John Paul II, *SRS*, no. 28,

²⁰⁴ Raymond J. de Souza, “John Paul II and the Problem of Consumerism.” (Accessed October 10, 2016)

exploding batteries, but later assured customers that the fixed devices were safe.”²⁰⁵ Because of the thirst for profit, the company ignored the safety of consumers and even created false claims about it. BBC News comments on this company: “The families of workers say there are about 200 cases of employees contracting serious diseases, including cancer, an investigation by the Associated Press news agency found.”²⁰⁶ Companies and societies have to learn to put people first, over profit and self-interest. This of course needs proper regulations, also on the global level, and a proper education in ethics and morality.

With all regards, Pope Saint John Paul II in his teaching warns societies that “the difference between ‘being’ and ‘having,’ the danger inherent in a mere multiplication or replacement of things possessed compared to the value of ‘being,’ need not turn into a contradiction.”²⁰⁷ Daniel Finn comments on *Centesimus Annus* and writes: “the pope notes the evil of consumerism and the harm it does to families and environment.”²⁰⁸ The fact that, to create more new things, more goods, to serve human needs, is the reflection of the creativity of human vocation through work. “We have to realize that a true ecological approach *always* becomes a social approach; it must integrate questions of justice in debates on the environment, so as to hear *both the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor*.”²⁰⁹ The Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace also confirms: “There is a need to break with the logic of mere consumption

²⁰⁵ BBC News, *Samsung to halt sales of Galaxy Note 7*, <http://www.bbc.com/news/business-37614770> (Accessed October 11, 2016).

²⁰⁶ _____, *Samsung denies keeping information on toxins from workers*, <http://www.bbc.com/news/business-37042199> (Accessed October 11, 2016).

²⁰⁷ Pope John Paul II, *SRS*, no. 28,

²⁰⁸ Daniel Finn, “Commentary on *Centesimus Annus* (On the Hundredth Anniversary of *Rerum novarum*), *Modern Catholic Social Teaching: Commentaries and Interpretations*, ed. Kenneth R. Himes (Washington DC: Georgetown University Press, 2005): 436-466, esp. 437.

²⁰⁹ Pope Francis, *Laudato Si'*, no. 49.

and promote forms of agricultural and industrial production that respect the order of creation and satisfy the basic human needs of all.”²¹⁰

Saint Pope John Paul II writes therefore very prophetically about the high relevance of consumer ethics and all societal actors as “indirect employers” of societies and thus also of the world and working conditions of workers:

It is therefore necessary to create life-styles in which the quest for truth, beauty, goodness and communion with others for the sake of common growth are the factors which determine *consumer choices, savings and investments*. In this regard, it is not a matter of the duty of charity alone, that is, the duty to give from one's ‘abundance’, and sometimes even out of one's needs, in order to provide what is essential for the life of a poor person. I am referring to the fact that even the decision to invest in one place rather than another, in one productive sector rather than another, *is always a moral and cultural choice*. Given the utter necessity of certain economic conditions and of political stability, the decision to invest, that is, to offer people an opportunity to make good use of their own labour, is also determined by an attitude of human sympathy and trust in Providence, which reveal the human quality of the person making such decisions" (CA 36, emphasis by the researcher).

In order to conclude, every decision of every man as consumer can, and in fact has to be seen and understood as a form of “moral investment,” especially also regarding integral human development in view of proper working conditions in which consumer goods and services originate. As seen in the Fairtrade Movement, these consumer choices and “investments” are more and more morally and ethically charged and relevant in modern societies. The 14 Christian Churches in Austria formulated 2003 this entailing truth and the relevance of Christians as consumers in building a more just and ecological responsible world. “Through our personal decisions about consumption and lifestyle, *we share daily in forming the world*. We have influence over how much we destroy or how much we protect the environment.

²¹⁰ Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, n. 486 (Washington DC: United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2004), 210.

