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CHURCH AND SOCIETY IN DIALOGUE

Rev. Fr. Dr. Obiora F. Ike



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His Lordship, Rt. Revd. Dr. M. U. Eneja, bishop of Enugu has always encouraged initiative and virtually pushed us to write and to publish. Write! write!! write!!! he would often caution. These encouragments helped me to accept invitations to write papers, present lectures, organise workshops even when the work-load on my table was very heavy and I had to overwork myself to meet the given appointments.

To all others who in one way or the other were Subjects of the lectures, papers, etc. in this collection, this book is a fruit of your invitation and of my response. I present it to a larger reading audience to share so that history will not say that we kept quiet when we ought to have spoken out.

Like Socrates, let me assert that "the unexamind life is not worth living".

OBIORA IKE

FOREWORD

Right now, the world in which we live in is experiencing a number of conflicts. These conflicts have always been there, perhaps in other forms, but in our times and in our country Nigeria, they seem to have assumed a new and agonising dimension. There are conflicts and contradictions between governments and the peace movements, between the ruled and the rulers, between trade unions and government agencies, between the rich and the poor, between ethnic groups and races within one's country and more currently in Nigeria, between Christians and Muslims. The tensions do not seem to lessen and in many cases, the conflicts have grown to assume total conflicts costing lives and leading to war.

Without doubt the fact of a world-wide conflict encompasses the lives of many people that the reality of conflicts cannot be doubted.

For us as Christians, this situation poses a very important question. What should be our attitude to the conflicts in which we find ourselves and which we see around us? Should we take sides or must we always remain neutral? Does the situation of the world concern us? How do we show it?

CHURCH AND SOCIETY IN DIALOGUE is a collection of various papers, lectures, speeches, reflections and scientific works I have had occasion to present to various audiences within the last few months here in Nigeria. I have called for dialogue. The fundamental point in dialogue is not the question of abandoning one's faith or seeking victory over the other. Dialogue aims first and foremost in accepting the reality that truth exists and in trying to reach a clearer

understanding and a deeper awareness of one's own identity, thanks to the challenge of the partner in dialogue. I have incorrigibly presumed that the Christian Churches share the joys and hopes, the sorrows and anxieties of the people of their societies . So be it.

Hence, I felt that there must be a responsibility and a concern, a practical involvement as well as suggestions as members of a society who are followers of Christ, as to how biblical principles can be of particular relevance to socio-cultural and political-economic issues in a country for the promotion of development, Justice, Peace and Liberation from all froms of oppression. The call for a renewed commitment of Christians to justice and peace issues is a call to deepen their faith and their mission in the scriptural task of "renewing the face of the earth".

If I may be blunt, mere Sunday Christianity or religion close to superstition, will have very little future here in Nigeria? No amount of popular religious practices, revival meetings or pious evangelism bordering on salesmanship can save Christianity in our part of the world if proclaiming justice "as an essential dimension of the proclamation of the Gospel" is neglected. It is doubtful also whether the present catechetical and pastoral approach is the lasting one. The God of the clouds and the skies may find very little sympathy when the hungry and the ignorant have been duly safisfied and are in a strong position to question the transcendental dimension of the human community which it once took for granted.

A critical self-examination of the role of the Church in our country will awaken all of us to the urgent and common task of addressing the present situation of abuse, poverty, corruption, injustices, and the trampling of human rights very prevalent in our societies today . Such a recognition will when well harnessed lead the Church to dialogue with organs of the state and society where the dignity of the human person is debased.

The bishops of Africa and Madagascar had this to say on the issues referred to above: "We would be betraying our mission we would be seriously failing in our love and duty which we owe to the men of this land, if we were to remain silent. . . in the face of a violation of human dignity, and of crimes committed in the name of the security of state".

This discovery of her role in the world needs to be specified articulately in a few relevant areas in the context of Africa and Nigeria.

(a) The first task of the Church would involve working out a sound, forceful and authentically biblical theory of development of the whole human person with special emphasis on social justice. Such a theology must be placed at the disposal of evangelisation (Ref. Evangeli, Nuntiandi, 18).

(b) The second task is to come out very strongly in defence of human rights, human worth and human dignity. Like the bishops of Africa once said: "For us, what is at stake ... is man, the African man, irrespective of the colour of his skin, his ethnic origin, his social condition, or his cultural or religious environment; what is at stake are his aspirations and hopes, his struggles and sufferings, his success and failure".

(c) The third task is a challenge on Church members to make faith relevant in action and translate the 'good news' within their own milieu. Matthew Chapter 25, will then become not just a bible passage but a magna charta for life: seeing Christ hungry and feeding him, naked and clothing him, thirsty and providing him clean water supply, sick and lessening the occurence of disease with preventive health care, good medical service; without shelter and working to provide decent housing for all; seeing him imprisoned and working to make such institutions unnecessary or humanly tolerable".

(d) Lastly, the task of the Church should accept the realisation that "the process of incarnation of the Gospel on African soil is like an unfinshed symphony". Authentic Christianity can never be a Euro-cultural or Asia-cultural export to MAMA AFRICA, for here, they have no roots. We have yet to sing God a 'new song' and make the gospel message find a home in our huts, in our village squares, in our large families, in our feasts, in our work, in our art and burial ceremonies and in the entirety of our cultural ambient. With this realisation shall be born, a new creation of a people set apart to be truly African and truly Christian, working for the dignity, that so belongs to them, and making this world an "adumbratio", that is the "Forshadow" of the "already" but "not yet" fulfilled understanding of the kingdom of God.

As a final remark, let me say that what follows in this collection *will* not go unchallenged. To find fault with one view or the other in this book is easy. As Hegel, the German Philosopher once said in the preface to his first book:

Nothing is easier than to judge what has substance and quality; to comprehend it is harder, and what is hardest is to combine both functions and produce an account to it."

To swim against the stream is fun in any case; in a conformist age it is a duty. In writing about the Church and the Social Question, I have tried in the following pages to buck the current prejudices and to say the things I like and believe in the way I want.

If any other justification is needed I can only express the hope that those who read this book will agree or disagree with me. In either case I have contributed to an ongoing debate.

The contributions will help dialogue and I see no need to retract or to alter the already stated views which were historically bound.

My message is essentially the motto chosen by the prophet Isaiah inscribed over all subsequent historical phenomena that "here on earth, God's work must truly be our own".

Obiora Ike
CIDJAP – ENUGU,

(15th February, 1990).

PAN AFRICAN JUSTICE AND PEACE CONFERENCE ROMA, LESOTHO, 29 MAY TO 3RD JUNE 1988

1. We, Bishops, Priests, Religious Men and Women, and Lay Men and Women, representing different regional and national Conferences of Bishops and Justice and Peace Commissions of the Continent of Africa and Madagascar have just concluded the first ever seminar organised on Justice and Peace by the Symposium of Episcopal Conferences of Africa and Madagascar in Roma, Lesotho, from May 29th to June 3rd, 1988. We are happy to have with us His Eminence Cardinal Roger Etchegaray, President of the Pontifical Commission Iustitia et Pax in Rome, and other observers from the same Eternal City and to the Almighty God, Father of us all, for his immense goodness to and love for us and all the blessings of these five days.
   Under the guidance of the enduring values of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, and the inspiration of the Spirit of the Father and the Son, we have endeavoured in a humble way to reflect on the justice and peace situation of our beloved continent and its islands. We praise and thank God for allowing us to share in his fatherly concern for his sons and daughters. We have surveyed the African situation by exchanging and sharing ideas, experiences, and information, and tried to identify with Africa in a fraternal manner.

2. We have done this in order to reaffirm unequivocally the truth of the fundamental teaching of the Church that "God created all men and women in his own image and likeness". (Gen. 1:27). Hence whenever conditions are such that they negate this equal dignity given to human

beings irrespective of their colour, race, sex, origin and religion, we as Christian's and as leaders should examine our conscience.

3. We further reaffirm our belief that the Lord Jesus is the saviour of all mankind and that in him all human beings form one family, there is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female (Gal. 3:28).
Jesus is the sole mediator between God and man who by his death has reconciled all men to God and has indeed destined all mankind to eternal life.
"In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses according to the richness of His grace which He lavished upon us." (Eph. 1:7).

4. Consequently, we reiterate the teaching of the Synod of Bishops, in 1971, that commitment to justice and peace is a constitutive element of the preaching of the Good News of Jesus Christ which was given magisterial commendation by Pope Paul VI in his encyclical letter. "The Evangelization of the Peoples". And by Pope John Paul II, in his encyclical "Sollicitudo Rei Socialis" (SRS) in December, 1987.

5. Therefore, we consider that a major role of the Church in Africa is the promotion of peace, and justice among the poorest of the poor.

6. It is our view that the preferential option for the poor, the marginalised, and the outcast of society is not a matter of choice but of obligation.
We are aware that the sheer complexity, enormity and variety of Africa's problems are over-whelming. But we are heartened by the enormous good will of such governments and other organisations, local, national, continental and international, as are trying to help.
The Christian Churches and linked charities, the United Nations Agencies and various charitable organisations are examples of ones that contribute generously. These give

us cause for hope and we give thanks to God for endowing humanity with such goodness.

7. We are saddened by tragic events in many countries in Africa, afflicting countless victims; meanwhile those responsible justify their actions with the righteousness of an ideology.
Because of prejudice and racial attitudes, many do not see the stark reality in Africa where their brothers and sisters are undergoing agony and despair. This can be likened to their sharing in the agony and crucifixtion of Jesus Christ and we would ourselves wish to have some share in their sufferings and to rise also with them in the resurrection.

8. We are grieved by the poverty, the disease, the hunger, the squalor and the ignorance of the masses of our people.

9. We note with regret the political instability of many of our nations, the military dictatorships to which millions of Africans are subjected, the hard-heartedness of some of our leaders, their greed, and thirst for power.

10. We condemn the flagrant violation of fundamental human rights such as freedom of speech, of the press and of association, and imprisonment without trial, the slaughtering of innocent people in many African nations and the many other forms of oppression and domination to which post-colonial Africa has become so accustomed.

We are further concerned about the economic stranglehold in terms of trade between the first-world countries and African countries and the growing neo-colonialism for political advantage of some first-world countries.

We consider it indeed tragic that the economies of 30 out of 36 Sub-Saharan African countries have actually worsened since independence and are alarmed that with

the rich nations imposing strings and high interest rates and unrealistic debt repayment schedule, African nations will be plunged further into economic quagmire.

We are further concerned that "inter-dependence must be transformed into solidarity, based upon the principle that the goods of creation are meant for all. What human industry produces through the processing of raw materials, with the contribution of work, must serve equally for the good of all." (SRS 39)

"Solidarity helps us to see the" other" whether a person, people or nation not just as some kind of instrument with a work capacity and physical strength to be exploited at low cost and then discarded when no longer useful, but as our "neighbour", a "helper", to be made a "sharer", on par with ourselves, in the banquet of life to which all are equally invited by God." (SRS. 39).

11. We deplore the travesty of justice in all forms of racism with specific reference to apartheid in South Africa which Pope Paul VI, in 1967, observed as an obstacle to collaboration among disadvantaged nations and a cause of division and hatred within countries (Populorum Progressio (PP), (63).
The Pontiff went on:" this state of affairs which bodes ill for the future causes us great distress and anguish". (pp. 64).

12. We consider the refugee situation of Africa as a clear instance of injustice to humanity. African refugees represent more than half of the world's homeless and are larger in number than the combined populations of the 10 smaller African nations. John Paul II calls this "a wound which typifies and reveals the imbalances and conflicts in the modern world. . . The tragedy of these multitudes is reflected in the hopeless faces of men, women and children who can no longer find a home in a divided and inhospitable world". (SRS 24). The

state of these children of God who have no homes to go to and no hope of being treated as normal human beings should be a shame to all of us.

13. We note with deep anguish that one of the major aspects retarding Africa's growth and development is lack of good health. According to the United Nations, 30% of African children under the age of five go through a period of malnutrition, severe enough to cause permanent mental or physical damage. This is a tragedy to which Pope Paul VI drew the world's attention in 1967 when he wrote: "Today no one can be unaware of the fact that on some continents, countless men and women are ravished by hunger and countless children are under-nourished. Many children die at an early age; many more of them find their physical and mental growth retarded". (PP. 45). While we denounce the very high infant mortality and the illiteracy rates of Black Africa, we object vigorously to our people being bombarded with the false message that various drugs that have been banned in their countries of origin can restore youthful vigour, sexual potency, even mental alertness and cure everything from cold to cancer and from pimples to polio.

14. We deplore the negative use of tribal feelings that results in inter-ethnic animosities which cause the wanton destruction of hundreds of thousands of human lives and valuable property and create perpetual state of hatred.

15. We would like to draw particular attention to the plight of women in Africa. In spite of their essential role in family and society, especially in agriculture, women are often treated as second-class human beings by their menfolk.

16. We are unhappy about difficulty and conflicting relationship between Islam and Christianity in some parts of Africa. We are always ready to co-operate in dialogue

with Islam especially at the level of basic human rights although in fidelity to our faith we cannot accept Islam's vowed determination to dominate the whole of Africa, In this regard we would appeal to African nations not to interfere in religious affairs and to respect religious freedom.

17. In order to remove the beam in our eyes so as to be able to see the speck in our neighbour's eye, we should like to recall the many injustices that have been caused in Africa by various religious factions and condemn them. We would also like to draw attention to the injustices within the Catholic Church itself and we plead that the Church be not only an agent of justice but also be seen to be just.

18. It is our conviction that violence need not be the answer to the problem of injustice and underdevelopment. We believe rather that the suffering and the misery of our people is due to the fact that we do not heed the words of St. John, "He who has the goods of this world and sees his brother and closes his heart to him, how does the love of God abide in Him?" (1 John 3:17).

    Pope John Paul II would remind us that human society is sorely ill and that the cause is not so much the depletion, of natural resources, but the weakening of brotherly ties between individuals and nations. "Peace is indivisible. It is for all or for non". (SRS 26). "When inter-dependence becomes recognised in this way, the correlative response as a moral and social attitude, as a "virtue" is solidarity". (SRS 38) "Peace is the fruit of solidarity. . ." (SRS 39).

19. We therefore believe that the key to the solution of injustice in Africa, as elsewhere, is love. We appeal to all to respond to the divine call to be men and women for Africa, architects of what Pope Paul VI called "a civilization of love" for the victims of hatred. The civilization of love condemns hatred and produces the joy of

living with others. In the civilization of love justice is held to be a sacred right of all men and women instituted for us by God himself. In it, what begins as a recognition of massive injustice of Africa must grow into a commitment to global love, provided that care is exercised lest in the process the new order takes on the bitterness of the old. Rather, the civilization of love should remind us that love is a weapon against which there can be no defences. Love is synonymous with the Power of Christ Himself and unless we believe in love, we cannot call ourselves the disciples of one who said: "I give you a new commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you", (John 13: 34). The civilzation of love involves itself with the building of the Kingdom of God, a society in which the poor are treated with respect, and violence is avoided as the willed destruction of another.

20. We are here reminded of what a great spokesman of God said: "Is not this the sort of fast that pleases me? It is the Lord who speaks, to break the unjust fetters, to break the throngs, of the yoke, to let the oppressed go free, to break every yoke, to share your bread with the hungry, to shelter the homeless poor, to cloth the man you see to be naked and not turn from your own kin; then will your life shine like the dawn and your wound be quickly healed over, your integrity will come before you and the glory of the Lord behind you. Cry and the Lord will answer, call and he will say: 'I am here' (Is. 58: 6–8).

21. To emphasise our involvement we urge all dioceses in Africa to have strong Diocesan Commissions in line with the thinking of Universal Church which founded the Justice and Peace Commission in Rome. We further urge that Justice and Peace Committees be established in each parish and indeed in every community where Catholics are found.

22. We suggest the following:
—the establishment of permanent National Secretariats on Justice and Peace with a national infra-structure to gather information and propose policies on issues of justice and peace. Where this is not possible, other appropriate structures should be used.

—the establishment of Regional Commissions of Justice and Peace and greater interaction between committees of Regional Episcopal Conferences and the political leaders of the various countries within the region.

—the establishment, at SECAM level, of appropriate structures to deal with questions of justice and peace at the continental organisations.

—the co-ordination by SECAM of the works of the various Regional Episcopal Conferences and assistance with support where possible.
—the establishment of National and Regional Episcopal Centres of social communications where necessary and full use of existing ones to ensure effective dissemination of information on issues of justice and peace.

—involvement of the laity with responsibility in the structures, programmes and actions for justice at all levels – SECAM, regional, national and diocesan.

23. We earnestly recommend education for justice and peace at grassroots levels as an imperative, if the Gospel of Christ is to be made actual to the people. We would further submit that in educating to justice and peace, we should take into account the religious dimension of justice and development in the African context. In particular, we would draw attention to the fact that the African considers phenomena holistically, that he values man-in-community, that he finds his full personality in group relationships, that he has a meaning for conscious symbolism, that he has respect for the sacredness of life, that he values friendship and that finally this is why he can laugh, joke and keep his sense of humour and be happy even in his destitution.

24. We consider that the restructuring of the methods for the formation of the clergy, religious and the laity is crucial in view of the risks involved. We see a need for support groups for the Christians committed to justice and peace. In order to be able to explain effectively the social teaching of the Church we see a need for the simplification of the language of the documents of the Church.

25. We suggest that the document emanating from this meeting be sent to African Heads of State with a covering letter expressing our concern and willingness to co-operate with all who are working for justice and peace.

26. To conclude, we would unhesitatingly point out sin as the cause of injustice and violence, and single out pride, greed and selfishness as the three major vices that militate against man's search to be himself. As Pope John Paul II said: "I have wished to point out the true nature of the evil which faces us with respect to the development of peoples: It is a question of a moral evil, the fruit of many sins which lead to structures of sin" (SRS 37).

27. Hence, we must develop a Church that will help in the promotion of the Kingdom of God. This is the Kingdom which substitutes righteousness for iniquity, truth for falsehood, humility for arrogance, love for hatred, unity for division and holiness for vice.

28. In this regard, Africa needs the Church because Africa cannot survive long without fidelity to what is essentially human and criticism of what is fundamentally inhuman and anti-human. Without criticism, freedom yields to totalitarianism, justice gives way to exploitation, charity recedes into ruthlessness, peace dissolves into hostility. But we need a Church which offers itself

as an agent which makes the human community stand under the judgement of the enduring values of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. The Church must be a place where all those forces, personal and political, which challenge and undermine these values, are themselves effectively exposed, Prophetically denounced and courageously disarmed and dismantled.

29. It must be a Church which proclaims, without compromise, the dignity and worth of every person, lest one becomes swallowed up in society's technological jaws; a Church which, as a revolutionary community, never rests until the principles of the Gospel of Jesus Christ are everywhere realised and extended.

30. Further, we resolve to make use of the native wisdom and genius of our fore-fathers to explain the content of the Gospel and of the African's spontaneity, joy and religiosity to evolve liturgies that speak to him in his existential situation, and of art forms and indigenous pedagogical richness to inculcate morality into our youth.

ARCHBISHOP JAIME GONCALVES,
Vice-President of SECAM

REVD. FR. OBINNA P. AGUH, CSSP, ACT.
Secretary General of SECAM.

SECAM Pan-African Seminar, Roma,
Lesotho 3rd June 1988.

CHRISTIAN UNDERSTANDING OF JUSTICE AND THE CHALLENGES ON THE NIGERIAN CHURCH:

by

Rev. Fr. Dr. Obiora Ike

Paper presented to the Diocesan Co-ordinators of Justice and Peace under the auspices of the National Seminar on "Justice the Foundation for Peace in Nigeria".

INTRODUCTION:

Justice is a much misunderstood concept and in practice much neglected and abused. Our human societies have become increasingly divided. Philosophical schools have construed this concept differently in terms of utility, equality, rules, impartiality, expediency, need etc. Theories of justice can be identified and categorised as metaphysical (such as Kent's Rechtslehre), legal, utilitarian, neo - Kantian, neo - Hegelian, neo - idealist, scholastic, postitivist and the natural theories of justice. On the reason why the concept should display such a diversity of meaning, the answer is that each version of a particular concept finds its natural home in a different way of looking at society. In our times, the differences have not narrowed, rather, we notice that through the various means of modern communication injustices seem on the increase. Wars are continuing, and the goods of the earth are not proportionately shared out. Alas, peace which is a product of justice has not arrived. As at now, humanity stands before the cataclysmic woe of a nuclear war, capable of destroying entire life out of the face of this earth, or at least distorting God's creation dramatically. Each of us can enjoy the luxury of dying 10 times over. Children die daily up to the tune of 40,000 because they have nothing to eat and no medicine to drink in a world capable of overfeeding everybody three times over.

While food and medicament is burnt off and wasted in inconcievable proportions in some parts of the world, some people have no bread for the day. It was the saintly Augustine of Hippo who had asked some sixteen hundred years ago the question concerning the need for Justice: "Remota Iustitia quid sunt regna nisi magna latrocinia"? (Without justice are states not but a band of robbers enlarged?) (City of God, Iv, iv), and the atheistic British thinker David Hume had emphasised that "Justice is the bond of society and no association of human individuals could subsist without it". (Hume, D; An enquiry concerning the principles of morals).

My attempt in this paper is however not to trace the origins of the multiplicity of meanings of justice, or to undergo a history of its development, but rather to consider one little perspective of the thematic by discussing the christian understanding of the concept of justice and the challenges on the Nigerian Church. The task is not an easy one even though in the context of this entire seminar, it is indispensable.

Approach:

Allow me to consider the above topic from an academic and a pastoral perspective.

The academic approach studies a particular concept or social situation in a detached fairly abstract manner, dissecting its elements for the purposes of understanding.

The pastoral approach, on the other hand, looks at the reality from an involved, historically committed stance, discerning the situation for the purpose of action.

One can be "academic" in the sense of a scholarly pursuit of knowledge, yet at the same time be committed to social action. Our approach is therefore analysis in the service of action for justice and peace. It is an intergral part of the faith that does justice".

The Ancient and the idea of Justice:

In Greek mythology and thought, justice was conceived as a supra mundane, eternal idea which is independent of man although man seeks to know its nature and draw inspiration from it in his actions. On the other hand, justice was conceived as a man - made social ideal, a concept completely dependent on man in its inception and practice.

The Greek terms for justice included *Themis* (a consort of Zeus), and Dike (a daughter) both permitting many and varried interpretations. *Themis* might be defined as the personification of rational thought, or as self-inherent righteousness (as in Kant or Hegal), analogous to the idea of justice; *Dike* on the other hand, was the personification of punishment or the decision of a judge, and was applied to relations among persons analogous to an idea of justice.

Plato:

There are paradoxes in plato's justice. Even though the recurrent questions in relation to justice are: What is the basis of social and moral obligation? Why should I be either moral or law-abiding if I don't feel like? Simply put: Why should I be good? Plato's answer is in his theory of political justice which says: "To do one's own thing". But what is "one's own thing?"

By implanting justice in the human soul, Plato develops a sort of personal justice: According to him, "In reality, justice pertains not to the outward action performed upon one's concern, but to the inner, that which really pertains to oneself and to self's concern; the individual avoids allowing the elements (gene) in the soul to mind each other's business and get involved with each other; he actually makes a proper disposition of (what is) personal to him (oikeia); he personally assumes command of and organises himself (auton hautou) and becomes friend to himself ... becoming in all respects one out of many ..." (Plato Republic, BK 4, 443 c9).

He goes on to maintain that justice consists in minding your own business and not interfering with other people. For Plato therefore, for there to be justice in the individual as well as a proper and due harmony within the state, the individual must keep a proper balance between the three elements, namely: intellect, ambition and physical desire.

That in short is Plato's solution to the problem of individual morality. Let us now turn briefly to Aristotle.

Aristotle:

Aristotle's theory of morality centers around his belief that man, as everything in nature, has a distinctive "end" to achieve or a function to fulfill. He begins his Nichomachean Ethics by asserting that "Every art and every investigation, and similarly every action and pursuit, is considered to aim at some good. Hence the good has been rightly defined as 'that at which all things aim". (Aristotle, Nichomachean Ethics, Penguin Classics, 1976, (ed. J.A.K. Thomas); Book I, i, 1094ai). With such a postulation, we are led to ask the question: "What is the good at which human behaviour aims?". Plato had answered this question in his doctrine of "Ideas", where he maintained that this supreme principle of Good was separated from the world of experience and from individual men and was to be arrived at by the mind's ascent from the visible world to the intelligible world. Aristotle, on the other hand, maintained that the principle of good and right was embeded within each man; moreover, this principle could be discovered by studying the essential nature of man and could be attained through his actual behaviour in daily life (Aristotle, Nichomachean Ethics., Book 1, 1094a1–22 (Ibid).

He thus distinguishes himself in the realm of ethics by bringing it down to practical life. "There cannot be a universal good such as Plato held to the culmination of his Theory of Forms" (Aristotle. op. cit., BK 1. vi).

It is exactly on this point too that Aristotle's theory on justice as different from that of Plato has to be seen and understood. In his Metaphysis, he severaly criticised Plato's "doctrine of Ideas".

Even though he does not give much time or space to the idea of justice as Plato does, Aristotle makes it known in several places in his writings that "all men cling to justice of some kind", and states clearly in the Ethics that "there is more than one kind of justice" (Aristotle, op. cit., BK, Vbii, 1130b), for example, that involving "the rightly framed law" which is "complete virtue, but not absolutely, but in relation to our neighbour". In the Rhetoric he gave it some content by saying that justice" is the virtue which assigns to each man his due in conformity with the law, while injustice is a vice whereby "man claims what belongs to others in opposition to the law" (Aristotle, Rhetoric., 1366b) Aristotle thus believed that man was a political and social animal, who "alone has any sense . . . of just and unjust", and he sought to reconcile justice with the conflicts he observed about him. Differently from Plato, he makes justice a human concern. In Book V of the Nichomachean Ethics, which so far as we are aware constitutes the first analytic study of the idea, Aristotle was already drawing attention to the ambiguity of the concept and to the multiplicity of its aspects. (Aristotle, Nichomachean Ethics, Bk. V. ii (1130a18–b8). However, he concedes that a common element runs through all these, which he characterises "as a proper proportion or relationship between individuals". (Ibid., Bk. V.iii. 1130b32–1131a22). Elsewhere, he considers it as "treating equals equally and unequals unequally but in proportion to their relevant differences". Like persons are to be treated alike and unlike persons correspondingly unlikely depending on the relevant differences.

So justice is a sort of proportion, and injustice the opposite. The man who acts unjustly gets too much and the victim of injustice too little of what is goo. It is then the duty of the law to "consider the difference caused by the injury of injustice; and it treats the parties as equals, only asking what one has committed and the other suffered a hurt. Accordingly, the judge tries to equalise the inequality of this injustice" (Ibid., Bk. V.iv 1132a2). This is why in cases of dispute people have recourse to a judge (dikastes) who acts as a divider (dichastes) or an intermediary between

the two parties to secure a mean. As such, the just must be a man of the middle, for virtue is in the middle.

Let us now turn to the search of this concept in African traditional religions.

Justice in African Tradition:

In many African societies, people could not read Aristotle, Plato or any of the known authors of the West. Perhaps they did not need them in order to practice justice or know of what is right and wrong.

For purposes of brevity, let us take the Igbo traditional society as an example of the African man's understanding and practice of justice.

What is said of Igbo society can apply with very general adequacy to the other tribes of Africa, more or less.

The Igbo idea or notion of justice is not easy to define. The core of Igbo man's concept of justice is evident through his proverbs and prayers as this example below may show: Nke Onye diri ya! (Let every man's due be given to him) Onye iro m diri ma m diri! (May my enemy live but may I live too) Ya bara Onye bara Onye! (Let the good things of this world reach all) Onye anwuna m' ibe ya efula! (May co-existence be realised by all) Ogburu Onye n'onye g'ala! (He who kills another must be killed) Ome nma na nma zukwara! (May the just man be rewarded with good); Ome njo na njo zukwara! (May the doer of evil be punished with evil) Egbe bere, Ugo bere, (Let the Kite perch and let the eagle perch); Nke si ibe ya ebela nku kwaa ya! (if one refuses the other the right to perch let his wing break) ehaa! (Amen).

From the above prayer of the Igbo man, one can observe that the notion entails some of the ideas of justice which we already outlined in the introduction to this chapter.

Aristotle's views about "a proper proportion or relationship between individuals" is involved. This would mean a proper respect for people's rights and properties (Nke Onye diri), acceptance of the right of material goods and acquisition by each – (Ya bara Onye bara Onye), the idea of fairness (Onye iro m diri ma m diri), impartiality (Onye anwuna ma ibe ya efula), the principle of retribution (Ogburu Onye n'onye g'ala) which is like the jewish *"Lex Talionis"* and which for the Igbo can be called also legal justice, and the notion of fairness and co-existence or live and let live which is equivalent to social justice. (Egbe bere Ugo bere).

Theophilius Okere summarises these traditional notions of justice thus: "In general, justice insists on strict equality between giving and taking; on the equality of individuals before the law; on equal distribution of rights and duties in the community; psychologically it is a certain innate passion for proportion; a demand for an equality in human affairs; a wish to restore and establish justice in a world full of inequalities.

Justice is not static but dynamic; vement is the work of culture and not of nature. The level of justice a society attains is the measure of its humanisation, that is, of its culture".

The Idea of Justice in Jewish Tradition:

The bulk of jewish ideas on justice are contained in the decalogue found in the Torah (laws) promulgated around 1250 B.C.

