

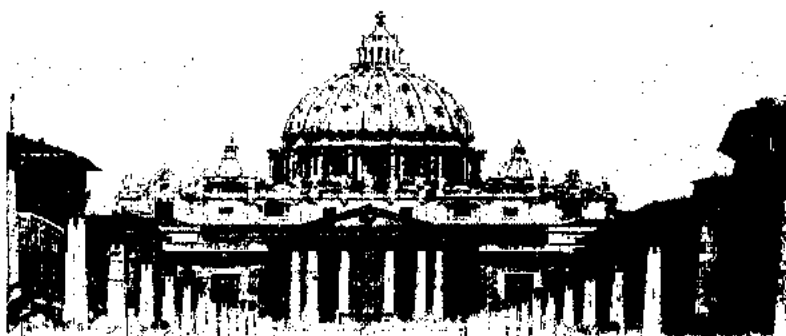
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The Merits of the Social Teachings of the Church

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The Merits
of the
SOCIAL TEACHINGS
of the CHURCH

*Marking the 30th Anniversary of the
Catholic Institute for Development
Justice and Peace (CIDJAP) Enugu*

Edited by:
Rev. Fr. Dr. Anieke
Chinedu Odinkemelu (JCD; PDE)

The Merits of the Social Teachings of the Church

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Chinedu Odinkemelu (JCD; PDE) (Editor)

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DEDICATION

To
CIDJAP
And
Rev. Msgr. Obiora F. Ike

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PREFACE

Catholic social teaching CST is the body of doctrine developed by the Catholic Church on matters concerning social justice and development, issues of poverty and wealth, economics, social organization, the role of the state and the Church. Its foundation was laid by Pope Leo XIII's 1891 encyclical letter *Rerum novarum*, which advocated economic distributism and condemned both capitalism and socialism. The roots of the CST can be traced to the Bible and the writings of the Catholic thinkers such as St. Thomas Aquinas and St. Augustine of Hippo etc.

Catholic Social Teaching is based on the belief that God has a plan for creation, a plan to build his kingdom of peace, love and justice. It holds that God has a special place in the history of mankind and for each one of us, whoever we are. Our part in this plan isn't just limited to things 'spiritual', or things we might do on Sundays, but that it involves every aspect of our lives, from the things we pray about, to how we live as responsible global citizens. Our part in this story is a kind of vocation for the common good, a call to treat everyone as your brothers and sisters. Catholic Social Teaching is the tradition of papal reflections about how we live this vocation for the common good in our world.

Catholic Social Teaching touches upon many different aspects of life, from the family to the larger society, from national to international development, how we think of those who are homeless to how we care for the environment, and from how we run our secular business to the rights of workers and the dignity of work. All the different areas that Catholic Social Teaching touches upon have developed from practical reflections on the realities of modern life in the light of the principles and themes of Catholic Social Teaching. Below are

CHAPTER EIGHT

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brief reflections from the Catholic social teachings CST:

“God's fundamental and original intention with regard to man, whom he created in his image and after his likeness (cf. Gen 1:26-27), was not withdrawn or cancelled out even when man, having broken the original covenant with God, heard the words: “In the sweat of your face you shall eat bread” (Gen 3:19). These words refer to the sometimes heavy toil that from then onwards has accompanied human work.... And yet, in spite of all this toil—perhaps, in a sense, because of it—work is a good thing for man.... through work man not only transforms nature, adapting it to his own needs, but he also achieves fulfillment as a human being and indeed, in a sense, becomes “more a human being”. **Pope John Paul II, *laborem exercens* no. 9, (1981).**

“The Church's deepest nature is expressed in her three-fold responsibility: of proclaiming the word of God (*kerygma-martyria*), celebrating the sacraments (*leitourgia*), and exercising the ministry of charity (*diakonia*). These duties presuppose each other and are inseparable. For the Church, charity is not a kind of welfare activity which could equally well be left to others, but is a part of her nature, an indispensable expression of her very being”.

“The Church is God's family in the world. In this family no one ought to go without the necessities of life. Yet at the same time *caritas-agape* extends beyond the frontiers of the Church. The parable of the Good Samaritan remains as a standard which imposes universal love towards the needy whom we encounter “by chance” (cf. *Lk* 10:31), whoever they may be. Without in any way detracting from this commandment of universal love, the Church also has a specific responsibility: within the ecclesial family no member should suffer through being in need. The teaching of the *Letter to the Galatians* is emphatic: “So then, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all, and especially to those who

are of the household of faith” (6:10)”. **Pope Benedict XVI, *Deus Caritas Est*, no 25, (2005)**

“*LAUDATO SI, mi' Signore*” – “Praise be to you, my Lord”. In the words of this beautiful canticle, Saint Francis of Assisi reminds us that our common home is like a sister with whom we share our life and a beautiful mother who opens her arms to embrace us. “Praise be to you, my Lord, through our Sister, Mother Earth, who sustains and governs us, and who produces various fruit with coloured flowers and herbs”.

“This sister now cries out to us because of the harm we have inflicted on her by our irresponsible use and abuse of the goods with which God has endowed her. We have come to see ourselves as her lords and masters, entitled to plunder her at will. The violence present in our hearts, wounded by sin, is also reflected in the symptoms of sickness evident in the soil, in the water, in the air and in all forms of life. This is why the earth herself, burdened and laid waste, is among the most abandoned and maltreated of our poor; she “groans in travail” (*Rom* 8:22). We have forgotten that we ourselves are dust of the earth (cf. *Gen* 2:7); our very bodies are made up of her elements, we breathe her air and we receive life and refreshment from her waters”. **Pope Francis, *Laudato Si*, no 1, (2015)**

“Participation in the various self help projects in a given society or community is a civic responsibility. Many a time communities gather to maintain their roads, market squares, provision of health care, portable water, electricity, building schools and Churches etc. This they do by physical contribution, financial contribution, fund raising, etc. A good and responsible citizen participates in all these”. **Bishop C. V. C Onaga, 2015 Lenten Pastoral: Civic Duty and Faith Commitment, no. 1.2, Enugu, (2015).**

“African nations must learn gradually to depend on their own capacities in every field. This corresponds to subsidiary

thinking. No outside assistance can take the place of self-effort. Social and economic actions that is, the increase of one's own productive capacities, certainly take on a particular importance in this sense". Obiora Francis Ike, *Renewing Mission and Identity of the Church in Service to Integral Education, Reconciliation and Human Development*, p.83, Enugu, (2015).

We hope these and other reflections you will find in this book will help you to appreciate the catholic social teachings of the church. We also anticipate that they will challenge you to contribute more actively and positively towards our shared vocation for the common good: protection of the environment, justice, peace and love etc in the society.

Yours

Anieke Chinedum Odinkemelu, Phd

CHAPTER I

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LIFE AND DIGNITY OF THE HUMAN PERSON:

THE NIGERIAN REALITY

By Rev. Fr. Dr. Ernest Obodo

1. Introduction

Recently, an Austrian couple expressed their wish to travel with me to Nigeria to which I agreed. After one week they came back to me to express their unwillingness to travel due to some reported human right abuses which they read in the internet as well as advice from some travel experts. They assembled pictures of people killed, burnt and left to decay by the road sides, horrifying pictures of violence pasted on Facebook pages and other innumerable cases that presumably portray Nigeria as a country that show little or no regard for the human person. Added to these were the daily news report of the activities of *Boko Haran*, the Kidnapping in the South East, the mayhem often unleashed by the Fulani Herdsmen on unsuspecting, innocent citizens even as they slept in their houses and the activities of the Niger Delta militants, which often kidnapped foreigners to buttress their annoyance. All my effort to convince this young couple that the danger was

not as great as reported by the media, proved abortive. Their response left me thinking as to what led us to this point.

To think of the dignity of the human person, a contemplation of psalm 8 of the Christian bible is important. Here, the psalmist sang an undying song in attribute to the majesty of God and the dignity of the human being and it is good to set verses 1, 4 to 6 of this psalm as a preamble here: "How great is your name, O Lord our God through all the earth! Your majesty is praised above the heavens; on the lips of children and of babes, you have found praise to foil your enemy, to silence the foe and the rebel ... What is man that you should keep him in mind, mortal man that you care for him? Yet you have made him little less than a god; with glory and honour you crowned him, gave him power over the works of your hand, put all things under his feet..."

Such is the depth of the honour and dignity which the creator has bestowed on the human being. The human being is the quintessence; the perfect example of all of creation, and the noblest of all animals. This poem by the Psalmist in honour of the dignity of the human being was corroborated by Shakespaere when he wrote in Hamlet:

What a piece of work is a man, how noble in reason, how infinite in faculties, in form and

moving, how express and admirable; in action, how like an angel; in apprehension, how like a god! The beauty of the world, the paragon of animals - and yet, to me, what is this quintessence of dust!

Root words

We shed light on the meaning on the most important words used here: dignity, human and person. The English word *dignity* is equivalent to the Latin 'honor, honoris' which is a third declension, masculine gender word meaning 'mark of esteem, respect, regard, honour or grace. It has a corresponding meaning with another Latin word 'decus, decoris', which has connotation in words like, splendor, distinction, beauty, glory and majesty. On the other hand, the English word, *human* is the Latin equivalent of the adjective word, 'mortalis' meaning 'transient'. It stems also from another Latin word, 'humanus, humane' meaning civilized, refined or kind. The Latin word for *person* could be taken from 'vir, viri, a second declension, masculine gender noun meaning, hero, husband, man, person of courage and nobility or from another Latin word kaput, kaptis, meaning, head, leader, life, source, and so on.

The Igbo word for the human person is *mmadu* which literally means 'the beauty of life' or 'beauty is'. In this sense, the

human being is the beauty of creation. The Igbo theology of the human person, is therefore, connected to the biblical appreciation of creation by God himself who "saw all that he has created and it was very good" (Gen 1: 31). Man is also the measure of all existence because he has dominion among all that God created. This agrees with the biblical injunction: "Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that move upon the earth" (Gen 1: 28). So, all things on earth should be ordained to humanity as to their center and summit.

2. Human life, a divine gift

The Genesis account of creation confirms man's Lordship over all creatures when it noted that man was empowered by God to give names to all animals and birds of the air (Gen. 2:19). The power of naming is the power of ownership. But this power of ownership is limited to control, lordship and mastership of created things. It does not make man an author but a custodian of life. God is the author of life. Only He can give and take life. Jesus said: no one takes my life from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down and authority to take it up again (Jn 10.18). Life does not belong to man; he owes it as a gift from God. Married people, therefore, transmit new life, not in their own power but as

collaborators with God the creator of life.

Murderers, abortionists and suicides often premise their actions on justice and the freedom to do with one's life what one likes. But does one actually have the right to end either one's life or that of others? The magisterial teaching of the Church stress the fact that "God alone is the Lord of Life from its beginning until its end: no one can, in any circumstance claim for himself the right to destroy an innocent human being. The gift of life is to be accepted with all gratitude and thanksgiving by man. Every child born is always to be accepted as a gift and a divine blessing. The Igbo people of Nigeria attest to this reality in the names which they give to a new born like: Chinenye-God gives, Onyinye Chukwu- God' gift. The Yoruba people attest to this when they say: Aaye je eburn lati odo Olorun- Life is a gift from God. Gifts are often accompanied by appreciation and responsibility as their consequences. There are consequences of the gift of life which man has received from God, and they include respect, love, care and upholding this life and dignity in every human person.

3. The Church upholds the life and dignity of the Human person

One of the reasons why some people lose sight of the sense of human dignity is the type of image of God which they built up

for themselves, either through learning or through personal experiences. If one has an image of God as a loving Father of all; who is caring, merciful and just; the God who has commanded us to love one another as we love ourselves; even to love and forgive our enemies, one cannot so hate his neighbor as to kill him. The Christian image of God the Father impels us to be our brothers' keepers. (Gen. 4:9). But if one's picture of God is that of a hater of all other persons who do not believe the way I do, then, violence is the attendant effect of one's attitude towards one's neighbor. As Catholics we were taught at catechism class that we were created in the image and likeness of God and it is here that our dignity as human beings originated. The Catechism of the Catholic Church puts it this way: "The dignity of the human person is rooted in his or her creation in the image and likeness of God. Endowed with spiritual and immortal souls, intelligence and free will, the human person is ordered to God and called in soul and body to eternal beatitude". The human person should, therefore, be viewed as a complex whole which is not "limited to this earth, but also what is supernatural and eternal". We were taught that the beatitude or eternal happiness is the ultimate goal of human activity but each person is endowed with the gift of human freedom which goes with an equal responsibility. Murder is one of the sins classed by the Church as mortal because it destroys charity in us and deprives us of

sanctifying grace and when unrepentant from, leads one into hell fire. On the other hand, where some religious fundamentalists are brain-washed to believe that if they kill in defense of their faith, it merits them eternal life in heaven, how would such a people ever appreciate the beauty and excellence of the human person. The Church upholds that "Human dignity rests above all on the fact that humanity is called to communion with God. The invitation to converse with God is addressed to men and women as soon as they are born. For if people exist, it is because God has created them through love; and through love continues to keep them in existence. They cannot live fully in the truth unless they freely acknowledge, love and entrust themselves to their creator."

Papal Encyclicals and other Church documents have appeared since the last century, in defense of human dignity. Prominent among them include: Blessed Pope Paul VI's *Humane Vitae*, St John Paul II Redeemer of Man, *Redemptor Hominis* and *Evangelium Vitae*; Pope Francis Apostolic Exhortation on the Proclamation of the Gospel in Today's world: *Evangelii Gaudium* and other publications by the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith.

For St John Paul II, human person and dignity are incomparable to anything "Man is called to a fullness of life which far exceeds the dimensions of his earthly existence,

because it consists in sharing the very life of God” The human person is not just respected because he exists here and now; but because he carries in himself the mark of eternal life and is a candidate of a life which has no end. That is why the human person is to be respected at any stage of life’s process. The dignity of the human being at the embryo stage is not less than of an infant or an adult. All bear equal mark of God’s ownership.

Closely related to human life and dignity is the issue of human right. Human dignity and human rights are inseparable. Quoting Pope St John XXIII, Pope St John Paul II clearly noted that peace comes down to respect for man’s inviolable rights (*Opus iustitiae pax*) while war springs from the violation of their rights and brings with it still graver violations of them. All the wars fought in the world or that are still ranging on have their root in the violation of human rights. Every human person has a right which should never be violated because it has its root in the creative impulse of the creator. The 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights by the U. N. O was a millstone setting limit to the numerous violations of these rights by nations and peoples. The committee of Nations that signed this Treaty believed it would bring to an end the various conflicts besieging nations and peoples. But, today, more than ever before, these rights are violated with greater impunity. GS 27 listed those injustices

against the human person which is a crime that humiliates the oppressor even more than the oppressed:

All offenses against life itself, such as 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 people are treated as mere tools for profit 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 honor of the creator.

4. The dignity of human life: the Nigerian Perspective

Section 34 of the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria clearly accords respect and upholds the dignity of the human person for the citizens of this country. It noted that no person should be subjected to torture, inhuman or degrading treatment; no person should be held in slavery or servitude and no person shall be required to perform forced or

compulsory labour. Nigerian citizens are, therefore, legally protected from undue molestation or unjust treatment by any one. Naturally, respect for life and dignity of the human person are intrinsic part of the Nigerian culture. Generally speaking Africa is the continent of "Life" and Nigeria epitomizes what that symbolizes. A lot of factors make one see in Africa, a continent where the future of humanity lies. The belief in the family system is still very strong here. In Nigeria, the family ties are so strong that one is never alone in the journey through life. The family life system is a sharing system where the members share their joys and sorrows, poverty and wealth. If one is sick, it is the concern of the whole family and if one is rich, one is expected to help the poor relatives. The family system in Nigeria is where birth and upbringing of children for the prolonging of the family lineage is both a desire as well as a pursuit. The different rites of passage pay attention to human life which is appreciated as a divine gift. In Nigeria, people save a lot money to prepare for the celebration of feasts and festivals. These feasts and festivals are not just solitary and individualistic celebrations but a community feast where everyone celebrates with his or her neighbour. In the pre-Christian traditional Igbo society every child born into a family is circumcised on the eighth day and dedicated to the gods for safeguarding. The naming ceremony which is performed on this dedication day portrays traditional

Igbo-Africa as life loving society. This shows how much our tradition was founded on the preservation of life. Behaviours which often led to the destruction of the life of others or of their life's earnings were often sanctioned with banishment of the perpetrator from the traditional society to serve as deterrence to others. Respect for life and dignity "is owed to every human being because each one carries in an indelible way his own dignity and value." Even though in Nigeria elders are accorded a great respect, yet every human person has his or her respect. Even the unborn child is treated with respect. That is why to beat a pregnant woman attracts severe punishment from the society. When one thinks of Igbo philosophy of life which places life as ultimate, for instance in the Igbo name Ndubisi- life is supreme, Ndukaku, Life is superior to wealth; one sees the depth of appreciation and value which the Nigerian society places over life.

The Fathers of the Second Vatican Council remarked that "the social order and its development must constantly yield to the good of the person, since the order of things must be subordinate to the order of persons and not the other way round". In order to place the human being in the noble and lofty pedestal designed for him by God, a proper distinction is always to be made in every society between 'being and having'. The individuals existing in any democratic society are truly the masters and sovereign of their own destiny. They

have only freely handed over their welfare and common good to the state and its managers. That was why Pope St Paul II affirmed that the common good which the authority of the State is meant to serve is "brought to full realization only when all the citizens are sure of their rights." Both culture and tradition; laws and the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria exist because of the human beings living within the polity, who are otherwise known as citizens of Nigeria.

Despite these positive attitudes towards human life and dignity of the human person in Nigeria, one cannot be blind to the different aberrations. The dignity of the human person does not just lie in the philosophy of life of a people; it requires strong moral and ethical behaviour often imbibed through long time of teaching and practice.

5. The Aberration

Nigeria is a country full of contraries. It is a place where the good, the bad and the ugly co-habit. Ours is a country where the best brains sometimes end up as beggars in the street while the daft control the economy and are in the corridors of power; ours has become a country where the brilliant chaps who score the best in the matriculation examinations end up gaining no admission while those who were mere bench warmers during exams make up the merit list. This is often because human dignity is not only suppressed but denied. Human dignity is

denied in a country where personal liberty, freedom of thoughts, conscience and religion are suppressed. More than fifty years after independence, Nigeria has failed to evolve a system that enhances human development. We know that without human development, it is difficult to find economic, social, structural nor infrastructural development. Human development is stalled because the human person is crucified and denied.

We notice the denial of basic human rights and the crucifixion of the human person in the denial of basic issues of natural life to the poor people in Nigeria. Abraham Maslow identified a hierarchy of human needs which the most basic ones include air, water, food; clothing and shelter; and added to this are basic psychological needs of love and respect. In a nation with enormous human and natural resources, the human person is abused and denied when millions of people lack in these basic necessities of life. **To begin with the air we breathe.** The abuse of our environment or environmental degradation is often no issues for people in authority in Nigeria. Pope Francis noted that creation is groaning in pains due to our indifference and lack of respect of our environment. This accounts to why the environmental degradation in the Niger Delta is not seen as a disaster but is politicized. The many gully erosion sites in Anambra State which continue to claim lives of many citizens and destroy their properties are no issues of urgent importance

to the state. The lack of respect to the environment where the common masses live is an abuse of and the denial of their human dignity. These should be basic issue of good governance. We often pay attention to bogus ideologies while neglecting the most fundamental ideas that build up strong ad reliable society. This explains why our governments invest billions of naira in the construction of complex conference centres while neglecting the most basic indices of development like the provision of good environment, food, good drinking water, and basic health delivery.

Is it not an aberration that education which is a child's basic right is made fun of in Nigeria? Denial of good quality education is a crime against the human person of our children. When the political class train their children in the best schools in Europe and America while destroying the nation's education industry, what an abuse of human dignity is that? Addressing Forex issues in an interview he granted to Al Jazeera during his visit to Qatar recently, President Buhari proudly maintained that his children are schooling abroad because he could afford it. What a bold affirmation of injustice by a man who is bringing change to the nation! When the political class claims to be giving Nigeria the best form of education but all their children are studying abroad; when this same political class cannot proudly send their own children to our local schools, is it not an admittance of total failure?

When the child is denied good quality education, then it its future is jeopardized. The dignity of the human person is in this instance crucified.

If the nation's health care delivery is left in the wrecks while most people in the political class fly abroad to get proper medical treatment for themselves and family, it divides the nation into first and second class citizens. The former Governor of Akwa Ibom State, Godswill Akpabio allegedly built a world-class hospital during his tenure as a governor of the State. But unfortunately, when he recently had a motor accident, he abandoned this "world class hospital" and travelled abroad for treatment. If the rich must always travel abroad for better treatment while the poor die at home for lack of good hospitals, then the human dignity is crucified. These are issues of social justice and respect of the human person.