Through a simpler lifestyle and changes in our patterns of consumption, we can contribute towards a more just distribution of the earth's resources."²¹¹

Accordingly, Saint Pope John Paul II emphasized already in *Centesimus Annus* (1991) the relevance and need of a deeper and proper education of consumers in view of just and responsible consumer choices: "Thus a great deal of educational and cultural work is urgently needed, including the education of consumers *in the responsible use of their power of choice*, the formation of a strong sense of responsibility among producers and among people in the mass media in particular, as well as the necessary intervention by public authorities" (CA 36, emphasis by the researcher); This important line of thought was further deepened by Pope Benedict XVI, who writes: "Together with the social responsibility of businesses, there is also the *social responsibility of consumers*. Every person ought to have the awareness that 'purchasing is always a moral – and not simply an economic – act'" (CV, 66).²¹² There is an urgent need of further reflections and studies regarding the interdependence and relation of work and consumption, on the level of the human person as worker and consumer, but also on the societal level of our modern consumer societies.

E. Leisure and Work

Derived from the Biblical foundation of work, Pope Saint John Paul II talks about work as workers' vocation in God's creative work, he also talks about the leisure of workers. In the document *Dies Domini*, he portraits a very clear view on a Day of God. "A Birthday" of

²¹¹ Ecumenical Council of 14 Churches in Austria, *Social Mission Statement 2003* (Vienna: KSA, 2003), no. 296 (emphasis by the researcher).

²¹² Cf. also: Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, *Vocation of the Business Leader: A Reflection*, (Rome: Vatican, 2013); Franz Gassner: "Sufficient and Sustainable Lifestyles: Challenges for Global Consumer Cultures", in: *Intercultural Mission: Looking Forward*, Volume 2, ed. by Lazar Thanuzraj Stanislaus SVD and Martin Üffing SVD (New Dehli, India: ISPCK, and St. Augustin, Germany: Steyler Missionswissenschaftliches Institut, 2015), 64-88 (English); Spanish Edition forthcoming: *Interculturalidad: En La Vida en Lad Misión*, eds. by Lazar T. Stanislaus and Martin Üffing (Estella: Editorial Verbo Divino, 2017).

the world, and of all creatures. Because, God created the world and all creatures in it, He was the very first worker on earth in His creative work, and on the Seventh Day he rested from the work he has accomplished as we have described in chapter one. Truly, the Day of the Lord (Sabbath) is rooted in the most ancient tradition at the very beginning of time. Thus, the day of rest from work is the day of the celebration of the Creator's work, which became in Christianity the day of the Risen Lord, the Sunday, as the Gift of the Holy Spirit: day of joy, rest, and solidarity.²¹³ Therefore, a long historical development of human's leisure until today; developed from the time when the Scripture was written to our time, humankind ought to have a day to rest and to celebrate the day in which the world was born! As the saint confirmed: "In our own historical context there remains the obligation to ensure that everyone can enjoy the freedom, rest and relaxation which human dignity requires."²¹⁴

Pope Saint John Paul II emphasizes the meaning of a day of rest, which is not simply a day that allows the workers to be free from work, but also a day of celebration in fraternity. "In order that rest may not degenerate into emptiness or boredom, it must offer spiritual enrichment, greater freedom, opportunities for contemplation and fraternal communion."²¹⁵ As human beings, despite of belonging to or not to any religious community, the requirement of material things and spiritual things are innate in each one of them. The Catholic Church believes that in God's image, "human life has a rhythm of work and rest. The institution of the Lord's Day helps everyone enjoy adequate rest and leisure to cultivate their familial, cultural, social, and religious lives."²¹⁶ In any society, the importance of building up

²¹³ Pope John Paul II, *Apostolic Letter: Dies Domini*, May 31, 1998, nos. 1-73, https://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/apost_letters/1998/documents/hf_jp-ii_apl_05071998_dies-domini.html (Accessed October 11, 2016).

²¹⁴ Pope John Paul II, *Apostolic Letter: Dies Domini*, no. 66.

²¹⁵ *Ibid.*, no. 68.