Here the principle of giving each man his due and not removing what belongs to another is maintained. Also in Judaism, the doctrine of man's free will and free action merit respectable notice. In his freedom, man chose God, decided for His laws and the moral life. The justice found in the covenant between God and the jewish patriarchs (Noah, Abraham, Moses, David) (Genesis Chap. 9: 1–17; Gen. 15: 1 ff; Exodus Chap 23: 2 Samuel Chapter 7 ff.) obligates God who acts voluntarily to honour the contract as long as man does. The function of religious laws is to impose on man the accomplishment of good actions and to prohibit bad ones. The highest act of justice is the law obliging men to pay homage to the Creator as a mark of gratitude for God's benefits to his creatures. Thereby, a consenting partnership of presumed equals is built up in which duties and rights

are stressed on the basis of divine commandment. The idea of justice here corresponds somewhat with Plato's view on the immutability of justice which cannot be altered by man. There is also a certain parallelism with Aristotle, whereby the idea arises out of man. Immutable yet dependent on man, this relationship led to the emergence of the concept as a moral contract between the jewish nation and God. In the Old Testament, the prophets were unpopular for reminding the jews that they had neglected this contract between nation and God.

Three important concepts express the jewish understanding of justice in three important historical moments of their existence, namely – deliverance, benevolence and observance Deliverance took place in Egypt – the deliverance from slavery imposed by the Pharaohs; By disobeying God in the 'Promised Land', God punished the Jews by allowing the 'Babylonian Captivity'. During this exile, the Jews conceived justice as benevolence; Later on, as the Romans conquered them and brought them under their rule towards the close of the millenium, justice entered the era of strict observance.

In all these three moments, it was God whose justice was reflected, but it was man who was required to act as the covenant decreed. And man had the freedom to choose to be just or unjust. The just would be rewarded by God and wicked punished. It was a sort of quid pro quo, a give-and-take idea, comparable to the "reciprocity" teaching of the Greek pythagoreans. However, jewish quid pro quo must be distinguished from the pre-literary Greek world view which presented justice as a matter, not of right, but of favouritism by the gods on man who was a plaything for their capricious endeavours. The eye-for-an-eye or "Lex–Talionis" law of exact retaliation in Hebrew justice was very strict, carried to the letters and it is with christianity that the story of a merciful and forgiving father assumes spectacular significance.

It remains to be said that the Hebrew concept of justice contained the idea of individual moral responsibility, later

articulated by christianity in the doctrines of the inviolability of the dignity and rights of the human person.

In stoic philosophy and in Roman jurisprudence which succeeded, justice becomes a universal law of nature, removed from the area of the gods, and is accessible to all men through reason. St. Thomas Aquinas christianised this theory by treating human laws as the "local application of natural law, which was itself an expression of God's rational will guiding the universe".

TOWARDS A CHRISTIAN UNDERSTANDING OF JUSTICE:

Scholastic Philosophy

St. Thomas Aquinas epitomises scholasticism, and we shall single him out as philosopher and theologian to consider his views on the issue at hand. It can be generally asserted that Aquina's philosophy is a rethinking of Aristotlenism, which does not however deny the originality of his thoughts. One broad characteristic of his works in philosophy is a tendency to seek the "middle way" on questions that have been given a wide range of answers. Today, this philosophical method is labelled "moderate realism" (Burke, J.V., Thomas Aquinas, Article in "Encyclopedia of Philosophy, Vol. 8. Macmillan, London, (ed. 1972), P. 105). It is in this context that we shall survey his ethical teachings, specifically his views on justice, not forgetting however that his religious commitments led him to look beyond philosophy for final answers.

Aquinas dealt with the theoretical analysis of ethical activities in a long series of works among which are: the Scriptum in IV Libros Sententiarum, Book III; Summa Contra Gentiles III, 114–138;
In X Libros Ethicorum;
Questiones Disputatae de Malo; and
Summa Theologiae, Part II.

In all these works, Aquinas teachings is basically the same He takes the approach of moral theology which defines what is morally good or evil in terms of its accord with the divine law, revealed through the Sacred Scriptures and interpreted in the Christian tradition. But Aquinas did not consider moral Theology to be a part of philosophy for he based his ethical teachings on the theory of natural law or eternal law, defined as "the examplar of divine wisdom as directing all actions and movements" (Aquinas, T., Summa (Theol., I–II, q. 93 a 1). His formulation of the idea of justice is based much on the writings of Aristotle found in book V of the Nichomachean Ethics. In this tradition which stated that "all things have a specific nature which do not change", Aquinas called justice a moral virtue defined as "the constant and perpetual will to render to everyone what is due to him." (Aquinas, T., Summa Theologiae., Pars 11a 11ae, q.58). But what is due to each man? How can we know it? Aquinas believed that the natural law which is "the rational creature's participation of the eternal law", made it possible for all men to have sufficient knowledge of what is morally right or wrong in order to regulate their own actions (Aquinas, T., Summae Theolog., I, II, q.91 a2). Uncompromisingly, Aquinas makes divine reason the touchstone of his reflections and "right reason" (recta ratio) is the justification of ethical thought. Whereas the supreme standard is the eternal law, in volitional activities, the proximate standard is human reason (regu proxima est ratio humana). Conclusively, we can say that for Aquinas, whenever man's action proceeds to its end in accord with the order of reason and eternal law the act is right and justifiable; but when it is twisted away from this rightness, it is an unjust act, a sin (Aquinas, T., Summa Theol, I–II 21, 1c). His basic proposition, technically called the judgement of Synderesis", (which is an intellectual quality enabling any man to intuit the first principles of practical reasoning) states that: "good should be done and sought after; evil is to be avoided" (Aquinas, T., Summa Theol., I-II, 94, 2). Critics of Thomas and legal positivists of our time posit a lot of questions on this Thomistic ethical view which

emphasise the role of the natural law. They ask: "How can a law be made known to man through his nature?"; "What proof have we that God has imposed a natural law on man?"; "Do all or most men recognise this law and, if so, how do we account for such a diversity of moral opinions?"; "Is this law always and everywhere the same for all men, or does it admit of exceptions?".

Surely it is not within our scope to offer explanations to the above questions, even though we point out to their relevance here. Suffice it to mention that Aquinas formulated the natural law theory from his view that man participates "of a certain share in the divine reason", but this share could thus be limited to such law itself and therefore not partake of justice. Human reason distinguishes man from other higher brutes which lack rationality. It is a part of being reasonable, maintains Aquinas, to respect the gods of others, even if an all-powerful legislator has not ordered so. "Theft is unjust, no matter whether laws legalise it or not". Like Plato, he thus gives in to a certain immutability of the rule of justice. But at he same time, he concedes that there are other secondary rules of justice concerning taxation, buying and selling which are not immutable.

"Divine justice (ius divinum) which stems from grace does not cancel human justice which comes from natural reason". John Locke took this position and regarded natural law as the universal test of the justice of positive law.

Aquinas believed that injustice was a harm on the unjust person, just like it was an offence against God. "For we do not offend God except by doing something contrary to our own good and rational reflection" (Summa Contra Gentiles, III, 121 - 122).

In his political philosophy (de Regno; In libros Politicorum; and Summa Theologiae I-II), Aquinas agreed with Aristotle that man is a social and political being with free will and free choice. He thus stressed the idea of the limited monarchy or that kind of state which Aristotle called the Politeia. The purpose of the State is to provide temporal peace and welfare to its citizens, whereby the State could

independently so dispense of justice even though there was the divine idea.

He admitted three basic kinds of justice known as "iustitia legalis".

Christianity had stressed the love of God for man manifested through the incarnation and crucifixion of Jesus Christ,and man was challenged to show love for his neighbour as reciprocity for God's love in order to achieve justice.

Baptism redeemed the believer from sin, the most fundamental injustice, and as Jesus once said: "For thus it is fitting for us to fulfil all justice (righteousness).

SUMMARY:

In the life of Jesus as situated in the Gospels, there are certain elements which appear very significant in our understanding of Christian justice.

(a) Justice in God is tempered with mercy and compassion (If you O Lord should mark our guilt, Lord who will survive? Psalm 129).

(b) Justice and love are inextricably bound together. (The thief on the cross: Today, thou shall be with me in paradise).

(c) Justice in personal life is to be seen as Righteous ness not those who say Lord Lord shall enter the Kindom of God, but those who do the will of my Father in Heaven) Mt.6.

(d) Justice in inter-personal relationship (Reconciliation). "As you would like others to do to you, do also unto them".

(e) Justice in the Church - (fraternity/Service. "A new commandment I give to you- love one another as I have loved you" (jn:13). "greater love than this no man has, that a man should lay down his life for his friends". (jn:13)

(f) Justice in the nation/world (fairness):
To each his due, to each according to his merits to each according to his need, rights, ability, justice according to deserts (deserve).

THE CHALLENGES OF JUSTICE ON THE NIGERIAN CHURCH:

The second Vatican Council in the Decree Gaudium et Spes challenged the entire Church to "consider the signs of the times and to translate them in the light of the Gospel" (Gs.II).

Unlike previous theological approaches which drew us to the scriptures and traditions as exclusive sources for guidance in knowing God's will, the Vatican II pointed to a new source found in social Theology which recognises events, situations and aspirations of people. People cannot be separated from the situation in which they live. In this view new approach, scripture passages long neglected make new sense.

The meaning of the 1971 synod of Bishops "Justice in the World" adds to this new wholity of the Gospel. The Bishops said:

> "Action on behalf of justice and participation in the transformation of the world fully appear to us as a constitutive dimension of the teaching of the Gospel, or in other words, of the Church's mission, for the salvation of the human race and its liberation from every oppressive situation."

In this way, we are able to interprete the Christian message within the context of experience of those who are victims of a hostile society; those who have been denied the development and legistimate enjoyment of the fruits of our human and material resources; those who have been stripped of their humanity and reduced to the level of chattels, the prisoners of human-inflicted pervasive society, the marginalised. What can the Church do for these? How can the Nigerian Church respond to the massive injustice prevalent in the society of which she has been called to be *leaven?* How do we claim Christ when we do not live as He did.

> "By this shall all men know that you are my disciples if you have love for one another."

He died that we might live.

It is my firm belief that the Nigerian Church has not been adequately faithful in propounding this social Gospel. The energy and sincere effort put into a "Sacristy pastoral" has not been fairly extended to a solid "social Gospel". Yet, our task is that of a prophetic and sacramental sign in the world. The Nigerian Church and Christian has not done enough in the implications of working towards justice and peace, linking faith with concrete pastoral action. This is a new task and a new challenge in our mission.

The Implications of this Social Gospel:

(a) Belief that pastoral action necessarily includes action on behalf of justice. Our new approach in evangelisation must now read also the *Socio-pastoral dimension* Just like Pope Paul VI said: "The new name for peace is Development" (Paul VI, Pop. Progressio).

(b) Rejection of sharp dichotomies between "sacred and secular", religious and political", "this world and the world to come", "development and evangelisation".

(c) Acceptance of the integral link between the service of faith and the promotion of justice. The modern equivalent of repentance should also include the responsible use of power.

(d) A clear and unconcealed option for the poor, the weak, the sick and the marginalised.

(e) Commitment to social change through change of structures, in addition to personal and interpersonal conversion.

PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS:

Socio-Pastoral Involvement:

(a) An implict requirement from the aforementioned is that the Church and the priest become more involved in the lives of the masses and help them to

discover and know their human worth and dignity. In this way, the people will be helped to participate in God's grand scheme in their own liberation from servitude and all forms of oppression and evil, including moral decadence and nonchalance, as well as economic dependence and beggary. You cannot just pray on empty stomachs.

Practice of religion:

(b) The Church is challenged to give a new blend to the whole question of the practice of religion versus the theoretical approach to religion which is "Do what I say, and not what I do".

Inculturation & Adoptability:

(c) The God we adore is not a weak or dead God, but alive, dynamic and ever in action. The Church must be an image of this God, creative, not killing creativity, full of initiative, not arrogantly attached to meaningless traditions, innovative, not chanting the dead slogans of past centuries and epochs. Our Church must be alive and awake, fresh and ever ready, in the spirit of aggiornamento to adapt and inculturate. Times are changing and the period of an arm-chair bourgeois-oriented-sacristy pastoral era is gone. The talk in the world today is that of a socio-pastoral involvement and action, stemming truly from the gospel and in favour of the poor and the marginalized. We are in search of the true Jesus of the Gosepl - not the hypocritical Jesus presented ignorantly to us partially in some cases by a colonially aggravated missionary orientation which believed 100 years ago that all over Africa "Hic sunt leones". "Here were lions".

Let us not be a church that reduces herself to the contents of the poem "Hungry, lonely and cold" which reveals it all:

"When I was lonely, you left me alone. When I was

homeless, you preached to me about the shelter of God's love. When I was hungry, you formed a humanity's club and discussed my hunger. When I was in prison, you guiltily crept into a cellar and prayed for my release. When I was sick, you fell on your kness and thanked God for your health. You seem to be so Holy, so close to God , But I am still hungry, lonely and cold" (Canan Banana - The Gospel according to the Ghetto, p.19).

Economic Independance:

(d) The Church must maintain within the context of Nigeria, now more than ever that political freedom and independence are undoubtedly important but unless they are accompained by economic and social justice they are meaningless. Life is inconceivable without a sound economic base. The economic struggle is a struggle for survival. According to Karl Marx, economic power gave the wealthy the resources which enabled them to control man's political destiny since human society reposes upon the economic sub-structure. In our day, era and generation, is the Church liberating the masses from the exploiting class or have we not joined in "licking their feet" for a crumb of bread from their corrupt wealth? The prophecy of Amos for the oppressive class should form a sound foundation for our attitude towards the new rich:

> "After crime upon crime of Israel I shall not relent for they sell honest folk for money, the needy for a pair of shoes, they trample down the poor like dust (Amos 8: 4-6).

God's denunciation of economic injustice is quite explicit and his desire for equitable distribution of the natural and national resources comes out clearly throughout the pages of the Holy Scriptures:

> "Let justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like an overflowing stream".

So the Bible does not just condemn economic exploitation, it also provides a formula or to put it in present-day 'parlance' an economic policy. The problem facing many nations, the problem of starvation, is not merely one of scarcity, it is largely one of inequitable distribution of the available food resources. What does this mean even for our inter-Church survival? How do the wealthy parishes in the dioceses share with the poorer ones? Where is the solidarity? There is a challenge facing all justice-conscious people in the world not only to reverse the state of affairs where the few continue to get richer and richer and the poor get poorer and poorer but to strive for meaninignful participation by the broad masses in the economic activity of their respective countries and areas.

Let me immediately state with all available emphasis that our love for God and his church must be the overriding criteria for any socio-pastoral involvement in this social Gospel.

Spiritual authenticity:

(e) We must live like Jesus lived, critical yet loving, radical but not fanatically destructive, direct and ever modest. The situation and future of the Nigerian Church for my own conception will become "antique museumlike and bourgeois" if we do not on grass-root level come out prophetically to accept the present challenges of the Gospel, conservative or progressive old or young, learned or unlearned. We say "Jesus Christ yesterday, today and forever." During his time on earth, Jesus was constantly engaged in teaching, working and challenging the status quo. Ours today in the African Church, here in Nigeria is the task of finding areas of common interest with those whom Jesus cared for during his

earthly visit. The marginalized, the sick, the deaf and dumb (Mt.28).

Social Questions:

(f) What social policies are there by Government for the poor. And what social policies does the Church have? The bells must ring at our doorsteps as "preachers of the Good News." If we do not participate in the process of bringing about change, we have no way of influencing the final outcome. The simple fact of life is that we either influence change or are influenced by it. No one has any right to pronounce judgement on the rightness or wrongness of their struggle. Those who are victims of injustice are their own best judges as to how they should respond to the violence of the oppressor. If God spoke to Moses and urged him to fight for the deliverance of his own people, why cannot he speak to us in our time? What on earth is the Church for?

Faith in Action:

(g) I often wonder what we mean when we talk glibly of the Kingdom of God on earth. How many christians ever bother to translate into specific terms what this Kingdom ought to be? Have we ever exploited the rich heritage in the Bible that can offer a sound basis for evolving a truly humanistic and christian world view? Meaningful faith must take place within the context of the total human situation. The quest for salvation is quest for spiritual, economic, political and social justice. Jesus died that we might live. We cannot possibly sacrifice the legitimate aspirations of so many of our gallant population who have paid the supreme price to keep Nigeria one and guarantee our freedom. They have died that we might live. They have lost their lives that we might find our own. In honouring them, let us fight to

transmit the heritage vis-a-vis the Nigerian socio-political realities.

Democracy:

(h) The Church must continue to insist on demoracy and the rule of law as becoming of mature citizens, and we must describe every military government as an aberration. Training towards democratic thinking should form part of our socio-pastoral life.

The Economy:

(i) We must consider the economy and therefore the budgets and all economic decisions as at the service of man. Whenever and however they negate man, especially the poor, we shall denounce them as deprivations.

Human Rights & Dignity:

(j) Life is sacred and this sacredness must be jealously guarded and protected. It would be folly to allow the ambitions and corruptions of the few to destroy that which is honourable in life. Human rights is not a gift of the State or a priviledge of the President, but an inalienable right of man - and a gift of the creator. Without fear and with solid faith, let us continue to emphasise the rights of man, the dignity of the human person which transcends all objects, the respect due to the person, and let us in interaction with parishioners express this respect. All those who die in the defence of Human Rights are carrying out a divine mission.

CONCLUSION:

At the end of this talk, I shall remind you that conditions in our country and in our continent are becoming worse.

Poverty has been rediscovered as very difficult to eradicate. The imbalance between the haves and have nots is growing alarmingly. Pope John Paul II on November 12, 1983 called humanity a "great patient in danger of death".

That description fits Nigeria very well. The last decade had not produced a single imaginative project towards redressing the balance. Honest-efforts have often been stigmatised. We have bombs to die from, but no bread to eat as is the case in many African societies now. The world is full of crisis and on the international theatre, there are many hot spots.

However, the prophetic stand of our Church in this world of evil initiates a future which villifies our faith that the Church's mission comes not from the dictates of man but from the God of history.

Let us proceed in faith and justice in our search for his Kingdom

ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL JUSTICE AS PRE-REQUISITES FOR PEACE AND DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA

by
Rev. Fr. Dr. Obiora F. Ike

(Paper presented at the CIDJAP Seminar on Justice – the Foundation for Peace at Sacred Heart Parish, Uwani, Enugu– 15th October, 1988)

SECTION ONE:

I. PREAMBLE

"There shall be peace on earth; but not until each
child shall daily eat his fill;
Go warmly clad against the cold wind
And learn his lessons with a tranquil mind.

And thus released from hunger, fear and need,
Regardless of his colour, race or creed,
Look upwards, smiling to the skies;
His faith in man reflected in his eyes."

(Dorothy Roight, Ride with the Sun,
McGraw Hill Int. Publ. Ltd.)

THE SOCIAL TEACHINGS OF THE CHURCH AND THE QUEST FOR A BETTER WORLD:

However astonishing it may appear, it is probably true or at least difficult to deny that the Social Teachings of the church together with their interpretation and development has attracted, especially in recent times, world-wide attention. Whether it is in the debate on "Liberation Theology-(ies)", or in the Pastoral Letter on Catholic Social Teaching

and the U.S. Economy" or in various other documents, theological developments and implementation attempts of this Teaching, the Social Teachings of the church has become more than ever, an intellectual force with an ethical standard, gaining more and more in vitality and influence within and outside the church.

The bishops of the continent of Africa, Asia and Latin America have often called for a new world economic order. In his encyclical on Human work, Pope John Paul II calls for a "global plan" designed to transcend the frontiers of individual states (JP II LE, n.18). For a number of years now, Catholic Social Teaching has taken a very close look at economic questions and has highlighted on the tense relationship which characterises the world economy, namely, 'the dichotomy between the solidarity from mutual bond and the solidarity from obligation (Hoffner, J. Cardinal, Ordo Socialis 1987, n.2, p.24).

A growing opinion within the Church maintains that Catholic Social doctrine has the potential and practical capability to bridge the contrasting differences between the ideological economic fronts represented by Marxist collectivism and capitalist individualism. On the other hand the scandal caused by the North-South dichotomy of the world's hemisphere, dividing the "one world" of God's creation into the over-rich and over-satisfied "North" and the under-fed, exploited and poor "South" can be adequately re-shaped and united by the right understanding of the Church's Social Teachings. Through it, a balanced guideline for shaping a dignified human existence within a modern economy and social milieu can emerge, giving credence also to the much expected "new world", "new international economic order" and the final "christianisation of humanity" and the world at large.

This paper is an attempt to expose the basic foundations guiding an ambition to realise economic and social justice for all as determinant for a lasting peace on earth (Pacem in Terris). It is a legitimate demand since the life of man here on earth is bound and guided to a large extent by economic and social considerations. Whether we accept it or not, man

is besides being a 'rational creature" also an "economic and social animal". It is as such a fundamental right of man to live in dignity of both economic well-being and social respect. No wonder then, the Fathers of Vatican Council II in the Pastoral Constitution instructed us "to preach the message of Christ in such a way that the light of the Gospel will shine on all activities of the faithful." (No. 43). It is as such, a call to look at economic and social activities through the eyes of faith. We are challenged not only to raise questions and share our beliefs but to live our faith in the world.

Quoting the Pastoral letter on "Catholic Social Teaching and the U.S. Economy (1986)", the bishops maintained what we also here in Nigeria feel and believe, namely, that "Economic life raises important and moral questions for each of us and for society as a whole. Like family life, economic life is one of the areas where we live out our faith, love our neighbour, confront temptation, fulfil God's creative design, and achieve our holiness. Our economic activity in factory, field, office, or shop feeds our families – or feeds our anxieties. It exercises our talents or crashes them. It raises our hopes or crushes them. It brings us into co-operation with others or sets at odds". (p. vii).

It would be arrant nonsense to pretend as if the demands of our faith did not weigh equally, besides "prayer" and "stations of the cross", also on a right understanding and practice of economic and social justice. Let us now reflect from the light of the above on the concrete historical, social and economic setting upon which our topic revolves: The Nigerian Situation.

II. THE CONTEXT OF REFLECTION: NIGERIA AND BASIC PROBLEMS

Nigeria today is undergoing a massive change in various spheres of life, economic, social, political, cultural and religious. Even our attitude to work and its organisation has changed a lot. The change has been sudden. What took about centuries in Europe in the pre-industrial, industrial and post industrial era to achieve are being cramped into one century

in Africa. Changes that took several generations in Europe are witnessed by one person within his lifetime in Africa. In Nigeria, for example, some people may be living a simple. rather very primitive form of pre-industrial existence, while still some others in the same society are in steady contact with the best of the products of post-industrial western society. The implications of all these very fast and hurried changes are today with us. There is much confusion with regard to values. There is crisis in digesting the colonial heritage. Prof. Chinua Achebe's titled work — "Things Fall Apart" portrays that the old order changeth, giving place to the new. However his book "No Longer At Ease" shows that the new order that emerged has brought much confusion and crisis with it, that for many, there is no rest of mind and body. Let us immediately assert that there is a natural difficulty for people who are still unable to read and write, who live in huts in the villages and are surrounded by semi gods, evil spirits and witchcrafts to adjust to the massive pressures of the space age, moon age, the computer age without much discontent and disarray. The difficulty has affected individuals, families, labour relations and work attitudes, as well as national development and productivity. It has affected the world views of many Nigerians who today can speak fluent English, German, French and anything exotic but whose traditional dialects, native customs and traditions have practically become foreign. This area of "cultural bazaar" is one of the determinants of the social and economic milieu.

Nigeria has been labelled infamously: "a nation of consumers" of foreign goods because a wide variety of ideas and values, drawn from external civilisations compete for the attention of potential Nigerian buyers with success. This situation has generated into neo-colonialism as local people change places with former exploiters. In the words of N.E. Njaka: "any people who have been controlled or ruled by a colonial system have a hard time re-establishing themselves. The systematic repression of original ideas through many hidden and open facets, and the gradual influence such repression has on the man and his children and society, lead the person toward self-condemnation and produce complexities and confusions not easily noticed or analysed", (Njaka E.A., Igbo Political Culture; Evanston, N.W. University Press 1974, p.xii).

The issue of values has therefore become a central issue in treating any topic related to the solution of the Nigerian societal chaos.

From the foregoing, without laying all the blame of the African predicament on slavery or colonialism (external factors), these no doubt left terrible psycho-political woes on the colonised. Colonialism was not only the amalgamation of varied cultures and peoples into one country (without consultation) it succeeded in brainwashing the colonised into rejecting their own skin, their own culture, etc. and replacing these with the eccentric, the vague values from Arabian and European countries. No doubt many Nigerians brought over this manipulation. They have in many cases gone beyond this to impose internal colonialism. A small group of rich and powerful citizens maintain their power, and wealth arrogantly at the expense of the misery of millions of the population. Many African governments are still semi-feudal denying the citizens basic rights. The situation is sub-human and oppressive. This situation calls for the urgent attention of the discipline of theology, exemplified in Catholic Social Thought, to grant audience to the chaos caused by an ignorant and godless leadership and to point towards ways and means of renewing the face of the universe and restoring the dignity of mankind.

III. THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL DIMENSIONS OF THE PROBLEM:

When the military junta under Mohammadu Buhari on the eve of 1984 removed power from the elected civilian government before them, they explained the reasons for their coup d'etat with the following economic and social problems:

a) lack of food at reasonable prices,
b) workers owed salaries in arrears,

c) corruption and indiscipline,
d) weak and inept leadership,
e) lacking respect for the law and the constitution,
f) deteriorating education,
g) mismanagement of the economy,
h) reduction of hospitals to mere consulting clinics, without enough drugs and adequate medical equipment (M. Buhari: Broadcast by Head of State to the Nation, Televised and Radioed – 1st January, 1984; published in various newspapers).

Buhari's military clique promised among other things, to heal the nation of all these social malaise. However, "within the first three months of getting into power, over 150,000 workers were sent on compulsory retirement and by the end of January 1985, over 3 million workers were made redundant" (Surajo Mohammed – Talking Drums, 1st April, 1985 – p.9. Editor Elizabeth Okere, London publ.).

The journalist Surajo Mohammed Agoro accused Burahi's government of not putting into practice what it promised the people: "One would have thought they are going to right the wrongs. Instead for more than a year of their stay in power, Nigerians have never had it so bad. We have witnessed a year of vicious and destructive military regime, which has more than doubled unemployment, increased poverty, presided over the wholesale destruction of jobs and decimation of industries. Food now costs three times what it used to cost before they came to power, while hospitals are now mortuaries because doctors have now decided to stop treating patients with infectious diseased injections ..." (ibid).

Buhari did not fulfil his promise to Nigerians and while he was praying his colleague Ibrahim B. Babangida used the same tools of military violence (coup) and toppled Buhari in August 1985. Babangida accused Buhari of almost the same things Buhari had accused the civilian government before it and pledged to remedy the situation. As at 1985, 1 USD changed for N1.00. Within one year of Babangida's rule, 1 USD now changed for anywhere between 5 to 6 Naira. Our currency is almost useless. Inflation and deflation is

very high. There is no work. Poverty has resurfaced tremendously. He imposed SAP, talked of market liberalisation while the opposite was in practice. The newspapers say it all: Nigerians are no better from whence they came. So why all the coups! The country with eight administrations between 1960 and 1988 (6 military and 2 civilian) could easily qualify as a country that is unstable, difficult to govern and in transition. Each administration blames the past, and pledges to correct the mistakes. When they leave power, the masses might have become poorer but the members of the administration have joined the "new rich".

The question of finding a formula to redeem the country from complete political, economic, social and moral collapse has been uppermost in the minds of many Nigerians. A cursory reflection into the daily realities will reveal the basic problems.

IV. SUMMARY AND ANALYSIS:

At this juncture, it is necessary to attempt a summary analysis of the economic malaise facing Nigeria and many countries of the Third World. The economic problems are structural and complicated.

- There is first of all, the colonial heritage. The dependence and reliance on foreign economic assistance overtly and covertly is increasing.
- industries are operating at extremely low capacity;
- exports are declining;
- agriculture is neglected;
- roads, transport and allied infrastructures are deteriorating;
- there is lack of basic technology and underusage of trained manpower required for a rapid diversification of the economy;
- there is lack of political will and leadership (or is it incompetence) to carry out required reforms and the cult of mediocrity which favours psychophants in positions of power instead of experts;
- Ill-thought government policies and political instability compounds the problems all the more;

– The institutions addressing these problems are bloated, highly inefficient and corrupt.

On the personal side of the economy, a writer stated that Nigeria is bedevilled by "gargantum, inefficiency, corruption and general social malaise".

– There is lack of adequate accountability of public funds;
– Economic planning is often very arbitrary changing from day to day, depending on the stock exchange market;
– an adequate population figure and corresponding planning for such is lacking. The issue is politicised.
– Religious and ethic bigotry is still with us.

Arthur Nwankwo asks:

"Can a country be truly independent while its banking and insurance systems, distribution networks, manufacturing sectors, commercial life are controlled by foreign nationals? Foreign monopolies adversely militate against all efforts by developing countries to achieve take-off into substantial growth. They invest capital in extractive industries and to a significantly lesser extent, in productive industries. As a result, the lion share of the economic surplus generated from the extractive industries goes to the countries of the foreign monopolies, thus the determination of these developing countries to have industries that will generate forward and backward linkages in the economy is frustrated." (Nwankwo A; Can Nigeria Survive? – 4th Dimension Publishers, Enugu, 1981, p.xii, p.2ff).