The question of religious freedom is a fundamental issue in every society. When we speak of religious freedom we are talking about "freedom to believe, freedom to practice one's religion which includes cultural freedom, confession freedom, freedom of conscience and freedom to hold on to one's world-view." Given the multiplicity of religions in today's world, religious fundamentalism is an abuse of the fundamental rights of the human being because it points itself as the only available truth while believers in other religion are

classified as false. The Nigerian constitution grants the Nigerian citizens the freedom of thoughts, conscience and religion. Jörg Winter is, therefore correct when he pointed out that "Religious freedom is a human right both in Christianity and in Islam". It is a fundamental Human Right which should be enjoyed by everyone despite his or her religious affiliation. But the Ese-Oruru abduction saga, or the Charity Uzoehina 'forced conversion' story, all speak of a nation where one is not free to practice one's religion without fear of molestation. Wanton destruction of human lives and properties due to religious intolerance has placed constant fear and mutual suspicion in the minds of adherents of the two major religions in Nigeria-Christianity and Islam. Religious intolerance, radical injustice, violence, torture, discrimination in its many forms and terrorism have become parts and parcel of our daily life experience in Nigeria. In the words of Jove Jim Aguas, the irony of the whole thing is that while the human person is the victim of violence and human degradation, it is the same human person who is the perpetrator of the injustice. So man is both the victim and the offender.

6. Our Challenge

Since we have discovered that we are the architects of our own misfortunes, we can reverse the course of history. Since independence, hardly does any year pass by without violence, turbulence or upheaval in one part of the country or the other.

The reasons for the quarrels are often issues of social justice and they are often swept under the carpet, giving rise to new forms of quarrel. We are challenged, as a people, to evolve new ways of dialogue in order to understand each other more closely and in a bid to finding ways of resolving our conflicts. The following steps are necessary:

Dialogue: Dialogue is always the middle way between two opposing parties. Many political leaders have tried to organize national dialogue with a lot of restrictions. These have often ended up in the same vicious circle. A national dialogue with sincere intention of heart to heart talk could be a simple solution to a big problem. Why are the different ethnic nationalities always boiling and erupting into violence? Why will the animal farmer not want to co-habit in harmony with the crop farmer? These are issues social justice and dialogue.

Core religious and cultural values: When the core African traditional values and those of Christianity and Islam like forgiveness, tolerance, love and peace are no longer taught in Religious Knowledge class, it is difficult for children to grow to live with them. The State is challenged to rise up to its duties of supervising the various syllabuses for religious instruction to checkmate teachers of fundamentalism. Fundamentalism is the common enemy of all religions. It exists both in Christianity and Islam. Faith and reason through proper education are the only cure of fundamentalism. The

education of the child is a primary responsibility of parents. Parents' obligation to educate their children is essential, original, primary and an irreplaceable responsibility which they received from God. Other agents of education are only there to help the family fulfill its traditional educational obligation to its children.

7. Conclusion: Our hope

Where does our hope of restoring a befitting future to the children of our nation lie? It lies in evolving a new strategy of education which begins from the family. This must be the kind of education that is not lopsided. It must be what the Church called 'integral education', that is an education which pays regard to "the formation of the whole person, so that all may attain their eternal destiny and at the same time promote the common good of society. Children and young persons are therefore to be cared for in such a way that their physical, moral and intellectual talents may develop in a harmonious manner, so that they may attain a greater sense of responsibility and a right use of freedom, and be formed to take an active part in social life." It is only education which does not ignore morality that can achieve this objective. Moreover, as the Fathers of the Second Vatican council emphasized, "the key, the centre and the purpose of the whole of human history is to be found in its (our) Lord and master, Jesus Christ."

ENDNOTES

¹ Shakespaere's Hamlet: The dignity of man: See Hamlet Act 2, scene 2, 303-312, in Shakespaerean quotes:

[Http://www.enotes.com/shakespaere-quotes/what-piece-work-man](http://www.enotes.com/shakespaere-quotes/what-piece-work-man); 01.03.16.

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 BI Pope Paul VI, Humane Vitae, no. 1, in: AAS Vol LX, 1968, no 9
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Perhaps this was what pushed man into working for any available means with a view to fulfilling the above divine mandate. And ever since that day man's struggle for survival has remained continuous. It is therefore apparent to suggest that man is co-eval with science.

Man has maintained a gradual process in his scientific development as it ranged from the primitive time to the contemporary days. Man at the ancient days became a *homoFaber*: one who designs crude implements like hoe, cutlass and so on for his own usage. This progressed from the *Paleolithic* (old stone-age, 500-300B.C) via the *Mesolithic* (middle stone-age, 3000-1000B.C) via the Mesolithic middle stone-age, 3000-1000B.C) when Boats paddles and other advanced tools were developed, to the Neolithic (new stone-age, 1000B.C-1200 AD.) when he settled and developed fishing, agricultural materials: pottery, backed bricks, wheels, sails and minor architectural constructions.¹

Meanwhile, at the stage of this scientific advancement, none of its discovery's or findings provoked reactions from people and other religious bodies, especially the Christians not until the scientific search attributed the origin of man to something else outside the exclusive creation of God. The first scientific claim about the origin of man was the theory of evolution advanced by Charles Darwin (1809-1882) in his book, "*The origin of the specie*". He declared that both plants and animals came into existence by the development of more complicated forms from earlier simpler forms, and that this type of existence involves serious struggle.² Of course this type of struggle do not favour the weaklings that are bound to die in the exercise while the strong ones continue the process. To lend credence to the above is the issue of atheism which some

scientists have professed. Davis insists that since virtual particles can pop into existence *ex nihilo* through quantum wave fluctuation, the universe can in that manner popped into existence.³ Fred Hoyle in his in his own scientific scorn argues that, it seems against the spirit of energy to regard observable effects as arising from the causes unknown to science and this in principle is what creation in past implies.⁴ This submission in its naked form doubts even Gods involvement in the creation exercise. No wonder, man in his biotechnological search made some discovery's in such matters like: the Personality pill known as Prozac, Artificial Insemination, Transfer and or freezing of embryos (Genetic Engineering) and cloning.

Furtherance to the scientific notion of man's origin and speedy advancement in bio-technology, series of questions usually asked from the religious angle included: whether God has mandated man to start producing children in the biotechnological industry anyhow, and wherelies the ancestral lineage or identity of those manufactured babies? What of the sacredness, sanity and value of human person?

It does appear the entire aim at this level is to challenge God's omniscience, supremacy and control over every other thing.

Brief survey of scientific evolution

Not even graffiti- the art of writing on the wall or hieroglyphics- the earliest form of writing invented by the Egyptians were in existence then. The art of writing and documentation of human activities did not take place immediately man was created. This indicates that there were many scientific activities of man that were not recorded in history. The period in question can aptly be referred as the primitive stage of man. Historians often trace the origin of science to the Egyptians and the Mesopotamians especially

during the Neolithic Age when men settled down to an organized agricultural life and activity⁵. Acceptably, at the fore front were the Mesopotamians and the Egyptians who distinguished themselves in the areas of sciences of Mathematics, Astronomy and Engineering, but the developmental strides by the Greeks can be never be ignored.

The Egyptians were credited with the famous Mathematical papyrus known as *The RindMathematical Papyrus written* when king – A – User – Re (1650 B.C.) was in power. This was followed by the *Edwin Papyrus*, the Egyptians medical treatise which later formed the basis of natural science. The *Alchemy* was a collection of the writings of Egyptians *Hermes Trismegistus* in the areas of Medicine Chemistry and Physics. It was at the Egyptians Mystery school and the Alexandrian Academy (300Bc 200AD) that all the sciences as well as philosophy were taught even before the Greeks went there for their own studies.

It was in Mesopotamia that the idea of numbers represented in decimal and sexa-decimal systems were developed. The people also advanced in the areas of planet, celestial and atmospheric condition. The Mesopotamians were indeed experts in the areas of Mathematics, Natural and Theoretical science.

The Greeks were able to acquire their knowledge of Sciences, Mathematics and Philosophy by virtue of the contact they had both with the Egyptians and Mesopotamians. Infact the entire Greek intellectual turning point became heightened when the Ionian Scientists / Philosophers first studied in Egypt. They included, Thales (624-565) who is regarded as the father of Western philosophy and science, Anaximander (600-548BC) Anaximenes (550-480) Pythagoras (572-510Bc) ,

Democritus (470-1400BC), Leucippus (540-475 B.C.) Etc.

Science both in the Roman (50BC-AD400) and Medieval period (AD 400 -1500) did not achieve much. The Romans were highly influenced by the Stoics and Epicurianists. The Medieval era was dominated by the Christian Theology which undermined most of the scientific findings. This period is known as the *Dark ages*. It was the Renaissance period (1250-1600) that marked a turning point in the development of science. The period paraded many scientists like Leonardo Da Vinci (1456-1519), Nicholas Copernicus (1473-1543) , and Giordano Bruno (1547-1600) a radical monk who later died as a result of his scientific scorn and views.

Modern scientific thought witnessed the likes of Johannes Kepler (1571- 1630). Others were the works of Rid (1791-1630), Jean Le Rond and Nicholas Copernicus, Galileo Galilie and Isaac Newton (1642-1727). Their achievements were followed by those recorded in the 19th and 20th centuries. This period assumed a considerable dimension as new discoveries and inventions emerged. The achievements were noticed in the areas of Chemistry, Geography, Biology .Physics etc. The era saw the discovery of the principles of electricity by Michael Faraday, while the formulation of the periodic table of elements and the discovery of the laws of heredity was the brain child of Mendeleev Dmitri and Gregory Mendel. Albert Erinsten's theory of relativity otherwise known as the theory of General and Special Relativity maintains that the laws of nature should appear the same to all freely moving observers .This advancement was also followed by the popular quantum theory which suggests that changes of energy in atoms and molecules occur only in discrete quantities , each is an integral multiple of a fundamental quantity.⁶ Other findings that emerged as a result

of this experience was a space exploration and the production of atomic missiles.

No doubt that subsequent improvement made in the medical field led to different biotechnological findings. Historically, biotechnology was mainly associated with food and Zymotechnology which focuses more on brewing of Beer. The attention given to it in the development of drug was just recently.

Biotechnology: an evaluation

Obviously, the biotechnological industry has received both negative and positive reactions from peoples at different epochs and fora. The clux of the argument stems from various findings and developments recorded in the field. Those who favour the phenomenal height and achievements made so far usually insist that longer life span, comfortable standards of living amongst others are ensured. This medical development even helps couples who cannot get children as they want through the natural process have as many children as they want in so far they have the financial muscle to pay for the expenses.

On the contrary are the views canvassed by the opposers of biotechnological findings that concern human beings. They have argued that the exercise is undemocratic; not societal friendly and it is costly amongst others. The following contentious issues in biotechnology are briefly discussed below,

1. Personality Pills: This is the kind of drug otherwise known as Prozac which is usually used by people that have some psychological disorder. Recent findings in this area show that the pill is being used to manipulate the temperamental nature of an individual thereby injecting in the person a new psyche,

character, personality and even identity. The implication is that since there is no steady personality attribute of that individual he can turn to Mr. A today, turn to Mr. B tomorrow and finally become Mr. S at old age. She has no ancestral lineage or progenitor having metamorphosed into different elements.

2. Genetic Engineering: Amongst all the findings in biotechnological industry, none has generated controversy, heated argument and debate like genetic engineering. This perhaps is as a result of its other ancillaries like, InVitro Fertilization, Artificial Insemination, Surrogate Motherhood and transfer of the embryos. Genetic engineering suggests carrying out experiment with the genes and other compositions of the human. It is an artificial means by which a given particular traits from one organism is manipulated and infused into another. This has various motivations: to cure or improve their quality, to prevent their contaminations with diseases and more recently to manufacture babies for those in need but who are unable to have them via the natural process.⁷

2.1. In Vitro Fertilization is also another means of this reproductive technology whereby sperm from another man is used to fertilize the eggs from a woman in the laboratory using an artificial womb. The aim behind this exercise is to correct infertility with a view to having a child.

2.2. Artificial Insemination is the process of fertilizing and subsequent transfer of the foetus to a woman by another woman usually in agreement.

2.3. Surrogate Motherboard: This aspect of genetic engineering involves engaging another woman who will carry and deliver a baby on behalf of the other woman. The

borrowed mother is more or less on contract basis and as soon as the baby is born, her involvement in the matter comes to an end. But this is not always feasible in the real sense of it. Recall the 1986 case of Surrogate Mother Mary Beth Whitehead of New Jersey who refused to relinquish her daughter, and thereby sparked off a landmark court case in the United States.⁸

2.4. Freezing of Embryos: This method involves selecting the choice of baby that the person wants to have either male or female. It implies that the technician is allowed to demonstrate his expertise anyhow in so far the needed sex of the baby is obtained.

2.5. Cloning: This no doubt is one of the latest developments in the biotechnological world, even though its discovery was not quite long, it has made heavy landmark in the medical profession. The first cloning was carried out by a team of medical researchers in George Washington University in 1993 under the directives of Jerry Hall and Robert Stillman. The result of their experiment was the multiplication of seventeen microscopic human embryos into forty-eight. Incidentally, this exercise attracted criticism from different quarters. Iroegbu summarizes:

For the Vatican however, this could lead humanity down the tunnel of madness. While Japan's Medical Association found it unthinkable, the French President, Francois Mitterand pronounced himself "horrified" by this cloning of human embryos. The protests are on-going worldwide.⁹

Concluding Reflection

There is no gain denying the fact that scientific technology has done a lot in the progress, development and improvement of human life. Science has had a tremendous impact in every aspect of human endeavor and this is quite commendable. The only contention here is that there exist some scientific findings, inventions and discoveries that are destructive, inimical, bad and do not have any respect for human dignity and worth. This explains the reasons why some scientific findings should be discouraged since they are now Frankenstein that has come to devour its creator. It is appalling to note that some of the scientific researches and findings were just carried out unnecessarily only in an attempt to show pride and exhibit intellectual and professional arrogance.

A case in point: NATO could have, with the least cost, yet effectively utilized anti-tank weapons to avert conventional defeat from the USSR. But the intelligent Science and Technology Professors pushed for the production of high density offensively destructive neutron bombs, not necessarily to ensure victory, but to manifest their technocratic, to attract more research funds, to promote more expansive travels and experiments, and to amass more horrific entitlements.¹⁰

Meanwhile, the complementarity of science and religion is an obvious one that manifest in some degrees and receptacles. Jesus Christ, the founder of Christianity spent many years during his carpentry apprenticeship prior to his earthly Ministry. The skill he acquired and his eventual entrepreneurship was Science and Technology in action. He

foresaw the dangers of producing destructive and dehumanizing weapons as well as needless scientific findings, hence his injunction that man should love one another.

Nevertheless, most of the scientific claims and religious beliefs have continued to oppose each other in so many areas and different epochs. Nwala extolls:

In the middle ages in Europe, there was a major conflict between the church, on the other hand, and science and philosophy on the other. Philosophers and Scientists suffered persecution and death for their beliefs. Many people were executed, lynched or burnt by the church for their (scientific) views when they ran counter to basic church teachings."

Subsequent upon the above premise is the same quarrel which various religious groups have over biotechnological findings especially in the area of genetic engineering. There are some Muslim countries where these artificial babies manufacturing via the manipulation of the genes is not allowed. They do not permit the use of sperm that was donated by anybody. Christianity and African Traditional Religion (ATR) religion also do not accept, encourage cloning or any genetic engineering outcome.

The emphasis which the church places on cloning stems from the devastating effect it has on humanity. Cloning allows for the manipulation and multiplication of the human embryos to ensure production of persons that are the same in all respects. Again devastating the embryos in multitude is viewed seriously as an act of murder by the Church because embryos

are considered unique and full of life in themselves. Worthy of note is that cloned people cannot reincarnate. It is indeed horrifying and terrible. Incidentally also, cloned persons do not have human personality, identity or uniqueness. Another argument is that since the sex, shape and size of the babies can be determined by the cloner based on request, it then suggests that human life has no more meaning.

God's injunction to man on human reproduction was through procreation (natural process) as against artificial means (cloning). Any step outside this, is contradicting the message of (Genesis 3:16) concerning suffering of women during child bearing. Even when the ban seems to have been lifted on the side of the Hebrew women they were still undergoing natural process and not otherwise.

No doubt, biotechnological findings are challenging God in so many areas. Man appears to be claiming ownership of powers, wisdom and knowledge that he does not have. But let man be guided by the fact that what this world considers to be wisdom is nonsense in God's eye. (1Corinthians 3:19) This should be taken seriously in order to avoid the wrath of God who has already declared that, He will destroy the wisdom of the wise and set aside the wisdom of the scholars/scientists (1Corinthians 1:19).

Man therefore should aspire for that scientific finding which has meaning, respect and bearing on human person. Some scholars have opined that the value and authenticity of human life cannot be attained through scientific technology that negates the divine directive. Okolo writes:

But the individual is ever craving for authentic existence. Man is not just what he is. He is also what he is not and what he will be. Man is

for the society but very little attention is given to it. A young woman or man spends five or more years studying to get a degree in architecture or engineering, to learn the techniques of developing a befitting house; but he or she spends very little or no time in studying how to develop a healthy relationship with those who will live in the house namely: wife/husband and children. An edifice that has the dwelling of animals inside it will obviously not stand the test of time. Hence the question is, which one is more important: the edifice or the family that will live inside it? Both are important, but following the order of priority, the human beings inside the edifice should be given priority attention. Hence, there is the need to study marriage and the family institution. This is a course of study that is fundamental and most important to the stability and development of our society.

Introduction

In the responses to the Lineamenta proposed in the 'Instrumentum Laboris' for the Synod of Bishops special assembly for Africa, one of the positive signs of the time delineated is that: "The African continent is witnessing the awakening of a profound cultural, social, economic and political consciousness. With the collapse of totalitarian regimes there are new hopes of revival everywhere." But the same lineamenta delineated also some negative signs of the time, one of them could be mentioned thus: "family values, once the strength of Africa, are being eroded; family uprooting disturbs both the moral sense and the sense of identity."

We wish in this study to respond to this complex situation of gradual loss of family values in our society. Through this response, we hope to contribute to the revitalization of marriage and the family institution. We want to demonstrate that a well constituted marriage and family in accordance with

its natural and original state leads to unity, community and solidarity which is participation, starting from the Family itself and then leading to the society as a whole including the Church. The current situation of self-centeredness and individualistic life style among the westerners is as a result of deviation from the natural route.

Therefore, the *raison d'être* of this work is in line with the aim of the 'Ecclesia in Africa': "Strengthening communion and community spirit in the Church of Africa and the universal Church." John Paul II says that "the Church can move forward only by strengthening communion among her members, beginning with her Pastors." This communion, community and solidarity spirit must have the family as its fundamental basis. Therefore, marriage and the family institution is the nucleus and the pivot of ecumenism and inter-religious dialogue.

The notion, nature and meaning of marriage

The new Code of Canon Law allocates to marriage a very important place among its canons, in it marriage is given a descriptive definition thus:

"The marriage covenant, by which a man and a woman establish between themselves a partnership of their whole life, and which of its own nature is ordered to the well-being of the spouses and to the procreation and upbringing of children, has been raised by Christ the lord to the dignity of sacrament. (can. 1055 §1).

Consequently, "a valid marriage contract cannot exist between baptized persons without it's being by that very fact a sacrament, (can. 1055 §2).

Etymologically, the Latin word 'matrimonium' is derived from its root 'mater' and from the suffix 'monium', put together 'matrimonium' refers to the natural inclination of male and female to unite together sexually; and through this union their arises the consequent generation of offspring and the duty of motherhood. As we can see, this etymological explanation portrays the idea of matrimony as corresponding to the purpose of marriage and family. It is however only an explanation of the root words. We shall explain further in the next sub-titles the deeper theological meaning of marriage in relation to the family.

The former code of Canon Law of 1917 defined marriage by anticipating its canons, which defined the essential objects of marriage and the essential purpose and properties of marriage in canons. 1081 and 1013 thus: "Marriage is a lawful and exclusive contract by which a man and a woman mutually give and accept a right over their bodies for the purpose of acts which are in themselves suitable for the generation of children." The former code of Canon Law described the primary end of marriage as the procreation and education of children. While the goals of achieving a high degree of emotional closeness, friendship and a sense of a shared life (interpersonal intimacy), though they were not prohibited, they were not stressed.

The development of interpersonal intimacy as an essential end of marriage, apart from biological intimacy is a relatively recent phenomenon. Generally, this new but rich meaning of marriage stemmed from improved social conditions and, in no small measure from the triumph of women's liberation movements i.e. women are now understood as equal to men in dignity and purpose. Hence, earlier views about marriage were focused more or less on the necessity of childbirth and

upbringing; this fact is made clear in the new dictionary of theology.

"It is very interesting to note that before the 20th century, Christian love was rarely viewed as a major component of marriage. The couple's biological sexual union was considered the most essential ingredient of marriage. Its value was not based on its power to deepen their interpersonal union, but rather on its biological outcome- the procreation of a child"

Sacred scripture contains extensive texts that speak about marriage. It begins with the creation of man and woman in the image and likeness of God and concludes with a vision of "the wedding feast of the lamb" (Gen 1, 26-28; 2, 18, 23-24; Rev 19, 7-9). The root of the marriage institution is found in the book of Genesis: "And the Lord God said, It is not good that the man should be alone, I will give him a helpmate fit for him" (Gen 2, 18). "Therefore shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall cleave unto his wife and they shall be one flesh" (Gen 2, 24). Marriage is therefore a natural and divine institution. Thus when the man says of the woman that she is "bone of my bone and flesh of my flesh" (Gen 2, 23), he means that she shares his strength and his weakness and all that lies between them. She is his partner in every contingency of life. It is, therefore, a companionship that is not sundered by changing circumstances. It is one of constancy, of abiding loyalty. This is strongly emphasized in the verse "that is why a man leaves his father and mother and clings to his wife, and the two become one".