²¹⁶ CCC., 2184.

a true human community on earth is the response to the order of creation of God and deeply related to work and leisure. For this purpose, “the response to creation is reverence and praise, not exploitation.”²¹⁷

In reality, there are many people who live and work under oppressive and even exploitative working conditions and long working hours, particular the poor or the workers in many factories, and industrial districts. Their miserable work conditions are often the result of exploitation, injustice by his/her own fellow men and indifferences of consumers and societies, inclusive political actors. They (the workers) have no chance to experience leisure. For this purpose, Pope Saint John Paul II writes:

man’s work too not only requires a rest every ‘seventh day’, but also cannot consist in the mere exercise of human strength in external action; it must leave room for man to prepare himself, by becoming more and more what in the will of God he ought to be, for the ‘rest’ that the Lord reserves for his servants and friends.²¹⁸

In the same manner, Michael Naughton argues:

If our work is to be a vocation, a place of sanctification where the universal call to holiness is manifested, it must be connected to leisure, a leisure that has the capacity to re-create us in our original image.²¹⁹

The teaching of the Church in general, and in particular of Pope Saint John Paul II’s, becomes more authentic and meaningful, when societies responds properly to the importance of a weekly day-off from work. With the guidance of the Holy Spirit and in the light of Scripture and Tradition, Pope Saint John Paul’s teaching has responded to the questions of society in our present time, as he expresses in *Centesimus Annus*: “‘Humane’ working hours

²¹⁷ John R. Donahue, *Seek Justice that you may live: Reflections and resources on the Bible and Social Justice* (New York: Paulist Press, 2014), 29.

²¹⁸ Pope John Paul II, *LE*, no. 25.

²¹⁹ Michael Naughton, *Integrating Work and Leisure: The Complementary Relationship between John Paul II’s Laborem Exercens and Dies Domini*, p. 36, <https://www.sandiego.edu/cctc/documents/readings/IntegratingWorkandLeisureNaughton.pdf> (Accessed October 11, 2016).

and adequate free-time need to be guaranteed, as well as the right to express one's own personality at the work-place without suffering any affront to one's conscience or personal dignity.”²²⁰ That is, the laborer can find meaning of what they are doing; agree upon, Norbert Lohfink comments: “when we sense that what we are doing contains meaning in itself, we experience happiness.”²²¹

Practically, corresponding to that is the case of the French Trade Union fights to preserve the work-free Sunday, or the Conference in the Polish Parliament on protection of the Sunday as a public good and a draft law on trade that of equality of opportunity in the industry. Alfred Bujara, the President of the Solidarity Commerce Trade Union and the chairman of the Legislative Initiative Committee, writes: “They are overworked, they do not even want any additional bonus for working on Sundays. They want this day to spend it with their families.”²²² Truly, Sunday, the day of rest is an important day for all human beings after six days of hard work. “It symbolizes that God’s home is indeed on earth and that the earth can find rest, a sense of security and a home for all its creatures with God.”²²³ Another practical case regarding to the rhythm of human work, the *South China Morning Post* voices problems of aircrews coping with increasing workloads of Cathay Pacific pilots, entitled: “Exhausted pilots tell Cathay Pacific their growing workloads are a threat to flight safety.” The article quoted one pilot who declined to be mentioned his name so as not to breach company policy, he says: “Aircrews working up to the maximum flying hours regularly risked an accident

²²⁰ Pope John Paul II, *CA*, no. 15.

²²¹ Norbert Lohfink, *Great Theme from the Old Testament*, tran. Ronald Walls (Edinburgh: Franciscan Herald Press, 1982), 210.

²²² Elke Zander, “More than half a million signatures in support of Polish draft law on limitation of commerce on Sundays,” Pub. Monday 5 September 2016, *European Sunday Alliance*, <http://www.europeansundayalliance.eu/site/home>. (Accessed October 11, 2016).

²²³ Ernst M. Conradie, *An Ecological Christian Anthropology: At Home on Earth?* (Vermont: Ashgate, 2005), 240.

sooner or later.”²²⁴ Another source comments: “You are generating cumulative fatigue the whole time and when you start your next duty, you haven’t recovered fully.”²²⁵ Thus, to be properly understood, a human person is not a machine, nor an object, but a subject in this world; that is why, rest or leisure is needed in view of human nature and secure and peaceful societies in order that human can live properly as beings created in the image of God.