It is my contention that the tenets of the Social Teachings of the Church, in other words the "Christian Social Principles" with all its dynamism, accompanies people in their quest for a solution to daily, human problems and to make life more human. Even if the Social Principles does not intervene as Pope Paul VI says to "give authenticity to a determined structure or to purpose a prefabricated model, it does not confine itself just to recalling some general principles. It evolves by means of a reflection that matters in contact with the changing situations of this world under

the impetus of the gospel as a source of renewal, since its message is accepted in its totality and its requirements . . ." (Paul VI, Octogesima Advenieus n.42).

Nigeria in its present situation will surely need the contributions of "Christian Social Principles" as aid towards solving some of its problems.

SECTION TWO:

I. TOWARDS A SOLUTION: CHRISTIAN SOCIAL PRINCIPLES AND THE ECONOMY:

> Let us begin with a fundamental paradigm.
> "The purpose of economics is the service of people, their material needs and those of their moral, spiritual and religious life. Economic activity is to be carried out according to its own methods and laws but within the limits of morality".

The Gospel's warnings about the danger of riches, and wealth must guide the approach of the christian to economic affairs generally and economics in particular which concern is the factors of production and distribution of wealth. The Church is not an expert on economics but the church makes and creates guidelines and laws for the economy. Economy yes, but not without morality. This is the strength of the church. A series of teachings borrowed from over 2000 years experience of church history and tradition, biblical reflection and sound reason, has this to say about the economy as fully stressed during the 2nd Vatican Council.

"Today, more than ever before . . . we must encourage technical progress and the spirit of enterprise, we must foster eagerness for creativity and improvement . . . elements that contribute to economic progress. The ultimate and basic purpose of economic production does not consist merely in the increase in goods produced, nor in profit, nor in prestige, it is directed to the service of man, of man that

is, in his totality, taking into account his material needs and the requirements of his intellectual, moral, spiritual and religious life, of all men and . . . every group of men of whatever race or from whatever part of the world. Therefore economic activity is to be carried out in accordance with techniques and methods belonging to the moral order so that God's plan for mankind may be fulfilled (GS 63, 64, 65)

Central to the conception put forward by the church is an idea of man who fulfils the designs of God by establishing control over and order with his environment. This environment is a product of man's efforts as decision maker or simply as citizen. The Church's teaching on the Economy is mainly in the area of enunciating general principles.

A summary of the basic teachings of the Council about economic and social affairs is attempted here.

I. *Economics at the Service of Man:*
Man is the author, the centre and the end of all social and economic life. Economic developments must remain under man's direction. GS n.63.

II. *Economic Growth:*
The economy is at the service of man, not man at the service of the economy. (GS n.64). The network of relations involving production, distribution, consumption needs to be made as personal as possible because they are links of service between the brotherhood of men. Therefore, all economics must be within the bounds of the moral order.

III. *The Control of the Economy:*
"Economic progress should not be concentrated at the hands of a few individuals or groups possessing too much economic power, nor of the political community alone, nor of a few strong nation's . . . all nations should participate in decision making" (n.65).

Order and justice demands that power should not be over-concentrated. The aim of a business arrangement should not

be to dominate but to allow both sides to profit. The principles of subsidiarity and solidarity are herein called for.

IV. *Equality in a Changing Society:*
The voluntary initiatives of individuals and of free groups should be integrated with state enterprises." (n.66). Private initiative and enterprise should be encouraged. Co-operatives too. The State should promulgate laws that enhances but controls excesses.

V. *Automation/Mechanisation/Humanisation:*
"Nor should development be left to the almost mechanical evolution of economic activity, nor to the decision of public authority. Automation? Yes: Computers? Yes: But man must be in control.

VI. *The Status and Value of Work — The Personalisation of Labour:*
"Hence we must renounce as false, doctrines which stand in the way of all reform on the pretext of a false notion of freedom as well as those which subordinate the basic rights of individuals and groups to the collective organisation of production." In other words, human work is the chief element in economic life. No work no economics. Work is the activity of man, a value of metaphysical significance and working is the existential expression of man's creative ingenuity. All else in the world of work is only an instrument of work. Man is the subject, not the object of work. On this lies his dignity and personality. Work cannot be sold or bought. Labour and capital must complement, not contradict each other, for labour precedes capital.

VII. *Management and Labour: The Call to Solidarity:*
"All citizens should remember that they have the right and the duty to contribute according to their ability to the genuine progress of their own community and this must be recognised by the civil authority". (n.68).

This calls for joint management by proprietors and a suitable share should be aimed at. Collective decisions taking care of workers interests is necessary. Trade unions are very necessary and the right to strike for basic rights should not be closed out as a legitimate means of sharing economic wealth.

VIII. *The Distribution of Wealth – Ownership and Service:*

"Earthly goods is destined for all (n.69). Everybody has a right to a share of the earth's goods sufficient for himself and his family. Man can only expect to "use" goods which he owns. There is a universal ownership of all goods on this earth and no one should appropriate to himself alone property meant for all when the rest have nothing. There is a christian duty to share and give to those in need. Customs should not be regarded as unchallengeable if they endanger the "common good' teaching and deprive the community of much needed material and spiritual assistance. On the other hand, customs should not be rashly discarded if they can still be so adapted as to be useful. "Created goods should flow fairly to all, regulated by justice and accompanied by charity."

Social security services can play an important part in bringing about the redistribution of wealth. The right to property remains. The Council stresses the need for further development of support for the family (just wages, special packages to large families, the poor, the disabled, etc.) and also for services assisting education and culture. But people who are lazy should not be encouraged at the expense of others. Job and employment opportunities should be created for all and mediocrity should be avoided. To each his due.

IX. *Investment and Monetary Policy (n.70):*

"Investment in its turn should be directed to provide employment and ensure sufficient income for the people of today and the future. Those responsible for

investment and the planning of the economy must keep these objectives in mind and work for the common good". The allocation of outlay should cater especially for the poor and the neglected. Monetary policies should not be at the expense of the weak and the poor. The IMF, World Bank, the multinationals, etc. are particularly called to re-examine their policies in the light of the above.

X. *Economic and Social Activity Towards the Kingdom of Christ:*

"Christians engaged actively in modern economic and social progress and in the struggle for justice and charity must be convinced that they have much to contribute to the prosperity of mankind and to world peace" (n.72). This is a call to individuals to practise what they believe, to teach it to others, to await in prayer and patience the long tedious journey towards the realisation of the promise and the dawn of the Kingdom of God.

II. PEACE – THE FRUIT OF JUSTICE:

Peace is the fruit of justice. Wherever people allow God to prevail in their lives, there exists those 'conditions of law' which regulate the communal existence of men and women in peace. In order to build up peace, we must above all remove the causes of discord in the world which lead to war, i.e., primarily the injustices (GS 83). In fact injustice in both the political, economic and social arena have served to marginalise many of God's children who live in situations of absolute poverty, hunger and misery. The world has not succeeded in allowing a wide section of the population to take part in the developing process nor has an equal partnership emerged between and within the industrial and developing nations. The situation is worsening. To achieve peace, it is necessary to accept joint responsibility for ourselves and for others. A policy oriented towards short-term national interest cannot resolve the world-wide problems. Hunger, unemployment and misery would only grow worse whilst

political instability and warfare would increase to an alarming extent. The motto of our Institute, CIDJAP, is: "Si vis pacem cole iustitiam" – If you want peace, cultivate justice." This can be done if we recognise and eliminate the long term manifold causes of injustice originally based on "personal sin" and today also on "structural sin". Some of these include eliminating through serious and conscientious planning and effort:

a) the deprivation of human rights and political rights;
b) the unjust treatment of minorities;
c) the hunger and indigence of a continuously growing number of people;
d) the social injustices prevailing in many countries of Africa and Asia;
e) the growth of religious fanaticism;
f) ideological confrontation;
g) the great arms build up;
h) the injustices embedded with the present world economic system.

The message of Jesus Christ and the Church as Sacrament of His presence in the world cannot be relaxed until the rights of everyone are preserved in the global trial of strength, especially the poorest and weakest members. We cannot satisfy ourselves with a situation where the wealthy give up a little of their superabundance to the poor. The message of Christ proceeds from the dignity of every individual human being as the image of God. We must advocate this dignity in the promotion of the right to life, the universal human rights as basic rights, the connection between law and freedom and the connection between law and equality. Freedom and peace can only develop wherever law is respected on the basis of fundamental rights. Wherever the law disappears and breaches of the law are not only officially provoked but also publicly applauded, peace and freedom are in danger alike. Those who free themselves from law end up by freeing themselves from freedom. On the other hand, law must only restrict the freedom of the individual in as much as this is necessary by virtue of the other's right to

freedom and of the common good. Law proceed from the fundamental equality between all people. It points out to us that everyone must be respected and promoted in equal fashion as a human being. – (Joint Pastoral Letter of the German Bishops: Out of Justice, Peace – The Church in the service of peace, pp. 42`51).

III. FOCUS ON THE CHURCH – A REDISCOVERED ROLE IN SOCIETY:

As a church in the world, we cannot claim moral impeccability. We live in the world and share too in the sins of omission and commission in the world. In God's great mercy, the sinner can find forgiveness. Repentance however, is a prerequisite.

The challenge we face today as christians is not simply that of explaining the contents of the scriptures to the world. No, this we have explicitly done. The problem we have as Bishop Zwane has boldly said is that 'God dies in the life and minds of the people because we bury him in our churches. God becomes irrelevant in the life of our youth because of our moralistic sermons that fail to challenge the evil systems that oppress man. God becomes the 'opium' of the masses of people when we become worshippers of money and the so-called 'good-life'. Whoever amasses wealth in the midst of poverty but fails to share it cannot be the sign of the presence of God in that community."
(Bishop Mandlenkhosi Zwane, A Man for All People, CIIR, London, 1986, p.82).

We are dealing with a God who takes sides on behalf of suffering humanity. He concerns himself with the ills and problems of people: those who are poor, the prisoners, the blind and the oppressed. We shall be attacked as "meddling in politics", but we can comfortably reply that the prophetic mission emphasises the need to link faith with action for justice and peace. What then is the role of the Church. Simply this: To act like Jesus did. When he was on earth, Jesus first of all studied and analysed the society in which he lived. In other words, we, the christians of the 20th

century must deal with actual people who live in concrete socio-economic political situations and translate the Bible in their context. This is not the area of faith/religion on one side and Action/practice on the other. That Faith which does justice is in vogue. It means in reality that we may have to give up a few luxuries so as to properly identify with the poor. This is a basic challenge today.

We know of course that in our world, there is much of technical know-how, and basic necessities of life. The problem in the world is that of distributing these things. Both in the State and in the Church, sharing is lacking. But we must learn and never give up learning. God's nature is goodness overflowing and that is sharing. This is the message we receive from the first christian community.

Finally, as christians, we are concerned with right and wrong. In discussing economic and social Justice as prerequisites for peace and development, what we really want to protect is not simply the person's right but the person as such. In protecting persons, we respect GOD the Creator. God endowed human beings with humanity in possessing rational nature and made man the most developed creature on this planet. Man is partly spirit, with immoral longings, made in the image of God. People's rights, then are rooted in their very nature and transcend any man-made legislation. Our attempt is to protect in an integral manner, the human person and to elevate his dignity, already elevated in creation by his creator.

IV. CONCLUSION

The mandate of the Church is to furnish testimony of the Gospel to mankind. The Church proclaims to the world the reconciliation with God bestowed upon us through Jesus Christ and the concommitant hope of peace.

The promotion and maintenance of peace depends not only on the policy of States, but also on the attitude of individuals and social groups. None of these spheres lie outside of the principles governing a reasonable system of ethics. For this reason, the Church claims the right to make a moral judgement in regard to political matters if the basic

rights of the individual or if the salvation of souls demand this. – (GS. 76).

"Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness. . ."

(Mt. 5).

CHRISTIANS AND POLITICS

By

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Lecture delivered to the Nigerian Federation of Catholic Students, University of Nigeria Enugu (campus) during the "1989 Federation Week" at the Main Hall of the UN, Enugu on 6/3/89.

INTRODUCTION:

I am priviledged to be invited to deliver a paper to this August assembly of the Nigerian Federation of Catholic Students holding at the UN, Enugu Campus during your Federation Week. It gives me pleasure to express how honoured I feel in being invited to speak to you on a topic that is both exciting and challenging: namely:—
"CHRISTIANS AND POLITICS".

Your general theme for the Federation Week is "Challenges of our time" and I feel proud to acknowledge how courageous, bold and dynamic your association has been in tackling within your means various dimensions of the problems facing our Society. I encourage you and wish your leadership and yourselves success in your undertakings.

I do not think that there is expectation on me to give a historical narration of the relationship between christians and politics, in the last 2000 years (i.e. since Jesus Christ Himself).

Infact, that would be expecting too much and I would not venture into such a historical exposition. I shall therefore disappoint those who hoped for such a historical past.

BASIC ASSUMPTIONS:

(a) I want to assume that most of us here present share a common unwillingness or even inability to accept the world as it is because we believe that it was meant to be different.

(b) Secondly, I want to presume that most of you here present wish that the world could be changed for the better.

(c) Thirdly, I assume that we want politics, dirty as it may be, to have clean persons go into it, operate it, purify, and make politics less dirty. This might involve giving christians the mandate and support to enter politics, run the affairs of the State under the Christian Ethics of good government supported by honesty, justice and integrity.

THE REALITY:

Look around you and you will discover the reality facing many nations. They are hungry, they are poor, they are exploited, and they die young.

This is the reality confronting over half of the world's population. It is the reality facing over 70% Nigerians who live in the rural areas or in the ubran ghettos of Lagos, Kano, Enugu, Ibadan etc. Such abject situation leaves no person of goodwill indifferent, thus the ongoing debate also here in Nigeria on the relationship between church and State, Christians and Politics.

POLITICAL THEOLOGY: The Call for Christian Participation in Politics.

Christians have gone crazy, I have been told many times, to think that God's will shall be done here on earth as it is

in heaven. It is this strong conviction against all cultural pessimism that has produced a growing emphasis on social justice. The expanding gulf between the industrialised world and the developing nations on one side, and the inequalities existing within various nations that has introduced a new seriousness among all thinking people concerned with justice.

Many christian theologians have come to regard it as their primary task to clarify the social imperative implicit in the Gospel of Jesus Christ. They call this "Political theology", and their starting point is the same crazy idea that God's will shall be done on earth as it is in heaven. The clarification of the social meaning of the Gospel has made them into critics of the present world order and proponents of an alternative society based on sharing and co-operation.

Church groups have become involved in new types of social action. One of the central concepts in "Political theology" is "Social Sin", a term used in the church's offical teaching for the 1st time in the 1971 synod of Bishops. In order to spell out the social meaning of the Gospel, charistians must analyse the structures of evil in their. society. Like J.B. Metz. has said:
"There is a genuine christian "home" in the world, and the christian has no reason to involve himself with it only in a bad conscience" (Metz: "Theology of the world")'

The world synod of Bishops in 1971 reminds us that "Action on behalf of Justice and Peace and *participation in the Transition of the world,* fully appear to us as a constitutive dimension of the preaching of the Gospel or, in other words, of the church's Mission for the redemption of the human race and its liberation from every oppressive situation". (Synod of Bishops, Justice in the WORLD, ROME 1971).

The call today, therefore, and indeed the plea is that we must know that our participation in the word that God is doing, that is to say in the work of bringing forth justice to the nation's, derives from our faith in God.

It is clear from these passages that doing justice is equated with the worship of God.

"A people cannot be just before the convenant God,

they cannot know or worship him, when they do not heed his call to take up the cause, and defend the rights of the poor and oppressed in the community (John R. Donahue, Biblical perspectives on Justice).

Therefore, the genuine worship of God in the Hebrew scripture has 2 poles: Yes, the cultic – praying, sacrifice, fasting - but also the social dimension of satisfying the demands of justice.

We cannot then claim that the highest religious activity is quiet contemplation of God when human community's life is littered with injustice. How can we see the face of our father in heaven when we cannot see the face of our brothers and sisters here on earth?

Christians are citizens of almost every nation on earth. Whether as a majority or a minority, they vote, (where this is not distorted by Military Politics), enter politics, bring opinion to bear concerning issues that face their various nations and societies.

We are quite aware of the possibility of divided opinion by christians on a number of social issues like other citizens of the nation. This is natural.

Yet in regard to fundamental principles and issues affecting basic duties and rights of those living in society, being a Catholic christian should make a difference. This is so because the social Teachings of the church give a definite teaching about the role of the believer in society. The citizen who is a christian is often confronted with issues that involve fundamental views about mankind, civil duties and rights, law, justice, liberty, life economics etc.

During the second vatican council, the Fathers called upon christians to respond to the society in the light of faith and thereby transform society as preached by Jesus Christ into a messianic world filled with Justice, Love and shared humanity.

This is why faith must transform politics to give this dimension of human existence a "raison d' etre" and a content.

Our vocation as chrisitans must be such that we are imitators of God. The God of the scriptures is active and dynamic

and does not stay up there in the clouds, remote from people. The God of the scriptures enters into a loving relationship with the human community and freely shares his creative power with the community, so that in his creation and building up to his kingdom. God makes the human community indispensable to his plans.

Therefore, the history of the human kingdom becomes the history in which the Kingdom of God is being buit.

THE BIBLICAL DIMENSION: *Jesus and Politics*

When Christ was brought before the tribunal of imperial Rome by his own people the charge laid against him was: "We found this man stirring up our people to revolt, opposing the payment of taxes and claiming to be our rightful ruler".

Was the accusation true? In a way it was. He revolted against the lack of compassion among his own people, the jealousy of workers when generosity was shown to those out of work until the 11th hour, the jealousy of the elder brother in the story of the prodigal son.

He revolted against the exploitation of those who benefited from political oppression when he offered to share the company at table of a little man who had to climb the tree to get a glimpse of him.

He criticised the status quo, the high priests, the pharisees, the sadducees, the hypocrites and those who absolutised power. He chose to re-order the political face of the universe by quoting Isiah: "The spirit of the Lord is upon me, because the Lord has anointed me.

He has sent me to bring good news to the poor, liberty to captives, recovery of sight to the blind and release to prisoners and to announce a year of favour from the Lord". (Is 61:1 - LK, 4:16-21).

Jesus himself as we know, (the first christian), was nailed to the cross on charges of political sabotage. When confronted by pilate, he politely replied: "my kingdom is not of this world. If my kingdom were of this world, my father would release one legion of Angels to fight on my behalf.

But my kingdom is not of this world (Jn. 18).

In another istance, when asked when the often mentioned kingdom of God would finally emerge, Jesus replied: "The kingdom of God is already here within you, i.e. on earth" (Jn. Mt.), in two clear instances, Jesus spoke of the Kingdom already within you and the kingdom yet to come. Any contraditions? Theologians have tried to rationalise that response and to reduce any contradiction by speaking of the "Schon" aber nicht vollendet" (meaning the "already begun kingdom but not yet fulfilled"). In other words the kingdom of God has already started, but its fulfilment for mankind can only be in eternity. 2000 years has come and gone since Jesus lived on earth. We his followers in the Nigeria context are challenged to reflect and to respond to "the happenings of the times and to translate them in the light of the Gospel" (Gd-). It is in the excercise of this challenge that we must see this lecture on christians and politics.

My approach shall be threefold:

(a) To expose the Catholic view of politics and Government

(b) To expose the duties and obligations of Government to its citizens.

(c) The duties and obligations of citizens.

Government: Where Did it Come From, What is it — And What difference does that make?

The Catholic interest in government stems from the Church's interest in man's welfare. What are human beings and what is their destiny? The Church views government in the light of its answer to that question, which we shall get to later.

That answer conforms to the Church's understanding of all reality. Things exist either by happenstance, accident or

by design. Necessity, fate, opportunity can all be included in the former assumption. Mankind, coming into existence accidentally, could use his intelligence to "get along," and thus government and all social relationships can be explained. Let us first consider those ideas.

Actually, that is how the prevailing philosophies on the subject explain the existence of government. All the philosophies of government prevalent since, roughly, the Protestant Reformation, consider government the creation of man for the race's benefit and convenience.

Thomas Hobbes (1588—1679) concluded that government comes about by the full, irrevocable surrender of humanity's affairs into the hands of the ruler. That rule thus becomes absolute, and the state is the great Leviathan, subservient to no other being, greater than all and answerable to none. God may be the ruler's superior, but God confirms that rule and ratifies the ruler's conscience. The word of the ruler is law, and cannot be challenged.

Such thought, of course, can indeed make a Leviathan of a court, or a legislature, or anyone considered a "highest authority." The substance of Hobbes' theory is that there is no one, no reality of civil effect superior to the ruler — the ruler's word binds everyone.

John Locke (1632—1704) likewise considered government a creation of man. He moderated Hobbes' theory by declaring that the surrender of affairs to a government is not irrevocable. It is at the desire, almost the whim, of the citizenry. Men may put on or put off governments as they find convenient and fit. Rulers are answerable, therefore, to citizens and not just to God and their own consciences.

It is easy to see why Locke was a favourite among the architects of the American Revolution. He gave philosophic justification for separating the nation from allegiance to the British crown, obedience to British law, and subservience to British legislators and ministers.

Most of what Locke taught, regarding government is acceptable to Catholic and compatible with Catholic social doctrine with one basic and most important exception, which we shall discuss shortly.

If Locke was the philosophic ancestor of America's Revolution, Jean Jacques Rouseau (1712–1778) was the same for the French Revolution. Rousseau insisted that government comes about by a social contract as an antidote for greed and power. Government, however, simply involves men in institutionalized greed and power. The ideal is for man to live without government – in a state of nature. That is what creation intended for men, who by their own nonconformity to nature introduce the evils that make government necessary. Thus, whereas both Hobbes and Locke would consider some form of government good, Rousseau considered it evil.

The first result was to convert most of intellectual France (where the Revolution actually took shape) into a state of childish emotionalism. The royal court itself began to play at return to a "state of nature," with the Queen and her ladies dressing as milkmaids, and the gentlemen pretending to be rustic farmhands. It was escape from reality, as surely as the rebirth of Rousseauism in our day is such an escape.

Hippies, environmental extremists, militants against "institutions", neonature worshippers are all today's Rousseauians. They find the answer to all problems in stripping off their clothes and frolicking in the forests, relying on others to supply their wants when summer fades and the reality of winter takes over.

It was all gentle fun in France during Rousseau's lifetime. Poor aristocrats dreamed of a day in which a type of natural superiority would be recognized by all. Those who could read Rousseau's books were titilated by his bold assertion of the naturalness and acceptability of illicit and perverted sex (similar to such universal titillation today, preached not only in books but now invading the nation's homes via TV).

Then the reality of winter arrived-the Revolution in Rousseau's name. He undoubtedly would have been one of its victims, had he not died on its very eve. For the snow of realism was soon turned red by the blood not only of aristocrats, but of all who were anti-revolution or thought to be so. Children, nuns, priests, bishops, servant girls,

maids of the rich, the rich themselves, politicians died. Titillation about sex turned to masochism. The guillotine was the real ruler in the absence of any other, and its court were those who had kept Rousseau's novels hidden under pillows or in kitchen cabinets.

One of the most ominous events in the United States in the 1970's was the outbreak of Rousseauism with its hidden disease of lust, anarchism, and death-devouring tyranny.

The Church's Teaching:

The Catholic view of Government is based on its basic position regarding all reality-that all is planned and has a divine cause and purpose, and is not the result of accident or accommodation to man's desires. Thus, Catholic doctrine differs from all the prevailing opinions insofar as the church says government is perfectly natural in its origin, came into existence (in microcosm) the moment more than one human came into existence. God planned government when He planned mankind.

Government is modeled on the family, the father and mother being the rulers, the other family members the citizens. Regardless of its particular form, all government derives its authority from God. That authority is conferred on government by the people-either through some form of direct or indirect suffrage or merely acceptance, as with a monarch or even a dictator.

Pope Leo XIII spoke of these things in his famous encyclical Rerum Novarum (The Condition of Labor) in 1891:

"Thus we have the family; the "society" of a man's own household; a society indeed limited in numbers, but a true "society", anterior to every kind of state or nation". (Rerum Novarum, No. 9).m

And later the same Pope made clear that the Church claims not the right to define what form the state should take, but does claim the right to define basically the nature of the state and the criteria for doing so:

"By the state we here understand, not the particular form of government which prevails in this or that nation, but

the state as rightly understood; that is to say, any government conformable in its institutions to right reason and natural law and to the dictates of divine wisdom." (no.25).

Society, therefore, exists by decision of God and must take a form and perform a function in keeping with its nature as willed by God and perform in keeping with divine wisdom.

The Church does claim the authority to judge government upon those unchanging criteria. Note the importance of this viewpoint. Under the theories that see government as man-made, a result of convenience or practicality, government is unlimited by anything basic or intrinsic. Its reach is as far and as compelling as its citizens tolerate or choose. There is nothing that in its nature prevents absolutism on the one hand, or near anarchy on the other.

Under the Church's teaching, that is not so. Government has a definable existence and is limited by its very nature. Actions by government contrary to divine wisdom or its own created purpose are not, in fact, governmental acts at all, but only pretensions to such acts. Only under Catholic teaching is being an oppressive absolutism, and compelled on the other hand to exist as a natural organism not dissolvable at the whim or desire of human will.

Pope Pius XI, in his encyclical on Atheistic Communism (1937) makes that point clear:

". . . God has likewise destined man for civil society according to the dictates of his very nature. In the plan of the Creator, society is a natural means which man can and must use to reach his destined end." (no.29).

Here the purpose of government is clear, it serves human beings by aiding them to reach their end. It does in the temporal order what the church does in the spiritual-provide the means for truly human living in keeping with the purpose and goal of humanity's creation. Any other activity is not proper or allowable for government.

Pope Pius XII reinforced these points.

"What . . . is the true concept of the state if not that of a moral organism based on the moral order of the world? The state is not an omnipotence crushing all legitimate autonomy." (Address to International Congress of Administrative Sciences, Aug. 5, 1950).

Nevertheless, government is not dispensable or a mere convenience.

"In the eyes of the Church no other social institution, after the family, is so vitally and essentially necessary as the state. It has its roots in the order of creation and is, itself, one of the most constituent elements of the natural law." (Pius XII, ibid.).

We are led from an understanding of what government is and whence it came, to why it exists and what is its proper function.

"The origin and primary scope of social life is the conservation, development and perfection of the human person, helping him to realize accurately the demands and values of religion and culture set by the Creator for every man and for all mankind, both as a whole and in its natural ramifications." (Pius XII, Christmas Message, 1942).

Thus, governmental action is linked to the human person and concerns that person's nature and purpose, particularly in regard to living in common with others. That which advances the person in perfection as intended by God is proper to government; obviously that which does not do so or actually thwarts the citizen's movement toward his or her purpose is improper. Vatican II carried forward that obvious truth about society.

"Individuals, families, and the various groups which make up the civil community are aware of their inability to achieve a truly human life by their own unaided efforts; they see the need for a wider community where each one will make a specific contribution to an even broader implementation of the common good. For this reason, they set up various forms of political communities. The political community, then, exists for the common good; this is its full justification and meaning and the source of its specific and basic right to exist. The common good embraces the sum total of all those conditions of social life which enable individuals, families, and organizations to achieve complete and efficacious fulfilment." (Gaudium et Spes no. 74) – The Pastoral

Constitution on the Church in the Modern World.

The above should not be understood to mean that government is simply a result of human decision. It is rather the result of human appreciation of God's purpose, achievable because of man's nature only in community. Even "loners," hermits, anchorites, contemplatives relate their "drawing apart" to the common good, giving themselves totally to God to make up for the failures of many who live "in the world."

It is the common good that dictates both the existence and functioning of government. The common good is not the same as the majority good, or some egalitarian idea that would make all to function in a common and similar fashion. Rather, as the Council tells us, it is the good for society itself, the conditions by which individuals, families, organizations may function best toward a common goal of human fulfilment. Government exists to ensure those conditions, including the free functioning of the church itself, which likewise is indispensable for mankind's achievement.

Political communities exist in germ, as it were, with the creation of human beings. They broaden or bring to fruition that germ by fleshing out communities broader than the family, but not subverting the family or the individuals in keeping with their nature and purpose. The state goes wrong when it forgets that duty, strays from it, or sometimes even attempts to thwart it, providing its own goals and purposes for its citizens.

It is on the basis of what government is and what its purpose is, that the church insists it cannot, for example, allow abortion or any other attack on basic human rights; or a false freedom that allows immorality to tempt citizens toward failure in their ultimate purpose.

Government, in the Catholic view, is not merely a negative thing, giving all a chance to work out their destinies; it must be a positive thing, ensuring the circumstances in which such a working out is possible for all.

3. The Duties and Obligations of Government:

It is within the context of what is presented above that we are brought to consider just what the government must do, what its obligations as government are and how they should be carried out.

The primary duty of government is the common good. All governmental acts, all legal approvals and restrictions must be related to that good. What is the common good? It is not necessarily the good of the majority, or of the minority, or of individuals – but the good of the whole, of society itself. That which serves the good of individual citizens, will, (perforce), serves the common good. Nor can the common good derogate from the true good of the individual, though some things that the individual might consider to be for his or her good must perhaps be sacrificed. It might, for example be considered a good for the individual to raise chickens. But the common good might dictate the individual not raising chickens in the midst of a suburban residential neighbourhood. The common good speaks of the environment necessary for the fulfilment of citizens living in common, or in society.