A further clarification of this deposition is given by A. O. Gbuji. He explains the nature of marriage ordered to the well

being of the spouses (and consequent procreation and education of offspring) as stemming from the nature of man and woman who are divided into two different but complementary sexes. Thus A.O. Gbuji noted that apart from the anatomical differences, we notice that man is physically stronger and adapted to the task of fatherhood, instead the woman is physically weaker and adapted to the task of motherhood. Man is more realistic, instead the woman is more idealistic. Man is intellectual, the woman is more industrious. Man is logical, the woman is intuitive. Man is emotionally more stable than the woman, he is more objective, more factual and slow in judgement, instead the woman is more subjective, more fanciful and quicker at judgement. A man wants to love so that he can be loved, a woman wants to be loved so that she can show love. Man is aggressive, the woman is passive. Man is self-assured, the woman is less self-assured. Man is less adaptable, the woman is more adaptable. Man is more secure in a love relationship, the woman is less secure in love-relationship. Man is less possessive, the woman is more possessive.

All these differences are certainly not the result of chance as noted by A.O. Gbuji. Man and woman complement each other. Marriage is the completion of both the man and the woman. In marriages, the personalities merge and become one. Man's strength is complemented by the woman's beauty, man's aggressiveness, by woman's passivity. Man is enriched by woman's purity of conduct, her patience, her devotion, her goodness, her generosity, her silent endurance of suffering, her attention, her love, her understanding, her sense of order and proportion, etc. Woman is enriched by man's sense of objectivity, his strength, his courage, and the protection and security which he gives.

Vatican II on its part broadened and enriched the concept of

Christian marriage, by linking it to the covenant between God and his chosen people and the Pauline model of the Church as the spouse of Christ thus:

"Christ our Lord has abundantly blessed this love, which is rich in its various features, coming as it does from the spring of divine love and modeled on Christ's own union with the Church. Just as of old God encountered his people with a covenant of love and fidelity, so our saviour, the spouse of the Church, now encounters Christian spouses through the sacrament of marriage. . . Spouses, therefore, are fortified and, as it were, consecrated for the duties and dignities of their state by a special sacrament; fulfilling their conjugal and family role by virtue of this sacrament, spouses are penetrated with the spirit of Christ. . ."

The same document of the Second Vatican Council goes on to assert that:

"God is the author of marriage and has endowed it with various benefits and with various ends in view; all of these have a very important bearing on the continuation of the human race, on the personal development and eternal destiny of every member of the family, on the dignity, stability, peace and prosperity of the family and of the whole human race."

However, care must be taken not to put too much emphasis on the procreation of offspring in marriage, since as we have noted in the definition of marriage, the couples partnership of their whole life ordered to the well-being of the spouses is very fundamental to the institution of marriage. The

document of the Second Vatican Council states therefore:

“But marriage is not merely for the procreation of children: its nature as an indissoluble compact between two people and the good of the children demand that the mutual love of the partners be properly shown, that it should grow and mature. Even in cases where despite the intense desire of the spouses there are no children, marriage still retains its character of being a whole manner and communion of life and preserves its value and indissolubility.”

Consequently, those spouses whose marriage has been blessed with the gift of children are obliged to give their children proper education. This upbringing has many dimensions, none of which ought to be neglected, they include physical, social, cultural, moral and Christian religious education. The Code of Canon Law states that both parents share equally in these serious obligations. On the other hand, those whose marriages are not yet blessed with children, in living with the hope of having one even through legal adoption, should not forget the fact that their marriage is still valid and as such a blessed gift from God. They should go on caring and loving each other in the partnership of conjugal relationship. They should not forget that the living God who joined them together understands their state of life (Cf.GS.50).

Notions and meaning of the Christian family.

The Catechism of the Catholic Church defines the family thus:

“The family is the original cell of social life. It is the natural society in which husband and wife are called to give themselves in love and in the gift of life. Authority, stability

and a life of relationships within the family constitute the foundations for freedom, security and fraternity within society.”

Consequently, the family, whether Christian or non Christian remains a natural institution vital for human life and the good of the society, the Church included.

However, a Christian family, because of its deeper meaning and dignity has a further role to play. This special dignity is based on the sacramental nature of Christian marriage. Thus: “From a valid marriage there arises between the spouses a bond which of its own nature is permanent and exclusive. Moreover, in Christian marriage the spouses are by a special sacrament strengthened and, as it were, consecrated for the duties and dignity of their state.” (can.1134).

Further, the document *Lumen gentium* of the Second Vatican Council states: “From the marriage of Christians there comes the family in which new citizens of human society are born and, by the grace of the Holy Spirit in Baptism, those are made children of God so that the people of God may be perpetuated throughout the centuries.” The Christian family is regarded as the 'domestic Church'.

Further the family is defined as:

“a community of persons whose proper way of existing and living together is communion: 'communio personarum'.” Here too, while always acknowledging the absolute transcendence of the Creator with regard to his creatures, we can see the family's ultimate relationship to the divine “we.” Only persons are capable of living “in communion.” The

family originates in a marital communion described by the Second Vatican Council as a "covenant," in which man and woman give themselves to each other and accept each other" (GS 48)."

The document of the Second Vatican Council continues:

"Fulfilling their conjugal and family role by virtue of this sacrament, spouses are penetrated with the spirit of Christ and their whole life is suffused by faith, hope and charity; thus they increasingly further their own perfection and their mutual sanctification, and together they render glory to God."

The Christian family is therefore a suitable home for the upbringing and education of children who are as such the future of the Church and of society. The command of Christ in the Gospel: "Go therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen" (Mt 28, 19 - 20), begins first and foremost with the family. Christian parents are as such the primary agents of evangelization.

General notions and definitions of the family.

Etymologically, the word "family" comes from the Latin 'familia' that means a household establishment, which in its simplest composition comprises the father, mother, sons and daughters of the family. Aristotle, the Greek philosopher, conceived the idea of the 'family' as: "the association established by nature for the supply of men's every day wants."

For Cicero, marriage, which constitutes the natural basis of

the family, is considered as *seminarium rei publicae*. Simply conceived, the term 'family' denotes a social unit, usually consisting of a male and a female adult living in one household and caring for their children. The term 'family' designates a special kind of basic societal structure. This is because it is not a human made structure, it is natural and independent of any civil or ecclesiastical foundation, yet it must be guided by both civil and ecclesiastical legislations.

It is difficult to find a comprehensive definition of 'family'. It is a complex natural institution. All of us human beings come from a family, but our experience of it differs according to our different cultural and environmental situations. This is why our notion of the family could also differ according to individual experiences of the family.

According to A. Trabucchi, (1995)

"The family is conceived as a distinct moral and social entity, which situates every human person at the center of his existential trilogy—birth, love, death, and which per se ought to constitute a good, a value, and common to all its members. The family is thus a relationship of life that is complete and durable, which from the spouses is extended to the children."

The family is the first social basic form of an organized social life that exists side by side with other forms of organizations. Each of these organizations for instance: cultural, religious, charitable, commercial, political, trade union associations constitutes a social complex. But the family is thus, the basic cell of the society that gives rise to these other organizations. These apart, the family promotes the fundamental exigencies of primordial man-woman relationships as social, gregarious beings. Since every human organization requires laws for its

orderliness and effective functioning, the family, because of its nature and its importance for the society, must also be guided by laws.

The family is the "natural and fundamental group unit of society", that is "a natural society based on marriage." This is because the family has its origin from God as narrated by the book of Genesis. "And the Lord God said, it is not good that the man should be alone; I will make for him a help mate fit for him."... "Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh." Consequently, the family in general, whether Christian or non Christian is founded on marriage.

Finally, for clarity sake, it is important to note a difference between the meaning of the family and household: A household consists of persons living under one roof. Usually consisting of a married couple and their unmarried children, but sometimes including the grandparents, married children and very close blood relatives just as in a family. But then included in a household are non-kin inmates, sojourners, boarders or lodgers, indentured apprentices and resident servants, employed either for domestic work in the house or as an additional resident labour force for the farms or family business. In fact, a household include all the people that constitute part of the family either by law of employment or by choice of the family. So the term 'household' is more extensive in scope than the term 'family'.

The universal nature of the family.

The family is generally understood as the original cell of the social life and the first society to appear on earth. It is the basic social unit and the foundation from which human life is propagated and multiplied. The family, as the oldest human institution, has existed among all cultures in human history.

Almost all human beings have grown up in some kind of family. The family therefore is indispensable. The reasons for the indispensability of the family can be seen from these points of view: mans' need for survival and the inherent need in man for companionship, sexual satisfaction and multiplication of human species through offspring. In each of the above reasons, human beings need one another. To provide security for survival, man needs others, and the more two or three people identify common elements between themselves the more they come closer to one another. On the problem of sexual satisfaction and offspring, man needs the woman and vice versa. But this has to be done within some legitimate conditions. So there was the need for some regulations guiding the marriage and family institution from its beginnings. The need for offspring necessitated also the need for their upbringing.

Families have varied considerably in form, not only from one era to another and from culture to culture but also within eras and, within cultures. In a culture the form of the family changes and disappears, giving way to others. All these forms of the family constitute an important part of social change. The reasons for such changes are the result of stages in human development. For instance, the following are some of the few family systems from the past that are representative of western family patterns: the patriarchal pattern from the Bible; the old Roman family; the Jewish family pattern during the time of Jesus Christ; the medieval family; the European peasant family pattern; and the modern varieties.

We have some knowledge of the patriarchal families from the Bible story. The Jewish family during the time of Jesus Christ was characterized by its emphasis on the propagation of the family name through male offspring for the subsistence of the Jewish people, the people of God. Divorce was permitted and

marriage was not contracted based upon mutual consent of the partners but upon formal arrangements between the heads of the families (normally the fathers of the families) involved. In old Jewish culture, women were given lower status.

The peasant family pattern in England or the pre-industrial family pattern was characterized by subsistence through family income alone. The family depended on itself for survival and productivity. Normally, the main occupation was predominantly farming and agricultural. Trade by barter was also practiced during this period. The modern family today is characterized by a lot of changes from the past systems. Some of these changes are positive but some elements are negative. It is characterized among other things by the fact that men now work outside of the home, in factories and public offices; they receive their wages in cash no longer a trade by barter system. The family is now a consuming unit and no longer a producing one. This means that the family economic subsistence is not dependent on the family management alone. The state must supplement where the family cannot, but must also allow the family to care for itself in those areas in which it can. So the family has a good number of functions to play for itself and for society; the state has as well some roles to play for the family. It is a situation of complementarities. Today, in the modern family system, women have equal rights with men. The right and obligations of the spouses are mutual and complementary. However, this is still very much dependent on where the family finds itself. In some cultures even in the west, equal rights between the man and the woman are still not very practicable.

Finally, despite these necessary changes in the nature of the family, it is to be noted that since history began, the family institution has always had common values among all peoples. The changes undergone in the family institution were only a

matter of progressive developments that have nothing to do with the substantial nature of the family. Such common values include: need for companionship; need for children and children's upbringing; need for security of the woman from the man and vice versa, of the children from their parents; need for personal identity; need for a home or common shelter. These have been common characteristics of the family, but vary in degree according to different cultures.

We may conclude by saying that the family has always existed and will always exist as long as the world exists. Family systems will continue to undergo some changes, but it is to be hoped that these changes be for the good of the family institution. We must work to offset any change that will be negative and destructive to the nature of the family.

The natural right to marriage and family.

The right to marriage and family is one of the fundamental rights of man. The universal declaration of human rights states in art 16 no.1:

“Men and women of all ages have the basic fundamental right, without any form of hindrances or restrictions of race, citizenship and religion to marry and found a family. They have the same equal rights to marriage, in their marriage and in the act of separation.”

In number 3. It states further: “The family is the natural nucleus and foundation of the society and has the right to be protected by the society and the state.” Today, no one has any doubts about this. It is a right that touches a very intimate and personal part of man. The right to marry and to create a family is therefore a fundamental right of men and women of all ages. This is noted also in the document of the Second Vatican Council.(GS no. 50)

"God himself said: "It is not good that man should be alone" (Gen 2, 18), and "from the beginning (He) made them male and female" (Mt 19, 4); wishing to associate them in a special way with his own creative work, God blessed man and woman with the words: "Be fruitful and multiply" (Gen 1, 28). Without intending to underestimate the other ends of marriage, it must be said that true married love and the whole structure of family life which results from it is directed to disposing the spouses to cooperate valiantly with the love of the Creator and Saviour, who through them will increase and enrich his family from day to day."

The natural right to marriage and family is further underscored by the Second Vatican Council:

"The rights of parents to procreate and educate children in the family must be safeguarded. There should also be welfare legislation and provision of various kinds made for the protection and assistance of those who unfortunately have been deprived of the benefits of the family life."

A renowned author on the family law, Nwogugu, puts the issue in right perspective: he views marriage as "a social institution, founded on, and governed by the social and religious norms of society. Consequently, the sanctity of marriage is a well-accepted principle in the world community. Marriage is the root of the family and of society."

The right to marry as a fundamental right is recognized in the Code of Canon Law. It states: "All persons who are not prohibited by law can contract marriage." or still better, "All

persons can enter into marriage who are not prohibited by law" (can.1058). This is a natural right and belongs to the order of creation where we find it as an indispensable condition for the transmission of life to which marriage and conjugal love by their nature are ordered: "be fruitful and multiply"(Gen 1,28).

The right to marriage is also implicitly recognized in the Code in its affirmation of the right to choose a state of life in canon 219: "All the Christian faithful have the right to be free from any kind of coercion in choosing a state of life." Also, the Code states: "To the lay members of Christ's faithful belongs the right to have acknowledged as theirs that freedom in secular affairs that is common to all citizens (can.227). The liberty with reference to marriage is among the primordial rights of the person. There is a certain degree of liberty in the very essence of marriage, apart from the provision of positive law. The validity of the conjugal bond on account of its peculiar character is subordinate to the liberty of the would be spouses. In fact, "the consent, which constitutes the marriage, cannot be supplied by any human power" (Cf. can.1057§1). It is obvious from the principle of necessity and indefectibility of the consent that the liberty, which in its substantial part is a good by its own nature, is to be juridically protected. This liberty expresses the human dignity of the spouses. Therefore, the Code, by recognizing the fundamental liberty of the faithful to choose their own state of life, logically recognizes the choice to conjugal life. The right to found a family is a corollary to the right to marry. In fact, in the Charter of the Rights of the Family Article 1, the Church expressly recognizes these rights thus: "All persons have the right to the free choice of their state of life and thus to marry and establish a family or to remain single." And in preamble I, the Charter states also:

“Society, and in a particular manner the State and International Organizations, must protect the family through measures of a political, economic, social and juridical character, which aim at consolidating the unity and stability of the family so that it can exercise its specific function.”

Art 3c reads: “The family has a right to assistance by society in the bearing and rearing of children. Those married couples who have a large family have a right to adequate aid and should not be subjected to discrimination”.

Nonetheless, as we have already pointed out, this assistance is not only on the level of financial or moral aid but also by means of legislations which help the marriage/family institution achieve its natural and societal goals. This is why the Code states: Even if only one party is a Catholic, the marriage of Catholics is governed not only by divine law but also by Canon Law, without prejudice to the competence of civil authority concerning the merely civil effects of the same marriage(can.1059).

Before we conclude, it is pertinent to point out that the positive laws of both the Church and State that govern marriage and family regulate a reality which predates them. Because marriage is first and foremost a natural reality, man possesses in an innate manner the right to marry, which is to found a family. And since this union is not a creation of the legislator, the right to marry is not a concession which the lawgiver makes to his subjects. This right is therefore a requirement of justice which is founded and rooted in human nature itself. What the law does is simply to lead or guide the marriage and family institution through the proper channels so that it may be practiced in the best way possible. “To think that marriage and family is a legal state is as absurd as to think that paternity and filiations are only, in turn, legal links.”

Consequently, juridical systems regulating marriage have to reduce the frame-work of their interventions to the following spheres: they regulate the orderly exercise of marriage celebration, fixing the requisites for the capacity of the interested parties and the legitimate form of celebrating the wedding. They must regulate the normal and pathological vicissitudes of the marital state. They regulate also the juridical effects of all kinds especially family and patrimonial effects which marriage produces with regard to other juridical and social institutions.

When does the legislator overstep its boundaries?

“The legislator oversteps its boundaries when as the result of its regulation, the natural reality of marriage ceases to be on the legal plane that perpetual and exclusive union between a man and a woman which is ordained towards mutual aid/companionship and children and become converted into a mere sexual relation between persons of different sex or worst still of the same sex.”

Let us conclude with the words of Pope Leo XIII:

“In choosing a state of life there is no doubt but that it is in the power and discretion of each one to prefer one or the other: either to embrace the council of virginity given by Jesus Christ, or to bind himself in the bonds of matrimony. To take away from man the natural and principal ends of marriage laid down in the beginning by God himself in the words 'increase and multiply'(Gen 1,28), is beyond the power of any human law.”

Some basic functions of the family

Generally the personal and social functions played by the family are almost the same in all cultures. There are however some disparities, but because of their little significance we prefer to treat this topic in a general way, the functions are:

Psychological/spiritual security.

There is the general saying that no man is an island. Human beings are obsessed by different kinds of fears and many are actually exposed to dangers. Such fears may be real or artificial. The family members help one another to attain an adequate emotional security. In this case the principle of subsidiarity may function as well. A new-born baby is the weakest in a family and needs protection and security. The male is stronger than the female in terms of physical strength. But the female may be stronger in psychological/emotional and spiritual balance. L. McSweeney identifies three kinds of awakenings in the life of every child as he/she grows towards adolescence, they are: an awakening to freedom; an awakening to one's physical powers and especially to sexual desire; and an awakening to personal values which enable young people to decide for themselves what they want to do with their life. These three forms of self-awakenings are interconnected and may be described as an explosion of physical and spiritual power. Every young person undergoes this process of self discovery which can generate kinds of inner conflicts and can disturb the person's psychological and emotional development if not well guided. It is the role of parents to guide their children in this stage of their lives. Moreover, the woman when she is pregnant needs a lot of security, care and support from her family for her sake but more still for the healthy development of the baby in the womb.

In a nuclear Christian family the psychological and spiritual

security is more assured than in a polygamous marriage.

Physical security.

This is generally based on the provision by the family of such things as shelter, warmth, food, clothes, medicare and medical insurance et cetera. Families with a permanent place of stay could guarantee more of this security than families that are not permanently located in a place. In the western world where many people are involved in all kinds of business that warrants a lot of movements from place to place, family physical security suffers a lot thereby rendering the family unstable. The need for stability is vital for the family. It gives the children and the entire family members more security, privacy and even emotional balance. The family alone cannot achieve a suitable social security without the help of the state or community. The state or community must guarantee the protection of its citizens from unjust external and internal disturbances. Therefore, one of the subsidiary functions of the state towards the family is the welfare function. It consists in the promotion of the general economic, sanitary, ecological and cultural welfare of the citizens.

Procreation and child socialization.

In Christian marriage, apart from the interpersonal relationship between the couple, procreation and education of offspring is very vital. Any society that undermines the need for children risks extinction. Child socialization is also very vital in every culture. Socialization is the only means of fostering the cultural – social heritage of a people.

The family is the primary economic community.

The family needs the basic necessity of life like shelter, food, drinks, medical care et cetera. Moreover, since education is a very important element for offspring, this will have to be provided for. The economic condition of a family is to a

considerable extent a question of family income. In the modern world of today, many young people do not attempt marriage if they are not sure of at least quasi permanent wages for the upkeep of the family. Women are becoming gradually more active in the family instead of the former redundant position they were used to occupy. Consequently many women work outside their homes just like men. In Igbo traditional family, the man is the breadwinner who provides for his family, while the woman is just a helper, her main occupation being agricultural farming.

Today, the situation has also changed tremendously. Many parents work outside their homes in order to provide for their families. So the problem lies at present that the economic condition of a family is to a considerable extent dependent on the state. It is therefore an important task of the state to secure a just family wage for wage-earners who have to support a family. But the economic condition is equally to a good extent a question of household management and responsible use of money. By working, producing and selling the family contributes to its economic well being and the economic well being of others. In this way the family shares in the development of society.

The family as the primary spiritual community for man.

The family as the basic social unit is the house where the seed of faith is planted. The transmission of religious beliefs and customs is fundamentally dependent on the family. Education of offspring, which is one of the primary duties of parents, includes also religious education. This is common to all cultures and peoples. The Code of Canon Law underlines this point: "...It is therefore primarily the responsibility of Christian parents to ensure the Christian education of their children in accordance with the teaching of the church."

In his Apostolic exhortation, *Familiaris Consortio* Pope John Paul II pointed out that in a Christian family, love and life constitute the nucleus of the saving mission of the Christian family in the Church and for the Church. Thus:

It is thus in the love between husband and wife and between the members of the family – a love lived out in all its extraordinary richness of values and demands: totality, oneness, fidelity and fruitfulness – that the Christian family's participation in the prophetic, priestly and kingly mission of Jesus Christ and His Church finds expression and realization.

It is in the sacrament of baptism and through this sacrament that the membership of the Christian community is fostered and perpetuated.

The family fosters the spirit of community, communion and participation.