IV – Conclusion

The arguments presented above on social justice in human work claim convincingly that Pope Saint John Paul II was a strong promoter and builder of a world in which justice and peace reign, particular justice in human work. Indeed, he promotes justice, human dignity in work and helps us to understand better the importance and meaning of human work in our present time. Performed by human hands, work is the fruit of man to serve human needs and God. Human beings are the subjects of work, not objects, they are ends with dignity, not only means. Beautifully, he expresses that work is a gift from the God, who created man with dignity. Truly, in a human society, there needs to be justice; to be just is to treat others according to what is due to him/her. Our world needs more sensibility towards our neighbors with care especially for the poor, by creating a network of care for work in deep responsibility for the human person and the common good. Hence, through work, humans participate in God’s creative work.

Furthermore, poverty as “a structural and inevitable condition of human existence...destroys the lives of most human beings.”²²⁶ Christian faith, as expressed in

²²⁴ Danny Lee, “Exhausted pilots tell Cathay Pacific their growing workloads are a threat to flight safety,” *South China Morning Post*, Sunday, 20 September, 2015, <http://www.scmp.com/news/hong-kong/article/1859802/exhausted-pilots-tell-cathay-pacific-their-growing-workloads-are> (Accessed April 2, 2017).

²²⁵ *Ibid.*

²²⁶ Müller, “Chapter 4: Liberation Theology In Context,” 65.

Catholic Social Teaching, tries to properly address integral human development, nourished in faith, hope, and love by the example of our Savior Jesus Christ, worker from Nazareth. Justice and earthly well-being and eternal Salvation are deeply interrelated, although differentiated in his work of ministry. The dignity of human work is deeply related to the work of the Father in Heaven. “There is neither a pure separation nor a simple identification between earthly well-being and eternal Salvation. Salvation is a differentiated unity of two interrelated aspects that are dynamically drawn together in the historical and eschatological arena and recip-rocally illumine each other.”²²⁷

²²⁷ *Ibid.*, 80.

CONCLUSION

Everywhere, at all-time, justice is needed and justice in human work is emphasized in this study on Pope Saint John Paul II's teaching. We live today in an unjust world and therefore justice is important and has to be strongly promoted. There exists no true human social relationship without the virtue of justice. Consequently, "the virtue of justice orders personal and social relation-ships."²²⁸ Today, in the complex world, where we are living, social relationships are highly important, as our world is more and more interconnected. These relationships ought to be radically just and "justice must be done, the necessary reforms must be put in place."²²⁹ Pope Saint John Paul II's teaching underlines this point.

To study justice is necessary, because it helps us to know how to appreciate and respect the value of each person in his or her great dignity, and the need to act justly towards him or her. And yet, by the concern for the reality of human work, which is one of the most important aspects of humankind on the earth to serve, Pope Saint "John Paul II has brought the Church's social teaching to its maturity."²³⁰ He shows us the way to realize more profoundly what justice is about and to act justly, in particularly on issues related to human work. He encourages us to witness the virtue of justice which builds-up proper human working conditions and thus peace in our world. Therefore, it is not enough, just to know what justice is, but also and mainly how to live and act justly. He, who knows what justice is, but does not live a life of justice, does not really understand what justice is. Everybody desires to live in a just society. Each one of us must act justly according to what he or she ought to do, in order to make our world to become

²²⁸ Gómez, *The Praxis of Justice and Solidarity*, 72.

²²⁹ Charles, "The Social Teaching Of John Paul II And Its Implications For Catholic Education For Life," 154.

²³⁰ *Ibid.*, 160.

a world filled with justice and thus a better place for all. That is the purpose of Catholic Social teaching in general and of the specific helpful contributions of Pope Saint John Paul II particularly.

His teaching is greatly and highly profound in its value, however, it still remains “sleeping” in many documents, which marks a weak point of the Church Social Teaching. How to show the great concern of the Church to society to human world through her teaching? That is a big question for the Church. Pope Saint John Paul II, through out his life, tried to answer this question. He himself lived and witnessed fully the Word of God and the justice it brings about. He invites and encourages us to do the same and follow his courteous example.

All in all, Christian social ethics and the teaching of Pope Saint John Paul II coincide in stating that its main principle is charity. But authentic charity must require justice. Moreover, the goal, over all, of social ethics and of the Social Doctrine of the Church, is peace, and peace cannot be achieved without justice. Therefore, promoting attitudes and structures geared towards justice is very important for all persons in general, and partly for all Christians, because this is the fundamental issue of being a son and daughter of God, working and thus witnessing to his Kingdom and its justice in our time.

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