Vatican II explains this: "Individuals, families and the various groups which make up the civil community are aware of their inability to achieve a truly human life by their own unaided efforts; they see the need for a wider community where each one will make a specific contribution to an even broader implementation of the common good. For this reason, they set up various forms of political communities. The political community, then, exists for the common good this is the full justification and meaning and the source of its specific and basic right to exist. The common good embraces the sum total of those conditions of social life which enable individuals, families, and organizations to achieve complete and efficacious fulfilment." (Guadium et Spes, no.74).

This is a paraphrase of what Pope John XXIII had written in Mater et Magistra:

"This (common good) embraces the sum total of those

conditions of social living, whereby men are enabled more fully and more readily to achieve their own perfection." (no. 65).

It should be noted that the common good far transcends mere economic condition. There are schemes that might, in fact, alleviate suffering, rescue some from abject poverty — but which might not serve the common good, indeed might subvert it by enslaving citizens to a materialistic, propertyless and classless society. Comfort and pleasure are not determinative.

On the other hand, a true pursuit of the common good may be recognized by certain results.

"So the divine order and harmony in the world must be the principal unifying force for the action of all Christians and of all men of good will in their work for the common good." (Pius XII, Christmas Message, 1957), where the common good reigns, poverty and suffering will be alleviated as much as possible. The converse, however, may not be true that is, absence of poverty and sufferings do not necessarily mean a reign of the common good.

It is the common good that dictates the duties and obligations of government that will now be discussed.

Guardianship of Rights:

It is obvious that government must protect the rights of its citizens if it is to fulfill its obligation to the common good No society where those rights are violated with impunity — either by the government itself or by citizens with the approval of the government can be said to be properly operating within the common good. The exercise of rights is necessary for the fulfilment of human beings, the achievement of their purpose.

"To safeguard the inviolable sphere of the rights of the human person and to facilitate the fulfilment of his duties should be the essential office of every public authority. Does not this flow from that genuine concept of the common good which the state is called upon to promote?" (Pope Pius XII to Italian workers, June 1, 1941, on the fiftieth anniversary of Rerum Novarum).

The Right to Life:

Life-the creation and gift of God-cannot be taken from innocent persons by anyone. It is inviolable, and not subject to the good of another. Therefore, it is a right that the government must not only recognize, but protect, no matter what its condition.

"God, the Lord of life, has entrusted to men the noble mission of safeguarding life, and men must carry it out in a manner worthy of themselves. Life must be protected with the utmost care from the moment of conception; abortion and infanticide are abominable crimes." (Vatican II Documents, Gaudium et Spes, No. 51).

Thus laws allowing abortion, euthanasia, or any so-called legal homicides are not within the power of government and are to be considered invalid. Further, the government has the obligation to act positively to prevent such evils.

"Rights must be religiously respected wherever they are found; and it is the duty of the public authority to prevent and punish injury, and to protect each one in the possession of his own." (Rerum Novarum, No. 29).

Obviously, what belongs to every individual — to have and to hold — is life itself. There can be no question of any government legitimately averting its gaze from acts that invade that right to life. Because some wish to pretend abortion is not the taking of human life is no reason for the government to honor that pretension.

However, most Catholic theologians admit the right of the state to execute for capital crime duly proved. It is theorized the criminal forfeits his right to live, or is an aggressor against his fellow citizens.

The Right to Learn about and Practice Religion:

The highest good for humans and one necessary for their happiness is to know God's will and follow it. That statement in fact could be considered a definition of religion itself. It follows from it that a government must recognize the right to do just that-practice religion. Indeed, it is governmental duty to foster the practice of religion.

Private Property a Right:

It is fashionable to speak of human rights and property rights, and to give a priority to the former. The truth is that property is a human right, and a most basic one. Property is conducive to the family's security. Owners are less subject to misfortune-inflation, loss of income. The right of privacy is more safe for the owner of property; even the right to a certain eccentricity, or individuality of personality, is served by property.

It allows men and women to be more the masters of their own fate. From property man leaves an estate for his children.

Pope Leo XIII considered property the goal of work and therefore essential to a decent state of living for workers.

"It is surely undeniable that when a man engages in remunerative labor, the very reason and motive of his work is to obtain property and to hold it as his own private possession." (Rerum Novarum, no. 4).

So true a right is the ownership of property that it is not allowed under Catholic teaching to weaken the right of property as to destroy it. (Pius XI, Quadragesimo Anno, no. 48).

Exorbitant and crushing taxation on property that would become actually a form of confiscation obviously falls under this prohibition. Discrimination, making property ownership difficult or impossible for many would likewise be immoral.

All recent Popes have upheld the right to property, even to productive property — that is, manufacturing and profit-making property, as Pope Pius XI insisted. (See Quadragesimo Anno, no. 44 et Passim).

Public monopoly (Socialism) would put ownership of either all property or at least productive property in the hands of the state, or would demand that all profit beyond that needed to keep production going, go into the hands of workers.

Private monopoly is the acquiring of unlimited vast holdings by an individual or combine of individuals making competition in various fields of enterprise difficult or impossible.

This type of monopoly existed more easily under the old laissez faire of the Manchesterian school of economics.

Public monopoly strikes at the right of property directly and inherently; private monopoly strikes at its practice, at ownership in fact. The latter is more properly an abuse of the property right, whereas Socialism is a denial of that right. Both, however, are condemned by Catholic doctrine.

Transmission of Property by Inheritance a Right:

Some theorists would strike at property by prohibiting its transmission to heirs. Other schemes impose such high inheritance taxes that property is actually confiscated by the state upon death. While admitting that the right to property is not rigid, and that its use is subject to regulation, Pope Pius XI nevertheless adds.

"It is plain, however, that the state may not discharge this duty in an arbitrary manner. Man's natural right of possessing and transmitting property by inheritance must be kept intact and cannot be taken away by the state from man, "for man is older than the state,' and 'the domestic household is antecedent, as well as in idea as in fact, to the gathering of men into a community."
(Quadragesimo Anno, no. 49; quotes from Pope Leo XIII, in Rerum Novarum).

The Right to Privacy:

There are certain areas of proper and society-serving activity that are sacrosanct and not open to the state's scrutiny and control. Those are the functions of the family that involve parental rights — the having of children, the education of those children, the religious and familial customs; the inculcating of moral values and habits, etc.

Such areas are almost the first invaded when Communism or other forms of absolutism come to control. Nothing prevents the dread opening of the door by agents of the state under such forms of government.

Fortunately, our Constitution goes a long way toward protecting the rights of privacy and of the home. Catholic social doctrine wholeheartedly agrees.

"The idea, then" wrote Leo XII "that the civil government should, at its own discretion, penetrate and pervade the family and the household, is a great and pernicious mistake. True, if a family finds itself in great difficulty, utterly friendless, and without prospect for help, it is right that extreme necessity be met by public aid; for each family is a part of the commonwealth. In like manner, if within the walls of the household there occurs grave disturbance of mutual rights, the public power must interfere to force each party to give the other what is due; for this is not to rob citizens of their rights, but justly and properly to safeguard and strengthen them. But the rulers of the state must go no further; nature bids them to stop her. Paternal authority can neither be abolished by the state or absorbed; for it has the same source as human life itself". (Rerum Novarum, no. 11; cf. no. 28 on the duty of the state to intervene).

Though outright intervention would be unthinkable in modern states claiming a rule of law, as the United States, subtle intrusion and usurping of parental rights is well underway.

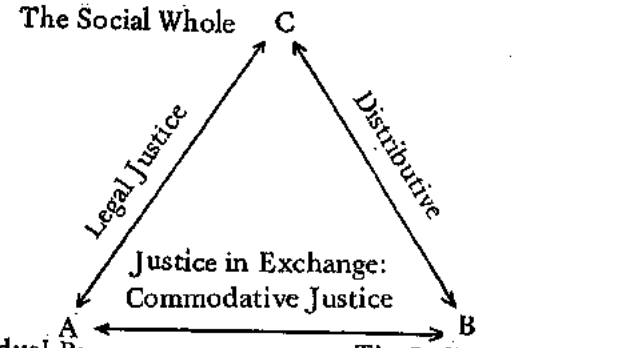
Because of governmental regulation, court decisions, legislative rulings, children are being subjected to evil and immoral theories and indoctrinated with pernicious values during the hours of compulsory schooling. Thus, birth control and abortion information are by law in many jurisdictions available to children, with parents helpless to interfere. A girl of whatever age may claim the abortion right without parental interference or any voice in the matter by the father of the baby. All of these are in effect an invasion of the home. That they are often done because of parental apathy or even parental agreement makes the intrusion no more moral. Parents may not properly surrender the child to the state, no matter for what pretended good.

Parental rights are in effect being surrendered by the submission of parents to so-called educational experts, Psychologists, counsellors, "clarifiers," and even amateur and professional advisers who sell their opinions in the popular media-particularly women's journals.

The Principle of Subsidiarity:

Catholic social doctrine sees all things — including governmental function-regulated by the philosophic principle that what is proper and possible at a lower level should not be done by a higher echelon. This is a law demonstrated in nature and is part of the rights of individuals.

It would be improper if parents, even from a motive of love, were to cling to all the child's functions, not allowing that child to do for itself what it is capable of doing.



(The above is a schematic representation of the basic forms of Justice, as taught by St. Thomas Aquinas. It is reprinted, with permission, from Justice, by Josef Pieper, Pantheon Books, New York, N.Y: 1955, P. 121).

Legal justice is owed to the social whole by individuals. It is fulfilled by obeying just laws, service, fulfilling the duties of citizenship. Distributive justice is the opposite-the service of justice owed citizens by the social whole, and fulfilled through government, though in actuality through persons who make up government, for, as such, government cannot do justice, but only a person or persons. Commutative justice is that fulfilled in exchange between individuals. All justice involves an indebtedness—what is owed.

To carry a child rather than allowing it to learn to walk on its own would be disastrous, even though it might protect the child from certain accidents.

The same is true in political and economic affairs. For government to usurp all economic functions would be contrary to the principle of subsidiarity. And where government function is proper, it should be retained upon and limited to the lowest level where that function can be carried out.

In a most enlightened analysis of modern social affairs, pope John XXIII upheld the principle defined and presented by his predecessors Leo XIII, Pius XI and Pius XII.

"At the outset it should be affirmed that in economic affairs, first place is to be given to the private initiative of individual men, who, either working by themselves or with others in one fashion or another, pursue their common interests." (Mater et magistra, no. 51).

Certainly the socialistic and communistic states are in full violation of this principle, which explains why their citizens so often seem content but are in effect atrophied in their desire and ability to care for themselves. Most visitors to such states are struck by the uniformity, the grey in describable spirit of lethargy that seems to dominate. Sameness is an inevitable result of disregard of subsidiarity.

It is almost as hard to reconcile the full welfare state the cradle-to-grave security state – with the principle. For that principle does not even allow the plea of greater efficiency to overthrow it. In point of fact, there is generally the greatest efficiency at the lowest level. The individual is generally more creative than the committee, and the local board of planning generally plans far better than the think tank in the capital city.

Pius XI was thinking about just such tendencies in the early 1930's, when it seemed that the age of individualism was yeilding to one of collectivization. He wrote.

". . . just as it is wrong to withdraw from the individual and commit to the community at large what private enterprise and industry can accomplish, so, too, it is an injustice, a grave evil, and a disturbance of the right order for a larger and higher organization to arrogate to itself functions which can be performed efficiently by smaller and lower bodies.

This is a fundamental principle of social philosophy, unshaken amd unchangeable, and it retains its full truth today." (Quadragesimo Anno, no. 79).

Just as the Popes had protested laissezfaire economics – with the government shut out of any regulatory role– and had heralded a day of greater social justice, so too they anticipated the abuse of the government's role and the eventual movement of the people against too-big government. The truth of Catholic social doctrine guarantees its neutrality, and its honesty in recognizing violations, be they by unscrupulous individuals or overzealous and over-weening bureaucracy. Catholic social doctrine rejects the infantilizing of citizens on the pretext they are being protected from the high and mighty. It is the surest barrier against Big Brother.

Vatican II picked up the theme.

"Governments should take care not to put obstacles in the way of family, cultural or social groups, or of organizations and intermediate institutions, nor to hinder their lawful and constructive activity. . ." (Gaudium et Spes," no.75).

Duty to Promote Harmony between the Classes:

The inevitable clash of the classes is a thesis of Marxist Communism. It provides the dialectic of force that will eventually lead to the creation of a total proletariat, with a single class – that of the workers. Communism actually advocates class violence, sponsors it toward that end.

The Church rejects this immoral concept.

"Now this is the primary duty of the state and of all good citizens: to abolish conflict between classes with divergent interest, and thus foster and promote harmony between the various ranks of society." (Pius XI, Quadragesimo Anno, no.81).

Catholic propagandists and teachers who urge the poor to take arms against the rich obviously are not promoting harmony and a peaceful solution to injustice, and are not therefore, acting in the name of Catholic doctrine. (The right to revolt in extreme cases of oppression will be discussed below).

Duty to Promote Security, Welfare of Citizens:

Even though war can be thought of, especially with today's weapons, as an ultimate horror, the duty of a state to guard its citizens, security and liberty is not relieved. If liberty is lost all rights are endangered, and in the case of conquest by the enemies of liberty all rights are lost. No one appreciated that better than Pope Pius XII, who had always worked for peace, but who lived to reign during the second and worse of the two world wars.

"A true peace . . . needs the support of a normal measure of power. But the real function of this force, if it is to be morally correct, should consist in protecting and defending, and not in lessening or suppressing rights . . .

"Do not ask from any member of the family of peoples, however, small or weak, for the renunciation of substantial rights or vital necessities which you yourself, if it were demanded from your people, would deem impractical." (Christmas Messages, 1943).

Pope Pius XII had seen the horror of the world's powers allowing an aggressor to swallow up whole nations—Austria, Czechoslovakia, the Baltic states, Poland. The theory was that the tyrant's appetite would be slaked and peace maintained.

The duty of power is not merely to protect the nation having it; it extends to the duty to protect others deserving of that protection by their regard for liberty and human rights.

Nor can cowardice or suppineness allow christian citizens to submit to aggression. Thus Pope Pius XII added this:-

"A people threatened with an unjust aggression, or already its victim, may not remain passively indifferent if it would think and act as befits christians." (Christmas, Message, 1943).

In other words, collective pacifism or politically imposed pacifism, does not befit the true state.. The virtue of liberty is due protection even at the cost of resistance, as long as such resistance has any chance of success. Even in the absence of such chance of success there cannot be a willing

submission to or co-operation with the aggressor. This has application today in the face of some voices suggesting a duty to help build a socialist or communist society on the part of Christians who have to live in such a society. Actually the duty is to avoid any true co-operation with building such a society which is in essence evil. Co-operation in the day-to-day maintaining of order that is part of even immoral government is a different matter.

Strict isolationism, in the sense that a nation can feel justified in not aiding other nations to be free is not part of Catholic doctrine. This is not to say that any nation must commit all its resources and strength anywhere there is a struggle for freedom. But neither can we pretend such struggles are not our affair.

"Among the goods (of humanity) some are of such importance for society that it is perfectly lawful to defend them against unjust aggression. Their defense is even an obligation for the nations as a whole who have a duty not to abandon a nation that is attacked." (Pius XII, Christmas Message, 1948).

Unfortunately, common action by the world nations in defense of those attacked is still quite selective. The nations gathered together in the United Nations are so ideologically prejudiced that the evils of military dictatorships are stressed, while the evil of Leftist aggression and subversion is barely noticed.

Catholic social doctrine, from the very beginning, has never condemned the profession of the warrior, that is, those who are professional soldiers, sailors, pilots in the service of their country. There is a tendency in some Catholic circles to equate such a profession with the immoral willingness to kill. That is in itself an unfair and immoral judgement, one that undermines patriotism and the honor of a military career. The true Catholic position was given by Pope Pius XII.

"All those who enter the military service in loyalty to their country should look upon themselves as the custodians of the security and freedom of their fellow-countrymen; and when they carry out their duty properly, they are

contributing to the maintenance of peace." (Christmas Message, 1948).

Social and Economic Welfare:

The right to life is a natural right, and therefore also a social right that the government must recognize and protect.

"Beginning our discussion of the rights of man, we see that every man has the right to life, to bodily integrity, and to the means which are suitable for the proper development of life, these are primarily food, clothing, shelter, rest, medical care and finally the necessary social services. Therefore, a human being also has the right to security in cases of sickness, inability to work, widowhood, old age, unemployment, or in any other case in which he is deprived of the means of subsistence through no fault of his own." (Pope John XXIII, Pacem in Terris, no. 11).

The Pope correctly gives first place among all rights to that of life. Upon that right depends all others, and if the right to life is not entitled to judical and legislative protections, then neither is any lesser right.

The second Vatican Council is explicit in condemning violations of the right to life, as well as other invasions of the integrity of the human person.

"Everyone should look upon his neighbour (Without any exception) as another self, bearing in mind above all his life and the means necessary for living it in a dignified way. "(Gaudium et Spes no, 27).

The Council then lists numerous crimes against this. "... Murder, genocide, abortion, euthanasia and willful suicide, all violations of the integrity of the human person, such as mutilation, physical and mental torture, undue psychological pressures; all offenses against human dignity, such as subhuman living conditions, arbitrary imprisonment, deportation, slavery, prostitution, the selling of women and children, degrading working conditions where men are treated as mere tools for profif rather than free and responsible persons; all these and the like are criminal; they poison civilization; and they debase the perpetrators more than the victims and militate against the honour of the Creator." (Ibid).

Obviously, then, the duty to prohibit these rests upon the state, in view of its duty to promote the common good through legislation and judicial ruling. So demanding is this duty that decisions, laws, rulings against these rights are deemed by Catholic doctrine to be null.

The state, however, in the view of Catholic doctrine, may answer attacks upon itself and its citizens by taking the life of the attacker. The Church has recognized the right to inflict capital punishment as one possessed by the state in virtue of its nature and obligations. The duty to the law-abiding may move the state to take the life of the law-breaker, when the offense is major, proved, and a grave threat to the welfare of society. Some theologians argue that the murderer, rapist, traitor, etc., have forfeited their right to life. Regardless, traditional theology recognizes the right of the state to execute.

"A criminal may be executed if juridical proof has established the moral certainty that he has committed a grave crime for which the state, in the interest of the common welfare, inflicts capital punishment, and if someone has been authorized by the state to execute the sentence." (Rev. Heribert Jone, O.F,M. Cap, J.C.D., Moral Theology, translated by the Rev. Urban Adelman, O.F.M. Cap, J.C.D., Westminster, Md., 1963, section 214, p.140; bearing the imprimatur of the Most Rev. John J. Wright, Bishop of Pittsburgh).

Duty to Recognize the Right to Procreate:

There is obiously a social reference in the right to procreate, and it calls the attention of the state to the danger of the contraceptive mentality. "Though there is little chance of the modern state joining its authority to that of the Church in condemning the practice of contraception, nevertheless it is Catholic doctrine that properly functioning government would protect the family from legal access to those devices and chemicals that work against the purpose and integrity of the family.

Pope Paul VI summarized that duty in this paragraph:

"To rulers, who are those principally responsible for the common good, and who can do so much to safeguard

moral customs, we say: Do not allow the morality of your peoples to be degraded; do not permit that by legal means practices contrary to the natural and divine law be introduced into that fundamental cell, the family. Quite other is the way in which public authorities can and must contribute to the solution of the demographic problem: namelly, the way of a provident policy for the family, of a wise education of peoples in respect of moral and the liberty of citizens." (Humanea Vitae, no. 23).

Those who find shocking such a statement of the state's duty to oppose contraception, find nothing shocking, it is a state duty to protect citizens from physical evils, such as pollution, unclean and unwholesome food, cigarettes, carcinogenics, etc.

Some phases of Catholic social doctrine will always meet opposition because they are based on the reality of the soul, a definite metaphysics, the supernatural, a binding moral code, etc. But all social affairs and social justice ultimately rest upon such, and if they do not govern affairs, then there can be no safe or binding social doctrine of any sort.

Duty to Recognize the Right to Organization:

Totalitarian regimes claim full power over organizations either to allow them or prevent them, to dissolve them, to regulate their functions. This applies to all organizations, unions, clubs, fraternities, etc.

Catholic teaching, however, rejects such plenary power. Organizing is of the nature of human beings who have the right to join together to obtain proper ends that serve both members and the common good.

This was one of the major issues that Pope Leo XIII faced in his great charter of working man's rights. Some argued that the government should prohibit unions as contrary to the good of certain unscrupulous employers. Leo answered to the contrary.

"Particular societies, ... although they exist within the state, and are each a part of the state, nevertheless cannot be prohibited by the state absolutely and as such. For to

enter into a society of this kind is the natural right of man; and the state must protect natural rights, not destory them and if it forbids its citizens to form associations, it contradicts the very principle of its own existence, for both they and it, exist in virtue of the same principle, viz., the natural propensity of man to live in society.

"There are times, no doubt, when it is right that the law should interfere to prevent association; as when men join together for purposes which are evidently bad, unjust or dangerous to the state. In such cases the public authority may justly forbid the formation of associations and may dissolve them when they already exist." (Rerum Novarum, no.38).

That Pope of social concern, Pope John XXIII, pointed out that Pope Pius XI had reaffirmed the same right to organize defended by Leo:

"In the same Letter (Quadragesimo Anno) there is affirmed the natural right to enter corporately into associations, whether these be composed of workers only or of workers and management; and also the right to adopt that organizational structure judged most suitable to meet their professional needs. And workers themselves have the right to act freely and on their own initiative within the above mentioned associations, without hindrance and as their needs dictate."(Mater et Magistra, no. 22).

The Second Vatican Council's document concerning Catholics participation in the modern world treated the same right.

"Among the fundamental rights of the individual must be numbered the right of workers to form themselves into associations which truly represents them and are able to co-operate in organizing economic life properly, and the right to play their part in the activities of such associations without risk of reprisal." (Gaudium et Spes n0. 68).

It goes without saying that no one may do corporately or may support an organization in doing anything that morality and Christianity forbid to the individual, Dishonesty, violence, injustice, cheating, undue pressure tactics are just as evil when practiced by corporations or unions as when

done by individuals, and members of such organizations are not exonerated because such things are done by the group to which they belong.

Right to Strike:

All the rights of workers would be badly endangered if there was no ultimate way to protect them, and to obtain justice. One such ultimate weapon that the Church recognizes as proper and lawful under certain conditions is the strike. Again, the right to strike must not be interpreted as the right to do evil, destory property, threaten with violence. It is simply the right to withold services or labour until just demands are met.

The second Vatican Council summarized the teaching of all recent popes and certainly the consensus of Catholic moral theologians:

"In the event of economic-social disputes, all should strive to arrive at peace settlements. The first step is to engage in sincere discussions between all sides; but the strike remains even in the circumstances of today a necessary (although an ultimate) means for the defense of workers' rights and the satisfaction of their lawful aspirations. As soon as possible, however, avenues should be explored to resume negotiations and effect reconciliation." (Gaudium et Spes, no. 68).

A legitimate argument could be made, however, in keeping with Catholic social doctrine as a whole, that strikes that greatly endanger the public welfare such as those by firemen, police, medical personnel, the military could not be justified by any circumstances. Nor could strikes of extreme duration which treaten the destruction of a business and therefore the loss of all jobs or which endanger public safety and welfare be justified. For example, a food strike or dairy strike that would endanger the health of citizens, especially the very young and very old, could hardly be justified. Temporary inconvenience, however, is one purpose of striking and cannot be invoked to call a strike wrong.

Right to Adequate and Just Remuneration:

The condition of wages in 1891, the time of Pope Leo's Rerum Novarum, was governed by the theories of the Manchester school-a strictly contractual matter "freely" arrived at, without interference by or regard for any other principle or right. The great Pope long before enlightened social legislation and almost alone among leaders of his time (the German Wilhelm von Ketteler (1811–1877), was equally prophetic), took note of this injustice:

"The ancient workmen's Guilds were destroyed in the last century, and no other organization took their place. Public institutions and the laws have repudiated the ancient religion. Hence by decrees it has come to pass that workingmen have been given over, isolated and defenseless, to the callousness of employers and the greed of unrestrained competition... so that a very small number of very rich men have been able to lay upon the masses of the poor a yoke little better than slavery itself." (Rerum Novarum, no. 2).

Such must not continue, the Pope insisted: "the wage shall not be less than enough to support a worker who is thrifty and upright." (Rerum Novarum, no. 34).

The terms "thrifty and upright" seem quaint today, of course. And yet thrift and the simple life are no less virtuous because they were part of a now-vanished Puritan ethic. Indeed elsewhere Pope Leo XIII calls thrift a moral duty for workers. But Pope John XXIII puts the matter of just wages into a more modern statement:

"... in this matter the norms of justice and equity should be strictly observed. This requires that workers receive a wage sufficient to lead a life worthy of man and to fulfill family responsibilities properly. But in determining what constitutes an appropriate wage, the following must necessarily be taken into account: first of all, the contribution of individuals to the economic effort; the economic state of the enterprises within which they work; the requirements of each community, especially as regards overall employment; finally, what concerns the common good of all peoples, namely, of the various states associated among

themselves, but differing in character and extent." (Mater et Magistra, no. 71).

The native idea that morality demands that all units of a given field of industry must pay the same wage that can be afforded by one unit ignores one of the requirements stated above- "the economic state of the enterprises". Indeed, to demand that each unit match the highest wage paid is to invite monopoly by the most powerful and richest participant in the field. Yet it has been known for Catholic spokesmen to insist that union activity against some given firm was justified because that firm was not matching the highest wage paid by its competitor.

Catholic doctrine bears upon right that citizens possess-namely, right to reasonalbe leisure; to opportunity for religious practice; to a participation in culture; to development of the person; to an education. These the church says, must be recognized and supported by the government. Such right, however, under the principle of subsidiarity is not necessarily served by the state simply providing these things. Public effort, however, should make them available to all who are industrious enough to wish to obtain them. Nor does Catholic doctrine support any public monopoly of or interference with the things themselves.

(3) *Duties and Obligations of Citizens:*

Some duties, it is true, are more directly related to others-fellow citizens-than to the government or the state. But this does not make these simply private duties, which the state cannot enforce or recognize by law. More and more it is being recognized that even private relationships can have social impact. For example, some say one's health and welfare are strictly a private matter, so that, for example, no one should be forced to wear a safety helmet when riding a motocycle. Others would answer that the public is involved in many ways when someone is injured-insurance rates are involved, ambulance costs, police costs, etc.

It can therefore, be legitimately questioned whether there can be any strictly private violation of the duties we have as individuals to other individuals, as for example, in abuse of sexual morality, or of our selves. The fall of nations and empires implies strongly that the public welfare is closely related to private moral strenght and fiber. Hedonism, selfishness, the weakening of the family, sexual perversion all have consequences for society. To what degree law should deal with these things is a matter of practical determination. But Catholic teaching certainly asserts the duty of the state to promote to whatever degree possible a decent, noble, and well-ordered society fully appreciative of the citizens' duties to God, neighbour, and state.

Duty of Obedience to Law:

The Second Vatican Council is clear that this duty of obedience to all but immoral commands of government is dictated by the nature of the institution:

"Political authority ... must be exercised within the limits of the moral order and directed toward the common good (understood in the dynamic sense of the term), according to the juridical order legitimately esstablished or due to be established. Citizens, then, are bound to obey." (Raudium et Spes, no. 74).

What of governments that are more de-facto than de-jure- that have come to power through conquest or force, that are based on erroneous, even immoral concepts? This was essentially the question of the Herodians presented to embarrass Jesus in the presence of Herod-hating Jews. The Council's answer is essentially the answer of Christ concerning the duty to a corrupt Caesar, who even had claimed to be divine.

"When citizens are under the oppression of public authority which oversteps its competence, they should still not refuse to give or do whatever is objectively demanded of them by the common good". (Gaudium et Spes, no. 74) In moral terms, a certain co-operation or better, a modus vivendi-with a bad government is sometimes dictated by

necessity. The co-operation cannot be with evil itself but with the good that often evil governments bring about in contrast to anarchy.

Are then citizens helpless to protect themselves? Must they supinely submit to oppression? The church does not teach that; on the contrary it prohibits surrender of rights, even voluntarily.

"... but it is legitimate for them to defend their own rights and those of their fellow citizens against abuse of this authority within the limits of the natural law and the law of the Gospel." (Gaudium et Spes, no. 74)

Does such law ever justify revolution? The Church answers "Yes."

"We know... that a revolutionary uprising-save where there is manifest, long-standing tyranny which would do great damage to fundamental personal rights and dangerous harm to the common good of the country-produces new injustices, throws more elements out of balance and brings on new disasters. A real evil should not be fought against at the cost of greater misery." (Pope Paul VI, Populorum Progressio- On the development of Peoples - no, 31).

Thus revolution cannot be condemed per se, but it is obviously an ultimate remedy and one not ordinarily applied. The Catholic Church does not sanction the idea that a people may revolt simply to change their form of government, not even with majority support. Only an actual corruption of authority by terrible tyranny that can be remedied in no other way justifies revolt, and even then certain moral rules, such as a restricition of violence and a reasonable chance of success, must be considered. (Ct. Gaudium et Spes. no 74). Certainly one example of a revolt that produced far greater evils than it claimed to remedy was the French Revolution of the late eighteenth century.

Duty of Patriotism:

Patriotism, that is, love of country, is a natural virtue. While patriotism can be exaggerated into what is called chauvinism, its absence is an evil.

"Citizens should cultivate a generous and loyal spirit of patriotism, but without narrow-mindedness, so that they will always keep in mind the welfare of the whole human family which is formed into one by various kinds of links between races, peoples, and nations." (Gaudium et Spes, no. 75).