The word community - *communitas*, has the Latin root *com-* (*cum*) implying 'plurality', while *-unity unus* means 'one'. The *tas* ending of the word gives it an abstract notion, in other words, the character of any "plurality" that is together in some way that makes us want to say that it is also a oneness, a unit. In this sense we can speak of a neighbourhood as a community (geographical oneness), of a Catholic community (oneness from a religious tradition); of the community of Western Nations (a political and cultural oneness).

According to Webster's Dictionary, a community is a body of people having common organization or interests or living in the same place under the same laws. It is the state of being held in common; common possession, enjoyment, liability et

cetera. It implies further common character; agreement; identity; social intercourse; association; life in association with others.

A community can be either likened to a family or distinguished from it. It is like a family in that the relationships between members of the community are basically personal in character rather than impersonal; it is unlike a family in that the association between members of the community is based on free choice rather than on common ancestry. However, they are related to each other.

On the other hand, 'Communion' *communio*, *communis*, meaning the act of sharing, or holding in common, or the state of things so held; participation, community; association or fellowship; mutual intercourse; a spiritual interchange of ideas or feelings et cetera.

"Solidarity" means union or fellowship arising from common responsibilities and interests, as between members of a class or body of persons, or between classes, peoples or groups; community of interests, feelings, purposes, or actions; social cohesion. Consequently, solidarity implies participation.

Communion since it has some elements of spirituality supersedes community but they complement one another. Communion of different people together in a more or less stable and lasting manner can give rise to a community of these people. An existing community could also give rise to communion among the members of the community. Community spirit and communion give rise to solidarity of the members, especially, in the sense of common purposes, action and participation.

The precedence of communion over community could be

explained from the points of view of the Doctrine of the "Mystical Body of Christ". According to Catholic theology, salvation is to be achieved not simply through a person's individual relationship with God but also and more significantly through an intensified life in community with other believers as members of Christ's Body. The commandment to love one's neighbour as oneself should then be understood as the mandate to remain in communion with others through love and action, and thus to perpetuate the reality of Church and civil society as interrelated communities.

When a man and a woman (or as in a polygamous marriage some women) unite together in marriage, with their children, they constitute a family: a relationship of mutual help, companionship and love. This is why the family in all its complex structure appears in every culture as a bond of communion and solidarity among its members. Hence, this is a natural attribute that arises from the nature of marriage and the family institution.

The family is the basic social unit. It is the basic cell of the society. The Holy Father, Pope John Paul II, saw in matrimony and in the family a complex of interpersonal relationships, which are thus set up. This interpersonal relationship arises from the married life of spouses, namely, those of fatherhood and motherhood, filiations and fraternity. It is through this interpersonal relationship that every human person is introduced into the "human family" - society in general and into the "family of God" - that is the Church. Hence, also from the perspective of the Church, the family is the first communion. It is the naturally conducive atmosphere where the union of man and woman reflects the relationship Christ and His Church, not only in the self-gift that establishes this communion but also in the effects of the self-gift; namely, the

conjugal love of man and woman, from which new life springs forth. This is why every valid canonical marriage is an establishment of consortium totius vitae – the partnership of the whole of life.

Conclusion

The person is not only sacred but also social. How we organize our society – in economics and politics, in law and religion directly affects human behaviour, dignity and the capacity of individuals to grow in community. Marriage and the family are the central social institutions that must be supported, strengthened and promoted, not undermined if the society will fulfil its basic functions to the people. The well-being of the individual person and of both civil and Christian society is intimately linked with the healthy condition of that community produced by marriage and the family. We believe people have a right and a duty to community and participation in society, seeking together the common good and well-being of all, especially the poor and vulnerable.

As the Catholic Institute for development, Justice and Peace (CIDJAP) mark its 30 anniversary. We pledge our continued unflinching commitment and devotion to its mission: empowerment of people; promotion of integral development; challenging structures of injustice; creating hope; working for peace and promoting the social teachings of the Church. But particular attention will be paid to bringing this mission to the nucleus of society through marriage and the family.

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CHAPTER 4

THE CHURCH AND ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERNS: THE ANGLICAN INVOLVEMENT

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Preamble

"LAUDATO SI, mi' Signore" – *"Praise be to you, my Lord"*. In the words of this beautiful canticle, Saint Francis of Assisi reminds us that our common home is like a sister with whom we share our life and a beautiful mother who opens her arms to embrace us. "Praise be to you, my Lord, through our Sister, Mother Earth, who sustains and governs us, and who produces various fruit with coloured flowers and herbs."

"This sister now cries out to us because of the harm we have inflicted on her by our irresponsible use and abuse of the goods with which God has endowed her. We have come to see ourselves as her lords and masters, entitled to plunder her at will. The violence present in our hearts, wounded by sin, is also reflected in the symptoms of sickness evident in the soil, in the water, in the air and in all forms of life. This is why the earth herself, burdened and laid waste, is among the most abandoned and maltreated of our poor; she "groans in travail" (*Rom 8:22*). We have forgotten that we ourselves are dust of

the earth (cf. *Gen 2:7*); our very bodies are made up of her elements, we breathe her air and we receive life and refreshment from her waters."

The above is a quotation from the Catholic pontiff, Pope Francis Encyclical '*Laudato Si*' on the need for all humanity to wake up to the challenges of the environment.

The Global Picture of the Environmental Crisis

The current environmental crisis that is ravaging the earth and threatening its carrying capacity as well as its yielding ability, calls for serious concern. This concern has become imperative as people are being urged to modify their behaviour in order to halt the progression of environmental crisis. Behavioural change has become a call to be adhered to, if we are to: reduce consumption, form the habit of repairing, reusing and recycling and according to Schumacher, live simply so that others may simply live, as people engage in different forms of development. The call for a behavioral change towards human attitude to the environment is a reminder of what the Scripture tells us that, "the earth is the Lord's and everything in it" (*Psalm 24:1*) and that all of creation belongs to God, not to human beings. Human beings are part of the created order and our first calling by God and concern is to be stewards of the earth and the rest of creation (*Genesis 1:28-29*). We cannot exercise responsible stewardship over the earth unless and until we change our "perception of dominion" on earth. This

can only come through a changed perception and behavior influenced by the scriptures. This has also been alluded to by many as the biblical basis for earth-keeping projects and "earth community" concepts. This responsible stewardship and earth -keeping is intended to foster the much needed emphasis on the integrity of creation.

It is also in keeping with this perspective that environmentally conscious people all over the world are raising awareness on the current tide of environmental crisis and its complicating nature. Darby has succinctly highlighted the crisis thus

"We live within a rapidly deteriorating global environment, brought about by at least to some extent by our own activity: it is a time of dangerous global warming, a time in which basic natural resources for ongoing life such as clean water and air are becoming exhausted; a time of an exploding human world population; a time in which one or another sort of nuclear catastrophe is possible-each of these matters being greatly complicated in many ways by global economic and political problems that no one seems to know how to address."

The implication of the global earth crisis painted above is that

today our beautiful environment has been distorted and destroyed in many ways. The extent of this distortion is such that human existence on the surface of the earth is endangered. The threat to human existence and 'bio-depletion' reminds us of Fidon Mwombeki's caution that "humanity is dangerously capable of destroying itself and the creation" The current rate of the earth crisis emanating from the quest for development and other human activities also increases the fear expressed by Sean McDough that "when the earth is disfigured and its fruitfulness impaired, then every succeeding generation of people is automatically condemned to poverty" and the possible extinction of the whole universe.

The current environmental crisis has to be viewed from moral and ethical perspective. Failure to do this is a sign and indication that the values underlying our dominant cultural and economic practices have become bankrupt. According to Conradie, the problem lies not outside but inside us, not in the ecosystem but in the human heart, in the collective psyche. The big question that confronts us is this, what shall we do to avert this impending doom?

To avert the impending doom, there is need for more inclusive, participatory and interdisciplinary collaborative effort involving especially Christianity and its theological resources. Patricia Mische captures this need aptly by

asserting that:

Science and technology alone cannot resolve ecological threats. Nor can governments or the laws they promulgate ... Sustaining the integrity of creation thus requires not only the external laws governments enact to deal with belligerent behaviour, but also inner governance, laws internalised in our hearts and minds and the will to live by them... Church praxis has special relevance for the development of inner governance and a culture of ecological responsibility. Religions carry the archetypes, the symbols, meanings, values and moral codes around which people coalesce and define themselves, their sense of the sacred, and their relationship with each other and the natural world.

Christian Ecumenical Engagement on Environmental Concerns over the years

In recognition of the role of religion in environmental discourse, a significant new dialogue emerged on the interface of ecology and theology during the decade of the 1990s. The concept of such an interface is now gaining ground within the formal study of ecology, environmental science,

environmental policy, environmental law, environmental economics and natural resource management. Following similar trend, theological studies in the field of environment and development soon became one of the areas in which Christianity expresses its concern for the environment. In view of the theological input it needed to make, there arose a need to articulate an eco-theological framework which would be responsive to the environmental challenges of our time, - one capable of inspiring practical commitment to environmental responsibility.

It is therefore, important to note that the role of religion in society has been recognized, including also the role of the church in environmental challenges. Christian involvement in the environment has a long theological history in spite of being accused for its anthropocentric stance on nature. Lynn White as mentioned earlier was one of such early accusers who held Christianity responsible for what he called "the historical roots of our ecological crisis". We have to note that Christian engagement on environmental issues should not be understood as simply aimed at responding to the above accusation to absolve itself of the blame of anthropocentrism. It is, however, to be understood as a way of fulfilling its sacred and social responsibility in the world- especially with regard to environmental protection. In this

context, the role of theology is to understand and systematically articulate the crisis, the causes, the effects (present and potential) and provide theological resources for the church to approach the problem in a more creative and helpful ways.

In this regard, a critical reflection on the contribution of theology would appreciate the efforts made through theological engagements at different periods in the history of Christian engagement on the environment-Dominion, Stewardship, Ecotheology and *Oikotheology*.

These phases which I termed the 'generation of ecological motifs', are to demonstrate that Christianity had evolved many stages of environmental concern and action. An elaborate and a more unified engagement in environmental matters from Christian ecumenical perspectives come from the World Council of Churches (WCC). The environmental engagement of WCC could be located between the third and fourth generation of the ecological motif. The World Council of Churches had contributed immensely to creating awareness and inspiring Christian commitment to global ecological issues.

The Anglican Environmental Network

Apart from the ecumenical initiatives discussed above, many denominations had at one time or the other been engaged in environmental action. For example, the 1998 Lambeth Conference Resolution on the environment is still the most efficient demonstration of Anglican voice on the Environmental situation. The Global Anglican Communion had encouraged a number of networks on Theology and Development particularly on environmental sustainability projects. These networks are coordinated through the office of the Anglican Consultative Council (ACC). The networks include the following: Peace and Justice Network, Youth Network, Refugee Network, Family Network, Urban Network and Environmental Network.

The Anglican Environmental Network is a result of the 1998 Lambeth Conference which was remarkable in the history of Anglican involvement in environmental sustainability. It was in this Conference that a resolution was passed on the environment, calling on all Anglican Provinces across the world as a matter of urgency to inform the faithful about what is happening to our environment and to encourage them to see the stewardship of God's earth as a necessary part of our Christian discipleship. This Conference sought to maintain the biblical vision of creation by calling for a responsible human relationship with the creation. The call is based on the

growing realization in many parts of the world that human existence and the entire ecosystem is endangered. The Conference realized that if humanity is to sustain the *integrity of creation*, then we will need to change our attitudes and behavior, noting that it is the poor of the world who often live closest to the results of environmental degradation, and that it is also the youth of the world who will inherit the results of the present degradation, it therefore asserts that concern for the environment is closely linked to a concern for justice. The Anglican Communion Environmental Network has the responsibility to help address the concern for eco-justice in a practical way. The aims of the network include the following:

- (i) To encourage Anglicans all over the world to support sustainable environmental practices as individuals and in the life of their communities.
- (ii) To provide information about policies embraced by synods, councils and commissions, and especially by the instruments of Anglican Unity (Statements by the Archbishop of Canterbury, resolutions and Reports of the Lambeth Conference and the Anglican Consultative Council)
- (iii) To support local initiatives by providing information about ideas and best practices developed around the Communion.
- (iv) To share information about resources and initiatives

that may be of value to Anglicans everywhere.

- (v) To provide an opportunity for interested Anglicans to meet both as a formal network, and informally via electronic media.

The Environmental Network represents an attempt by the Anglican Communion to seek practical ways of engaging in environmental issues and placing same on the agenda of the Global Anglican Communion.

Official Statements on the Environment from the See of Canterbury in Recent Times

To be discussed in this section are some official prominent statements made by the two former heads of Anglican Communion, whose primacy fall under the period of the establishment of the various environmental initiatives.

George Carey 1991-2003

George Carey's primacy lasted from 1991 to 2003. During his tenure, he moved the Anglican Communion to embrace the difficult task of responding creatively to the environmental challenges facing humanity. On June 4, 2001, on the eve of World Environment Day, he launched a Church Seminar on environmental issues. In his speech during the launching, he called for greater attention to be paid to the links between poverty and the environment. In order to vividly clarify this

link between poverty and environment, he made two important statements which have been reproduced hereunder:

A child born in a wealthy country is likely to consume, waste, and pollute more in his lifetime than 50 children born in developing nations. Our energy-burning lifestyles are pushing our planet to the point of no return. It is dawning on us at last that the life of our world is as vulnerable as the children we raise.

The interaction between the environment and poverty is twofold. Clearly, environmental degradation causes poverty. An obvious example is the link between climate change and expansion of deserts, such as the Sahara with the resulting loss of both arable and grazing land for herds. On the other hand, poverty can be the cause of environmental damage. Poor people are forced to create conditions that imperil themselves and our world. It is thus very much in the interest of richer countries to bring poorer nations out of extreme poverty to share in the fight against environmental damage.

From the above statements, we could see that Archbishop Cary was concerned about the relationship between poverty and the environment. To some extent, the issue of

environmental justice emerged strongly from his two addresses.

Rowan Williams 2003-2012

Here, the statement by the former head of the global Anglican Communion, Archbishop Rowan Williams becomes insightful. He said that "Anglicans are in international development because of a certain set of convictions about humanity". In order to live out this conviction, he stressed that we will need to change our attitudes and behavior emphasizing behavioral change as a requisite solution to sustaining the earth, and solving the current environmental crisis. This, according to him, is in recognition of the fact that a combination of factors; which includes but not limited to, climate change, industrial pollution, deforestation, soil erosion, mineral and fossil fuel depletion, species extinction, over-population, over-consumption, and even unregulated tourism and development, are having devastating global effects on our environment.

Archbishop Williams has presented a series of lectures which touched on the environmental crisis especially the problem of the current climate change. Archbishop Williams argues from an environmental justice perspective as to why ecological issues are fundamentally a matter of justice for both human

and non human inhabitants of the earth. In his opinion, viewing creation as a gift from God enables humanity to debunk the impression that the earth and its resources are just there for human use only. He further argues that:

For the Christian the connection between ecology and justice is axiomatic, it is no surprise to read in much contemporary writing on ecology that the irresponsible treatment of the environment both reflects and encourages an oppressive politics. To conscript the resources of the natural world into the struggle for power between humans is nothing new; but what recent decades have made clear is that this process has now reached a point at which the offence against the nature of things is no longer just a matter of moral and theological judgement: it has reached a point at which an offended natural order 'rebels', is no longer able to co operate with undisciplined human will.

Archbishop Williams expressed appreciation for some of the church practices which promote environmental friendly living among individual churches. However, he condemned the slow pace at which the practice is taken at the institutional

levels of the global Anglican Communion. He also showed dissatisfaction on non-commitment on the institutional level where action on environmental issues are lacking. While commenting on this situation, he says:

A recent and welcome development has been the growth of 'eco-congregations', local churches or church groups signing up to a set of environmentally responsible policies for their day to day work as individuals and as communities. But there is still a gap in speech and practice at the level of our institutions as a whole.

Similarly, in a lecture titled "Ecology and Economy" delivered at the University of Kent in Canterbury, Archbishop Williams addressed directly the relationship between ecology and economy. He writes:

The two big "e-words" (ecology and economy) in my title have sometimes been used in recent decades as if they represented opposing concerns.... But this separation or opposition has come to look like a massive mistake. It has been said that 'the economy is a wholly-owned subsidiary of the environment'. The earth itself is what ultimately controls

economic activity because it is the source of the materials upon which economic activity works.... Economy and ecology cannot be separated. We should not be surprised, after all, the two words relate to the same central concept.

Considerable time have been spent discussing the global Anglican Communion involvement on environmental sustainability, below is a brief discussion on the contribution of the Anglican Church in Nigeria. Nothing happens globally until it happens locally.

In order to fulfill the aims of the Anglican Environmental Network, a proposal for the establishment of a National Directorate of Theology and Development in the Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion) was made. The proposal was one of the many resolutions emanating from the Theological Consultation Conference held in Ibru Ecumenical Center, Agbaraha otter in Delta state. The Directorate of Theology and Development as proposed will engage in actions towards protecting, caring and managing the environment through the following areas:

I. Environmental awareness and education: The Directorate will encourage all the Anglican Theological

Institutions to engage in the study of **ecology, theology and development** as part of its curriculum. This has become necessary since the theological students upon ordination, are expected to go into the mission field to help build up peoples' knowledge of the impacts of environmental damage on lives and livelihoods. In addition, they are expected achieve two important goals (1) assist in identifying and utilizing community assets to improve their livelihoods, (2) Educating and empowering communities on the basic principles of sustainable development in order to improve their livelihoods through the concept of **Assets Based Community Development (ABCD)**

- The National Directorate has the responsibility of organizing workshops at the national level where participants from all the dioceses are trained in environment and development concerns in order to provide environmental awareness to their respective dioceses by gathering, processing, and disseminating Government and International information on best environmental practices.
- The Directorate encourages the establishment of Diocesan Inspectorate of Environment and Development to engage in a regular environmental inspection of the vicarages and church compounds, to

ensure aesthetics and best environmental practices, including EIAs on the on-going church projects where possible.

In addition to the above, the Directorate is expected to engage the public through sensitization and *conscientization* programmes, workshops and training in order to promote best practices and case studies relating to sustainable development. This will be achieved by articulating resources from the bible, indigenous knowledge system, to identify structures, factors, and people's attitudes which contribute to ecological footprints and see what can be done to halt or reverse (where possible) the progression of such ecological footprints.

The Directorate draws its aims from that of the Anglican Environmental Network but in addition, expands the vision of the Church of Nigeria especially the section which states that the Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion) should be a caring church. Strengthening social responsibility of the church through the vision of the Church of Nigeria has become imperative since if the church does not engage or stand side by side with the people in sharing their joys and sorrows, anxieties and daily burdens, it would lose its relevance.

Conclusion, Observation and Recommendation

We have seen from the discussion that the church has shown concern about the current environmental crisis judging from the ecumenical involvement and actions on the environment over the years. Various denominations have followed the ecumenical examples to have a denominational perspective of their own engagement. The global Anglican Communion as a denomination, had done creditably well in placing environmental sustainability in its global agenda. The Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion) has followed suit by establishing a National Directorate on Theology and Development with the aim of translating the global Anglican Communion policies on the environment to the grass root.

However, in spite of the ecumenical policies and denominationally oriented practical actions, there still exist in the various church denominations traces of nonchalance on individual levels. I am aware of this fact because I recently engaged in a research that sought to determine the level of environmental awareness among the Clergy in a particular state of Nigeria. From the result of the research, it was discovered that one of the strongest factors responsible for the nonchalance is traceable to the influence of the **theology of "Otherworldliness"** This work is not about the research I have mentioned, therefore I am not going into the details of the theology of "otherworldliness" but suffice it to say that the influence of this theology has not presented the Church as an organ or agent of social transformation, one that is concerned with the integrity of creation.

According to this theology, the duty of the church is just to urge God, hopefully in prayers, to intervene and give a solution to the problems or needs of people, if that is necessary. This view is informed by the perception of the World as an Old dilapidated building which has been mapped out for demolition and/or destruction. The duty of the Church is not to help people, live a somewhat better life in the Old apartment building but to convince them to move over into the new apartment house, which is the Kingdom of God. For the Church to achieve this role of pointing people to the Kingdom of God, it must maintain a "certain aloofness from the world". All these, are based on the wrong application of hermeneutics to biblical texts such as John 17:16 "They are not of the world, even as I am not of it."

This theology impresses us to believe that the harsh and bitter experiences of majority of the inhabitants of the earth stifle every effort in conceptualizing this world as home. It therefore does not appeal to many Christians especially those at the margins of the society who have been structurally and systematically excluded from the world and its resources. The harsh realities of this world, the prevailing injustices in it, including the harsh global economic conditions under which many live, do not inspire people to feel that they are at home on earth. As a result, people continue to long for a real home

and are in agreement with the apostle Paul who said that:

I consider that the sufferings of this present time are as nothing compared with the glory to be revealed for us. For creation awaits with eager expectation the revelation of the children of God, for creation was made subject to futility, not of its own accord but because of the one who subjected it, in hope that creation itself would be set free from slavery to corruption and share in the glorious freedom of the children of God. We know that all creation is groaning in labour pains event until now...we also groan within ourselves as we wait for adoption, the real redemption of our bodies.