Duty to serve the Nation:

The Thoreauvian spirit more and more infects modern Americans—a kind of disassociation between the individual and the needs of the nation to serve all its citizens. True, ineffective and corrupt politics often lends a seeming justification to this anti-institution mentality, and the political institution's own blindness to individual rights often undermines its own claim to such services.

But the Catholic Church firmly teaches that no citizen is exempt from obiligation to serve the whole community.

"Man cannot be exempted from his divinely imposed obligations toward civil society, and the representatives of authority have the right to coerce him when he refuses without reason to do his duty." (Pius XI, on Atheistic Communism, no. 30)

"The Church has always accepted that this duty extends to armed defense of the nation, though it can wellbe argued that true conscientious objection should mitigate the duty to take arms, substituting nonviolent services in time of war. It should be noted, however, that in today's world no totally pacifist nation could survive, so that a nation has a right to armed defense by its citizens.

The duty to serve the nation implies a truth Puis XI asserted when he wrote:

"It is not true that all have equal rights in civil society. It is not true that there exists no lawful social hierarchy." (On Atheistic Communism, no. 33).

The Pope is not here speaking of metaphysical or natural rights. He is speaking of the unnaturalness of a society in which all claim to be governors, with none governed. He is opposing the idea of a complete egalitarianism or

pure democracy, the actual withering away of the state as promised. (But of course never delivered). by Communism. Even in a true democracy such as the United States there must be lawmakers, presidents, judges, and those in some manner or other under them. Having elected our officials, we have the duty of heeding and obeying them to the degree that is proper.

This teaching immediately precedes Pius XI's condemnation of "collective terrorism." Though it was addressed to anarchical terror of the post-World War 1 period, that condemnation has immense implications today. Terror has returned with a vengeance, and threatens innocent persons everywhere. In the name of wild political creeds of the Left it brings death, maiming, torture to establish the "evil" of governments that do insist there are to be the governors and the the governed. Only the Church seems to detect the real evil-a society in which mankind, including goernors, maintain there is no Being superior to man and owed man's absolute homage and obedience.

Duty to Exercise the Franchise:

Obviously the ballot box can be a powerful weapon for good and for the shaping of a proper society. To neglect the exercise of the right to vote for reason of sloth, indifference, or an ignorance of issues and candidates that could be overcome involves some sort of moral irresponsibility. All Catholics are encouraged by their Church's social doctrine to be informed voters. With the breakdown of tranditional party lines, the duty of being personally informed becomes even greater. Puis XII summed up the Church's advice on voting. "... To exercise and exercise well, one's right to vote is to work effectively for the true good of people, as loyal defenders of the cause of God and the Church." (Pius XII to International Union of Catholic Women's Leagues, 1947).

When issues are clear-cut, and one candidate supports and stands for principles of action, philosophy, rights contrary to the truth as outlined by the Church, Catholics can have a clear duty to vote against such a candidate. It is

within the right - even the duty - of church spokesmen, Priests, Bishops, etc. to point out that duty, even to the extent of naming names and imposing a moral duty to vote against candidates who espouse evil. This is not an intrusion into the rights of the government, but rather upholding the common good.

End of Labour-Employer Conflict:

Catholics on both sides-labour and management - have a duty over and beyond their loyalties to their fellows. Irreconcilable conflict - especially asserting the necessity of such conflict, as do Marists - is not compatiable with Catholic teaching.

"The Church never ceases to labour so that the apparent conflict between capital and labour, between employer and the worker, may be transformed into a higher unity, which is to say, into that organic co-operation of both parties which is indicated by their very nature and which consists in the collaboration of both according to their activity in the economic sector and the professions. It is for you to prepare for the coming of that day in your country." (Pius XII to Katholikentag, 1949).

Note, this implies the survival of both capital and labour, not their disapearance in some new entity. It can be taken, therefore as an admission of the morality of capitalism. The same, of course, cannot be said of Communism or any true Socialism.

Duties of the Poor, of Workers:

Poverty does not exempt anyone from the exercise of duty. Nor should the worker, in contempt, as it were, of his position, consider himself or herself without obligation to society as a whole. There are those who foster the exact opposite attitude, for one reason or another. But the church always says, with Pope Leo XIII:

"First of all religion... is exceedingly powerful in drawing rich and poor together, by reminding each class of its duties toward the other, and especially of the duties of justice.

Thus religion teaches the labouring man and the workman to carry out honestly and well all equitable agreements freely made, never to injure capital, nor to outrage the person of an employer; never to employ violence in representing his own cause, nor to engage in riot and disorder, and to have nothing to do with men of evil principles, who work upon the people with artful promises, and raise foolish hopes which usually end in disaster and in repentance when too late." (Rerum Novarum, no. 16).

Duties of the Rich and Employers:

Even more strict and demanding are certain duties that are involved in wealth and in being given by God talent and opportunity to employ the labour of others:

"Religion teaches the rich man and the employer that their work people are not their slaves, that they must respect in every man his dignity as a man and as a christian; that labour is nothing to be ashamed of, if we listen to right reason and to christian philosophy, but is an honourable employment, enabling a man to sustain his life in an upright and creditable way; and that is shameful and inhuman to treat men like charrels to make money by, or to look upon them merely as so much muscle and physical power. Thus again, religion teaches that, as among the workmen's concerns are religion herself and things spiritual and mental, the employer is bound to see that he has time for the duties of piety; that he be not exposed to corrupting influences and dangerous occasions; and that he not be led away to neglect his home and family or to squander his wages.

Then again, the employer must never tax his work-people beyond their strenght nor employ them in work unsuited to their sex or age." (Leo XIII, Rerum Novarum, n0. 16).

Obligations in Unionism:

Pope Leo XIII dared to do something that most political power of unions has left them to some degree immune from restraint by civil power, but no such immunity is granted

by God to the conscience of someone simply because of union membership.

"The offices. . . should be distributed for the good of the society itself, and in such manner that difference in degree or position should not interfere with unanimity and good will.

Let the common funds be administered with strictest honesty, in such a way that a member receives assistance in proportion to his necessities. Among the purposes of a society should be an effort to arrange for a continuous supply of work at all times and seasons; and to create a fund from which members may be helped in their necessities, not only in case of accident, but also in sickness, old age and misfortune". (Leo XIII, Rerum Novarum, no. 43).

More recently, Pope Pius XI discussed the need for moderation on the part of workers in making wage demands (Quadragesimo Anno no. 72). That point, made in the early years of the depression, is even more pertinent for us today, in days of uncontrolled inflation, for which unrestrained wage demands certaintly are a contributing factor.

Profit, Yes; But also an Equitable Sharing of it:

More than one scheme has been advanced for the ending of all profit. Most such schemes are intended for what was once profit for investors, owners, managers to end up in the hands of politicians. Some were perhaps more honest in a desire to see all profit go to workers, as if profit could continue in such a situation.

The Catholic position approves of reasonable profit, but does urge that it be shared equitably (though not necessarily) among all involved in its accrual. Pius XI condemned the idea that all profit belonged to the workingman:

"The cause of the harrassed workingman was espounsed by the intellectuals, as they are called, who set up in opposition to this fictitious law (that accumulation of all riches must fall to the wealthy) another equally false moral principle: that all products and profits, excepting those required to repair and replace invested capital, belong by every right to the workingman. This error, more subtle than that of the

Socialists, who hold that all means of production should be transferred to the state or as they term it, socialized, is for that reason more dangerous and apt to deceive the unwary... (Quadragesimo Anno, no. 55).

"Wealth... which is constanly being augmented by social and economic progress, must be so distributed among the various individuals and classes of society, that the common good of all be thereby promoted. In other words, the good of the whole community must be safeguarded. By these principles of social justice, one class is forbidden to exclude the other from a share in the profits..." (Ibid. no. 57).

Many firms, for whatever motive, fulfill this obligation by encouraging workers to become shareholders in the corporation, and making such stock purchases easy. Others use bonuses, profit incentive payments and other plans by which profit is distributed.

The church rejects the communist idea that the only wealth is labour, and therefore labour alone should be rewarded. The contribution of invention, management, investment is recognized.

Duty of Following Divine Law in regard to Reproduction:

Having children is an ability and command from God. Its concern is, therefore, not just society's or the state's but God's purposes, His kingdom, the Church.

"Marriage is not... the effect of chance or the product of evolution of unconscious natural forces; it is the wise institution of the Creator to realize in mankind His design of love. By means of the preciprocal personal gift of self, proper and exclusive to them, husband and wife tend toward the communion of their beings in view of mutual personal perfection, to collaborate with God in the generation and education of new lives." (Pope Paul VI, Humanae Vitae, no.8).

From this truth follow the duty and right of responsible parenthood:

"Responsible parethood also and above all implies a more profound relationship to the objective moral order

established by God, of which a right conscience is the faithful interpreter. The responsible exercise of parenthood implies, therefore, that hunsband and wife recognize fully their own duties toward God, toward themselves, toward the family and toward society, in a correct hierarchy of values.

"In the task of transmitting life, therefore, they are not free to proceed completely at will,as if they could determine in a wholly authonomous way the honest path to follow; but they must conform their activity to the creative intention of God, expressed in the very nature of marriage and of its acts, and manifested by the constant teaching of the church." (Humanae Vitae, no. 10)

Does this mean that population increase is totally outside the concern of government? No. But it does mean that in responding to that concern, government is limited and dictated to by higher laws.

"... It is certain that public authorities can intervene, within the limit of their competence, by favoring the availability of appropriate information and by adopting suitable measures, provided that these be in conformity with the moral law and that they respect the rightful freedom of married couples. Where the inalienable right to marriage and procreations is lacking, human dignity has ceased to exist. Finally, it is for the parents to decide, with full knowledge of the matter, on the number of their children taking into account their responsibilities toward God, themselves, the children they have already brought into the world, and the community to which they belong. In all this they must follow the demands of their conscience enlightened by God's law authentically interpreted, and sustained by confidence in Him." (Pope Paul VI, Populorum Progressio, no. 37).

This decision can never involve contraception, that is, chemical, surgical, mechanical means of practiciing sex but preventing its normal outcome.

"... The direct interruption of the generative process already begun, and above all, directly willed and procured abortion, even if for therapeutic reasons, are to be absolutely excluded as licit means of regulating birth.

"Equally to be excluded, as the teaching authority of the Church has frequently declared, is direct sterilization whether perpetual or temporary whether of the man or of the woman. Similarly excluded is every action which, either in anticipation of the conjugal act or in its accomplishment, or in the development of its natural consequences, proposes, whether as an end or as a means, to render procreation impossible." (Pope Paul VI, Humane Vitae, no. 14).

Obviously, therefore, it is beyond the competence of any true government to dictate to parents concerning procreation, to promote sterilization, the use of other immoral means of birth prevention, or to do more than provide information and encouragement toward using procreation for the common good within the dictates of God's laws. The Church has the right to publish those laws, and if the government does not accept them, that does not give the government the right to act in any manner contrary. Catholics have the duty to oppose and resist, in whatever manner is prudent and practical, the vast governmental expenditures in promotion of artificial birth control and sterilization, whether within the nation or outside it.

The Duty (under Universal Charity) of welcoming Others:

Since World War II nations of the world have had ample opportunity to welcome those cast adrift, exiled, driven from their homes by conquerors, fleeing persecution and injustice, seeking a place of peace and safety. The duty to welcome such weighs upon both individuals and nations. The duty obligation lies in a particularly heavy manner upon those who may have given up the duty to defend liberty in their homelands, from which they have been forced to flee.

"We cannot insist too much on the duty of welcoming others--a duty springing from human solidarity and christian charity which is incumbent both on the families and the cultural organizations of host countries." (Pope Paul VI, Populorum Progressio, no. 67).

Conclusion:

I talk to you in the middle of lent ,
Lent is the fast before the feast,
the Spring time before the fulfilment.

Isaiah the prohet saw lent thus:
"To loose the fetters of injustice,
to untie the knots of the Yoke,
to let the oppressed go free and to break every yoke,
to share our food with the hungry,
to take the homeless poor into our house,
to clothe the naked.

Never to evade a duty to fellow mankind. (Is: 58 - 8).

This is the message of this lecture. The potential consequences are as fantastic as the kingdom of God itself. It is our task and our challenge to realise it.

Finally, one lastsentence before I stop:
"man is not a figure in the landscape - he is the shaper of he landscape."

I thank you.

By: Rev. Fr. Dr. Obiora F. Ike
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CHURCH WOMEN ORGANISATIONS TODAY: A LIBERATING FORCE THAT WILL BRING ABOUT SOCIAL JUSTICE AND DEVELOPMENT (INSPIRATION OR A FACT)

Paper presented by Rev. Fr. Dr. Obiora F. Ike to the Seminar Participants Development Education Centre, Enugu at the House of Assembly 26.8.88

INTRODUCTION:

I feel highly honoured to be invited by the organisers of this three day workshop under the able leadership of Miss Cecilia Asogwa of CARE CANS ENUGU to present a paper on Church Women Orgainsation Today. As you all know, we are now in the Ecumenical Decade for Solidarity with women, a decision marked in January 1987 by the World Council of Churches to start in 1988 and to end in 1998. I consider the three day workshop as not only appropriate but, also very urgent. The situation of rural women and women in every part of the world is very clear. Women form the bulk of those who have come to be known as the "marginalised", the oppressed, those who have nothing to show for all their work, for all their worth. Over eighty percent of women in the world live in situations of abject poverty and "squalor". It was therefore a welcome intention that the World Council of Churches decided to inaugurate an Ecumenical Decade of Churches in solidarity with women.

As much as I understand, the purposes of the World Council of Churches Women's Decade include:

1. Empowering women to challenge oppressive structures in the global community, their country and their church.
2. Affirming through shared leadership and decision making, theology and spirituality, the decisive

contributions of women in churches and communities.

3. Giving visibility to women's perspectives and actions in the work and struggle for justice, peace and the integrity of creation.
4. Enabling the churches to free themselves from racism, sexism, and classism.
5. Enable the churches to free themselves from teachings and practices that entail discrimination against women.
6. Encouraging the churches to take actions in solidarity with women.

THEME

As you well know I have very limited time at my disposal. I shall therefore not go into the aims and purposes of the ecumenical decade for women solidarity. I have been asked to talk only on *church women organisation today as a liberating force that will bring about social justice and development*. My speech should be understood as an inspiration as animation and as conscientisation. The work is yours.

Women all over the world form over 60% of the world's population but, women don't have up to 20% of the goods, privileges, sources and resources of the world. They are therefore producers who do not share in the fruit of their labour. Many women do not have paid work, many women do not own property, many women do not have a home and many women do not have education. Women are discriminated against in most countries of the universe just because of their feminity, beacuse of their sex. I therefore feel that the churches have a lot to contribute in this situation of structural injustice. I believe that women, organised under the churches can form a liberating force, to bring about social justice for women. My speech will therefore be classed into three different sections:

1. CHURCH WOMEN ORGANISATION TODAY

It is perhaps important to localise our talk in the Nigerian context. In Eastern Region we know that many of our people are converting to Christianity, people going to churches. We notice that associations of various groups, youths, men and women being formed everywhere. It has become abundantly clear that women organisations are the largest in number, the strongest in organisation, and the more productive in terms of results. Whether in the protestant churches, the organised catholic church or even in the spiritual churches, the role of women cannot be overlooked. Women are no longer just seen today in these churches; they are also heard. However being seen or being heard is not the issue. The issue is how the church women can help liberate those women who have been condemned to live in situations of structural and man-made injustice. There is the Catholic Women Organisation (C.W.O). There are other organisations of women. Are they necessary? Can they be used as sources and centres for mobilisation of women? Can the organisations be made better? What of their leadership? Can they avoid pettiness, discrimination, and acts of disunity to *form one global group, with the common aim of liberation of women.* If Jesus came on earth to preach, to teach and to liberate, what does Jesus mean to rural women today? What does Jesus mean to city women? What does Jesus say in a situation where women in the world do not have the chance to express themselves. It is in this light that we must justify the existence of these church women organisations, that we must support them and give them the opportunity to establish as a powerful force for the good of other women (church or not) who are joined or must be joined for the same fight of liberation. Church women organisations today in Nigeria have came to stay.

In some cases they are united, in many other cases they are disunited. We also remember the old proverb that says "united we stand, divided we fall". If church women would understand that unity is the source for their power and for their liberation, church women all over Nigeria, in all

ecclesiastical provinces in the eastern region will fight and work for more unity among themselves. I agree that church women organisations are not well organised as at now, most of the led are being pulled around. *They don't even know their rights. They cannot just distinguish.* They want to be led, but by who? I feel therefore that church women organisations must emphasize articulate leadership, selfless leadership, result-oriented leadership among those who lead them. Unity, Leadership and priority of goals form the main aims.

2. LIBERATION:

The second portion of my speech has to deal with liberation for social justice and for development. When Jesus came on earth he was given a book to read in the temple. He opened it and it was Isaiah's book, he turned out a chapter and it was talking about liberation, "the spirit of the Lord has been given to me because the Lord has anointed me to speak good news to the poor, liberation to captives, giving back sight to the blind, preaching to all an acceptable year for the Lord." It was a liberating message. Jesus could also have added, to free women from the pangs of out-moded cultures, from the bondage of men, from the ignorance and fear of fighting in their favour for their rights. Liberation is a catch word today all over the world. We hear of Black Liberation Theology, liberation from sin, liberation from death, liberation from economic, social and political oppression. Liberation today is a catchword because we want to be free. Liberation deals with freedom. Our question, however, should not be liberation for liberation sake but liberation for what? It is in this context that the theme I am supposed to speak about is definitive. Liberation to bring about social justice and development. It is clear to all that wars will continue to be, that disquietness will continue to be. That racism, classism, sexism and all forms of oppression will continue to be, because where there is no fairness, there is no social justice. The motto of the Institute where I work says "if you want peace, cultivate justice." (Si vis pacem cole iustitiam). The fight for justice,

the struggle for development and in our own case, integral development, is a concrete expression of this liberation force which the decade for women solidarity inaugurates.

I have a strong feeling that liberation is not just simply carrying a gun and shooting right, left, up and down. Liberation has a purpose. The liberation brought about by Jesus was liberation from sin that man may be free to serve God. The liberation talked about by church women organisations today must be that there might be fairness, in other words that there might be social justice and that development might be integral. That women might go to school to learn to read and write and know their rights, privileges and obligations, that their children would grow in dignity as children of God created free, that there might be fairness; in other words that the goods of this earth shall be distributed to those who inhabit this earth fairly; That the cake made for all shall not be eaten by only a few; This, I think, is the substance of this new slogan "liberation for women, solidarity with women". I want to inspire you to fight for this because freedom cannot ever be bought for anybody. You the women have to bring about your own freedom. You have to fight for this freedom. If somebody gets you freedom on a platter of gold, you cannot cherish it. But that freedom for which you fought, which you know is important for you, you will never want to give up.

Recent political history has a lot to say on this. We will consider a situation of a country like Nigeria. People say that we had political independence on a platter of gold and did not know what to do with it. But a country like Zimbabwe fought for her freedom and they know what to do with this freedom. They are working towards a better society, they are conscious, they are sensitised. Two examples of people who are free. In the one case, Nigeria did not need to fight for it. It was given to her and that is why we have mismanaged it. In the other case Zimbabwe had to fight for it and that is why they are preserving it. Women must fight for their freedom. It cannot be bought for them by men or just given to them as a present. Even though it is their basic right it has been denied them by cultural diffe-

rences and cultural oppression. This is the time to fight and get it back. No other person will do it for you. You the women must work in your favour and fight for your right.

3. SOLIDARITY WITH WOMEN: PRACTICAL PROPOSALS

Let me now address myself finally to the third stage, an area I consider this paper relevant for your situation "Solidarity with Women. It is clear of course like I said that freedom cannot be bought for you by any other person. You have to work for it. But we can act in solidarity with those fighting for their freedom. This I think is the reason why the churches, the governments, the private initiative, the intelligensia and those involved and interested in the movement and good of men have to come together to rally around you women our mothers and sisters, to rally around you to achieve those noble aims. We have to rally around you in fact, in word and in action. Let me propose immediately some areas of solidarity with women.

(a) UNDERSTANDING WOMEN'S CAUSE:

I think that it is important to understand the cause of women, to understand their work, to understand their problems, to understand their prospects. Efforts must be made to sensitize the public on the need for solidarity with women in their problems.

(b) SHARING THE PROBLEM:

Understanding is one thing, acting is another. I feel that we should not only listen and study and assess the problems of women in our society. We have to act in favour of changing those structures that dehumanize and depersonalize them. Let it be clear that you women are loved, you are cherished, you epitomize one of God's most beautiful in creation. But let it not be forgotten that your weakness can often be exploited, that your openness, and hardwork can be misused by those who understood

themselves as lords of the universe and not as fathers. Let it be clear to you dear women that the church in Nigeria, the Roman Catholic Church wants to share solidarity with you. This has been shown in ways especially in the massive support the Church hierarchy is giving to women organisations. Much more still needs to be done but much has been done. Let us pray that church women organisations will continue to merit the blessing of the local ordinaries in their various dioceses and of course the parish priests and of the grassroot workers.

(c) DOING PROJECTS WITH AND FOR WOMEN:

In our time and era a lot of projects are coming up. Projects on education, health, water, food, schools, etc. I think that those of us that are privileged in society, government or non governmental should shower solidarity with women by championing and supporting these cause for more social justice and more development.

You can be sure and this is my own promise that the CIDJAP shall do all she can to enable women realise the noble aims they have set for themselves. We shall do it in thought, in words and in action. I wish your workshop a happy success and I pray that what has begun in this decade for women shall merit God's blessing for the good of women and the good of mankind for more justice and more peace in the world. I thank you for listening.

THE ROLE OF THE YOUTH IN THE POLITICAL LIFE OF NIGERIA COME 1990:

Lecture presented to the Bigard Memorial Seminary, Ikot-Ekpene branch of the Nigerian Federation of Catholic Students 14th March, 1987, by Revd. Fr. Dr. Obiora Ike.

First of all, I want to say that I am well aware that this lecture is not the last word on the issue. I am not a politician, and even then, it is not easy to transpose solutions mechanically from the abstract political theories to concrete political realities. This lecture should be considered primarily as animation and conscientisation. Secondly, it is with joy mingled with gratitude and respect that I thank the organisers of this seminar/lecture. I have therefore the pleasure as guest speaker to welcome this grand concourse of youth, patriots and friends, all Nigerian nationals for congregating here under the umbrella of the Nigeria Federation of Catholic Students in BMS, Phil. Campus, Ikot Ekpene Your association is one that is nationwide, broad, positive and constructive. During my years as student both in Nigeria and abroad, I had always cause to look up admiringly towards the NFCS. At that time in 1978, the Seminary was not yet affiliated to the NCFS. But today it is, and I am proud that it is. In a way, it supports my belief that the future has much to offer. We have however to work for this future.

The general theme for your symposium is "the youth and religion in technological development". At no other time can such a topic be of paramount importance. When we consider all that man has done in the area of art, technique and science, we have hardly words to describe the gigantic progress, achievements and discoveries which have been made. The reality of today's world with all its sophisticated computer memory chips, micro-processors, electronics, informa-

tics and telematics, whose consequences are yet only half understood, as well as the fact that we are on the verge of a productivity increase that is every bit as dramatic as the shift from an agricultural to an industrial economy, all these smack of a technological wonder. People speak today of the "moon age", "space age", nuclear and atomic age", "computer and Robot age". Economists note that the economy will become more highly skilled and many jobs will become more satisfying. Unpleasant, repetitive jobs will be done by computers. This is however achievable meanwhile in the industrialised society. At the same time experts are worried that the fruits of the technological age are not so rosy as presented. People have learnt now to replace workers with technology, but they do not know how to use technology to put people back to work. Especially in countries of Europe and America, technique has brought with it too, a looming crisis in the world of work. Thousands of previously productive workers have been condemned to marginal workers. Over and beyond this, technology has triggered off an unpalatable confrontation, almost on all fronts; superpower confrontation, ideological confrontation, and confrontation between the haves and the have-nots. All that this has boiled down to is that technology is at the service of WAR. We can each and everyone of us enjoy the luxury of dying twenty times over in the event of an atomic-nuclear war. Terrible indeed but this is the heritage of technology.

No doubt, technical work is a progress in man's attempt to overcome the universe (Subdue the world and fill it. . . , Gen. 2:): but progress always requires an evaluation and an orientation. One must ask whether a given progress is sufficiently "human" and at the same time sufficiently "universal", whether it helps to level out unjust inequalities and to promote a peaceful future for the world; whether fundamental rights are guaranteed for each person, for each family and for the nation. In a word, one must ask oneself constantly whether the technical work concerned helps man to become more human and to fulfil the meaning of his life. Like John Paul II says over and over again: "Work must serve man and not man work. Technical work must be the

ally of man, enabling him to live in truth and freedom in all its fulness, to lead a life more worthy of man" (JP II; Address to the ILO; 15:6-82, Geneva, Publ. in CTS, 1982/7, p.284).

From the aforementioned, we notice immediately a religious dimension to the entire discussion. (It is in religion that meaning is sought and answers given. Whether they are absolute or tentative, religion has passed through as the area that evaluates, elevates and determines the basic meaning of human life and endeavours). You can now see the relevance of the topic you have chosen as a general theme for yourselves. Technology and religion must complement themselves for the good of man. Otherwise, they both may run the risk of parallelism and consequently of lack of cohesion, dimension and fulfilment.

Permit me now to share my thoughts with you on the topic you have offered me to deliberate on, namely: "The youth and religion in Nigerian politics come 1990". We cannot begin by definitions because we shall end up having several of them as to who is youth. Last Thursday at the retreat centre at Awka, I had the opportunity to address the diocesan youth on a likely topic as yours. Because of the milieu however, we spent more than thirty minutes discussing the question: who is youth? We shall not repeat that same experience today, as we shall on the long run, end up not having solved the question. I can only add that the youth know themselves. If they do not, they are not youth. Likewise is the problem of religion not one for definitions. For that word, there are over five hundred definitions I know and learnt during the years I was reading comparative religions in Europe. Some are complementary and others contradictory. But we can however maintain with a noble objectivity that (religion refers to a relationship between man and the object of man's) worship. Our third operative word, namely: Nigerian Politics is not something for definitions but for experience. Since 1914 with the northern and southern protectorates in colonially carved out British area of influence fully amalgamated under Lord Lugard, Nigeria became an operative word in the political

dictionary. That country which came into independence in 1960 has continued to defy all known prognosis of political scientists. Someone wrote recently in the magazine Newswatch that "Nigeria is God's experiment into the unknown". Sarcastic as that may be, there has not been any long-lasting prognosis of the orientation, direction or content of this nation. As has often been repeated, Nigeria came into existence as a political entity by "an act of administrative convenience". Historians know better and we have been thought that the Berlin Conference of 1884/5 under Germany's Bismarck was convened to put order in the "scramble and partition of Africa" by European powers. What came out as a result of that conference was the shameful Berlin Act which declared that: "Any European power which could show that it had a predominant interest in any African region would be accepted as the administering power in that region, provided it could show that its administration was a reality". (Forsyth, F. The making of an African Legend: The Biafra story, London, 1969, p. 15).

As Forsyth, British born writer maintains:

"Britain had gained a colony. It had not been conquered, it hadn't really been explored. It had no name, so later Lord Lugard's girlfriend gave it one – NIGERIA" (Ibid;) Britain's colonial policy remained exploitative and orthodox: "maintain law and order, stimulate the production of raw materials create demand for British exports, and raise taxes to pay for colonial rule".

(The Future of Nigeria and of the children of God who in all fairness was not a fundamental issue in British colonial policy). No wonder, just sixty-three months from October 1, 1960, the tiny veneer that hid the masked disunity in the country burst into a tribal war, now unfortunately known as the Nigeria–Biafra war. Balance: two million people dead, fourteen million homeless or displaced, billions of property lost, millions wounded and maimed for life, psychological terror and societal disorder entrenched. In tracing the root causes of the war, forsyth believes and historians give him credit for that, that the fundamental spark had been ("the tribal hostility embedded in this enormous and artificial

nation. . . for Nigeria was essentially a British, not a Nigerian experiment" (Ibid;).

Abubakar Tafawa Balewa had this to say: as first Prime Minister of Nigeria "since the amalgamation of the southern and northern provinces in 1914, Nigeria has existed as one country only on paper . . . It is still far from being united. Nigerian unity is only a British intention for the country." (Publ, in the Punch Newspaper, Nigeria, Friday 12 Dec. 1982; Vol. 8 No. 13, 819; pp. 12–13). And Chief Obafemi Awolowo, one of the first runners for the "Nigeria is not a nation. It is a mere geographical expression. There are no Nigerians in the same senses as there are English or Welsh or French. The word Nigerian is merely to distinguish those who live within the boundaries of Nigeria from those who do not". (Ibid;).

Dear listeners, (I do not think in all sincerity tha this attitude has changed in Nigeria, not only among the ruling elite, but also among the masses of the citizens). As far as I am concerned any meaningful political discussion on Nigeria must begin with the geo-political discussion. Are we really a nation? And if we are not can we really become one? And if we cannot become one why not we break apart that we can independently rule ourselves? and if we were to rule ourselves either on a confederation or on smaller sovereign states, how many nations can Nigeria make? Hausa, Yoruba and Igbo have always been seen to be the major tribes of Nigeria. What then do we do with the tiny tribes? (If these questions are not answered, we shall for my little political experience continue to wallow in the search for a viable political future). But we cannot step into B without stepping into A. Therefore dear youths of Nigeria, wither Nigeria?