The above text and others with similar expressions have heavily influenced our Christian cosmology. They have instigated and reinforced the notion of the alienation of human beings from the rest of the "earth community". The extent of this alienation is such that some Christians have been preoccupied with what Conradie called a feeling of "otherworldliness" which does not encourage a sense of belonging here on earth. Instead, "it fosters a sojourner sensibility". The description of heaven is very enticing and tantalizing, it invokes a strong feeling of longing to be there because the conditions therein are unimaginable compared to the prevailing harsh conditions of injustice inherent in the this

world. For example, the book of Revelation describes the beauty of the heavenly condition with the following tantalizing expressions

"Therefore, they are before the throne of God and serve him day and night in his temple; and he who sits on the throne will spread his tent over them. Never again will they hunger, never again will they thirst. The sun will not beat upon them, or any scorching heat. For the lamb at the centre of the throne will be their shepherd; he will lead them to springs of living water. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes.

Those who have suffered discrimination, deprivation and exclusion in this world would certainly find enough consolation and comfort from the above biblical texts. This would not only arouse the thinking that we are sojourners on this earth, but would also reinforce the longing for the "eternal home" where there is no form of suffering or discrimination or deprivation as described in the text. This anthropological emphasis on humans as sojourners here on earth has permeated and dominated most of church liturgy, theology and traditions which look with misgiving on the world and its creatures. Behind this belief is the conviction that the world is an inimical place and in no sense the believer's true home. Thomas Hoyt, describes how some black American

Christians who have experienced extreme racial discrimination have been influenced by this thinking. As a result, they have over spiritualized the scripture to the extent that creation is viewed as evil indicating that the earth is not a place to be longed for. A similar thought had been held in the early formative period of Christianity. This was reflected in its dualistic division between the soul and matter which was influenced by platonic and Gnostic ideology. The theology of "otherworldliness" corroborated the views of one of the senior clergy respondent mentioned earlier in my research experience. Certainly, this is a poor theological concept, not based upon the truths of scriptures.

Having made the observations, the following recommendations are made as strategies to counter the extremities of the theology of otherworldliness: (1) The church should intensify its teaching ministry based on sound hermeneutical principles. This will help Christians strike a balance between their responsibility to God's creation as stewards of same while also being conscious of heaven, our eternal home (2) To achieve this, the church should creatively articulate a theology of the environment in such a way that the integrity of creation should be emphasized. To achieve this, I recommend that the concept of "oikothology" should be explored by the church by introducing it in the curriculum of

all the Seminaries and theological institutions.

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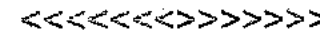
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CHAPTER 5



CARE OF GOD'S CREATION

(With Reference to Nigeria)

(By Rev. Fr. Dr. Ambrose Chineme Agu)

Introduction

Today, more than ever before, people have come to realize that various hardships experienced by humanity and the decline in quality of life are results of how we live and relate to nature. It has become obvious that our ill-treatment of nature, which reacts with changes in its behaviour, is the cause of our own undoing. Simply put, our attitude to nature has turned against us.

Thus, the growing awareness that our world is seriously threatened by deleterious human activities like deforestation, use of agro-chemicals, plundering of natural resources, disrespect for nature, and hazardous gaseous emissions from factories, etc., is leading everywhere to an ever increasing concern for the mother earth. This concern has given rise to various national and international policies, social movements and what we know today as *ecological theology*. The same concern has motivated Pope Francis to an environmental encyclical *Laudato Si'*, in which he affirms that we are faced

“with global environmental deterioration.” The deterioration shows itself in climate change and natural scourges.

Therefore, in the face of climate change and disruptions in nature, the people of the world have come to realize that they cannot continue to live as usual and use the goods of the earth recklessly. There is a clarion call for a change of attitude towards nature. Unfortunately, this clarion call seems not to have been heard by most Nigerians since they are living in utter neglect of the new laws and principles emerging everywhere concerning the care of nature. Apparently, many Nigerians are ignorant of what is happening elsewhere, and there is seemingly no law put in place by the government to check certain acts. If these laws exist, they are not enforced.

In this short article, I wish to renew the call for the care of God's creation and to appeal to all, especially Nigerians, for a change of attitude towards both human and non-human creation.

The Problem: Ecological Crisis

Ecological crisis has to do with changes or modifications in an environment which create adverse conditions for the continued survival of the species in the environment. It is the result of environmental degradation. The Free Encyclopedia, Wikipedia, indicates that “ecological crisis occurs when the environment of a species or a population changes in a way that destabilizes its continued survival.” Ecological change and, therefore, crisis, has assumed a world-wide dimension. The causes of this crisis are multiple, but human activities are

acknowledged to be the principal driver for ecological change. One major effect of the ecological degradation is climate change which, itself, has adverse effects on ecosystems. For instance, the rise in global temperature has led to the melting of the Arctic and Antarctic ice sheets, rise in sea levels and decrease in snow-fall. This has so influenced the ecosystems that many species are threatened; the threatened species are forced to change their habits. Those that cannot adapt to the new circumstance are either driven out of their habitats or they gradually go into extinction. For instance, polar bears (sea bears) are among the threatened species as a result of climate change.

The polar bears live in one of the planet's coldest region, precisely in the countries that ring the Arctic Circle, namely, Canada, Russia, Alaska, Greenland and Norway. They are protected by a thick coat of insulated fur, which covers a warming layer of fat. Their primary prey is ice seals. In the wake of the global climate warming, the Arctic sea ice is disappearing with the result that polar bears have limited opportunity for hunting and for finding food. Consequently, the polar bears are not developing enough fat for the winter and they are unable to reproduce at a healthy rate.

Besides polar bears, summer ice is essential for the sustenance of a variety of aquatic animals such as shrimps, crabs, oysters, amphibians, cold-water fish and bowhead whales. These animals, not excepting the local people in the Arctic, are forced to change their behaviours or migrate to more favourable areas. In fact, the climate warming has adverse effect on sea and wetland ecosystems. Cold water fish vacate

their natural geographical range and migrate to cooler areas. The option to move is, however, not available to some aquatic life. Again, the loss of sea ice opens up larger parts of the Arctic Ocean to shipping and drilling for oil and gas. These activities worsen the condition of the arctic ecosystems already stressed by the climate change.

Another area of the crisis is the disappearance of biodiversity or biodiversity extinction in many regions of the world. At an alarming rate, immense numbers of species are being decimated through bush burning, deforestation and desertification, increased carbon dioxide in the atmosphere, overhunting, pollution and chemical warfare. It has been noted that every "year between 17,000 and 100,000 species vanish from the planet. The speed in which species are becoming extinct is much faster than in the past."

According to the report of the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF), a non-governmental Organization founded on April 29, 1961, on account of "increased carbon dioxide in the atmosphere, the world's oceans are 30% more acidic now than before the industrial revolution. Cold oceans, like those in the Arctic, are acidifying twice as fast as average. Acidic water interferes with the development of coral reefs and the shells of oysters, crabs, snails and plankton, just to name a few."

Thus, through destruction of natural habitats, invasion of or introduction of unfavourable and harmful substance in ecosystems, the world is experiencing at an alarming rate the loss of genetic and species diversity. The loss of species in an ecosystem spells doom because all forms of life modify or

influence their contexts.

We cannot drop the issue of global warming without reference to the ozone layer depletion and *greenhouse effect*. The depletion of the ozone layer, which shields the biosphere from harmful ultraviolet radiation emitted by the sun, is a serious concern. The principal cause is the release of chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs) into the stratosphere from chemical industries. The reduction of ozone in the stratosphere has serious consequences on humans, animals and plants. Among these consequences are skin cancer, cataract, and inhibition of the reproductive cycle of phytoplankton, etc.

In addition to this, certain human activities like bush burning, burning of fossil fuels, agriculture and land clearing increase the amount of greenhouse gases (water vapour, carbon dioxide, methane, nitrous oxide, ozone) in the biosphere. These gases trap extra from what is released by the sun and cause the earth's temperature to rise; this is the greenhouse effect, a situation which is felt everywhere in the world.

Also, inappropriate relation to nature and ecological degradation are leading to high records of deaths, in both developed and developing nations of the world. Today, more than ever before, human beings are experiencing new types of incurable or near-incurable sickness and diseases at endemic and pandemic levels. We suffered the scourge of Ebola Virus not long ago. Some dangerous diseases like cholera and lassa fever have been recurrent. These diseases tend to be epidemic each time, and claim a great toll on lives. In addition to this,

desire for money (capitalism) has led to production of synthetic foods on which many people depend. Today, many have no access to natural and organic food; the result is poor resistance to diseases. Our environment is no longer healthy enough, and this should be the concern of all.

Giving a speech on the occasion of World Day of Peace in 1990, Pope John Paul II indicated that ecological crisis is a moral problem. This means that we cannot go ahead with the environment without considering what is right and what is not in the light of divine law. "When man turns his back on the Creator's plan, he provokes a disorder which has inevitable repercussions on the rest of the created order. If man is not at peace with God, then earth itself cannot be at peace: 'Therefore the land mourns and all who dwell in it languish, and also the beasts of the field and the birds of the air and even the fish of the sea are taken away' (Hos 4:3). This citation shows the extent of damage that can be caused by irresponsible and indiscriminate human actions. It also means that we should not do anything with entire nature without determining the consequences of our actions. Thus, the Pope writes further:

Certain elements of today's ecological crisis reveal its moral character. First among these is the indiscriminate application of advances in science and technology. Many recent discoveries have brought undeniable benefits to humanity. Indeed, they demonstrate the nobility of the human vocation to participate responsibly in God's creative action in the world. Unfortunately, it is now clear that the

application of these discoveries in the fields of industry and agriculture have produced harmful and long-term effects. This has led to painful realization that we cannot interfere in one area of the ecosystem without paying due attention both to consequences of such interference in other areas and to the well-being of future generations.

What is even more disturbing is when the human life is directly attacked or taken as a secondary value. When economic concern or selfish desire to make gains and maximize profit is placed as a supreme value, it becomes the propelling force that undermines respect for life and human dignity. Unfortunately, this is a practice that has been ingrained in our cultures. The Pope decried this situation as he wrote:

The most profound and serious indication of the moral implications underlying the ecological problem is the lack of respect for life evident in many patterns of environmental pollution. Often, the interests of production prevail over concern for the dignity of workers, while economic interests take priority over the good of individuals and even entire peoples. In these cases, pollution or environmental destruction is the result of an unnatural and reductionist vision which at times leads to a genuine contempt for man.

The Pope also showed concern at the vast possibilities in biological research and decried the "indiscriminate genetic manipulation" and "unscrupulous development of new forms of plant and animal life." He described as unacceptable the experimentation regarding the origins of human life. While noting that rejection of or indifference to fundamental ethical norms would lead mankind to the brink of self-destruction, he stressed that "*respect for life, and above all for the dignity of the human person, is the ultimate guiding norm for any sound economic, industrial or scientific progress.*"

From all we have seen, it is clear that ecological crisis is real, but the extent of ecological disruption is usually not evident to, or known by, a great majority of people. However, we have observed changes in the universe. Global climate warming is harsh on all forms of life. The mother earth is in pains. This requires creation of awareness and a change of attitude. Let us consider some factors favouring environmental degradation.

Factors Favouring Environmental Degradation

Irrational Human Hubris towards Creation

And God blessed them, and God said to them, "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." (Gen 1:28).

The presumed belief that we are better than the rest of creation coupled with wrong theology of dominion over created things

has led humans to ecological "sins". Squandermania, ruthless exploitation and plundering of natural resources, degradation and lack of oversight over nature characterized the human dominion. And for eons we have lived under the illusion of being superior to non-human creation and of being in control of our relation with it. But little did we know that we were shrouded in terrible ignorance; ignorance about our capability and our true relationship with non-human creation. The result is "that natural environment has been gravely damaged by our irresponsible behavior." Writing on the care of the earth on which we have inflicted much harm by our irresponsible use and abuse of the resources God endowed her with, Pope Francis remarked: "We have come to see ourselves as her lords and masters, entitled to plunder her at will. The violence present in our hearts, wounded by sin, is also reflected in the symptoms of sickness evident in the soil, in the water, in the air and in all forms of life." Earlier on, Benedict XVI "urged us to realize that creation is harmed 'where we ourselves have the final word, where everything is simply our property and we use it for ourselves alone. The misuse of creation begins when we no longer recognize any higher instance than ourselves, when we see nothing else but ourselves.'" Nature now laughs back at us as we find ourselves in ecological crisis which we cannot easily control.

It is now high time we bent down to learn the true situation of things. The perils of climate change and environmental degradation are compelling us to rethink. I believe that we cannot understand the injunction of Gen. 1:28 in isolation from its wider context of Gen 1:1-2:15. God created, and all he created is good. What is good is meant to be cherished and

preserved. It is significant then that Gen 2:15 says, "The Lord God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to **work it and take care of it.**" Therefore, we should understand first that the "dominion" of Gen 1:28 means a creative responsibility. It is a command to care, not to neglect; it is an appeal to protect, not to destroy; it is a mission to nurture, not to plunder; it is an instruction to use reasonably, not to misuse. As Benedict XVI told the priests of the Diocese of Bolzano-Bressanone, "as long as the earth was seen as God's creation, the task of 'subduing' it was never intended as an order to enslave it but rather as the task of being guardians of creation and developing its gifts; of actively collaborating in God's work ourselves, in the evolution that he ordered in the world so that the gifts of Creation might be appreciated rather than trampled upon and destroyed."

If today we understand that we have a mission to nurture and fend for all forms of life, much good can still be done and harm prevented. In the 2008 Pastoral Letter of Chinese Regional Bishops' Conference (CRBC), the bishops wrote in reference to Gen 1:28, "... man is the culmination of His creation. He lets man share in his love; He gives man dominion over the world in order to share with him His power to create, to make the earth more beautiful. We also realize that: man and all things on earth are all God's creation, all living things are equal, we need each other for existence, we need to co-exist and prosper."

Restricted Idea of Redemption

The Christian bible contains two eschatological views which are apparently mutually exclusive and likely to cause confusion if not properly ordered to each other. One view

speaks of the destruction of the world through fire and the disappearance of the elements (2 Pet 3:7,10,12) on the Judgment Day; the other view is about the restoration or renewal of all things (Acts 3:21; Rev 21:5).

The first view has led to a popular view of destruction which compels us to denigrate the earth as "nothing" and not deserving of respect or care. Thus, unconsciously and simply we believe that the beautiful fauna and flora of the earth with all the elements will be blotted out of existence once the time is up. Then only human beings will be eligible for redemption. Were it to be so, God's creative force would end in fiasco. This mentality has its consequences for ecological conservation. "If our vision of the future is a rather vague disembodied state that has no place for trees, flowers, mountains, lakes, and fascinating animals and insects, then it is likely that we will not attach much value to them in the present."

The second view dwells on restoration. The idea of restoration or renewal implies the idea of continuity. What is renewed or restored is not an entirely new thing but what had been there. Therefore, 2 Pet 3:7,10,12 cannot mean the complete annihilation of the physical world. It is important to note that Peter, after mentioning the idea of destruction by fire in verse 12, immediately referred, in verse 13, to "*a new heaven and a new earth* in which justice reigns, according to God's promise." That means that the destruction alluded to by Peter should not be seen as a blotting out of all that is there now. According to Ludwig Ott, "The idea of destruction by fire (2 Peter 3:7, 10, 12), which is often found outside the

framework of biblical Revelation, can be taken to be simply a current mode of expression in which the Revelation of the destruction of the world is clothed." For St. Augustine, "the present world will not be entirely destroyed but merely altered: 'The form will pass away, but not the nature.'" This is a reference to Paul who writes, "For the form of this world is passing away" (1 Cor 7:31; cf. 15:24).

With the above background, we can see that the promise of restoration and renewal which is evident in the Scripture helps us to understand the destruction by conflagration. "I make all things new" of (Rev. 21:5) is not to be understood as "I make entirely new things." Josef Wohlmuth writes that the "'see I make all things new' ... should not be interpreted as the eschatological correction of the first creation or even of its demonic origin, but as a radical transformation of a world, which does not owe it to itself but is tempted to do this."

Now, it is not only that the world will be renewed; this renewal will envelop both human and non-human creation. This is why Paul teaches that.

creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God; [20] for the creation was subjected to futility, not of its own will but by the will of him who subjected it in hope; [21] because the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to decay and obtain the glorious liberty of the children of God. [22] We know that the whole creation has been groaning in travail together until now; [23] and not only the creation, but we

ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies. [24] For in this hope we were saved. Now hope that is seen is not hope. For who hopes for what he sees? [25] But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience (Rm 8:19-25).

The result of the restoration of all things is "a new heaven and a new earth." The Prophet Isaiah was the first person to prophesy a new heaven and a new earth (Is 65:17; 66:22), followed by Peter 3:13 and Rev 21:1. These prophecies do not conflict with the teaching of Jesus: "Truly, I say to you, in the new world, when the Son of man shall sit on his glorious throne, you who have followed me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel" (Mt 19:28). The centre of this new heaven and new earth will be the New Jerusalem, which will emerge from God out of heaven (cf. Rev. 21:2-3). This impressive vision of the future will be fulfilled here on earth. The emerging new world will be characterized by justice and peace (2 Pet 3:13); in it, God will dwell among humans and all the restricting circumstances of this present world will vanish (Rev. 21:4).

Therefore, the view of restoration and the notion of a new heaven and a new earth are a respectful recognition of this world and an invitation to reverential treatment of this world and all in it. The entire creation which God himself proclaimed good should be cherished with gratitude. God himself loves his creation. In fact, creation is so important to God that he intends to renew it at the end of time. The details of how he would do it we do not know. But both human and

non-human creation will be, all things being equal, re-created and redeemed. This is a biblical revelation we usually gloss over or pay little attention to. The result of the neglect is the degradation of creation.

Ignorance of our Responsibility

In spite of the growing awareness about ecological issues, many people on the globe, especially those in developing nations, are still either ignorant or not properly informed about the ecological threats that face the universe today and what their responsibility should be. This level of ignorance varies and reflects in the way they live and behave towards the environment.

Nigeria, for instance, is yet to heed the clarion call to the protection of the environment. Our lifestyle has not yet changed in the interest of the environment. It baffles me that many vehicles ply our roads, emitting thick hazardous fumes and no one calls their owners to order. Many spoilt and abandoned vehicles hem our streets and make traffic difficult, and no one acts. Mechanics set up their workshops indiscriminately wherever they find space, and they are allowed. Reckless dumping of refuse into rivers and water channels is still a practice. Akin to this is the indiscriminate disposal of wastes along the streets and throwing out of rubbish from vehicles while on transit. In fact, management of refuse is still a problem in spite of increased attention in this respect in some States. Factories are sited within living quarters. Noise pollution goes on in most places unchecked. Actually, many things go wrong and there is no one to turn to.

Some of these things mentioned above are done more out of

ignorance or lack of awareness than from ill will. Apparently, even the ministers of environment do not know the extent of their responsibilities. Therefore, there is need for a serious mission to call people to order. The government and the Church should get involved in creating awareness and enforcing order.

Am I my Brother's Keeper Mentality

Self-centeredness is one of the reasons for this mentality. We are social beings and should live with the consciousness that we are not alone in the universe. Thus, it is high time we knew that our actions have domino effect, whether good or bad. Therefore, a responsible action requires being thoughtful of the consequences thereafter. Sins, including "sins" against the environment, affect both the sinner and the others. Thoughtful consideration of oneself, others and the environment should be the basis for action or non-action at all circumstances.

Taking Positive Steps

Comprehensive Respect for Life

In the *Laudato Si'*, Pope Francis writes: "The destruction of the human environment is extremely serious, not only because God has entrusted the world to us men and woman, but because human life is itself a gift which must be defended from various forms of debasement."

Respect for human life requires much more than a focus on the human person. We stand and fall with our environment and with the rest of creation. If it is well with our environment, it will be well with us. We depend on the environment for our

life in its entirety. Creation furnishes us with the materials we need for our work and for our sustenance. The air we breathe is part of nature. The food we eat and the drinks that slake our thirst are gained from the natural environment. The gears we use, the articles of clothing that cover our nakedness and provide warmth for the body are obtained from nature.

Creation gives us the materials for our shelter. The medications we need for the restoration of the body are the gifts of nature. Therefore, respect for human life means also taking adequate care of creation in toto. It means taking care of the flora and fauna of the universe; it means paying attention to the entire environment of men and women.

From the foregoing, it will not be difficult to see how all forms of life depend on one another. Care for one form of life is also care for the others. We must learn to live environment friendly, with the understanding that whatever happens to our environment happens to us.

Disciplined Use of Resources

Conservation of creation means also using the material that creation offers us frugally and with restraint. Squandermania leads wastefulness, but judicious use of materials is a way of safeguarding creation.

Jesus left us a wonderful lesson in the miracle of the multiplication of loaves. Often we pay more attention to the reality of the multiplication and the number of people fed. But there is an aspect of the miracle story that we gloss over. It is the aspect of Jesus asking his disciples to collect what was left over. This aspect is usually mentioned in passing or

cursorily, but it is an important lesson in the light of the preservation of the goods of nature. Jesus, although he could multiply and replicate resources, did not encourage wasting of resources. This is a great sermon on waste reduction and judicious use of resources. This singular act of Jesus is in tandem with the call by the Church on the international plane to promote "simple life" and "frugal spending" in view of the conservation of the earth's resources.

There is a move today towards the protection of the environment through three "Rs" (Reduce, Reuse, and Recycle) campaign. The message of the three "Rs" is that we should discipline ourselves to eschew greed; we should not turn to waste what could still be used for other purposes; we should make profit out of what ordinarily would be wasted through recycling. Unfortunately, we do not have many recycling plants around us which could turn our wastes to useful materials. This is an area both the government and the Church could explore to make things better for our people.

It may be interesting to note that charity is a means of waste reduction. Giving out what we have that we do not need removes our excesses. Often, it is greed or ostentatious living that makes us accumulate more than we need. We should learn to share so that those who do not have will not lack, and those who have will not have excess. In this way, the possibility of accumulating wastes will reduce.

When we multiply wastes, we pollute our environment and create an unhealthy environment which does not spare human life. The pollutants we produce take their tolls on human life.

Dirty environment and polluted water sources lead to cholera, typhoid fever and so on. Caution should, therefore, be taken in the way we use materials and products.

The Imperative to Ecological Education

We have already stressed the importance of awareness creation on ecological problems and responsibility. Pope John Paul II, in his World Day of Peace address in 1990 called for some education in ecological responsibility: "*An education in ecological responsibility is urgent: responsibility for oneself, for others and for the earth. ... Churches and religious bodies, non-governmental and governmental organizations, indeed all members of society, have a precise role to place in such education. The first educator, however, is the family, where the child learns to respect his neighbor and to love nature.*"

If we intend to achieve a significant and consistent result in this education, then **Environmental Science** should be integrated into the curricula of studies in our country for the various levels of students. A properly adapted design can be prepared for each level of pupils and students, starting from the primary to the tertiary institutions. If attempt is made on all fronts to inculcate in our people ecological consciousness and discipline, a greater and lasting impact will be made. In our time, we can no longer remain indifferent to the way things are. Doing this will, gradually but certainly, lead to the collapse of our world.

Conclusion

In this short article, I have tried to expose the danger facing our world today, the ecological crisis. Though I have not done an exhaustive analysis of the issues involved, the exposition made is sufficient to show us that the problem is real and calls for sincere attention. The reality of the ecological crisis is a matter of life and death because it concerns the survival of all forms of life on our planet, earth.

The continued expansion or attenuation of the problem lies on our hands since human activities are to blame for the ecological predicament we are entangled in. The whole situation calls, therefore, for conscientious and concerted efforts to make amends and change our attitudes. I invite all to join the campaign to fight ecological degradation and curb the crisis already making life difficult for all.

ENDNOTES

Pope Francis, Encyclical *Laudato Si'* on the Care of Our Common Home, Nigeria:

St. Paul Publication, 2015, no. 3. Wikipedia, "Ecological Crisis" in:

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ecological_crisis, accessed on 3/7/2016

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WWF Global, http://wwf.panda.org/what_we_do/where_we_Work/arctic/what_we_do/climate/

John Paul II, *Peace with God the Creator, Peace with all of Creation* (Message of His Holiness Pope John Paul II for the Celebration of the World Day of Peace, 1 Jan 1990), no. 5. Presented online: <https://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/messages/peace/document>, accessed on 19-Feb-16.

Ibid., no. 6.

government no matter from which angle it is considered. It encourages governance at the grassroots; in other words, it promotes participatory government. It involves local people in the government of the State and the Church. This is the reason for the particular or local Churches, that the gospel may reach every corner of the world. It is also the reason for the faith-sharing communities that were created in zones and according to streets in recent years. If the central government of the Church at the Vatican is left alone to take decisions concerning a particular parish, the issue will linger for perpetuity. But when authority is decentralized and delegated, it makes governance easier.

In the civil context, the formal establishment and official decree of the Local Government Administration in 1976 was a result of the principle of subsidiarity, in order to facilitate the government of the people by the people and for the people. The local government councils were being controlled in all ramifications by the Federal and State before this reform. Then, there emerge the problem of some towns complaining that they were being neglected especially in the allocation of resources. Notwithstanding this new idea, the State government continued to interfere in the affairs of the local government; it continued to call the shorts in the affairs of the

local populations. It was the 1976 decree that gave some independent status to the Local Government, and finally helped in solving the problem of marginalization of some remote parts of the Country. In her attempt to intervene in those activities that promote good living, the local government has created public enterprises in order to take care of some governmental services. The question is whether this has helped matters. There are still lapses, and that is why the Catholic Church cannot keep silent. The Church, in her social teaching, still insists that the citizens from the smallest communities, organizations, zones and families, should be taken care of.

The Catholic Church, in trying to put order, and in her quest for this participatory government in the Church, has in her hierarchical structure the dioceses and the parishes, so that every Catholic has the pastoral care due to his/her state of life. The Church cannot shy away from making her voice heard on behalf of the poor masses that are marginalized. She has always been the mouthpiece of the citizens before the Government when things are not moving as they should. Indeed, how could one promote the dignity of a person without showing concern for his basic needs, at the roots of the family, groups, associations, and the local territories from which they came? The basis of true care and education of the human person, in his/her totality, includes his/her Social,

economic, political, cultural and material aspects of life.

1.1. ORIGIN OF SUBSIDIARITY.

The word "Subsidiarity" is derived from the Latin verb *subsidio* (to aid or help), and the related noun *subsidium* (aid or assistance). This concept was first used formally in Catholic social teaching. It is a principle of social organization that originated in the Roman Catholic Church, and was developed following the First Vatican Council. It has been associated by some with the idea of decentralization. In its most basic formulation, it holds that social problems should be dealt with at the most immediate (or local) level consistent with their solution. The Church, in her wisdom, knows that, in discharging her salvific duties, she needs the local people to make gospel reach the ends of the world. This principle is sometimes viewed as an aspect of the concept of federalism, although the two have no necessary connection.

2.1. SUBSIDIARITY IN THE CHURCH'S DOCUMENTS

In order to foster this principle and to show that the Catholic Church propagates it, it is well defined in the Church's documents. Let us examine what she says about this principle of subsidiarity. We cannot talk about Catholic teaching without the Bible because it is the foundation of our faith. Every Christian teaching is rooted in it. Tracing back to the

Acts of the Apostles chapter 6 verse 1-4, it reads;

"Now during those days, when the disciples were increasing in number, the Hellenists complained against the Hebrews because their widows were being neglected in the daily distribution of food. And the twelve called together the whole community of the disciples and said, "It is not right that we should neglect the word of God in order to wait on tables, Therefore, friends, select from among yourselves seven men of good standing, full of the spirit and of wisdom, whom we may appoint to this task, while we, for our part, will devote ourselves to prayer and to serving the word"

The negligence of the widows in the daily distribution was not out of malice rather because the Christian community were growing in number and the population was becoming unmanageable for those whose duty were to share the community's needs. Considering their complaint, the apostles introduced them to representative government: They chose among themselves able men who will do this work. If the apostles had made the selection themselves, it could have not solved the problem who knows. This is

subsidiarity in practice.

The *Compendium of the Catholic Church* defined "Subsidiarity" thus:

"...the realm of civil society, understood as the sum of the relationships between individuals and intermediate social groupings, which are the first relationships to arise and which came about thanks to "the creative subjectivity of the citizen" [397].

Subsidiarity, understood in the positive sense as economic, institutional or juridical assistance offered to lesser social entities, entails a corresponding series of negative implications that require the State to refrain from anything that would de facto restrict the existential space of the smaller essential cells of society. Their initiative, freedom and responsibility must not be supplanted."

The salient points to note in this definition are *smaller cell of society, juridical assistance, freedom and responsibility*. The society cannot be complete without human persons and this shows that the principle does not operate in blues, rather, humans are involved. We find out here that number matters, the population of the people should be small for its

effectiveness. Juridical assistance shows that aid to this must be to a particular group of persons within specified territorial bounds. This very point is important because people within the same territorial jurisdiction are likely to share many things in common than in a mixed culture. Again, in as much as the small groups of persons are being helped, it should not be forgotten that they have their rights and responsibilities. Therefore the Church propagates that their rights are to be upheld at the same time.

The *Code of Canon Law*, Book II, on "The people of God, particular Churches and the Authority constituted within them": The Articles in this chapter deal fully on the creation of Dioceses, Prelatures, Vicariates, Prefectures and Parishes. All this is to decentralize and decongest the load at the center which is the Vatican, creating avenues for easier asses to the authorities. It helps to foster pastoral care and participatory government in the Church at the local level (cf. Canons 368-374). Then chapter three of this same section of the Code of Canon Law vests powers on the particular Councils of the particular Churches. The code specifies clearly who has what power and its limits. Every level and arm of the Church also has corresponding responsibility attached to her authority; for authority cannot be separated from certain responsibilities. Thus this decentralization of power makes each local Church to have her Diocesan

Pastoral Council and Parish Pastoral Council, depending on which level.

The *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, deals on the principle of Subsidiarity in the context of man's social nature. In treating the dignity of the human person, it refers to her origin at the creation. Having been fashioned in the image or likeness of God, the image of her Creator and endowed with spiritual personality, man deserves every honor and respect.

In his participation in social life, man lives in a community and needs someone with legitimate authority to govern him. Authority can only be exercised legitimately when it seeks the common good of the group concerned. When the community is not involved in the affairs that concern them, be it political or otherwise, then the authority is questionable and does not foster human dignity. "Participation is voluntary and generous engagement of a person in social interchange". It is very important that every individual is carried along in these social interchange- men, women, children and old alike. When everyone is involved, each assumes personal responsibility due to his/her state of life. Meanwhile, it is the role of the State to defend and promote the common good of civil society and this is not different from the common good of human family. The principle of subsidiarity comes into play here, because it is only the small groups that can identify

among themselves who has the aptitude to lead.

3.0. SUBSIDIARITY VIEWED FROM SOCIAL PERCEPTIVE According to the United Nations Development Programme (1999), Subsidiarity is:

"Decentralization, or decentralizing governance, refers to the restructuring or reorganization of authority so that there is a system of co-responsibility between institutions of governance at the central, regional and local levels according to the principle of subsidiarity, thus increasing the overall quality and effectiveness of the system of governance, while increasing the authority and capacities of sub-national levels."

The *Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary* defines subsidiarity as "the principle that a central authority should not be very powerful, and should only control things which cannot be controlled by local organizations" (that is, a supporting, rather than a subordinate) performing only those tasks which cannot be performed effectively at a more immediate or local level. This definition brings out the aspect of the superior-subordinate relationship. The subordinate here is seen as a collaborator, not as an inferior who only takes

instruction, but rather one who is allowed to use his/her initiative. Therefore, it should be an organizing principle that matters ought to be handled by the smallest, lowest or least centralized competent authorities. Certain political decisions should be taken at a local level if possible, rather than by a central authority.

The term "subsidiarity" is also used to refer to a tenet of some forms of conservative or libertarian thought in the United States. For example, conservative author Reid Buckley writes:

"Will the American people never learn that, as a principle, to expect swift response and efficiency from government is fatuous? Will we never heed the principle of subsidiarity (in which our fathers were bred), namely that no public agency should do what a private agency can do better, and that no higher-level public agency should attempt to do what a lower-level agency can do better – that to the degree the principle of subsidiarity is violated, first local government, the state government, and then federal government wax in inefficiency? Moreover, the more powers that are invested in government, and the more powers that are wielded by

government, the less well does government discharge its primary responsibilities, which are (1) defense of the commonwealth, (2) protection of the rights of citizens, and (3) support of just order."

3.1. LOCAL GOVERNMENT

ADMINISTRATION: A necessity for the Principle of Subsidiarity. Subsidiarity principle, in other words, means administration of government at the local level. Let us examine this tier of government and see how it relates to this principle. The 1999 *Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria*, Section 7, guarantees the election of the Local Government Councils. The Federal Government knows quite well that, from Capital Territory, it will not be able to follow up fully and judiciously the activities of the Local Government. Then she deems it fit to officially create and give independent status to Local Government Administration. Without a sound Local Government, a democratic political system at the centre is not possible; and if social services are to be built up, expanded and distributed efficiently, there has to be efficient organs of Local Government directly representative of the people.

The Local Government is an essential instrument of national

and state government for the performance of certain basic services, which can best be decided upon and administered locally on the intimate knowledge of the needs, conditions and peculiarities of the area concerned. It unites people in a defined area, in a common organization, whose functions are essentially complementary to those of the central government, and in the interest of the local residents for the satisfaction of common community needs. It is a means by which a local community solves jointly its common problems and satisfies its needs, which would have been otherwise difficult for individuals to solve or provide respectively. Consequently, its effectiveness is judged through the development it generates, the social amenities it provides, and to the extent that it has catered satisfactorily for the happiness and general well-being of the community it is established to serve.

It provides avenue for the local participation in formulation and execution of policies and decisions that affect their everyday lives. It arouses the local communities' political awareness; it helps mitigate inadequacies at the national and state levels, in terms of participation. Above all, the responsibilities of providing schools, health care, building and maintenance of roads, building of local markets and parks lies on the Local Governments. The Local Government also overcomes what is called "tyranny of distance" created by

National and State governments, since it engenders grassroots participation in policy formulation and implementation.

The provisions of the principle of subsidiarity makes the Federal and State governments oppose the existence of the Local Government. Just as it is gravely wrong to forcefully take from individuals what they can accomplish by their own initiative and industry and give it to the community, so also it is an injustice and at the same time a great evil and marginalization to assign to a greater or higher association what lesser or lower organizations can do. For every social activity and amenity ought, of its very nature, to furnish help to the members of the body and never destroy or exploit them. Therefore government should always seek and vouch for the betterment of the general populists. There is administrative need in every locality that is of direct concern to the local community that is best dealt with locally. So not to allow the existence of the Local Government to solve immediate problems of the local people is indeed not wise and does not solve the problem of government at the grassroots.

3.2.CHARACTERISTICS OF SUB-SIDIARITY PRINCIPLE

Local: - Its localness helps the local people to be acquainted with what is happening at the center. The principle advocates government at the smallest group. It is close to the common

people and their problems. This is why there were warrant chiefs during colonial era, though the position then was exploited by some greedy chiefs.

Efficient: - It is capable of managing the local amenities/services in such a way that would help raise the standard of living for all. It renders services to the people, and provides services that are local by which its success it judged.

Political participation: - It provides a forum for participation in decision making. But at the same time, it commands the respect and support of the people in a broad perspective that can be said to be democratic, since democracy actually involves accommodation of another's point of view, mutual appreciation of another's interest, application of the principle of fair play, tolerance and respect for the rights of others.

The Nigerian nation has not been foreign to this grass-root governance since this was the status quo in the traditional society even before the advent of colonization. This could be traced as far back as 1860 during the indirect rule system. Then in 1950^s, we had in the mid-west the Benin Kingdom, in the North the Hausa Fulani Kingdom, the Yoruba Kingdom of the west, and in the East, the Umunna of the Igbo society. Traditionally, Nigerians love to be talked to by their leader in the traditional set up. Issues are extensively discussed until

conclusions are reached amicably.

4.0. CONCLUSION

The principle of subsidiarity protects people from abuses by higher-level social authorities and calls on these same authorities to help individuals and intermediate groups to fulfill their duties. It is not one sided, because every person, family and group, has something original and good to offer to the community. Therefore, the community has to make sure that she extracts these gifts from her individuals. Experience shows that the denial of subsidiarity or its limitation, sometimes, destroys the spirit of freedom and initiative. A very pathetic constraint is the fact that the third tier of government, which is the Local Government, is not independent. This is the major reason why the Federal and State governments have faulted in respect of the principle of Subsidiarity. Its existence and legislative power is derivative and so this principle is not respected by the government. The principle of subsidiarity is opposed to certain forms of federalism and bureaucratization, and excessive presence of the State in administration.

I wish to conclude with this statement of the *Compendium of the Catholic Social Teaching*, number 187, which says:

" In order for the principle of subsidiarity to be put into practice there is a corresponding

need for: respect and effective promotion of the human person and the family; ever greater appreciation of associations and intermediate organizations in their fundamental choices and in those that cannot be delegated to or exercised by others; the encouragement of private initiative so that every social entity remains at the service of the common good, each with its own distinctive characteristics; the presence of pluralism in society and due representation of its vital components; safeguarding human rights and the rights of minorities; bringing about bureaucratic and administrative decentralization; striking a balance between the public and private spheres, with the resulting recognition of the social function of the private sphere; appropriate methods for making citizens more responsible in actively "being a part" of the political and social reality of their country."

When the principle of subsidiarity is ignored, governments often overstep their bounds in managing matters best handled on a more local or individual level. Typically, this decreases economy, efficiency, liberty and the personal character of the

social order.

ENDNOTES

1. *The Holy Bible*, the New Revised Standard Version; Catholic Edition.
2. *Compendium of the Catholic Social Teaching* Chapter 4 Number 4.
3. *Code of Canon Law* Book II "The people of God, particular Churches and the Authority constituted within them"
4. *Catechism of the Catholic Church* chapter 5 "The dignity of human person" Number 1877-1927
5. *Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary, International student's Edition.* Oxford University Press.
6. *Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria*, 1999; Section 7
7. L, D. Ademolekun, Oluwu and M. Laleyo. (1988) *Local Government in Africa since Independence.* Lagos: University Press.
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CHAPTER 7

HUMAN RIGHTS IN CATHOLIC SOCIAL THOUGHT: AN APPRAISAL OF THE NIGERIAN SITUATION

By Rev. Fr. Paul Akpomie, OP

INTRODUCTION

News of killings, riots and ethnic disputes, usually ending in blood bath and so called "ethnic cleansing", are not far from us. They make the headlines on a daily basis. Scenes from such conflicts are often bizarre and inhuman that they leave us wondering if they have really been perpetrated by human beings like ourselves. The sad fact is that the answer is always in the affirmative. The Church has not been silent in this regard. Though a religious institution, she is obliged to speak up on social issues. The social teaching of the Church, which is the medium through which the Church airs her view on social matters, is an embodiment of concepts (composed of truths, principles and values) which the living Magisterium extracts from Revelation and the natural law as well as the theological and natural sciences, in order to help peoples and

governments to organise a more humane society in accordance with God's plan for the world¹

In this paper, we shall be considering what the Church puts forward as its view on human rights while comparing it with recent events in the country that have called to question the right way of perceiving and relating with the human person.

1.0 Catholic Social Teaching: In Perspective

The definition we have given above, identifies certain sources as the origin from which the Church's social teaching is drawn. We said that it is drawn from "Revelation and the natural law."

The *natural law* in this case is that inscribed by the Creator in man's very being, in his animal and rational nature, as understood by his intelligence. It is the expression in us of what our reason demands. More than this, it informs our conscience of what we should do to act in accordance with our rational nature, so that we do not go against all that is good and noble in man².

Revelation is that which confirms the natural law. Because of our fall, resulting from original sin and the passions, it has become necessary that we be brought to a truer knowledge of God by Divine Revelation. Revelation, it should be noted, is twofold; that of the Old Testament and the New Testament.

The Decalogue, in the Old Testament, is an expression of the moral law of the old dispensation; a further expression of the natural law. It sets out duties to God, rights and duties concerning the human person, the family, our neighbour. They are as binding as an expression of the natural law, but are reinforced by the fact that they are a positive manifestation of the Divine Will. On the social plane, the prophets are accorded a most important place as they denounced injustice, proclaimed the rights of the poor and lowly and preached social and religious justice³. The New Testament, the second half of the Divine Revelation, shows Christ perfecting the Old Law. The New Law becomes that of charity which invests all virtues, particularly justice, with the grace of the Holy Spirit. Revelation, thus, consists in God's great design for the salvation of mankind than in particular precepts on one virtue or another.

Our definition also identifies the living *Magisterium* as the author of the Church's social teaching. We must not fail to admit that the contributions of different *theological schools* who have made great effort in applying the principles and conclusions of the Magisterium to different situations. They, however, do not constitute the sole means by which the Church makes her opinions known. The Church alone is the gateway to salvation and under the protection of the Holy

Spirit, the source of all truth. It is the proximate and universal measure of the true meaning of the social teaching of the Church as it is of every other branch of doctrine⁴.

We may also be curious about the content of the Church's social teaching. We have already defined it as an ensemble of concepts, made up of truths, principles and values. These truths are what one has to believe and know; whether moral or religious truths. Principles, likewise, ought to be practised as a code of moral behaviour; the values are to be respected, defended and cherished as fundamental human rights.

Whenever the Magisterium intervenes through its social teaching, it does so in the name of truth and of the principles which are *sub species aeternitatis* and in the light of the Divine law, irrespective of whether it is a question of faith or morals. It intervenes to *protect and safeguard* those supreme values of the dignity of the human person and the eternal salvation of souls⁵. As for its purpose, the essential object of the Church's social teaching is the *advancement of the kingdom of God* through human relations and temporal realities for the salvation of men. The Church also pursues a proximate objective notwithstanding. She cannot, by herself, build an earthly city nor organise a temporal society. She leaves this to governments and nations. But as mother, guardian and educator of moral conscience she seeks to build

a more brotherly society which will be more in accordance with God's plan for man and the human community.

1.1 The Mission of the Church

The Church, as *teacher*, helps women and men to recognise and fulfil their vocations and their destiny. She moulds their consciences to recognise the duties of their different spheres of human activity. She teaches them, in particular, that the order of salvation pervades their whole economic and social life. She reveals the true value of human endeavour in the divine plan. She reveals also the spiritual meaning of work, of human love, of married life, of art, technology, and all the activities of the human community. She shows men that civilisation needs redemption to rediscover its true meaning in accordance with God's plan. *Human society* is, therefore, the object of the social teaching of the Church⁶.