A country populated with over 100 million people, the largest African populated nation and the biggest concentration of black people anywhere in the world; the country with over 200 languages, over 400 tribes, peopled by the various races that inhabit Africa; the country whose economic potential is an envy to outside powers be it within or outside the continent; the country within Africa with the

most highly educated academic professionals and elite: medical doctors, priests, lawyers, engineers etc, (why does nothing work in Nigeria?)

Permit me therefore to outline in brief what I consider the basic problems of Nigeria.

Books and articles, lectures and symposia on all levels have been written and organised on these questions. Chinua Achebe's booklet titled "The trouble with Nigeria" and published in 1983 by 4th dimension publishers attempts in a scholarly manner to articulate these problems. (a) Lack of unity; (b) Lack of Leadership; (c) Corruption; (d) The cult of mediocrity; (e) The crisis of values as a consequence of colonial heritage; (f) Government work and property is considered as "national cake' for each to grab as much as one can. "Onye ube reoro ya racha"; (g) Ethical de-orientation. (It is not that these problems are now). Infact majority of the city Nigerians know that these problems exist, and many even profit that they do exist).

And here my question: (Are the problems of Nigeria beyond solution? Or is there any chance that we can in one little way by a positive fair solve some of them?

What can the Catholic Federation of Students, such an organised and idealistic youth do in Nigeria as their own contribution towards its future?

This later question I think is the reason why I have been invited today to share my views with you on the role of the youth in the oncoming political theatre for 1990.

In fact, this whole area demands careful reflection of (the Christian who has a task from the creator to remain a good steward and to use earthly goods in the service of the human family).

The right to self determination:

In a well understood system, democracy means and implies that people must remain masters of their own destiny). They must be the subjects and not the objects of any political system. This I think is the first task which is expected of every youth in this country in 1990. Much is therefore,

expected of the Christian youth. History tells us that (Christianity played very significant roles in shaping society and directing its course). Why can it not do the same in our times? Addressing the group of Catholic youth, let it be made known to you all that the future belongs to you. (No one can therefore make laws that will determine your destiny who is not there to share in it). (Christ made laws for man but he stayed to participate in it and to let the laws guide him). He taught us that Christianity and the Church must be rooted in, and be responsive to the realities of life. Theological texts can only provide guidance to the resolution of the conflicts, and problems that confront mankind. (Identity of the Church with the people's problem *must inevitably lead to an identity of the Church and the people).* It is only then that the Church will *not only teach them from the pulpit, but she will accompany the people she will learn with them in the peasant fields, in factories and even in the world of the marginalised.* The challenge for the Christian youth, is the call for a change from dogmatism and passivity to involvement, from theory to prazis, from the past to the present, from abstraction to reality. In other words, the quest for salvation must be seen as a quest for economic, political, social and spiritual justice. Meaningful faith must therefore take place within the context of the total human situation. *I don't know if I am clear enough* on this *point* but my second point shall elucidate further.

The Poor:

To me it seems as clear as day that there is no future for the Church except at the side of those who do not have the present, but only the future – the oppressed. Church movements made up mainly of the non-poor, decision makers, liberal professionals and students, may lay claim to an improved present, but not to a different future. Because of this their historical significance may be positive, but it is extremely limited.

The law of evangelisation is the law of incarnation: *without incarnation no salvation.* That is why I believe, there is

an implicit requirement for the Church and its youth to involve itself in the lives of the masses and help them discover and know their human worth, and together with them, participate in God's grand scheme to co-operate in their own liberation from servitude and all forms of oppression and evil, including moral decadence and non-challance, as well as economic dependence and beggary. The question of social justice is deeply rooted in the scriptures. The problem facing many nations today, and Nigeria is no exception to this, namely starvation, is not merely one of scarcity, it is largely one of inequitable distribution of the available food resources. There is a great challenge facing all justice-conscious people in the world *not only to reverse the state of AFFAIRS* where the few get richer and richer and the poor get poorer and poorer, but to strive for meaningful participation by the broad masses in the economic activity of their respective countries.

You are the audience to whom such words must be directed, because the future belongs to you. If you co-participate in shaping it fairly, you will reap the fruits therefrom. If we do not participate in the process, we have no way of influencing the final outcome. Like Canaan Banana has said: "The simple fact of life is that we either influence change or are influenced by it" (IN: The Gospel according to the Ghetto). Look around you and you will discover that in Nigeria, while a small group of human families enjoyed a standard of living unknown to our country in the past, most of our people eke out a precarious existence and as has been said on various international forae, almost 40,000 die each day from sheer starvation. The basic human right to eat, to health, literacy and nobility are denied to millions of people in our country as elsewhere.

The youth must be able to maintain that there can be no other room in 1990 for arrogance on the part of the incoming political rulers. I am personally convinced that it is morally unjustifiable, infact it is not right that majority of people in our country should be placed in a position of beggars. The transfer of vast resources from the rich to the poor is a matter of simple justice, not almsgiving. It should

be seen as voluntary help and co-operation among equals.

HUMAN RIGHTS:

When Buhari and Idiagbon plus Mohammed Rafindadi took over power in Nigeria on the eve of new year 1984, Nigerians expected results. But within a few months, Buhari ended up alienating himself from the people. He had used the language the gun speaks on drug pushers forcing many of them to face the firing squad; He had imposed bans on all forms of political gatherings, sacked not less than two million people from regular employment; banned the Nigerian Students Union, the Nigeria Medical Association, suspended the right to strike by workers in their legal demands, expelled many neighbouring aliens as well as engaging in a system of confrontation with other governments. After one and half years in office, Buhari had ended up making more Nigerians poorer than they were before his government came to power. He succeeded in betraying the people.

Ibrahim Gbadamosi Babangida who succeeded Buhari through a military coup, declared himself President and vowed to side the need for upholding fundamental human rights.

Babangida said:

"This government is committed to the promotion and protection of human rights both domestically and internationally. We fully realise that in order for us to effectively act out this commitment at the international level, we must begin at home to build a society that guarantees freedom within the limits of law to the individual. The Nigerian must enjoy freedom to think, act and express himself, and this government will endeavour to protect his person, family and property . . . The objective of this government is to demonstrate with regards to human rights that a Nigerian administration can be both competent and humane" (Annual Foreign Policy address by Ibrahim Babangida; Occasion of the patrons Dinner of the Nigerian Institute for International Affairs; Lagos 29th Nov. 1985 (publ. in Nachrichtenaus Nigeria, Bonn).

On democracy, Babangida said: "We recognise that a government, be it civilian or military, needs the consent of the people to govern if it is to reach the objectives. We do not intend to rule by force, . . . Fundamental rights and human liberty will be respected but their exercise must not degenerate into irrational excesses or border on subversion" (Babangida, Text of special Broadcast, in Nachricthenaus Nigeria, Bonn, 1985).

These and many other statements were made by our President. How far these words have been translated into action is left for you and me to judge.

Let it be known however, that human rights are *what people are entitled to, not what society or the state is willing to give,* They belong to people because they are people and are valid against government, state or military regime. Human rights travel with people. I personally believe that the rights of man do not come from the generosity of the state but from the hands of God.

The youth should never tolerate a situation where one form of colonial control or exploitation has passed away only to be replaced by another no matter how subtle. (The sanctity of the person, the rights of the individual as guaranteed by law, the demand for a fair trial and the assumption of the innocence of an accused person until he is proved guilty, the need for both individual and community responsibility, all these as guaranteed by the rule of law must remain our aims and objectives).

We have come a long way in achieving independence. It was a toughening school and the experiences made by the champions of our independence has armed us with a spiritual weapon which now enables us to put to the test the authenticity of claims of those who profess to be democratic and civilised, and those who claim to act in our name, when in reality, we were not consulted. The time has come (when the youth of this country must ask constructive questions because the future is theirs).

The love of our country must outweigh the love of our petty selves. The enjoyment of individual freedom under the law should mean more to us than our self-centred party pro-

grammes, tribal instincts, and ideological manifestoes. Common dangers and common enemies must alert us on the need for common security.

One realises the complications of the story told of Archbishop Helder Camara of Northern Brazil, who, while he was giving soup to the poor, the government was happy and heaped praises on him, but when he stressed that structures of injustice instituted by government should be changed to enable the poor rise to their human worth and dignity, the government was very hostile and branded him a communist. Giving palliatives is not a substitute for working to CHANGE the causes of injustice. I would imagine that the solution is not only to work on the soup, but also on the government. They are not mutually exclusive.

In this connection, we can picture the famous development aid slogan: "Give a man a fish and you feed him for a day. Teach him how to fish and you feed him forever".

Jesus came to bring freedom, to proclaim release for prisoners, to let the broken victims go free (Lk 2:18). Today, Jesus is still sending his followers into the world, and I don't know for what else, if not to continue in his footsteps. "As I have done, so you also may do". This implies, healing the sick, feeding the hungry, clothing the naked and helping each other.

This is for me the sign of true followership. Not in preaching but in doing, for Jesus as the Bible records, began – "to do and to teach". And what of the youths of our society today? Are we challenged? Or Are we simply theoretising? The marginalised of this world, the believing poor know very well what Jesus is saying in the Gospel. Good news is the fulfilment of legitimate human expectations and the realisation of dreams. The youth can make these dreams become real come 1990.

Conclusion:

Dear friends, it was John F. Kennedy who once said: "Ask not what your country can do for you, ask what you can do for your country". I don't think anybody quarrels over that. However, the youth of Nigeria must demand that

their country also accept their desire to serve and grant them opportunity to do something for it. The youth of today must consider themselves a new generation of Nigerians who are not crushed down by tribe, language, party, sex religion or class. The youth should not accept exchanging places with any other people or any other generation. But they have the right to demand that Nigeria accept their services and grant them opportunity to serve. Of course, we cannot all be captains, but we have the possibility to be crew. I think that there is a big work for each and everyone of us to do here in Nigeria, for our faith and for our country.

The graves and lives of young Nigerians who answered the call to national defence and integrity should never have been spent for nothing.

Let me therefore urge you to begin anew, remembering that civility is not a sign of weakness and sincerity is always subject to proof. Like J.F. Kennedy urged: "Let us never negotiate out of fear, but let us never fear to negotiate".

Finally, with history the final judge of our deeds and a good conscience our sure reward, let us go forth like Isaiah to lead the land of our birth, come 1990, asking for His blessings and His help, but knowing quite fully well that here on earth, man is co-operator with the creator and God's work must truly be our own.

What I have within the past minutes said are a few general ideas, some of them superficial. Let me now have your reactions for our mutual enrichment.

CHILD ABUSE IN NIGERIA AND THE RESPONSE OF THE CHURCH

(A Paper presented on the occasion of the Official Opening of the Motherless Babies Home of the Catholic Diocese of Enugu, Holy Ghost Cathedral on 7/12/89 by Rev. Fr. Dr. Obiora Ike, Director, CIDJAP).

My Lord Bishop
Rev. Fathers, Brothers, Sisters,
Dear Motherless Babies,
Distinguished ladies and gentlemen.

Introduction:

We live in a world where the brutality of daily existence cannot allow us as Christians to sit idly on the fence and watch business go on as usual. Many of you would agree with me that the situation of many human beings in our society today, does not correspond to the will of God and to the God-given dignity which his image casts on every creature. The Bible records that human beings were created in a state of abundance, dignity and freedom. This original situation of mankind was distorted by man's inability to use his freedom well.

Mankind has discovered in the millions of years of existence here, on earth, that disaster upon disaster face him. The hard conditions of human existence for many people at various ages and in various parts of the universe, prove that mankind does not have it easy in this desolate "vale of tears" called our world.

At various times and in various ways, the search for a less burdensome society, a more confortable milieu of existence and a dignifying state of life has always challenged mankind to seek for salvation and to search for God who can guarantee absolute and final solace to mankind's suffer-

ings. Most religions of the world deal with this phenomenon of searching for a kingdom devoid of fear, poverty etc. as a final response to the problem of human existence. Some intellectuals and philosophers have posited the theory of Absurdity as a meaningful response to a meaningless world. Why should beloved ones die? Why must children live without water, food, clothings and above all love? Why must there be wars, pests and famine? Why must 4/5 of entire humanity live in abject squalor and in perpetual want, while 1/5 of mankind enjoy in abundance goods made for all? Why is injustice a parental and constant situation peculiar to the human condition and found virtually everywhere? Why do we have military dictatorships, unjust and oppressive governments, and regimes that have no legitimacy whatsoever to rule others?

How do we explain the fact that many good people and deeply religious persons suffer want, degradation and various calamities, while supposedly corrupt and bad people enjoy, at least in the eye of the public, a certain measure of the goods of this world? These and other questions has made many to think. The answers have not been the same, and the questions are not lessening. If I shall add a personal question, and I beg your pardon, why should innocent children be brought into a hostile world and abandoned by family or other wise to live in Motherless Babies Homes? Lonely, without parents, without parental love, without adequate care from society, be it medical, educational or otherwise and to grow without love and dignity? Such brutality challenges my conscience and I am forced to say that business cannot go on as usual.

Child Abuse and Neglect in Nigeria:

Child abuse refers to "any deliberate act by a person, group or society designed to inflict harm on a child or prevent it from normal, mental, physical, emotional and moral development. To have a name, nationality shelter, food, medical care and education is a basic right of the child. Anybody who by doing something or by doing nothing

contributes to the denial of those rights to a child commits child abuse".

"Child neglect is given when there is absence of efforts to provide conditions whereby a child will develop normally. The right to a name, nationality, protection, food, shelter, medical care and lack of education are out of lack of commitment or ignorance partially or completely denied".

Child neglect may have such serious consequences that one can then speak of child abuse" ANPPCAN ADVOCACY SERIES Page 9 "Child Abuse and Neglect").

Without much debate and without searching too far, it must be clear to anybody who is honest and willing to see that child abuse and neglect are very rampant practises in our Nigerian tradition. Everyday in the papers, on Television, over the radio, on the streets, in our remote villages, in our homes and towns, child abuse is noticeable. Whether it is the child thrown away by the mother into a dustbin after birth because society, hypocritically, cannot accept a mother without a husband or the common practice of hitting children with sticks and objects etc, the African child is often humiliated by the elderly, in the name of education and training by denial of basic rights. Thus, the child may not eat egg because he might grow up stealing eggs. Protein nutrition is thereby denied him. The child may not eat meat during meals as this is a reserve for the elderly. Should the child be given any meat, this is often the skinny and bony parts. The African child is expected to sleep late and wake early, to fetch firewood and water from very distant places, to cook for his parents, clean the home, wash clothings, and attend to various domestic chores. Such a training is considered traditional and acceptable, but in many cases and in the eyes of the international community, this practice is considered a deprivation of the child's natural dignity.

Child abuse in Nigeria has certainly become an accepted evil. Very few people now raise an eye brow to this oppressive situation. In fact now, many children are stationed on highways as hawkers and smugglers and school education

for them is not an agenda. There is the so called "begging session" during which parents organise their children to roam about the streets appealing for alms as is very common in Lagos, Kano, Sokoto, Ibadan and Aba roads. A concrete and most heart-breaking example is the case where many children are virtually forced to wander about the roads in dehumanizing beggary, either in the name of religion as seen in Kano and Sokoto roads or in the form of expiating pity as is seen on Broad Street in Lagos where the parents hide away and hope that the sight of their children would mean more money from sympathising passersby. The Nigerian Society is virtually now used to this ugly sight and hardly does one shrug at children who living like slaves, worn over at an auction, playing a purely passive role without education, without future, without dignity are reduced to the level of chattels and are conditioned to become society's potential criminals. Some of these children are sexually abused, many of them without any moral or civil education. Neglected and abandoned, they grow up to hate the society which never showed them love. The boomerang is felt by everybody hardly. The future of tomorrow are the children of today .

Further abuses prevalent in Nigerian Society include the inability by government institutions, Churches etc. to make effective laws and create atmosphere that guarantees the protection of the rights mentioned above. There is hardly any holiday programme for the children. Other areas that need serious study, governmental regulation and Church involvement on a social pastoral level include:

(i) Epidemiology and other facets of child labour in Nigeria
(ii) Child trafficking;
(iii) Suppression of Women;
(iv) Health opportunities for children;
(v) Malnurished and exploited children;
(vi) Repressive political and religious systems;
(vii) Finally, cultural conflicts on socialization of children.

WHAT DOES THE UNITED NATIONS SAY ABOUT THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD?

The United Nations conventions on the rights of the child (ages below 18 years) accepted that a child needs special assistance to survive. If the child is helped to develop normally, it would become a useful member of society and a healthy individual. Children ensure the future of any nation.

A child has definite rights to be able to grow up normally:

- It has a right to live.
- It has a right to acquire a name and a nationality.
- It has a right to enjoy parental love and have a place of residence or shelter.
- It has a right to proper feeding.
- It has a right to medical care;
- It has a right to be educated.
- It has a right to be protected from all kinds of harm.
- It has the right to moral upbringing.

HOW CAN WE TRANSLATE THESE RIGHTS FROM THEORY INTO ACTION IN THE NIGERIAN CHURCH?

CHURCHES RESPONSE:

Distinguished ladies and gentlemen, the role of the Church in the world is to carry the lamp of love which the founder of the Church gave to her as a command. This work which is social and pastoral in essence and dimension must involve a concrete relationship to the down trodden and the oppressed, especially children. No-one will doubt the efforts of the early missionaries of Nigeria in fighting for the dignity of children. It was the missionaries who stopped the killing of twins. It was the missionaries who sent the children to school, taught them to read and write and above all, taught them moral and civic responsibilities.

In our own time, the work of the Church continues like we observe today the official opening of the Holy Child Motherless Babies Home Enugu. It is a praise worthy venture, thanks to the initiators. We commend the Church of Enugu Diocese and request her to continue the good work.

However, what the Church is doing in the area of child abuse and neglect in the Nigerian Society is *"Simply not Enough"*.

The Church in her mission on earth has the duty not only to preach Justice but to do Justice. In the words of the 1971 synod of Bishops "Action for Justice and participation in the transformation of the world, fully appear to us as a constitutive dimension of the preaching of the Gospel, or in otherwords, of the Church's mission for the redemption of the human race and its liberation from every oppressive situation". (JUSTICE IN THE WORLD 6). In our context, child abuse and neglect not only becomes a Justice question but a Challenge to Justice action. There is enough work for each and everyone of us.

Let us organise awareness programmes, Seminars and Workshop to sensitise our people on the need and the problems of this segment of our population – marginalised children. Let us show them love. Let the pulpit be a place to speak for these voiceless ones. Let pastoral letters be written on their behalf. Let us confront government to fulfil her duties by budgeting tax-payers money for the welfare of these children. Let philanthropists support them financially. Let there be adoption of these children into stable families. Of course, we must also have to rethink our population policy in the spirit of the Church's Teaching on planned and responsible parenthood. Let us once again show solidarity and united effort in sharing concern and love these Motherless Babies.

It is surprising that they are not called Fatherless Babies. Where then are the Fathers, even if the Mothers are no more?

With prayer, love and honesty our sure weapons of evangelisation, let us continue in His Service, knowing quite fully well, that here on earth, God's work shall surely be our own.

I thank you for listening.

JOHN PAUL II's "LABOREM EXERCENS" AND ITS RELEVANCE FOR THE NIGERIAN ETHICS OF WORK THE PUBLIC SERVICE AND THE CIVIL SERVICE:

by

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"Though the Church's first care must be for souls, how she can sanctify them and make them share in the gifts of heaven, she concerns herself too with the exigencies of man's daily life, with his livelihood and education and his general welfare and prosperity" – Pope John XXIII, mater et Magistra, No. 3[1].

SECTION I

Introduction of the problem as a Challenge on the Discipline of Theology:

This paper derives from a fundamental concern with the present state of affairs on the continent of Africa – Politically, socially, economically and religiously. It takes Nigeria as an example. Igboland in its strictest sense – only as a paradigm of that which happens or can happen elsewhere.

As is largely known, in most developing countries, people are deeply engaged in decrying the great anomalies facing them – poverty, exploitation, ignorance, hunger, coups, injustice, alienation and cultural degradation. There is increasing loss of moral and spiritual values and the mounting loss of faith in God, a loss of faith in life itself, its meaning and the impossibility for any change for the better. Many have given up! Others who had hoped for a better day in their life time have crashed on these hopes. Their visions

for a better world order have been marred. Here in Nigeria, corruption and the lack of any sense of direction have increased recently. In an attempt to find out how the present came to be and to fashion out better trends for the future, many worried, honest and truth seeking persons have called on the discipline of Theology for a direction. The Social Teachings of the Church at this point in time has been challenged to respond to the "Social Question" in Nigeria as elsewhere by seeking, elements from Christian Social principles, acceptable and adaptable to Nigeria and Africa for the solution of many of the problems facing the nation.

Especially in the areas of Human work, the right understanding of the value, meaning and social structure of work, the attitude to work, the work ethics of the Nigerian civil and public servant, the conflicts between labour and capital, the rights of workers including their wages, trade unions and the possibility to strike, the unemployed, the migrant workers, the disabled and the situation of women, exactly in these areas is Catholic Social Thought Challenged to thought and to action. We accept the challenge.

This paper therefore, is an attempt to respond to this challenge, from the perspectives of the encyclical letter of Pope John Paul II: "Laborem Exercens." The author does not lay claim to solve various problems, rather, we aspire to take note of them, expose them, seek their causes and offer from the perspectives of Christian Social Principles relevant elements towards a solution. We are thus faced with the problems of unity and diversity. How can we in the unity of Catholicity seek for elements relevant for the African situation from the Encyclicals whose Social milieu were not influenced by the African situation without disrupting the unity in Catholicity?

Can we redefine and reframe the terms of reference, yet remaining original?

In our attempt to consider the relevance of Laborem Exercens for Nigeria, our attitude is and must be, to retranslate and readapt the proposals and scientific argumentation's present in the document and to place them vis-a-vis the Nigerian world of work. In so doing, we are able to

identify the differences and the meeting points. We are able to establish relevant values and put them in the context of a developing nation with a developing Social Ethic's without denying the basic truths that guide man. In other words, we are able as Africans and African Theologians to make changes in the entire process of assimilating teachings from outside by giving definitions from an African contextual framework. Theology talking to Africa has to be understood and translated into the realities of the African so that the voice of Christ may be truly heard by the indigene without the risk of alienation. As has been sufficiently proved, both here and elsewhere, there are many inter-related aspects uniting traditional values and the Social Principles of the Church. Ours is a search for the identities and the differences, thus, the relevance of John Paul II's "Laborem Exercens" for the Nigerian work ethics and properly so for the Nigerian Civil/public service.

SECTION II

WHAT IS "LABOREM EXERCENS"?

A fundamental dimension of man's life on earth is human work. Human work is "the key to the whole Social Question", that is, to all the problems which have arisen for each one of us, for our society and for the world at large with the development of industrial manufacture.

It is through work that man can renew the face of the earth, because through work man creates, builds and organises the society and the world.

It can be conveniently asserted that everything that is, is a product of work, the food we eat, the houses we live in, the roads, cars, books, education, the family and society, religion and culture. Human work is the guiding thread through which all political, social, economic, religious and cultural aspects of man's life in society is co-ordinated.

Laborem Exercens is the name of the Pope's Third Encyclical letter, devoted solely to the problem of human work. It is thus a social Encyclical, after the manner of the first

of the great Social Encyclicals by Pope Leo XIII, "Rerum Novarum" or "of revolutionary times" written in 1891 at a time of great industrial unrest and revolution in Europe with the attendant problems of capitalism and exploitation.

Rerum Novarum was geared towards correcting the injustices and calling people to order by establishing basic Christian Principles as guidelines for thought and Action.

Since 1891, successive Popes after Leo XIII have written on related problems of the Social Questions. Worthy of mention here are Pius XI" "Quadragesimo Anno" (1931); Pius XII's, Whitsun Broadcast (1941); John XXIII's matter et Magistra (1961) and Pacem in Terris" (1963); Paul VI's "populorum progressio (1967). With Laborem Exercens (May 1981), John Paul II joins the list of the "Social Popes."

A profound and wide ranging document, with over 15,000 words in length, Laborem Exercens was written to commemorate the 90th Anniversory of Pope Leo XIII's Encyclical– "Rerum Novarum" (1891).

Laborem Exercens was intended to be publicly announced on 15th May 1981 – the exact day of the anniversary of Rerum Novarum. But it bears the date of 1st September 1981, the feast of the triumph of the Holy Cross, and this delay is due to the Pope's hospitalisation after the attempted murder by the Turk Ali Agca. This "extrinsic" affair with the date gives the document a personal and spiritual originality which cannot be ignored.

Exposing work as a human participation in God's creative activity, John Paul II shows that work can be and must be the means of man's fulfilment as an image of God. The product of labour must be worthy, the labour itself dignified, because the worker himself, is carrying out the Creators purpose: "subdue the earth", and in doing so imaging God to all his creation.

The document contains many technical and difficult arguments to make its points clear, but it ends up as a directive for man-the worker. The great social encyclicals of the Church, of which laborem exercens is the latest are of their nature different from doctrinal encyclicals.

While the principles which are essential to the teaching of

the Church, such as the dignity of man as a child of God do not change, nevertheless the circumstances to which they apply do change, sometimes very radically. And so does the situation of man in the later part of the 20th century. Like the Pope himself observes in main reasons for the encyclical: There are widespread introduction to automation into many spheres of production;
The increase in the cost of energy and raw materials;
The fact that the world is being intolerably polluted;
The emergence on the political scene of people, who, after centuries of subjection, are demanding their rightful place among the nations and in international decision making.

The development of informatics and telematics; and vicious circle of inflation and unemployment;
The distressing economic situation in the North-South axis, but also the unnecessary waste and endangerment of world peace in the East-West squabblings and ideological power-struggle;
The loss of a sense of culture and corporate work style;
The marginalisation of the agricultural sector and the massive exodus from the rural zones to the cities;
The social and economic under-valuing of the vocation of motherhood;
The separation of work from its relation to the family;
Lastly, the fact that issues relating to work and labour are seen only as determined by the dogmas of contemporary ideologies.

The encyclical Laborem Exercens addresses itself to these problems in a new way. And here lies the originality of John Paul's encyclical on Human work.

No one will overlook the fact that this is the first time that a Pope devotes an entire encyclical completely to this one theme. Although the Pope himself states he does not intend to deal with human work in an original manner but in organic connection with the whole tradition of the Church's social teaching, his encyclical is original.

In the first place the choice of the theme exposes this facts. Unlike his predecessors who in their commemorations

of Leo XIII's milestone achievement undertake an organic review of the themes connected with the "Social Question", John Paul hesitates and writes rather on "Homo laborem exercens". His reflections are divided into five parts and contains twenty seven paragraphs in the original Latin version of the document 'Laborem Exercens'. Part One (including paragraphs one to three) is the introduction to the theme of Human work – with a definition of this concept.

Part Two (paragraphs four to ten) discusses the details of work and man, the family and the Nation. Here work in the subjective and objective sense are considered.

Part Three (paragraphs eleven to fifteen) discusses the central conflict existing since the industrial revolution between labour and capital, a discussion which leads us to abandon the antinomy between them and to seek for the option of "Laborismus" which insists that human work comes before capital.

Part Four (paragraphs sixteen to twenty three) considers the rights of workers within the context of fundamental human rights as agreed upon by the world community of nations. Various groups of workers are considered, their situation and the possibilities for betterment.

Part Five of Laborem Exercens (including paragraphs twenty four to twenty seven) contains elements for a spirituality of work – with Christ – the man of work as the paramount example, and the cross as the way to salvation and resurrection.

In this document, John Paul's reflections are deeply rooted in the Bible, where work is presented as participation in the mystery of creation and redemption – its characteristics being that work is necessary, painful, corporate, redemptive and creative.

The Pope's Definition of Work:

In the encyclical letter of Pope John Paul II, "Laborem Exercens", the Holy Father defines work as "any activity by man, whether manual or intellectual, whatever its nature or circumstances, it means any human activity that can and

must be recognised as work, in the midst of the many activities of which man is capable and to which he is predisposed by his very nature, by virtue of humanity itself'. (John Paul II: Laborem Exercens: English translation – Encyclical on Human work, CTS, London, 1981 No. 1).

This definition of work and its meaning as given by the Pope has a very wide and broad scope. Work is referred to by the Pope as an activity. In the book of Genesis, man is presented as the only creature in all creation created in the image of God. "So God created man in his own image", (Gen. 1:26) and gave him the command to "Subdue and fill the earth". (Gen. 1:28). This command contains within it an invitation to participate in the creative activity of the creator through work. Says the Pope: "From the beginning therefore, he is called to work" (LE, No. 1), man is called to work and to activity in the biblical words of the creator. "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it; and 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". Commenting on this biblical words, the Pope says: "even though these words do not refer directly and explicitly to work, beyond any doubt they indirectly indicate it as an activity for man to carry out in the world. Indeed, they show its very deepest essence . . . In carrying out this mandate, man, every human being, reflects the very action of the creator of the universe." (LE, No. 4, 2).

Through work, man benefits from past generations and works for the benefit of generations yet to come. Work is thus a transitive activity: It originates from human subject and is directed towards an external object. However, it does not follow from this that work's external purposes are of the first importance, necessary though it is that all should be pursued. The Second Vatican Council teaches that "as human activity proceeds from man, so is it ordered towards man". This essential purpose of man's work is to perfect himself than to change the world in which he lives, though he must change the world. In changing the world, man supplies the material for human progress but that material cannot of itself bring human progress about.