As *guardian of the moral law*, the Church cannot allow the social and economic order to violate the moral law when it should, in fact, serve to make it correspond to God's plan. Since we should attain our destiny through upright living in the temporal order it is most important to realise that this temporal order (political, economic, social) does not itself constitute by its organisation, institution, structures and spirit, an obstacle to the supreme destiny of the human person and mankind. This is in the light of evident examples of societies

and milieux where it is difficult; if not impossible, to remain faithful to the moral law and to live a Christian life. It is in this light that Pope Pius XI commented that the conditions of economic and social life are such that a very large number of people find the greatest difficulty in carrying out the work which, alone, is necessary for their eternal salvation⁷.

The Church also intervenes as *mother*. In this capacity, she loves her children and cannot accept any situation which would harm them. She is not just satisfied with stating the ills in society, she wants the temporal order to conform more to God's plan and to the dignity of man. She demands the setting up of an economic and social order which will be more in accordance with the plan and the means of rebuilding an abundantly fruitful social structure. The Church, in order to bring human persons to their ultimate fulfilment, has the mission of uniting all men and women in Christ, in the Church as the Mystical Body of Christ. Hence, through her social doctrine, the Church teaches all how they should prepare, here and now, to accomplish collectively the destiny of mankind through their thought and action in family, economic, social, on the national and international planes.

It is, however, a sad state in Nigeria as we seem more and more to be receding from a better attainment to social justice. This is especially glaring in the area of human rights protection. But to know what the Church would prescribe for the malady

which is the Nigerian situation, we shall do well to consider the Church's statement on Human rights and how this is amenable to events in the country.

1.2. The Church's Social Teaching on the Human Person

According to the *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, the Church sees in every person, the living image of God himself. This image finds, and must always find anew, an ever deeper and fuller unfolding of itself in the mystery of Christ, the Perfect Image of God, the One who reveals God to us and humanity to himself. It is to men and women, who have received an incomparable and inalienable dignity from God himself, that the Church speaks, rendering to them the highest and most singular service, constantly reminding them of their lofty vocation so that they may always be mindful of it and make themselves worthy of it⁸. This focus on the human person is not mistaking. All of social life is an expression of the human person who is its unmistakable protagonist.

This important awareness is expressed in the affirmation that "far from being the object or passive element of social life," the human person "is rather, and must always remain, its subject, foundation and goal."⁹

1.3 The Human Person: A Creature in the Image of God

The fundamental message of Sacred Scripture proclaims that the human person is a creature of God and sees in his or her being, in the image of God, the element that characterises and distinguishes them: "God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female He created them" (Gen 1:27). God places the human person at the centre and summit of the created order. Being in the image of God, the human individual possesses the dignity of a person, who is not just something, but someone. They are capable of self-knowledge, of self-possession and of *freely* giving themselves and entering into communion with other persons. Human persons are, further, called by grace to a covenant with the Creator, to offer Him a response of faith and love that no other creature can give in his stead¹⁰. The human person's likeness with God shows that their essence and existence are constitutively related to God in the profoundest of ways. Our relationship with God can be ignored, forgotten or dismissed, but it can never be eliminated; only human persons have the "capacity for God."¹¹

This relationship between God and humans is reflected in the *relational* and *social* dimension of human nature. *Guadium et Spes* teaches that we are not solitary beings, but social being, and unless we relate to others we can neither live nor develop

our potential¹². In this regard, it is striking that it is only after God created the woman that man found the need for interpersonal dialogue satisfied. In one's neighbour, whether man or woman, therefore, there is a reflection of God himself, the definitive goal and fulfilment of every person¹³. Man and woman, notwithstanding their relationship with each other by which they rediscover themselves as persons through the sincere gift of themselves, are in relationship with others above all as those to whom the lives of others have been entrusted; "For your lifeblood I will surely require a reckoning, ... of man (and) of every man's brother" (Gen 9:5). The fifth commandment which forbids the willful taking of life has validity because God alone is Lord of life and death¹⁴. This proposal by the Church meets a stark contradiction in the Nigerian situation.

2.0. Human Rights in Nigeria: The Church and Social Situation

Nigeria's human rights record remains poor, and government officials at all levels continue to commit serious abuses. Our reference to the state of human rights activities in the country is the U.S. Department of State. According to its report, the most significant human rights problems are: extrajudicial killings and use of excessive force by security forces; impunity for abuses by security forces; arbitrary arrests; prolonged pretrial detention; judicial corruption and

executive influence on the judiciary; rape, torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment of prisoners, detainees and suspects; harsh and life-threatening prison and detention centre conditions; human trafficking for the purpose of prostitution and forced labour; societal violence and vigilante killings; child labour, child abuse and child sexual exploitation; female genital mutilation; domestic violence; discrimination based on sex, ethnicity, region and religion; restrictions on freedom of assembly, movement, press, speech and religion; infringement of privacy rights; and the abridgement of the right of citizens to change the government¹⁵. This report speaks of nothing but the disregard and utter insensitivity to the inalienable dignity of the human person. Life is treated with contempt to say the least. Human life at every stage is threatened; peace is far removed where this seems to be the case. This is the sad state in which the country finds itself. Despite these evils, the Church is still obliged to paint the real picture of the human person. It goes to the heart of the matter by identifying sin as responsible for this malaise of inhumanity.

2.1 The Tragedy of Sin

According to the *Compendium*, the marvellous vision of man's creation by God is inseparable from the tragic appearance of original sin¹⁶. Saint Paul captures this so well when he says that, "Sin came into the world through one man

and death through sin" (Rom 5:12). Man, against God's prohibition, allows himself to be seduced by the serpent and stretches out his hand to the tree of life, falling prey to death. By this gesture, man tries to break through his limits as a creature, challenging God, his sole Lord and the source of his life. It is this sin of disobedience that separates man from God¹⁷. So, at the root of personal and social divisions, which in differing degrees offend the value and dignity of the human person, there is a wound which is present in man's inmost self. It is this wound we call *sin*; beginning with original sin which each of us bear from birth as an inheritance from our first parents, to the sin which each one of us commits when we abuse our own freedom.¹⁸

This mystery of sin is composed of a twofold wound, which the sinner opens in his own side and in the relationship with his neighbour. That is why we can speak of *personal* and *social sin*. Every sin is personal under a certain aspect; under another, every sin is social, insofar as and because it also has social consequences. In its true sense, sin is always an act of the person, because it is the *free act* of an individual person and not properly speaking of a group or community. Certain sins, moreover, constitute by their very object a *direct assault* on one's neighbour. Such sins in particular are known as social sins. *Social sin* is every sin against the rights of the human person, starting with the right to life, including that of life in

the womb, and every sin against the freedom of others, especially against the supreme freedom to believe in God and worship him; and every sin against the dignity and honour of one's neighbour. Every sin against the common good and its demands, in the whole broad area of rights and duties of citizens is also a social sin. Recent events in the country underscore the importance of this point. Quite notable are reports of killings in Jos which is still fresh in our minds.

In 2010, the *Vanguard* Newspaper recently reported the killing of over 200 people in three villages near the *Shen in Du* district of Jos South Local Government Area of Plateau State. The perpetrators are suspected Fulani herdsmen on reprisal attacks from an earlier incident. At least 45 children, including toddlers, were among those hacked to death, gunned down or roasted in their abode by the marauders at about 2:30 am (Vanguard, 2010:1). This has since incited protests and demonstrations. Noteworthy is the peaceful demonstration staged by a group of women from the same state, condemning the killings while repeating allegations of inactivity against security agencies when distress calls were made to them. The women who were dressed in black as a sign of grief and mourning, also displayed gory pictures of women as they marched to the State House of Assembly and the Government House (Vanguard, 2010:5). This is but one of many consequences of social sin which perpetuates the structures of

sin. Such acts of violence leave victims with psychological traumas that remain for years to come. They also constitute obstacles and conditioning that go well beyond the actions and brief life span of the individual and interfere also in the process of the development of peoples, the delay and slow pace of which must be judged in this light.¹⁹

2.2 The Universality of Sin and Salvation

Sin is a universal phenomenon; "If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us" (1Jn1:8). This universality is explicated in the doctrine of original sin, which is that guilt inherited from our first parents. Russel Shaw sees part of the doctrine as concerned with a moral calamity which occurred at the dawn of history – a primal act of rebellion against God by our first parents, a rebellion whose very disorder and bitter consequences are transmitted from generation to generation. No wonder Reinhold Niebuhr once remarked that it is the only empirically verifiable doctrine in Christianity.²⁰ It encourages us not to remain in guilt and not to take guilt lightly, continuously pointing to other extraneous factors as the reasons for our short-comings. This is not separated from the consciousness of the universality of salvation in Jesus Christ. If an attempt is made in this regard, it engenders a false anxiety of sin and a pessimistic view of the world and life, which leads to contempt of the cultural and civil accomplishments of mankind. It should not be

misconstrued that sin or evil is a reality; but even greater than evil is the light of hope which we are afforded in Christ's act of redemption by which sin and death are destroyed (cf Rom 5:18-21). The universality of this hope also includes, besides the men and women of all peoples, heaven and earth. According to the New Testament, all creation, together indeed with all humanity, awaits the Redeemer: subjected to futility, creation reaches out full of hope, with groans and birth pangs, longing to be freed from decay (cf. Rom 8:18-22).

In the mean time, man needs to know and fully understand himself. A step in the right direction is not to consider one of his characteristics to the detriment of all others. The Church calls human persons to consider the different dimension of the mystery which they embody.

3.0 The Many Aspects of the Human Person

A preliminary consideration demands that we realise that human beings are created by God in unity of body and soul. The spiritual and immortal soul is the *principle of unity* of the human being, whereby it exists as a whole, as a person. These definitions not only point out that the body, which has been promised the resurrection, will also share in glory. They also remind us that reason and free will are linked with all the bodily and sense faculties. The person, including the body, is completely entrusted to himself, and it is in the unity of body

and soul that the person is the subject of his own moral acts²¹ (John Paul II, 1993:48). This is why he is held responsible for his acts. A moral failure at any level and from any person who has complete and perfect use of his bodily and rational faculties is culpable.

The lack of security in the country is condemnable and unacceptable. The current rate of crime across the nation, rising cases of extra-judicial killings, human rights violations, robberies, high-profile assassination and deliberate failure to comply with government directives are testimony to the sheer incapacity or wilful defiance of people to government directives. What this underscores is the fact that man, in whatever capacity and in every moral decision he makes, is held responsible for his acts. This points us to something more fundamental about the human person. It is the fact that man by his corporeal and spiritual nature is set apart.

The Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace highlights this in its document when it says that what distinguishes Man is his openness to transcendence and uniqueness. It avers that openness to transcendence belongs to the human person: man is open to the infinite and to all created beings. He is open above all to the infinite – God – because with his intellect and will he raises himself above all the created order and above himself, he becomes independent from creatures, is free in

relation to created things and tends towards total truth and the absolute good. He is open to others, to the men and women of the world. He is able by this to come out of the self-centred preservation of his own life, to enter into a relationship of dialogue and communion with others.²²

Further, they assert that man exists as a unique and unrepeatable being, he exists as an “I” capable of self-understanding, self-possession and self-determination. The human person is an intelligent and conscious being, capable of reflecting on himself and, therefore, of being aware of himself and his actions. He must always be understood in his unrepeatable and inviolable uniqueness. In fact, man exists above all as a subjective entity, and as a centre of consciousness and freedom whose unique life experiences, comparable to those of no one else, underlies the inadmissibility of any attempt to reduce his status by forcing him into preconceived categories or power systems, whether ideological or otherwise. And this calls on individuals and political as well as social institutions to, not only show simple respect, but also, be committed to the promotion and integral development of the person.²³

3.1 Respect for Human Dignity

We should note that a just society can become a reality only when it is based on the respect of the transcendent dignity of

the human person. The person represents the ultimate end of society, by which it is ordered to the person. Hence, the social order, as we have earlier hinted, should invariably work to the benefit of the human person, since the order of things is to be subordinate to the order of persons, and not the other way around²⁴ (*Gaudium et Spes*, 1966:26).

Respect for the human dignity can in no way be separated from obedience to this principle. It is necessary to consider every neighbour without exception as another self, taking into account first of all his life and the means necessary for living with dignity. Every political, economic, social, scientific and cultural programme must be inspired by the awareness of the primacy of each human being over society (CCC, 2235). Benedict XVI lends his voice to this when he reminds governments "engaged in boosting the world's economic and social assets," that the primary capital to be safeguarded and valued is man, the human person in his or her integrity. He insists that man is the focus and aim of all economic and social life.²⁵ With this, we are compelled to speak of the recent violations on human rights in the Nigerian society. But still other facts are necessary for an adequate grasp of the matter. We need to first look at the Church's statement on Human rights, especially the right to life.

3.2 The Value of Human Rights

The Conciliar document *Dignitatis Humanae*, asserts that the movement towards the identification and proclamation of human rights is one of the most significant attempts to respond effectively to the inescapable demands of human dignity²⁶. This has received such an impetus because the Church recognises that the roots of human rights are to be found in the dignity that belongs to each human being. This dignity inherent in human life and equal in every person, is perceived and understood first of all by reason.

The natural foundation of rights appears all the more solid when, in light of the supernatural, it is considered that human dignity, after having been given by God and having been profoundly wounded by sin, was taken on and redeemed by Jesus Christ in his incarnation, death and resurrection.²⁷

The ultimate source of human rights is not found in the mere will of human beings, in the reality of the State, in public powers, but in man himself and in God his Creator. These rights are universal, inviolable, inalienable. They are *universal* because they are present in all human beings, without exception of time, place or subject. *Inviolable* insofar as it is inherent in the human person and in human dignity, and because it would be vain to proclaim rights, if at the same time everything were not done to ensure the duty of respecting

them by all people, everywhere and for all people. They are *inalienable* insofar as no one can legitimately deprive another person, whoever they may be, of these rights, since this would do violence to their nature.²⁸

3.3 The Specification of Rights

The teachings of Pope John XXIII, the Second Vatican Council, and Pope Paul VI have given abundant indication of the concept of human rights as articulated by the *Magisterium*. John Paul II has drawn up a list of them in the Encyclical *Centesimus Annus*. He gives them as: the right to life, an integral part of which is the right of the child to develop in the mother's womb from the moment of conception; the right to live in a united family and in a moral environment conducive to the growth of the child's personality; the right to develop one's intelligence and freedom in seeking and knowing the truth; the right to share in the work which makes wise use of the earth's material resources, and to derive from that work the means to support oneself and one's dependents; and the right to freely establish a family, to have and to rear children through the responsible exercise of one's sexuality. In a certain sense, the source and synthesis of these rights is religious freedom, understood as the right to live in the truth of one's faith and in conformity with one's transcendent dignity as a person.²⁹

The first right presented in this list is the right to life, from conception to its natural end which is the condition for the exercise of all other rights and, in particular, implies the illicitness of every form of procured abortion and of euthanasia.

This situation is even more precarious in the country as not only young life is threatened, but adults as well. Recent killings around the country bear glaring witness to this. We have earlier mentioned the Jos crisis. There is also the Niger-Delta issue. So much blood has been shed over the issue of kidnapping and oil bunkering; most of it has been unnecessary.

A report gotten from Amnesty International for Nigeria 2015/2016 reiterates the decadence of our respect for human rights and series of abuses. We shall give a cursory view of this report.

Niger-Delta killings and Environmental abuses:

Amnesty International reports say that twenty years after the execution of environmental activist Ken Saro-Wiwa and eight others, oil pollution continued to cause devastation to the Niger Delta region, harming the livelihoods and health of its inhabitants. There were hundreds of new spills during the year, and oil companies failed to clean up the contamination of previous spills, some of which occurred decades ago.³⁰

The report further claims that the government continued to

fail to hold oil companies operating in the Niger Delta to account. It did not provide the oversight needed to ensure that companies do more to prevent spills from happening, or to respond to them in a timely and adequate manner.

Companies' response to spills was frequently slow and clean-up was inadequate. Oil companies continued to blame the vast majority of spills on sabotage and theft, a claim which was based on a flawed oil spill investigation process led by the oil companies rather than the government watchdog, the National Oil Spill Detection and Response Agency (NOSDRA). NOSDRA published details and a map of investigations into spills online, but it did not release information about the response to spills and clean-up. Amnesty International avers that in August, President Buhari announced that his government would begin the clean-up and restoration of the oil-damaged Ogoniland region, in line with the recommendations of the UN Environment Programme. A sum of £55 million (US\$83 million) paid out by the oil company Shell was distributed to the Bodo community, following the settlement of a court case in the UK in 2014. However, Shell had yet to clean up the damage caused by two massive spills at Bodo in 2008.³¹

Internally displaced people (IDP)

In September, the International Organization for Migration

estimated that over 2.1 million people were internally displaced in northern Nigeria; 92% of them lived in host communities, while the remainder lived in camps. The camps in Maiduguri were overcrowded, with inadequate access to food and sanitation. The government established a committee to investigate allegations of human trafficking and sexual abuse of IDPs, with the complicity of security and camp officials. The results of the investigation had not been made public by the end of the year.³²

Indigenous People of Biafra Movement (IPOB):

Protests for an independent state of Biafra took place in the south and southeast. On 14 October, Nnamdi Kanu, leader of the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) and director of Radio Biafra, was arrested and charged with criminal conspiracy, managing and belonging to an unlawful society and intimidation. On 17 December, the Federal High Court in the capital Abuja ordered his unconditional release from the custody of the Department of State Services.

However, he was not released and was charged with treason on 18 December; he still remains in detention at till time of this write up.³³

Torture and other ill-treatment:

In her report, Amnesty International holds that torture and

other ill-treatment by police and military remained pervasive. Extrajudicial executions, extortion, and arbitrary and prolonged detention were rife. In July, the police announced they were reviewing the Force Orders, including Force Order 237, which allows police officers to shoot suspects and detainees who attempt to avoid arrest or escape – whether or not they pose a threat to life. The Inspector General of Police also announced that over the past three years, almost 1 billion naira (US\$5 million) had been paid out as compensation to victims of human rights violations by the police.³⁴

Many police divisions, including the Special Anti-Robbery Squad (SARS) and the Force Criminal Investigation Division, kept rooms where suspects were tortured while being interrogated. In November, the Inspector General of Police announced the creation of a Complaints Response Unit and a reform initiative for the SARS, in response to public concerns about alleged violations by police officers across the country. The Anti-Torture Bill – intended to prohibit and criminalize the use of torture – was passed by Parliament in June. It had not been signed into law by the end of the year.

The reports further say that the Nigerian police have also been involved in frequent human rights violations, including extrajudicial killings, torture, arbitrary arrests, and extortion-related abuses. Despite the dismantling of many “road

blocks” by the inspector general of police, corruption in the police force remains a serious problem. The police routinely solicit bribes from victims to investigate crimes and from suspects to drop investigations. Senior police officials embezzle or mismanage police funds, often demanding monetary “returns” that their subordinates extort from the public.³⁵

Boko Haram Crisis:

Horrible abuses in the north by the militant Islamist group Boko Haram and the Nigerian security forces' heavy-handed response to this violence dominated Nigeria's human rights landscape in 2013. In May, President Goodluck Jonathan imposed a state of emergency, which was extended for another three months in November in the three states where Boko Haram is most active. The emergency failed to curb atrocities and to sufficiently protect civilians. The prosecutor of the International Criminal Court said that there was reason to believe Boko Haram had committed crimes against humanity. The four-year insurgency by Boko Haram, which seeks to impose a harsh form of Sharia, or Islamic law, in northern Nigeria and end government corruption, has killed more than 5,000 people. Although the Nigerian government set up a committee to develop an amnesty framework for Boko Haram, the group continued to target government security agents, churches, and mosques.³⁶

Since 2012, Boko Haram has burned more than 300 schools in the north and deprived more than 10,000 children of an education. In a particularly gory attack in July, suspected armed Islamists killed 42 pupils and teachers and burned down a government-owned boarding school in Mamudo village, Yobe state.³⁷ Boko Haram continued to commit war crimes and crimes against humanity in northeastern Nigeria, killing thousands of civilians.¹ In January, the group expanded the territory under its control by seizing the towns of Baga and Monguno in Borno state. Boko Haram fighters deliberately killed civilians, particularly men of fighting age, detained others and destroyed buildings. In the attack on Baga, Boko Haram killed hundreds of civilians in what may be its deadliest attack to date. Satellite images revealed that more than 3,700 buildings had been damaged or destroyed in the attack.

Thousands of civilians lived under Boko Haram's violent rule, either in the captured towns or after being abducted and taken to camps. Many women and girls were raped and forced into marriage. From March, a sustained offensive by the military, with assistance from the armed forces of Cameroon, Chad and Niger, forced Boko Haram out of major towns in northeastern Nigeria. However, Boko Haram continued to kill civilians through raids on smaller towns and villages as well as bomb attacks.³⁸

Bomb attacks targeted markets, transport hubs, bars, restaurants and places of worship in cities across the northeast, as well as Abuja and the towns of Jos, Kano and Zaria. Boko Haram used young women and girls as suicide bombers in many of the incidents. The military announced the recovery of more than 1,400 people from Boko Haram-controlled territory, mostly women and children. The fate of 219 schoolgirls abducted from the town of Chibok, Borno state, on 14 April 2014 remains unknown.³⁹

Inter-Communal and Political Violence:

Violence between ethnic groups continued to claim lives. In Riyom and Barikin Ladi, local government areas in Plateau state, communities clashed over allegations of cattle rustling and land disputes. Perpetrators of violence were rarely investigated and prosecuted.