(a) *Work – A Specifically Human Activity Uniting all Mankind – (Co-oporate dimension)*

The Pope makes it clear that work is a specifically human activity. Just as man is a "homo sapiens", "homo loquens", so also is he a "homo laborem exercens". This alone raises the dignity of work. Animals do not work; their natural movements and activities is not and cannot be regarded as work, but is rather best explained by their instinct for self-preservation. Man however, beyond the instinct of self-preservation seeks self-realisation which work offers.

In the words of Pope John Paul II, "Work is one of the characteristics that distinguish 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".

Since work is specifically human property, it is therefore a uniting factor for all men. This universality of work suggests the unity of mankind whether among men or among women, of every race and nation, who speak different languages, represent diverse cultures, and profess different religions.

(b) *Work – A means of Livelihood and Existence (Necessary)*

The second meaning of Human Work, dictated by the Genesis story: "in the sweat of your face you shall eat bread. . ." and often quoted and elaborated upon by John Paul II is the concrete fact that work, is a means of existence, assures a livelihood, sustains family life and helps the working man earn some wages to satisfy his material and spiritual needs. "Thus man must earn his daily bread and contribute to the continual advance of science and technology". Work assures man's life and health, either directly, whereby man grows his own food as farmer, or indirectly, whereby man does some job which earns him money to buy his needs. Man's life, personality and development are shaped and dignified by work.

(c) *Work – Gives meaning to Human Life and Existence on Earth (Re-demptive dimension)*

In the Encyclical Laborem Exercems, the Pope brought to light one fundamental meaning of Human work, stating clearly the fact that work reveals to man the true meaning of his existence." The problem of work has a very profound link with that of the meaning of human life. Because of this link, work becomes and indeed is a problem of man's spiritual nature." As one of those aspects connected with the "inscrutable mystery of man's Redemption in Christ", work presents itself as a fundamental aspect, one that is always relevant, demanding renewed attention and decisive witness.

In his first Enclyclical letter "Redemptor Hominis", the Holy Father stressed the fact that "man is the first road which the church must travel in fulfilling its missions; man is the first road and the fundamental road of the church mapped out by Christ Himself. . . . Man's dignity is an elevated one, because of the saving work of Christ and so also is man's work. For not only does work bear the imprint of man, but it reveals to man the true meaning of his existence – work considered as a human activity regardless of its concrete content and circumstances. Work is endowed with this "basic dimension of human existence, through which man's life is built up every day".

(d) *The Evils of Unemployment:* .

From the above distinctive characteristics of work, we have seen that work is necessary for men. But it is a fact that many people are unemployed. Critically looking at their situation, based on our objective but positive idea of work, we would not be mistaken to affirm that unemployment is an evil.

(i) It is an evil because it makes the unemployed less

a human person, that is that which makes him distinctly different from other sub-human animals. He has no opportunity so seek self-realisation which work offers.

(ii) It is an evil because through it people lose their rights to existence. "He who does not work should not eat" the sacred scriptures say.

(iii) It is an evil because the people involved have lost their rights to growth in life. They have lost their human dignity since man's dignity is an elevated one, because of the saving work of Christ, so also is man's work.

It stands clear that the right to work stands as the most fundamental of all rights in the labour world, for it is only to the working individual, that all other rights descent upon. To be out of job means to be out of means of livelihood. One might even say that unemployment is not only an evil in the general sense in which we have described it, it can in certain senses also mean the negation of existence, especially in the context of Nigeria and many of the developing nations, where to be unemployed does not automatically guarantee social security, like in many European countries of today. Unfortunately, there are no statistics available to buttress the exact number of Nigerians without work. But it is reasonably acceptable to state that about fifteen to twenty percent of the capable working population of Nigeria are without work. Majority of Nigerian citizens, both skilled/unskilled workers are thrown out of job, by private, public and government sectors.

SECTION III

HUMAN WORK AND NIGERIAN SITUATION:

(a) *Pre-colonial Society:*

In this section, we refer to Igboland, that is to the preliterary, pre-colonial and pre-industrial Igbo culture.

We intend to survey Igbo tribal Society in its work structures before the birth of the Nigerian nation. Such a historical and cultural excursion is necessary as we can thereby better understand the background and attitude to work in Igbo traditional society before the political, cultural and social interruption of Igbo history in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. It is important to note that what is here said of Igboland, might apply to any of the various ethnic groups of Nigeria.

Attitude to Human Work in Igbo Traditional Society:

In discussing the attitude of the Igbo to work in traditional society, it must be made clear that some of those traits have disappeared in modern times among the same people and this is understandable. The times have changed, influences from Europe, America and other African and world communities have infested Igboland, and the caption of S. Othenberg's book "Ibo receptivity to change" is being daily experienced among the Igbo of today. The society is no longer strictly an agricultural one, as technique, industrialisation, commercialisation and new government jobs, among others have invaded the economic scene.

First of all, human work was understood in traditional society as a fundamental dimension of man's existence because, through work, man was able to change, re-organise, and restructure his society. Work was therefore, regarded as a creative activity. Man built his house, built up his family, the village assembly, the village square and the places of worship through work.

Secondly, the Igbo understood under human work, a means to feed himself and his family and kindred. Here, work was regarded as a necessity of nature to keep body and soul together without which, the society would disappear. In this context, the Igbo in traditional society, as Basden has tried to show, toiled "when there was a great necessity, either hunger, or else superior force."

Leisure is appreciated and people should not overwork

when it was not called for. Summarily, there were two sole inducements to work, namely:

(a) To provide basic foodstuff for the family and the kindred.
(b) To provide shelter for the family.

Thirdly, work was understood in Igboland as a corporate activity, performed by all members of the community and family. Through work a man, his wife or wives, and children were able to engage themselves in a united and concerted action to complement each other and fulfil their basic needs.

Work was a part of life, in the words of Arinze: "Nobody was called a worker because everybody was a worker. It was taken for granted that everyone did some useful work, and most of it was rural."

Seen in this way, the ramblings in Europe in the nineteenth century concerning the situation of the "working-classes" and the "employers", could not make any sense for the Igbo of the same period. Besides, the attitude of the Igbo view of work considered one kind of labour, namely, that of the farmer, as a noble activity as opposed to the Romans and Greeks of olden times, where manual labour was usually left to hired hands and slaves, since it was a "Mean" job for the citizens. Worthy of free man, for the ancient Greek and Roman, was work on poetry, science, philosophy and the art of participation in government. But for the Igbos, praises were lavished on the successful yam farmer, and he had a noble status in the society.

Why this Attitude to Work:

This attitude to work is understandable for various reasons:

(i) The climate was tropical, plenty of sunshine, sometimes very hard on the worker. There are only two clear seasons for the Igbos: the wet season and the dry season. This clear weather division into rainy and dry seasons, makes it imperative for the Igbo to work and plant in the wet season, and to havest and rest for the greater part of the dry season, Nature thus played a vital role in determining work tempo.

(ii) The material needs in traditional society were not generally flamboyant. People had just the minimum for existence, as a strong sense of materialism, unnecessary amassing or accumulation of wealth was generally absent.

(iii) Thirdly, the needs of the family and of life were on the whole easily satisfied. The farms supplied practically all the food needed for daily consumption – yams, cassava, vegetables and fruits. Meat was available through hunting activities, and its consumption was often modest.

Traditional Igbo Society – Absence of the Rich versus the Poor:

In Igbo traditional society, there was a marked absence of rich and poor classes. People were generally farmers and they grew their own food. Since most of them cultivate the same type of food, it is to be expected that their diet would be almost identical. There was a technological limitation to what wealth would bring about to cause a class system among the people, as Max Glukman has mentioned: "with available tools – Axe, Hoe and Adze, Spear and Trap, Bows and Arrows, Dugouts or Canoes and Fishing-nets, each man can produce little beyond what he himself can consume. Hence though the poor might work for those who have more, they cannot be employed to give the rich an elaborate level of life above their own."

Under this condition therefore, the rich could not get rich in their production and acquisition as the possibilities for storage were limited, nor could the poor get poorer in their consumption of excess.

It is thus clear that as most of traditional Igbo people were farmers at subsistence level, so was it very difficult to create a class of haves and have-nots, for everyone was forced to eat the same food, and live under the same circumstances.

Change of Attitude in Colonial Days:

The period that opened up towards the end of the 15th century has been described by historians as the "Age of Exploration", and this description covers many events that followed, namely, slavery, colonialism and christianisation. A new impulse to exploit the natural resources of certain commodities which Europe did not have, the desire to counteract Muslim expansionism; and the wish to explore the so called "unknown world", forced the well-to-do classes of Western Europe to tour round the world and thereby to seek for the supplies of these luxury commodities (such as silk, ivory, gold, precious stones, and spices), previously obtained directly from Asia. What started as trade in legal materials ended up with slavery which lasted for over 2 centuries, costing entire Africa, precious manpower and depopulation.

Colonialism took over from slavery. But Britain's colonial policy remained exploitative and orthodox: "Maintain law and order, stimulate the production of raw materials, create demand for British exports, and raise taxes to pay for colonial rule." This policy lasted until 1960 when Nigeria became independent.

In the context of Nigeria, the colonially imposed government with its federal structure coincided with Britain's dreams, without proper consideration of the historical realities; the wishes of the various ethnic groups occupying the area, and was therefore from its inception unworkable and politically unrealistic as history has tried to prove in the twenty-nine stormy years of the nations existence.

Colonial Heritage and the Crisis of Values

In making reference to the problems of Nigeria, we are thereby attempting to locate the context and milieu in which the Encyclical letter of Pope John Paul II is being applied in its relevant message.

As has already been shown from the preceding descriptions, the traditional society described above has already or is rapidly disappearing, following the intrusion of foreign

powers into the political, cultural and social life styles of the natives.

Infact, Nigeria today is undergoing a massive change in all spheres of life, be it economic, social, political, religious or otherwise, and this situation has to a very large extent also changed the original attitude to work in traditional society; it has changed the organisation of work, and the type of work done.

For many Nigerians, work is ceasing to be rural or subsistent and is becoming urban and white colar jobs. Instead of hoes and matchets, people today work with paper and pen dressed in French or British suits to match.

The Western European influence during the colonial era and after has left its indelible mark on the situation of Nigeria, and has inherently become the origin of all problems associated with the nation Nigeria. This does not mean that the external causes alone are responsible for the situation.

Infact, there are also internal problems which have no doubt joined to maximise the contradictions. The problems of corruption, embezzlement of public funds, laziness, the tendency to materialistic wooliness and self-centred pedestrianism coupled with selfishness, the absence or total lack of intellectual rigour in dealing with issues, the cult of mediocrity, lack of examplary leadership, the lack of fair play and the neglect of public utilities, added to the situation of "get rich quick", armed robbery whether by single individuals, groups, or by public servants and elites, the cult of waste, consumerism, lack of efficiency, the exploitation of the weak and lowly, and above all, the indiscipline in public and private life—all these join hands together to make what we today call the "bane of the Nigerian society."

The question of finding a formula to redeem the country from complete political, economic, social and moral collapse has been uppermost in the minds of many Nigerians, both high and low, rich and poor, public officers and privately employed, students, teachers, churchmen, civilian's and military men. Some have been content with mainly exposing the ills of our society, solutions have been sought,

ideologies propounded and moral orientation schemes initiated, such as the "Low Profile", *"Otu Olu Obodo"*, the *National Ethical Re-orientation Programme"* and the *War Against Indiscipline"*. One may however ask: But why all these measures? What is wrong with Nigeria?

Attitude to work today:

It has been sufficiently demonstrated in the preceding pages that Nigeria's history is one of colonialism and extended economic exploitation, both from outside and from inside. Because of the colonial economic system with foreign firms such as UAC, UTC, BP, Shell, John Holt, Royal Niger Company, National African Company, all operating within the territory and carting away its raw materials to Europe, independent Nigeria inherited an economy that was in 1960 structurally engineered to be dependent on, and manipulable by the International Money Markets of Western Europe and America. This dependence sees in Government work, even after the colonial era-service to a bourgeois institution that does not merit it.

Government work is looked upon only as a source for "getting one's share of the national Cake", and therefore many people are prone to look at what is government's as "no man's Land and 'no man's property", and people render unsatisfactory service to it. There is strong negative "utilitarianism" in people's attitude towards national service and government work. The reasons are clear, and in the historical situation understandable. Commenting on this state of affairs someone wrote: "The colonial power was not loved and was served with less than total dedication. Government business was regarded as nobody's business. Government funds were considered to be limitless. This mentality had a damaging effect on work attitudes".

Behind this assertion lies the principle that work which serves the good of foreign powers primarily and not that of the workers runs the risk of being haphazardly done.

The consequences for the natives was that new classes of people gradually came into existence with nothing to sell other than their labour. Surely, they did not like this labour and would easily neglect it, but for the fact that their daily bread depend on it.

These hired labourers were fired anytime, badly paid, sometimes beaten by the masters, and they on their own, have bad reminiscences of these times. National work was therefore, looked upon with suspicion – as work for a foreign body. This attitude however, is gradually changing with the many appeals to patriotism by the post-colonial governments but much has still to be done. The famous slang *"Oga emem pay"* (will it pay me, or rather, is it to my gain) often heard in the post-colonial Igboland is a product of this situation. When attitude to work remains only utilitarian, only to get daily bread, but not to become more, not to help in nation building, not to build up a corporate body, that is, a community of workers, not to get spiritual fulfilment; when work is considered simply as a task to be done and get quick money, then we are away from the mark. Pope John Paul has a lot to offer the Nigerian worker in his attitude to work.

Work, (and this is contrary to all that traditional societies taught the natives) is considered alienating, especially paid jobs. Therefore there is no personal engagement or interest in the work done for others. And so, many Nigerians employed to work for an enterpreneur or for the government, engage likewise in private work which can give them personal fulfuilment or bring them nearer to their private wishes.

During employed working hours, many people play, eat, chat, prepare for exams, trade on other goods, but they do not work adequately for that which they are paid unless this is adequately controlled. The booklet on 'National Consciousness and Mobilisation Crusade' titled *"War Against Indiscipline"* and systematically carried out by Buhari Government has a lot to say on the point mentioned here.

Slogans often heard during work hours include 'Na me be Nigeria?', 'Me I no go die for dis kind work', meaning simply that many workers do not identify themselves with the work they do.

Applying the Social Principles of Laborem Exercens to Nigerian Situation Today:

Inspite of all criticisms on external powers and on the past, Nigeria today needs authentic value to appreciate the actions of its citizens and judge their conduct, but these values cannot be solely created by Western Society and then applied to Africa. Africa's values must and has to emanate from the realities of Africa, and it is only when committed individuals decide for this option that the new society ideally aiming at restoring the dignity of the human person can be created. The time has come for such a revival.

To have a true understanding of the meaning and value of human work, we need only reflect on the following words of the Holy Father, Pope John Paul II in Nigeria.

"Nigeria has been blessed by the creator with a rich human potential and with natural wealth. Such gifts, received in humble gratefulness, are also a constant challenge, for the goods of this world are given by the creator for the benefits of all. Public authorities are entrusted with the sacred assignment to channel these riches to the best interests of the people, that is, for the betterment of all and the future of all."

WORK AS A NECESSITY:

(a) It is man's duty to work. It is by his work that he must procure his daily bread; by his work that he must contribute to the continuing development of the technical arts and sciences; by his work – of particular importance, this-that he must help to raise even higher moral and cultural standards of the society in which he shares his life with the human family. In so far as we fail in realising this, we frustrate our lives and fail in what we owe the common good, offending against the virtue of social justice which bids us to do habitually whatever is necessary for the common good. Since it is man's duty to work, Nigerians may need to change their attitude to work, which since the colonial experience has become exteriorised. Work should not simply mean

"Meal thicket", but must be more for a country with the potentialities to elevate Africa. Work must be understood as necessary, creative, corporate, painful and redemptive.

MAN THE SUBJECT OF WORK:

(b) Man alone is adapted to work. Indeed, work is one of the signs by which man is distinguished from other living creatures. Although active in sustaining themselves, animals cannot be said to work. Work is a fundamental dimension of man's existence on earth, and through work man fulfils his life on earth. Therefore, work bears man's signature, the distinctive mark of his humanity and nature, the mark of a person who is created in God's image to act within a community of persons. We must keep always before our eyes the subjective nature of work. First man, then the rest. If we do this we shall never neglect or deny the threefold external purpose of work, namely family, nation and mankind; nor shall we neglect the dignity of the working person and the uniqueness of the individual.

WORK IN THE OBJECTIVE SENSE:

(c) The Encyclical Laborem Exercens extols the unique worth, value and dignity of man, and asserts that economics must serve man, not otherwise. Man's special relationship to God his creator and his endowment with reason, faith and an eternal soul make him superior over work itself, the objects of work and the tools and equipments used as working materials. Such an attitude will help rescue Nigeria and entire Africa from the impending economic secularism or materialism facing modern nations.

(d) THE PRIMACY OF LABOUR OVER CAPITAL:
The conflict between labour and capital is superfluous and based on false views of man. The undoubted source of the conflict lay in the fact that when the workers offered their labour for sale, they put their powers at

the disposal of a class of entrepreneurs who were led by the principle that profit should be maximised and tried strenuously to establish the lowest possible wage for the work done. Apart from this, Men's work was abused in other ways for the sake of profit, among the evils being the neglect of safety precautions and of provision for the health, living conditions of the workers and their fundamental human rights as well as their families. The Pope offers the basic thesis that there is a priority of labour over capital, and at the same time no inherent opposition between both. While recommending the sharing of profit between capital and labour the Pope warns that both capitalism and socialistic communism, that is, economism and materialism have erred in setting mankind in an antinomy of ideologies to the left and right. Nigeria must reject all ideologies whether to the left or to the right. African policy-makers are thereby helped to strike a balance between rigid capitalism and extreme collectivism. We must maintain the primacy of man over things including ideologies.

(e) WORKER'S PARTICIPATION FOR DECISION MAKING:

The 'personalist argument' is offered as a valid alternative to all forms of work which deprive the worker participation in the means of production, or bureaucratise his personality. As the document points out, the man who works rightly expects something besides a fair wage for his labour. He wants also to have the process of production so arranged that he works, even on something which is owned in common, he can be aware that he is working 'on his own account." This awareness is extinguished by excessive bureaucratic supervision which centralises everything and makes the worker feel that he is just a cog in a huge machine directed from above; nay rather, that he is for more reasons not a mere instrument of production rather than

the true subject of work endowed with an initiative of his own. Failure in this respect inevitably does incalculable damage to the running of the economy, harm which is not confined to economic consequences but has as its first victim man himself.

(f) PRIVATE PROPERTY:

On the ownership of private property, Laborem Exercens maintains that this right is a natural one and is in order with the will of God. Ownership of property, whether individually owned or in the hands of the community as title holder must be strictly differentiated from rigid capitalism or extreme collectivism. Christian tradition has never held that the right to ownership is absolute and untouchable, rather, the right has always been understood within the broader context of the right which is common to all men to use the goods of the whole of creation. The right to private disposal is plainly subordinate to the right of common use of goods that are intended for all mankind. In the context of Nigeria, we are guided from the above assertions to learn that one man cannot live in super-abundance when the entire masses around him live in poverty and squalour. An adequate method of distribution of the goods of the nation must be undertaken to ensure that the majority of the citizens have their rightful share in the nation's resources.

EXTERNAL INFLUENCES:-

(g) Laborem Exercens rightly points out to African leaders as well as workers and employers everywhere, that some of our problems in labour and productivity are controlled by factors beyond the workers and his direct employer. Such factors which cause dependence in economic relations may be social as international trade policies and relations, multi-nationals, and other economic determinants which need adequate examination. Policy makers and economic experts are thus helped from the Pope's research to know where the problems

lie and to take necessary steps to curb them for the good of the worker.

THE RIGHTS OF WORKERS AND HUMAN DIGNITY:

(h) The rights of the worker are inalienable. By guaranteeing him these rights, the charter of the United Nations which calls for the respect of human dignity and guaranteeing of human rights are recognised. In the words of the Pope: "As the Magisterium of the Church has pointed out several times, especially since the publication of "Pacem in Terris", respect for this great body of human rights constitutes the primary condition for peace in today's world: peace within states and social groups as well as between states. The human rights that flow from work fall into the broad context of these principal rights of the person" (LE, N. 26). Among the many rights of the workers which any serious nation must guide and guarantee are: the right of citizens to work; the right to just wages for work done; the right to form trade unions for the defence of workers rights from all sorts of exploitation; the right to strike when this becomes inevitable; the right to own property and to participate in the ownership of the means of production; the rights to various social benefits and insurances such as health education, leisure and rest, pension and old age, protection against threats to personality and property; rights to practice of religion, freedom of movement, speech, thought and existence. Other rights include the protection of women from chauvinistic elements of exploitation; guaranteeing the rights of migrant workers, technical workers, the disabled and unemployed and last but not least, protecting the dignity of agricultural work by granting farmers essential support, services, loans and encouragement. In a developing nation such as Nigeria, official state policy must be aimed at achieving the full realisation of these rights for the common good of all its citizens.

SPIRITUALITY OF WORK:

(i) Finally, the spiritual orientation offered by Laborem Exercens confirms and elevates the traditional African conception of work, which if properly understood, contributes to the development in Africa, as well as in other continents, the conception of work as a God-given vocation to help in creation. Work will thus be understood as a human obligation in the complex meaning of the word, for the Creator has commanded it and man cannot live and grow in his humanity without it. Properly understood, work has before all else the property of bringing people together, uniting them in the oneness of God's supremacy. For through work, man cares for his family and those closest to him; he cares for the wide range of his human society, that is, the nation which is his mother, and the whole human family of which he is a member.

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CHURCH AND CONTEMPORARY NIGERIAN SOCIETY:

SOCIAL TEACHINGS OF THE CHURCH; PAST AND PRESENT – ENUNCIATION OF RELEVANT THEOLOGICAL PRINCIPLES

Rev. Fr. Dr. Obiora Ike

Aim:

The basic aim of this lecture is commitment to a faith that does justice. Following the opening of the windows of the Vatican through Pope John XXIII via the Second Vatican Council in 1961, we in the Church have come to understand more fully and to appreciate more deeply that a "living faith" leads directly to a "loving action" in the transformation of the world.

This paper must be considered primarily as a participation in the world wide call for the knowledge and spread of the Church's Social Teachings as Pope John XXIII has declared: "But today more than ever, it is essential that this doctrine be known, assimilated, and put into effect in the form and manner that the different situations allow and demand. It is a difficult task indeed, yet a most noble one. To the performance of it we call, not only our own sons and daughters scattered throughout the world, but also men and women of goodwill everywhere (Mater et Magistra).

Concluding, the Pope calls for the unity of Thought and Action. "It is not enough merely to formulate a social doctrine. It must be translated into reality. And this is particularly true of the Church's Social Doctrine, the light of which is truth, justice its objective and love its driving force". (Mater et Magistra).

Introduction

The general topic I have been assigned is to present the social teachings of the Church – past and present and to enunciate relevant theological principles from them acceptable and adaptable within the context of Africa. This general topic falls in line happily with the broad theme of this year's seminar by the Nigerian Association of Ecumenical Theologians in Jos aimed at creating awareness on the relationship between THE CHURCH and CONTEMPORARY NIGERIAN SOCIETY.

The organisers and members of this association owe themselves, the African continent and the Church the duty of being animators of numerous Christian communities whose mission is to bear witness to the Gospel of Jesus Christ. We cannot convert others unless we ourselves are converted. We cannot lead others rightly if we do not know the way. We cannot find the way if we have no faith. We cannot work for the unity of all christians, if we are arrogantly fanatic about our private affiliations or confessions and intolerant of other groups. We must open up to learn, to live and to love. I pray that the set goals of this seminar be translated into reality for the good of God's children on earth, the liberation of Africa, the salvation of souls and the glory of God.

The Problems

Somehow, one is forced to believe that we have reached the end of time. Under present day events, hunger, industrial pollution, injustices of unimaginable extents, wars, moral disintegration, plagues of various sorts including AIDS, genetic manipulation and of course, an era that lacks belief in God, in man and in any meaning in human life, theologians are at the cross-roads. There are many questions and little answers. In earlier times (Old Testament, New Testament times) the theologian arrogated to himself monopoly of ultimate answers to complicated questions since he was the "analytic student of the mind of God". Today, the theologian has joined the questioners to such an extent that instead of throwing more light to issues of faith and life, he has

decided to accept the original human condition of ignorance and to join in a new search.

The situation is worsened when we discover the 'Sophisticated' in-fighting among theologians as to who has the best and lasting answer to our problems, who is the heretic and the orthodox, etc? There is thus an attendant crisis of a lack of orientation. Many are confused, and those who previously pretended to be strong have been forced, dragged or misled to join the faceless mob.

Faced with an embarrassing and unacceptable situation where equality of all mankind is only "Pep talk", where justice is considered an illusion, where human rights has no place and the rule of law only a matter for the elite, one cannot but question the credibility and condition of our secular and spiritual leaders, who lay claim and authority, not only over bodies of men, but also over their consciences. The promises that things might be better and that the future is brighter has been considered historically fallacious and misleading. Hopelessness and absurdity seem to have taken the upper hand. The promised land is alas 'a doom' land.

Look around you, here in Nigeria and in most countries of the developing world and you will discover the brutal realities confronting many of God's children. They are hungry, they are poor, they are exploited and they die young. The phenomenon is incomprehensible, especially in a world where food, medicaments and clothing are burnt off in alarming proportions. 40,000 children die each day for lack of water, medicine and food. 90% of the Nigerian population live on "oil doom" while a marginal 10% enjoy "oil boom".

SAP is practised by people who do not preach it, while those who talk about SAP live in "earthly heaven".

It is in this context dear friends that I write this paper assigned to me. It is an unpallatable topic, taking into cognisance that the situation is not changing for any better. In the context of Nigeria, for example, corruption has come to stay with us as a "registered institution". Believe it or not, the practice of giving and taking bribes has been accepted by many of our citizens as a "survival strategy" and a way

of life, with the little exception of a "little rest" who might either follow the majority or be brutalised by the tragic human element of "join them when you cannot beat them". Military dictatorship in Nigeria as elsewhere has replaced the God-given gift of self-rule and the value of democracy. The economic sphere leaves much to be desired as over 80% of the population of Nigeria live in poverty and squalor, without good drinking water, no light, no decent housing, no food to eat, no good jobs, no acceptable relevant and adaptable education and no reasonable content of a certain acceptable 'quality of life'.

Many false steps have been taken by the responsible authorities in government and the consequences will be felt for a generation to come.

Religious bigotry and double morality have not made the people of our generation any better than the apostates and harlots of old who sought for God where there was immediate material result. Authentic and true religiousity seem to have been sacrificed at the altar of clever psychologists, dupes, charlattans and non-performers. At last, the saying of Jesus Christ in the Bible "woe to this generation . . . she seeks constantly for a sign" . . . appears to have come to pass.

As far as ecumenism is concerned, many christians have been grossly divided over cosmetics, but not over the substance of HE who called us to HIS service.

Ecumenism has been marginalised as an affair for the "talkatives", keeping in mind that for over 300 years, we have been talking. The results of over 300 years talking has not been seen in the unity of christians, for further divisions, even within the confessions and polarisations into progressive, conservative, orthodox, etc. have taken place.

Inspite of many single and group efforts by very sincere and honest people, the christian search for unity cannot be said to be considerably positive. We have still a long way to go.

Introducing the Social Teachings of the Church:

Many christians are not aware of the fact that the Church has some Social Teachings. Some are baffled and the direct

question often is: "what has the Church to do with human Society"? Even today, it is a rare theology department or seminary which provides a course dealing specifically with the Church's Social Teaching.

That the Church has developed a body of teachings on social, economic, political and cultural matters and what that body says seems to have been forgotten, or never known. There are diverse reasons as to why ignorance exists.

a) The documents are long and the language too academic and theological. Oftentimes, the documents seem to be rather abstract, dry in content, and not very attractive to pick up and read for simple folk.
b) They are not often preached about from the pulpit or taught in catechism classes.
c) Most annoyingly is the fact that many christians cannot get hold of this teaching. Where do you buy an encyclical? Thank God if our rural parishes have medals, crosses, rosary, pieta, bibles and 'child of Mary' to sell.
d) The topics frequently are a challenge, dealing as they do, with controversial social issues, and therefore they make some readers uncomfortable. Many readers think of 'Humanae Vitae' (on Human life, 1968) which forbade the use of contraceptive pills, and pre-marital sexual behaviour which led to much debate over the Church's unchallenged authority over sex-life in Europe and America.
e) Finally, authoritative statements, whether from government or Church do not have as much attraction as acts of authentic christian witness and life.

Sign of Hope:

Inspite of the above, however, there has been a small resurgence of interest in the Social Teachings. New attention is paid to what the Church has to say on the political and economic issues of the day.

The serious crises facing mankind on national and international fronts concerning the Social Order and the right order of values have challenged priests, politicians, teachers,

workers, businessmen and professional people. Many are in search of answers and the Church's position seems to still weigh on people's consciences.

In the face of injustice, poverty, international debt, falling standards of living and economic and political disparities, accompanied by the threats of a world war and complicated by contemporary social events and issue, many honest citizens are now searching for explanations, guidelines and directions based on a christian vision of the world. Catholic Social Teachings has been challenged to offer an answer from a theological perspective to some of these questions. What is the Church's position on war and peace, missiles and the arms race? What of economic justice for all, international development, racism and sexism? Have we any words to offer on Human rights, apartheid, military dictatorships, the dignity and worth of all persons, the sacredness of human life? What of labour, trade unions, work, the poor, women etc?

There is a growing interest for christian responses to such questions. More and more people are discovering or re-discovering for the first time, the rich heritage of the social Teachings of Christianity.

Some respond with surprise, enthusiasm and astonishment. Others with utter suspicion and rejection. Especially guilty are politicians of the left or of the right who feel challenged by these Teachings and make noise if the views in a Teaching do not favour their political lineage.

This way or that way, there are no easy answers to hard problems that would be found in these social Teachings. What can be found, according to M. Schultheis and P. Henriot is "Social Wisdom" based on

- biblical insights
- the tradition of the Fathers of the Church
- scholastic philosophy
- theological reflection
- and contemporary experience of the people of God struggling to live out faith and justice. (Ref: The rich heritage of Catholic Social Teaching, Washington, Centre of concern, p.2).

We can do no better here than quote Pope John XXIII from his Social encyclical to the universal Church (1961) titled "Mater et Magistra" (Mother and Teacher) where he writes. "The Church has formulated particularly over the past hundred years, and through the efforts of a very well-informed body of priests and laymen, a social doctrine which points out with clarity the sure way to social reconstruction. The Principles she gives are of universal application, for they take human nature into account, and the varying conditions in which man's life is lived. They also take into account the principal characteristics of contemporary society and are acceptable to all (Mater et Magistra).

The pontiff calls for the knowledge and spread of this teaching where he says: "But today more than ever, it is essential that this doctrine be known, assimilated, and put into effect in the form and manner that the different situations allow and demand. It is a difficult task indeed, yet a most noble one.

To the performance of it we call, not only our own sons and daughters scattered throughout the world, but also men and women of goodwill everywhere, (M and M).

Concluding, the Pope calls for the unity Thought and Action. "It is not enough merely to formulate a social doctrine. It must be translated into reality. And this is particularly true of the Church's social doctrine, the light of which is truth, Justice its objective and love its driving force. "(Mater et Magistra).

Towards a contextual theological approach: A Challenge:

From the foregoing, are we not challenged as Africans and theologians to look inwards and to develop a contextual social ethics relevant to us? Are we not challenged to place our findings at the disposal of the universal Church?

Today, in our search for a new theological attitude, our africanity must influence our christianity in the sense that morality becomes a liberating event, a morality of the beatitudes in a political context, as the spirit of justice, love of neighbour, reconciliation. This is where marriage, child

birth, work, trade and economics, social organisations, war, love and various dimensions of life make their impact on theology from the African traditional perspective. Theology talking to Africa must attempt to adapt, inculturate and fit into the situation of the African. In times past, various documents were completely taken over into the African world without seeking for the relevant points which concerned the human person of Africa.

Today, as African theologians, we must be faced with challenges of unity and diversity. How can we in the unity of catholicity seek for elements which are relevant for our context from the bible and the social encyclicals without disrupting the unity of catholicity? It is time for Africans to say what is and what is not ourselves. To redefine and reverse the frames of reference. To establish original African values and place them in the context of our behavioural patterns without denying the basic truths that guide man.

This new movement must make changes in the entire process of assimilating teachings from outside by giving definitions which arise from an African framework. The voice of Christ talking to man in Africa has to be truly heard without the risk of alienation or over-watering. The ultimate essence of theology is of a mystical order – the encounter with God. In the context of Africa, this must involve the God of liberation, the God of the poor, the lonely and oppressed. One can assert that African spirituality has produced its most valid and useful reflection which involves, like the Boff brothers, Clodovis and Leonardo have written on liberation theology.

LIBERATION:

- "Conversion to the poor and to evangelical poverty".
- A communion of sisters and brothers in a committed community.
- Hope in a kingdom of God in history in the form of a new society.
- Service to and with the oppressed.
- Incarnation among and solidarity with the outcast.

- "Parrhesia" – the prophetic courage and freedom of proclamation and denunciation.
- Patience along the historical byways of a people in the wilderness of the world.
- The cross of persecution and matyrdom, in the footsteps and discipleship of Jesus Christ.

(Boff. L. and C: Liberation Theology: From confrontation? to Dialogue, Haper and Row, N.Y. 1986 p.30).

ENUNCIATION OF RELEVANT THEOLOGICAL PRINCIPLES:

1. *Religious and Social dimensions of life are linked:*
The "Social" human construction of the world is not "Secular" in the sense of being outside of God's plan, but is intimately involved with the dynamic of the reign of God. Therefore faith and Justice are closely linked together. (Gaudium et Spes, 1965 n. 39).

2. *Dignity of the Human Person:*
Made in the image of God, women and men have pre-eminent places in the social order, with inalienable political, social, legal and economic rights. The fundamental question to ask about social development is: what is happening to people? (Populorum Progressio, 1968, N.8–26).

3. *Option for the Poor:*
A preferential love should be shown to the poor, whose needs and rights are given special attention in God's eyes. "Poor" is understood to refer to the socially and economically disadvantaged who as a consequence of their status, suffer oppression and powerlessness" (Octogesima Adveniens 1971, n. 23).

4. *Love and Justice are Linked:*
Love of neighbour is an absolute demand for Justice, because charity manifests itself in actions and structures which respect human dignity, protect human rights, and facilitate

human development. To promote justice is to transform structures which block love. (Justice in the world, 1971 n. 16 and 34).

5. *Promotion of the Common Good:*.
The common good is the sum total of all those conditions of social living – economic, political, cultural which make it possible for women and men to readily and fully achieve the perfection of their humanity. Individual rights are always experienced within the context of promotion of the common good. (Mater et Magistra, n.65).

6. *Political Participation:*
Democratic participation in decision making is the best way to respect the dignity and liberty of people. The government is the instrument by which people co-operate together in order to achieve the common good (Christmas Message, 1944).

7. *Economic Justice:*
The economy is for the people and the resources of the earth are to be equitably shared by all. Human work is the key to contemporary social questions. Labour takes precedence over both capital and technology in the production process. Just wages and the rights of workers to form trade unions are to be respected. Women and disabled people, migrants and unemployed people share fully in the profits of the production process in solidarity. (Laborem Exercens, 1981).

8. *Stewardship:*
All property has a "social mortgage". All people are to respect and share the resources of the earth. By our work we are co-creators in the continuing development of the earth (Laborem Exercens 1981).

9. *Global Solidarity:*
We belong to one human family and as such have mutual obligations to promote the development of all people across

the world. In particular, the rich nations have responsibilities toward the poor nations and the structures of the international order must reflect justice. (Populorum Progressio, 1986).

10. *Promotion of Peace:*
Peace is the fruit of justice and is dependent upon right order among humans and among nations. The arms race must cease and progressive disarmament take place if the future is to be secure. In order to promote peace and the conditions of peace, an effective international authority is necessary (Populorum Progressio 1986).

The Church and Politics:

Paragraph 76 of the Church in the Modern World states that it is highly important, especially in pluralist societies, that a proper view exists of the relation between the political community and the Church. The role of the Church being what it is, she must in no way be confused with the political community, nor bound to any political system. In their proper spheres, the political community and the Church are mutually independent and autonomous. Yet by different titles, each serves the personal and social vocation of the same human beings. The more they co-operate reasonably, the more effectively they will perform this service to everybody's advantage. Man is not confined to the temporal order. The Church, rooted in the Redeemer's love, helps to make justice and charity flourish more vigorously within nations and between nations. She preaches the gospel truth and brings the light of her teaching to be on every province of human affairs with the witness of her faithful. Thus she respects and promotes political liberty and responsibility. Always and everywhere the Church must be allowed to preach the faith with true freedom, teach her social doctrine, carry out her task among men unhampered and pass moral judgements even on matters concerning politics when fundamental rights or the salvation of souls require it.

The Church has also been urged by the great sons of Africa to fulfil this role, to keep the state faithful to the

law of God. The late Jomo Kenyatta, speaking to the Catholic Bishops of East Africa, said: "One of the services you give to others is to help them keep going in the right direction. We have many distractions and can wander off the path. We need constantly to be put back on it again; we may not even know that we are going astray, that we are taking the wrong direction. That is why we need the Church in our midst to tell us when we are making a mistake. The Church is the conscience of society, and today society needs a conscience. Do not be afraid to speak. If we go wrong and you keep quiet, one day you may have to answer for our mistakes."

The Bishops of Africa:

Recently the bishops of the whole of Africa at their general assembly reviewed the situation on our continent.

We have good reasons to be glad and hopeful in considering the many efforts made by the sons and daughters of this continent in general and by our leaders in particular to promote and rehabilitate fundamental African values. We are particularly happy about the recognition given to various countries. It must, however, be admitted, alas, that it is for other reasons that Africa finds herself at the centre of the world scene. We would be betraying our mission, we would be seriously failing in our love and duty which we owe to the men of this land, if we were to remain silent.

We denounce all that which constitute a violation of human integrity and everything that offends human dignity, such as sub-human conditions of life, arbitrary imprisonments and deportations. We condemn all crimes committed in the name of the security of the state, as if the state were absolute and not at the service of the citizen, that is to say the human person.

Teaching of the Church:

In this statement the bishops of Africa are re-echoing and applying to the present situation the social teaching of the Church and its head, the Pope. Despite the time that has

elapsed, the message of Pope Pius XII to the world (Christmas 1942) retains its validity and even reflects our situation today.

Never (he said) has it been so capitally important to understand clearly the true foundations of all social life as in these days when humanity, diseased by the poison of social errors and tossed by a fever of conflicting desires, doctrine and aims, has become the unhappy prey of disorder created by itself, and is experiencing the disruptive effects of false social theories that neglect and contravence the laws of God.

The original and person ... Reason:

The Original and essential purpose of social life is to preserve and perfect the human person ... Reason enlightened by faith assigns to each person and to each particular association in the social organism a definite and noble place. Above all, it tells us that the purpose of the whole of the state's activity, political and economic, is the permanent realisation of the common good: that is to say, the provision of those external conditions which are needful to citizens as a whole for the development of their qualities and the fulfilment of their duties in every sphere of life, materials, intellectual and religious.

If social life, such as God wills it, is to attain its end, it needs a juridical constitution, in order to secure the balance. needs a juridical constitution, in order to secure the balance. The security and the concord of society, has also the right restrained within the honourable discipline of life. But no authority worthy of the name can tail to feel, it the just exercise of this right, an anxious sense of responsibility in the sight of the eternal judge, before whose tribunal any unjust sentence, and especially any reversal of divinely established principles, will receive inevitable punishment and condemnation.

The ultimate, deep-rooted principle which lie at the foundation of society cannot be abolished by any effort of human ingenuity; they may be denied, ignored, disregared or disobeyed, but they can never be deprived of their

juridical validity. (Radio Message, publiched in Acta Apostolicae Sedis, January 1943).

THE SECOND VATICAN COUNCIL:

The second Vatican Council in its document "The Church in the Modern World" observed that:
"a keener sense of human dignity has aroused in various parts of the world an eagerness to build a juridical - political order in which personal rights affecting public life are better protected. Such are the rights of free assembly, free association, freedom of expression. Many are voicing disapproval of any kind of government which blocks civil or religious liberty, multiplies the victims of ambition and political crimes wrenches the exercise of authority from pursuing the common good to serving the advantage of a certain faction or of the rulers themselves. The exercise of political authority, whether in a community as such or in representative institutions, must always be carried out within the framework of the moral order, in pursuit of the common good dynamically understood and according to a lawfully established juridical system. The citizens are then bound in conscience to obedience.

Where citizens are oppressed by a public authority which exceeds its competence, they should not on that account refuse what is objectively required of them for the common good, but it is allowable for them within the limits of the law of nature and the Gospel, to defend their rights and those of their fellow citizens against this abuse of authority.

When the exercise of rights is temporarily curtailed on behalf of the common good, it should be restored as quickly as possible after the emergency passes. (The Church in the Modern World, paras 73,74,75).

HUMAN RIGHTS:

The most recent formulation of the teaching of the Church on human rights is that contained in the encyclical letter of Pope John "Peace on Earth". In it the Pope enumerates and

explains the rights and duties of individuals and the state. Dealing with the individual and the political community he states:

Man has a right to freedom in investigating the truth and, provided no harm is done to the moral order or the common good, also to freedom of speech and publication. He has likewise the right to be accurately informed about public events.

Man's personal dignity involves his right to take an active part in public life, and to make his own contribution to the common welfare of his fellow citizens. As a human person he is entitled to legal protection. In consequence of the juridical order willed by God, man has his own inalienable right to juridical security. To him is assigned a certain, well defined sphere of law, immune from arbitrary attack. Those who have authority in the state must exercise that authority in a way which is not only morally irreproachable but also best calculated to ensure or promote the state's welfare. The attainment of the common good is the sole reason for the existence of the state rulers. Hence, every civil authority must strive to promote the common good in the interest of all without favouring any individual or group.

The chief concern of civil authorities must therefore, be to ensure that the rights of the individual are recognised, coordinated, defended and promoted. Thus any government which refused to recognise human rights or acted in violation of them would not only fail in its duty; its decrees would be wholly lacking in binding force. (Peace on Earth, paras: 12, 26, 27, 53, 56, 60, 61).

These and other rights of individual formulated in the encyclical letter of Pope John "Peace on Earth" find their echo in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of the United Nations, to which Swaziland is a signatory, in particular articles 3,9,11 18,29, and 30.

POPE PAUL VI AND THE 1971 SYNOD OF BISHOPS:

Representatives of all the Catholic Bishops of the world met again in 1971 to review in the light of the consultation made

throughout the Catholic Church the application of the teaching of Christ and his Church to the actual situation in the world today. His Holiness Pope Paul VI confirmed and published their conclusion in the document Justice in the World. The Bishops wrote:

We see in the world a set of injustice which constitute the nucleus of today's problems and whose solution requires the undertaking of tasks and functions in every sector of society. Therefore, we must be prepared to take on new functions and new duties in every sector of human activity.

Our action is to be directed above all at those men and nations which because of various forms of oppression and because of the present character of our society are silent, indeed voiceless victims of injustice.

Among these, mention is made of migrants, refugees, those persecuted for their faith:

Justice is also violated, by forms of oppression both old and new springing from restrictions of the rights of individuals. This is occuring both in the form of repression by the political power and violence on the part of private section.

The Church has received from Chrit the mission of preaching the gospel message which contains a call to man to turn away from sin to the love of the Father, universal brotherhood, and a consequent demand for justice in the world.

This is the reason why the Church has the right indeed the duty to proclaim justice on the social, national, and international level and to denounce instances of injustice when the fundamental rights of man and his very salvation demand it.

Her mission involves defending and promoting the dignity and fundamental rights of the human person.

A YEARNING FOR JUSTICE

By the dark corners of the Ghetto:

(1) there we sat and wept, when we yearned for justice.
(2) Against the walls there we leaned.
(3) We declined to bow to the vows of silence and comformity.
(4) For daily our oppressors required of us a new loyalty;
(5) They demanded of us to drink from the cup of slavery.
(6) But how could we stand the sour taste of forced loyalty?
(7) If I forget to fling open the gates of freedom;
(8) I shall have betrayed her greatness.
(9) If I do not set freedom above my highest joy,
(10) Let me be silenced forever.
(11) If I leave you, O Ghetto,
(12) Let me be human forever".

(Canaan Banana; The Gospel according to the Ghetto), (Mabo Press, Gwelo, 1980 Page 10).

A LIST OF THE SOCIAL ENCYCLICALS

1. *Rerum Novarum* (The condition of labour) Encyclical letter of *Pope Leo XIII* , 1891.
2. *Quadragesimo Anno* (The reconstruction of the Social order)Encyclical letter of *Pope Pius XII,* 1961.
3. *Mater et Magistra* (Christianity and Social Progress). Encyclical letter of *Pope John XXIII,* 1961.
4. *Pacem in Terris* (Peace on Earth). Encyclical letter of *Pope John XXIII,* 1963.
5. *Gaudium et Spes* (Pastoral Constitution of the Church in the Modern World), *Second Vatican Council,* 1965.

6. *Populorum Progressio* (The Development of Peoples). Encyclical *letter of Pope Paul VI,* 1971.
7. *Octogesima Adveniens* (A call to Action) Apostolic letter of *Pope Paul VI,* 1971.
8. *Justice in the World.* Statement of the Synod of Bishops, 1971.
9. *Evangelii Nuntiandi* (Evangelization in the modern world) Apostolic Exhortation of *Pope Paul VI,* 1975.
10. *Laborem Exercens* (On Human Work)' Encyclical letter of *Pope John Paul II,* 1981.
11. *Solicitudo rei Socialis* (The Church's Social Concern). *Pope John paul II,* 1987 .

INTERVIEW WITH REV. DR. OBIORA F. IKE BY THE SIGN MAGAZINE

THE SIGN: The Sign Magazine, which belongs to the Nigeria Association of Philosophy students Bigard Branch, is happy to have an interview with you, the theme of which is Nigeria towards the third Republic.

FATHER: Thanks:

The Sign: One of the greatest contributors to the demise of the first and second republics was the wanton looting of public money by politicians and public servants. Do you foresee a recurrence of this economic sabotage in the nascent third republic, and if you do, what suggestions would you proffer as panacea?

FATHER: Well, I am not a prophet, but anyone who knows what happened in the first and second republics will surely, taking into consideration Nigerian political system, believe that in the third republic the same would happen. Not much has changed between the first and second republics. The same old Nigerians are there, the same old mentality, the same disrespect for the law are there. So, I don't see something new going to happen. In the third Republic there would even be worse looting of public money and property.

I think this problem will remain with Nigerians until a completely new orientation is created which will begin with education right from childhood. Until now, it is not there. With government takeover of schools, the church has no chance to propagate a certain ethics on the people who form the future. So, I don't see any change in the third republic. Look at what happened in the local government elections. It was worse than whatever happened in the other elections,

and this under a military rule. You can imagine what will happen in the third republic.

When you talk of suggestions as a panacea to this situation. I have already talked about education. That is number one. It has to be a multidimensional education: it has to be education of the mind not just reading books and getting certificates. It has to be a political, economic, ethical education and orientation, a discipline of the will. I think this very important to create a new awareness on the people in the future and in the republic that is to come.

Of course, laws must be very strong and effective, respectable and reasonable too, and they should guide and correct people. If the laws remain what they are today, loose and at the whims and caprices and the interpretations of those who wield power, then I fear things would continue to be the same. Human beings need some control to obey the laws and live as they should. If they don't have this control they will always look for seek out. This, I think, is a little suggestion towards a new political era.

THE SIGN: An unplanned and or disorganised economy has the ugly consequence of dissipating and incapacitating all efforts to establish and maintain a stable political organisation. What would be your advice to our policy makers and economic planners in this regard with respect to the political future of this country?

FATHER: First of all it is very important to maintain that economy must be and is at the service of man. Economy for and in itself appears to lead the people it is supposed to serve. We as a church, we as a thinking group must definitely push across this view and this point that economy serves man and not man economy, why I say this is because the fundamental understanding of the dignity of the person creates an awareness where, whether it is politics or economics or all other substructures, serve man.

I fear that in Nigeria we have created a society where people are recognised because of their economic wealth. If somebody is poor, you can forget him. So, the person, the

individuality, the dignity of the person depends on what wealth he has. I find this a terrible trepidation; a very dangerous situation where a nation will just down crash.

Now, coming to your concrete question, my advice to our policy makers and economic planners. Of course they all (should) know that for any economy to work it must be a free economy. A free economy guarantees that the individual person, without any control from monopoly or whatever, can contribute his own quota and also get the gains for his contributions. You know there is a big problem in the world today (between) the so-called communist countries and the so-called free economy or capitalist countries. In the communist countries things often don't work, economy does not go as much because it is a planned economy. The church believes that man is a free individual and, therefore, economy must also be free. There should be control, of course. That's number one.

Number two, I think that there must be long-term planning. Without a long-term planning, and structural adjustment the economy of a nation will definitely be based on flowers, and Nigeria has been known to be a country which imports everything. We cannot continue to guarantee this situation. We have the ability to produce, so our economy should be geared towards production.

People should build more industries than they build just houses. People should be made to know that it's not just spreading wealth around, but "investing" in persons that matter. We need the personnel, we need trained personnel. Nigeria merits the best. Upon this also should the laws that guide nations stand.

Of course, the economist should also consider the different classes of people that exist in the society. Taxation should reflect those who earn more and those who earn less, and treat them accordingly. There must also be a balanced economy, you know, the wages people receive should be able to keep them, otherwise, they will be tempted to look besides and sideways for whatever extra money they can get, leading to economic indiscipline. So, I believe that these elements will really help our nation economically.

THE SIGN: Our country is now experimenting a new economic system called the Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP). How would you assess the programme so far?

FATHER: Well, the tenets of SAP are understandable, they are also reasonable. But the practice of the SAP has been seen to be hyocritical. How can you talk about structural adjustment when those who propagate these theories live in "heaven" (call it heaven), whether it is the president or his minister? But the masses below suffer. So, we create an ambivalent economy. People talk about structural adjustment on one side and others live it who don't talk it. So you see it is a problem of the structural adjustment policy. If Nigeria would want to match words with action, I think the rulers especially must lead by example and the people will follow. As far as the SAP is concerned, I say again, that the tenets, the foundations are not bad, they are okey. But then the practice has been seen to be very unjust. More people have suffered more and they were supposed to have been helped through this adjustment programme, all because of selfishness.

THE SIGN: According to Karl Marx, philosophers have succeeded in interpreting the world, but the problem is how to change it. What role do you think philosophers can and should play apart from mere verbous theoretical interpretations, towards the effective development of our country and the third-world countries in general?

FATHER: Of course, Karl Marx was correct in stating, (that was in the Thesis on Feuerbach), that philosophers have interpreted the world, however, the problem is to change it. It is an all time task, it faces every generation. It will continue, for we shall continue to change the world. But how? That's for me what is more important, and I think Karl Marx pershaps missed that term "how to change the world".

Well, how to change the world is not easy. Jesus Christ

showed a way to change the world. He said we should live together and accept each other and to tolerate each other. That was too ideal for the people of his time and they murdered him.

Now, you ask what role philosophers have to play. Philosophers often are not theologians, and they spend their time in theoretical interpretations rather than in concrete projects and development, call it practical involvement. I personally believe that ideas can rule the world and that the greatest men in history were not just those who did but those who thought, because on their thought rests the action of many people behind them. It is the function of philosophy to bring out ideas, and until now we don't have many known philosophers in Nigeria. People are busy thinking about how to make money than just thinking about how to develop those avenues that can help on a longer term basis.

Well, what can the philosopher contribute to Nigeria? The philosopher should create rationale behind the actions of man. I think especially in the areas of ethics and jurisprudence that philosophy can contribute a lot to Nigeria. In the area of ethics because a philosophical foundation will create the basis and rationale for action, why this and not that? Think before you act. It is the philosopher who can give what is more important; that you buy weapons and stock them for a war that is undeclared or that you train the minds of the people that they may know their rights more than before. Train a mind, train a people and you will have a better and stable society. (sound reason for this and think out ways of making it spread. On the jurisprudential level we know that our problem in Nigeria is that of not being able to obey laws or being able to jump over any law that is made the next day. The philosopher should create a forum where rationale behind the law should take place just before the law. In other words, philosophers should give reasons to base the law and make it plausible enough and saleable than just laws that are propounded and there is no rationale behind them. We do not make laws for laws sake, especially in these two areas, ethics and jurisprudence. I consider the philosopher to be of very important use for the development

of this nation, and of course the third-world countries in general.

THE SIGN: One of the problems we have in our country is that people show disdain for theories. They want the here and now practical result. What have you to say about this?

FATHER: Yes, Nigeria is a country in a hurry. People have said that over and over again. But we know that a man in a hurry will always stumble. (and his stumbling will also be very great). You rightly pointed out that in our counrty people want results and not just planning, not just working for it. But you cannot just expect result without working for it. All countries in the world which are today considered great had to work for it. How can Nigeria, twenty-eight years after independence, still continue to blame our colonial masters for our problems? We have had 28 years to manage the affairs of this nation but government after government, I must tell you, without exception, has blundered all through, in the same one point, lack-of a plan, being in a hurry to do everything in a day, forgetting that what America is reaping today was planted 200 years ago. What have Nigerians planted? What have the governments planted? They planted four-year term development projects that yield nothing, because after four years the government is off, the development project is off, and another government begins with another new four-year programme. Rubbish! I say this mad rush for whatever, getting money and building houses and so on, they have to stop. They must stop! Nigerians must do their homework and we know, of course, that with sound planning and God on our side, the results will yield. They will not be today, they will be tomorrow; they will be lasting.

THE SIGN: You have written a book on human work. How would you assess the present day attitude of Nigerians towards work bearing in mind that though man flees from work, work remains a fundamental dimension of his existence on earth?

FATHER: Very correctly said, work remains a fundamental dimension of man's existence on earth. and this is a quotation of His Holiness Pope John Paul II in his encyclical on human work titled, Laborem Exercens.

There, the Holy father tries to put across this view which has often been forgotten by many, that man as man on earth is known in his work. It is through work that we create, it is through work that we make things become. All houses, cars, chairs, etc couldn't have been without work. In other words, during work and in work man resembles the Creator.

Well, my book on human works; Value Meaning and Social Structure of human work tried to interprete the relevance of Laborem exercens for a post-colonial African society. In other words, what are these fanciful theories about work and about God as creator to do with the struggling nations exploited over centuries in slavery.

I discovered that the work ethics in Nigeria today is foreign. People talk about work as "olu oyibo" (white-man's job). You are doing something for another. Man does not identify himself with the work he does, he looks at work as only a means of getting pay. This is wrong. That is selling oneself. We must see in work our own self, the production of our labour for our own good but also for the good of society. As long as man sees work as something there and not something for him, an expression of himself will continue to be an alienation, and this is the most terrible thing that can happen to a nation. So, from my own conception, I believe that in my book, human work should become a part and parcel of ourselves, all work, big or small, all types of work, human beings must identify themselves with.

The present day attitude of Nigerians to work leaves much to be desired, moreso when people even believe that it is through the public service that they can siphon and steal what belongs to the nation. So, people consider their work as a means of exploitation. This is terrible, it is a dangerous precedence. Work can never be a means of exploitation. Work must always be that activity of man resembling the creator to make things become what they may

be. I think this is a very important area where a work ethic has to be developed.

THE SIGN: Unemployment is evil because it deprives its victim of the opportunity to exercise and develop his faculties and be able to achieve self-realization and fulfilment which work offers. But unemployment, evil as it is, has remained a parmanent feature of contemporary society. What could be responsible for this and what remedy would you suggest?

FATHER: Unemployment is an evil. In fact, it is a crime to be in a society where human beings can say that they have no work. If work is a fundamental dimension of man's existence on earth, then not to work is in itself an evil because it means that the human being is not enganged, not operative, and so not co-creative. A society that can waste talents, waste labour, waste persons, without giving them adequate employment is a society at a loss. I fear Nigeria is joining those societies, those countries who, though with adequate potentials, cannot absorb young men, young women, old men and old women in the world of work.

Well, there is a lot of reasons for unemployment. There are technical, labour, financial as well as political reasons. However, no matter what reasons, unemployment remains in itself evil.

You ask what could be responsible for this? Simply planned economy, wrong planning, selfishness. Communism, for example, will like to absorb everybody in the labour world, and they do nothing. Capitalism will want to put capital above labour and these come to the same materialism. In the mind of the Creator all men are called to work and until the givers of work call them employers, the governments, understands this, until such laws are made that guarantee the free and equal participation of all citizens in the world of work, we shall continue to have unemployment and, I must say, the dangers of idleness, for an idle mind is the devil's workshop. So we shall one day be blown up by all these unemployed people who have, at least sometime

during their idleness, thought out some good ideas of how to make things work in their own world.

THE SIGN: Ignorance is often described as a disease especially when it is ignorance of one's rights and obligations. The illiterate and semi-literate still constitute a good percentage of Nigeria's population. Most of these people hardly know their rights and obligations as citizens of Nigeria. What role would you think education will play towards enhancing and protecting the rights and responsibilities of these and other Nigerians, and how feasible is such a project?

FATHER: It was St. Thomas Aquinas who said, educate a man and you have made a citizen. Now, he understands by citizens the being, the person with all the rights, the knowledge of his responsibilities and obligations. Educate the person. This is also the call of the church all through the centuries. I accept entirely your view that education is indispensable towards the training of citizens for their civil rights, towards knowing their civil rights and also their civil responsibilities.

I believe strongly that in the context of Nigeria we need an open system in education. We cannot cut out people who can contribute positively from education. The church has been cut out by the government from contributing positively to education. This is wrong. It is even immoral to cut out people who can contribute something because the government has no monoply of education, neither do the family, parents, the church. So all those who have something to contribute should really be called and harnessed to give what they have that there might be a sound quality also in education.

Now, you talk about rights. I accept your view that illiteracy and semi-literacy can be found in large percentage of Nigerians. This is a fact. What do we do? Look at the (1988) budget. How many percent did the government budget for education in contrast with defence? What is more important, that you buy weapons and stock them for a war that is undeclared or that you train the minds of people that they may know their rights more than before, that

they may become persons because education is a human right? So you can see that a government that has lost a priority of what is more important in order of budgeting is a government that should be corrected.

I strongly believe that without a sound education our political situation will continue to be in a vicious circle because the people will continue to vote according to what they have learnt. Train a mind, train a people, and you will have a better and stable society.

THE SIGN: By way of conclusion, Father, we are very grateful to you for speaking to us on these topical national issues. We pray and hope our readers, especially the ruling class, will have enough food for thought and action from your rich and timely advice as we march steadily towards the third republic.

FATHER: Thanks and God bless.