Episodes of inter-communal violence in the Middle Belt states of Plateau, Taraba, Benue, and Nasarawa left more than 400 people dead and scores of houses destroyed. Federal and state authorities failed to hold accountable the perpetrators of these crimes and break the cycle of violence. In response, ethnic and religious groups in this region resorted to forming their own militias to deliver justice and security. State and local government policies fed discontent by discriminating against "non-indigenes"—people who cannot prove that they are descendants of the original inhabitants of an area.⁴⁰

An ongoing inter communal conflict in Damaturu, Benue State, has left scores of deaths and rendered homeless many of its inhabitants. Yet, there is poor investigation, intervention and prosecution of these crimes.

Conduct of Security Forces:

Amnesty International reports say that government security forces were implicated in various human rights violations with regard to the Boko Haram insurgency. The large number of troops deployed to enforce the state of emergency engaged in the indiscriminate arrest, detention, torture, and extra-judicial killing of those suspected to be supporters or members of the Islamist group. Security forces razed and burned homes and properties in communities thought to harbor Boko Haram fighters. In Baga, a town in Borno state, Nigerian troops destroyed more than 2,000 buildings and allegedly killed scores of people, apparently in retaliation for the killing of a soldier by Boko Haram. The authorities have yet to bring anyone to justice for these crimes.⁴¹

Housing rights:

The new governments of the states of Lagos and Kaduna rendered thousands of people homeless and vulnerable to other human rights violations when they conducted mass forced evictions without consultation, compensation and the provision of alternative accommodation.

Amnesty International reports thus, that in August, hundreds of residents of the Bayan Alhudahuda community in Zaria were given a demolition notice of 28 days, ordering them to demolish their own houses or risk being charged a fee for the authorities to do so. Ninety-two homes, with between 10 and 40 residents each, were demolished. Two weeks later, the affected residents were still sleeping in the classrooms of a nearby school, mosques and marketplaces.

In September, around 10,200 residents of the Badia-East community, Lagos, were forcibly evicted from their homes less than 24 hours after being notified that the Ojora (traditional ruler of the community) had been granted the right to take possession of them. Many of the residents continued to sleep on the demolition site for up to three weeks afterwards and remained homeless. Mass forced evictions continues.

In July, 10 residents of Bundu Ama in the city of Port Harcourt received 6.5 million naira (approximately US\$30,000) as part of the payment of 11 million naira awarded by the ECOWAS Court against the federal government. This was compensation for unlawful shootings during a peaceful protest against the planned demolition of their houses in 2009.⁴²

Ecclesial Response:

It is pathetic that we speak so easily of the loss of human lives. Those who have died in the violence of this uprising are not

just numbers; they are persons with dignity and the inalienable right to life. Any government that sits with ease, feigning indifference while watching its citizens die in their numbers is not only insensitive to their plight, but is also far from understanding what it means to build a humane society. The Church decries such lethargy in the face of evil, and that is why it has not been silent in affirming the dignity of the human person.

The Church is irrevocably committed to transforming the sinful structures embedded in the society. Borrowing the words of Pope Paul VI, "Modern man listens more willingly to witnesses than to teachers and if he does listen to teachers, it is because they are witnesses".⁴³ This is because witnessing gives life and makes concrete the ideologies we teach. The Catholic Church in Nigeria has responded in varied ways to addressing some of the human rights abuses. One of such response in the Diocese of Enugu is the establishment of The Catholic Institute for Development, Justice and Peace (CIDJAP). It was founded 4th October, 1986.

CIDJAP is a social organ of the Catholic Church, committed to the implementation of Catholic social teaching. CIDJAP implements its vision of empowerment, development and combating injustice through a vast range of activities and programme. As an institution, she is involved in prison and

human rights work, primary and secondary health care, housing, community development, micro-credit schemes, vocational training programmes, and many other activities targeted at those living in poverty in Nigeria.

Indeed, CIDJAP Enugu is not relenting in her efforts and these works are translated in many dioceses through many organs related to the Justice, Development and Peace Commission in the Nigerian church.

CONCLUSION

We have been considering the issue of human rights in the Church's view and its pertinence for the Nigerian situation. We have seen that the Church is unequivocal in its affirmation of the inviolable, inalienable and universal nature of human rights. This, she says, is because the human person is unique, unrepeatable and created in the image and likeness of God. The wholesale degradation and even extermination of innocent lives in the country is antithetical to the values that ought to be promoted and entrenched in society.

The Church through her social teachings and level of praxis to promote the dignity and rights of persons have, in no mean way contributed to the promotion and development of the human person and his rights. Despite this fact, more still needs to be done. This will be amply aided with a better coalition

with government agencies.

The Nigerian government as well as the Church in Nigeria have important roles to play, duties that demand that they come together in their aspirations. This coalition does not have to be a direct one. Initiatives should, however, be taken by both Church and State to encourage the dignity of the person. The Church does not have to compromise standards in speaking, wherever and whenever possible, about the need to safeguard the lives of citizens. The government should more and more listen to the Church in her decision-making process. And both should support governmental and non-governmental initiatives that promote the general well being of citizens. By so doing, Nigeria will not only grow in her appreciation of the indispensability of her citizens, but will become better and stronger in every facet of her life.

ENDNOTES

1. Emile Guerry. *The Social Teaching of the Church*. London: Society of St Paul, 1961, p.21
2. Cf. *Ibid*, p. 23.
3. Cf. *Ibid*, 23.
4. Cf. *Ibid*, p. 25.
5. Cf. *Ibid*, p.26.
6. Pontifical Council For Justice and Peace, *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*. Ibadan: Paulines, 2004., p. 106. (Here after, PCJP, 2004).
7. Pius XI, Encyclical Letter, *Quadragesimo Anno*, 1931. Pius XI, 1931)
8. Cf. PCJP, 2004, p. 105
9. Pius XII, Radio Message of 24 December, 1944, in Pontifical Council For Justice and Peace, *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church* (PCJP).

- Ibadan: Paulines, 2004., p.5. PiusXII, 1944:5
10. CATECHISM OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH. Ibadan: Paulines, 2002. #357 (Here after, CCC, 2002).
 11. John Paul II, Encyclical Letter *Evangelium Vitae*, 1995. #34. (Here after, John Paul II, *Evangelium Vitae*, 1995).
 12. Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World *Gaudium et Spes*, in *Vatican II: The Conciliar and Post Conciliar Documents* Vol. 1, edited by Austin Flannery. Dublin: Dominican Publications, 1975. #12. (Here after, *Gaudium et Spes*, 1979).
 13. John Paul II, *Evangelium Vitae*, 1995. # 35.
 14. *Gaudium et Spes*, 1966. #27.
 15. "Human rights in Nigeria" *Wikipedia*. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Human_rights_in_Nigeria (19 Feb. 2016).
 16. PCJP, 2004. p.115.
 17. CCC, 2002. #1850.
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 20. Russel Shaw. *Why We Need Confession*. Huntington: Our Sunday Visitor, 1986. p. 26.
 21. John Paul II, Encyclical Letter *Veritatis Splendor*. Ibadan: Paulines, 1993. #48.
 22. PCJP, 2005, p.130.
 23. PCJP, 2005, p. 131.
 24. *Gaudium et Spes*, 1966. #26.
 25. Benedict XVI, Pope. *Caritas in Veritate*. Kerala: Carmel International Publishing House, 2009. #26.
 26. Declaration on Religious Liberty *Dignitatis Humanae*, in *Vatican II: The Conciliar and Post Conciliar Documents* Vol. 1, edited by Austin Flannery. Dublin: Dominican Publications, 1975. # 1.
 27. *Gaudium et Spes*, 1966. #22.
 28. John Paul II, 1999:3
 29. John Paul, 1991:47
 30. "Human rights violation in Nigeria" <https://www.amnesty.org/en/countries/africa/nigeria/report-nigeria> (20th Feb, 2016).
 31. Cf. "Human rights violation in Nigeria" <https://www.amnesty.org/en/countries/africa/nigeria/report-nigeria> (20th Feb, 2016).
 32. Cf. "Human rights violation in Nigeria" <https://www.amnesty.org/en/countries/africa/nigeria/report-nigeria> (20th Feb, 2016).
 33. Cf. "Human rights violation in Nigeria"

work which is best seen in the light of the individual person and workers' rights which establishes the social relations between those who work and those they work for. It advances the reconciliation of these two concepts by pointing out unemployment as a factor that undermines both the dignity of work and workers' right in Nigeria. The paper finally sought to highlight the role of the Church and the State in addressing this threat to dignity of work and workers' right.

Introduction

The whole idea of work could be said to be coterminous with the being of man. This is because the idea of work is seated in the very being of man making work become a reality that is as old as humanity. At the centre of the being of man is his rationality that outdistances him from lower animals and brutes. Gifted with rationality, man becomes a mystery even unto to himself.

This makes man to be understood as a bundle of possibilities because in the view of Philosophical Anthropologists, 'man is a mystery even unto himself'. With his rationality, man becomes a bundle of possibilities; conforming and adapting his environment to suit his needs and soothe his worries. While the lower animals are subject to the whims and caprices of mother-nature, man takes hold of his environment and adapts it to his taste. This is evidenced in the progressive strands and developmental feats man has achieved in the area of science and technology. This appropriation of nature and his environment by man introduces the whole idea of *work*.

Work is a venture that accords the individual some level of nobility; it is dignifying. From the moral standpoint, the dignity of work is founded on the biblical injunction "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it". Work

becomes a response to this divine injunction. The dignity of work is seated in this response of man to God. From the economic parlance, one can see the dignity of work as something that is rewarding. With work, one's daily bread is guaranteed and he/she is fitted into a position where he could carter for his needs. The beauty of work is found in man's ingenuity; his creative power that suits him into participating in the divine scheme as a pro-creator with God.

In the course of exploring nature in work, human beings establish social relationships with each other. This calls for the establishment of work contracts mostly in the modes of employers and employees. It becomes very pathetic that people treat each other as mere *means* to attaining their economic *ends*. This contradicts the nature of the human being who is fundamentally an *end* in himself. This situates the whole idea of workers' right in the ambience of fundamental human right. This is to the extent that it is inalienable to the individual person and is targeted as fostering a good rapport among people in the place of work. This is fundamental because it accords the individual person a proper place as an *end* and not a mere object of economic gratification.

It suffices to note that the individual person is dignified by work; work makes for uniqueness and shows ingenuity of the individual. It is also rewarding for the individual that embraces it. The right of workers stresses the social dimension of work, where work is done in relationship with others. This paints the picture of the work-front.

Understanding the Concept of Work in Perspective

It has been a contest in ideology across different epochs and disciplines in an effort to pin-point the meaning of work. One

would not be in error to assert that work has proven to be a fluid-concept; fluid to the extent that varied people from diverse disciplines and interests, employ the same term to suit their ideological interests at the moment. The effort here is to project the understanding of work from the stance of different schools of thought and from thence, underpin the understanding of the term work in perspective.

a. *The conventional definition: This school of thought seeks an understanding of work from the perspective that activities that are paid are work. Simply put, the conventional definition of work limits work to activities that are tied to salaries and wages; formal employment. Self-employment and business ingenuity are eschewed from this understanding of work.*

b. *The Extended Conventional definition: there are three versions to this understanding of work namely; third person criterion, the two-person career, and unpaid work that is a necessary background work for paid work.*

Third Person Criterion: This definition is favoured by economists when they are computing the value of unpaid work. It was first proposed by Margaret Reid in 1934. The question posed is: Could this activity be done by someone else for pay? If so, it counts as work. This criterion include in the definition of work "those economic services produced in the household and outside the market, but which could be produced by a third person hired on the market without changing their usefulness to members of the household." Marshall uses the third person criterion to make a

distinction between unpaid domestic labour and employment, thus, "School work, studying, participating in sport for exercise, cooking or gardening for pleasure cannot be employment, even if they involve strenuous effort". Grunt refers to the third person criterion to critique the distinction made between work and non-work (work that is not paid). He says "Since almost every activity undertaken without payment in the home is also undertaken for money in the formal economy the distinction between work and non-work is seriously flawed."

The-two person Career: Papanek defines the two-person career as a career that requires a husband-wife team to perform it but in which only the man is paid, while the wife renders supportive and necessary but unpaid assistance. While it seems that the number of two-person careers has somewhat diminished, due to the fact that most wives today have their own job or career, it is by no means dead.

Unpaid Job in preparation for Paid Job: The third way in which unpaid work is directly linked to paid work and hence, it is recognized as work involved is self-care that consists of making oneself presentable for a paid job. Self care represents a most interesting borderline case of how work is defined in this perspective.

From the foregoing it could be sifted that, the expanded conventional definition still takes its cues from the understanding of paid work. Unpaid work is recognized as work either because it unambiguously could be paid for because the service is in fact

available on the labour market (the third person criterion), or it is the acknowledged support role for a paid position (the two-person career), or it is seen as necessary for successfully engaging in one's paid employment (self care in preparation for a paid job).

- c. **The Goal-Achievement Definition:** this definition includes as work, those "activities that are not intrinsically enjoyable, and that are engaged in because of some desired outcome in the future are work, because there is no immediate gratification, and a definite goal is to be achieved. It may be something as specific as improving one's job opportunities through studying or something as diffuse as helping a child develop in a positive way. This means that the goal achievement definition cross-cuts the paid/unpaid divide."
- d. **The Social Coercion Definition:** this is an alienated view of work that considers as work those activities which are hard, unpleasant, not freely chosen, drudgery, and difficult. The question of paid or unpaid job rarely comes in here, since what counts is embracing an activity and expending energy on it, not out of one's will or convenience, but in obedience to a social demand.
- e. **The Energy Expenditure Definition:** this understanding of work underscores it as an activity that is energy consuming. Work is "the exertion of effort toward some end" (Reskin 2000: 3261). Marshall defines it as "The supply of physical, mental, and emotional effort to produce goods and services" and Nolan

understands work as "the transformation of nature through the expenditure of mental and physical capacities."

What is perceived as not-work is clearly relative to one's definition of work. But above and beyond these interests and sentiments that becloud a real understanding of work, there is need to highlight some key factors that underlie the whole idea of work.

First is that work is transformative: it transforms the person and environment of the person that embraces it. In doing work, one is transformed to become more human and is elevated to the status of participating more in humanity.

Work endows nobility: there is dignity in work. It is not a mere strenuous activity. It elevates the status of the individual that embraces it. This goes beyond economic returns of being paid and financial returns, to touch the integral part of the individual that works.

Work is communicative: it places human beings in a position that they become interactive with each other. One's work affects the other; it can enhance or diminish the person of the next person. This is the social character of work and that explains why people should not be used as mere *means* (especially in the manner of machines and other factors of production) to achieving the work of others.

Work links one to humanity: man could be said to be naturally fitted for work. His is endowed with physical, as well as, psycho-spiritual faculties that enable him to work. To work, therefore, keys the individual person into the larger

gamut of humanity. Refusing to work is an implicit shot-out from humanity.

Work is purposeful: in as much as work entails the expending of human energy, it is directed to useful ends that would benefit humanity. Unlike lower brutes who would expend a great deal of energy in response to their instincts, the energy man expends in work is not merely for its sake; it is directed to some ends, it is purposeful.

In sum, whether work is gainful or unrewarding, painstaking or easy, convenient or necessary, paid or unpaid etc, a good understanding of work should be divested of all sentimentalities and targeted at the very nature of man who is essentially fitted for work; in his physical make-up, spiritual calling and from his psychological standing.

The Dignity of Work Explained

The need to expound on the dignity of work comes from the understanding of work as something that is strenuous and energy consuming. This even degenerates to the level where work is seen as a means of punishment devised to get people conform to social norms and disciplines. This is especially in the context where work is designated with the term *labour*. The whole idea of dignity of work is to establish work as something that ennoble the human person rather than diminish his being and merely sap his energy. The effort here would be to employ practical terms in the understanding of how work is original to man and from thence, make some biblical citations to see work as a divine injunction to which man should conform.

It has been argued that by nature, man is the being that is best

fitted for work. This could be easily sifted from the physical make-up of man. It is the view of the philosophical anthropologists for example, that the human hand is created to have a firm grip of implements and equipment designed for work. The hand is projected from the body to reach out to the environment and manipulate it to the advantage of man. The anthropologists argue further that even machines that are designed to aid work are manufactured after the likeness of human physical attributes. It is dignifying for man to own up to this natural calling to work for which his entire physiognomy is fitted for.

Apart from the physical nature of man, his psycho-spiritual nature also points to the fact that he is naturally created to embrace work. The rationality of man best places him in a vantage position to take initiatives and embrace innovations that would help him manipulate his environment to suit his needs. This rational power of man makes his work to move beyond the mere expending of energy in the manner of lower animals. While lower animals expend their energy in response to their instincts (obeying the whims and caprices of nature), man directs his energy to useful results. This is the dimension of work the philosophical anthropologists would term *purposiveness*. The energy expended by man in work is directed to useful ends, all thanks to his rationality that makes ingenuity possible. Therefore, though man is gifted with physical attributes that would help him expend his energy, he is not deficient in mental faculties that coordinate and direct the activities of his physical nature to useful ends.

No matter what dimension one tends to evaluate it from, it is nothing less than the truth that human beings are by nature designed by the Eternal Architect to be workers. This is seen

in their physical and psycho-spiritual components. This makes it the case that in embracing work which he is naturally designed for, man takes a path that is dignifying; dignifying in the sense that he measures up with the demands of who he is. This is not different from the view of St. John Paul II who argued that "If one wishes to define more clearly the ethical meaning of work, it is this truth that one must particularly keep in mind: Work is a good thing for the human person—a good thing for his or her humanity—because through work the human person not only transforms nature, adapting it to his or her own needs, but he or she also achieves fulfillment as a human being and indeed in a sense becomes "more a human being." The Church believes that work is important. It's more than just a way to earn money—it's a way to participate in God's creation.

From the moral standpoint, work is seen to be in obedience to the divine injunction. As early as in the book of Genesis, man was made to participate in the creative works of God with the injunction "be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it". This makes work the paradigm for participating in the eternal scheme of creation. To own up to this call is dignifying and extols man; elevating him to the status of sharing in the creative works of God.

In another instance of the Genesis account, work comes as a consequence of sin; after the fall of man.

God's fundamental and original intention with regard to man, whom he created in his image and after his likeness, was not withdrawn or cancelled out even when man, having broken the original covenant with God, heard the words: "In the sweat of your face you shall eat bread". These words refer

to the sometimes heavy toil that from then onwards has accompanied human work; but they do not alter the fact that work is the means whereby man achieves that "dominion" which is proper to him over the visible world, by "subjecting" the earth. Toil is something that is universally known, for it is universally experienced. It is familiar to those doing physical work under sometimes exceptionally laborious conditions. It is familiar not only to agricultural workers, who spend long days working the land, which sometimes "bears thorns and thistles", but also to those who work in mines and quarries, to steel-workers at their blast-furnaces, to those who work in builders' yards and in construction work, often in danger of injury or death. It is likewise familiar to those at an intellectual workbench; to scientists; to those who bear the burden of grave responsibility for decisions that will have a vast impact on society. It is familiar to doctors and nurses, who spend days and nights at their patients' bedside. It is familiar to women, who, sometimes without proper recognition on the part of society and even of their own families, bear the daily burden and responsibility for their homes and the upbringing of their children. It is familiar to all workers and, since work is a universal calling, it is familiar to everyone. And yet, in spite of all this toil—perhaps, in a sense, because of it—work is a good thing for man. Even though it bears the

mark of a bonum arduum, in the terminology of Saint Thomas this does not take away the fact that, as such, it is a good thing for man. It is not only good in the sense that it is useful or something to enjoy; it is also good as being something worthy, that is to say, something that corresponds to man's dignity, that expresses this dignity and increases it.

In sum, Work is a challenge God has posed to humans to make them actualise their very being. Unlike the common notion of a punishment, one can and should advance an understanding of the great need to conquer one's environment; fitting, adopting and adapting it to serve his needs. Work is for the good of man in that with it he conforms his environment to his taste. The second credit is that it brings to fore, the unique nature of man, allowing him to showcase his ingenuity. The biblical injunction *increase and multiply and subdue the earth* evidences this divine will. Man must work in obedience to God and for his own good; guaranteeing a better life for himself.

The Right of Workers

The year 1891 witnessed the official declaration of the Church on the dignity of work and the rights of workers. It is the fact that in the field of work, men encounter one another. This encounter with others may culminate in a rift in people's relationship. This is the fundamental footing for workers' right; to ensure that individuals do not cross their boundaries in the field of work. More importantly, the need arose to re-emphasise the rights of workers with the wake of capitalism as an economic trend. With the birth of this economic theory, the onus of business men came to be 'maximizing profit'. This placed the employers of labour in a very tight corner that they

were drenched with the tendency of using all at their disposal, including their employees as means to attaining this maximal profit. This degraded the person of man who is essentially an *end* in himself; instead of being treated as ends in themselves, men were adjudged and treated as factors of production alongside capital and the rest. This trampled the dignity of man under foot. "Prevailing economic thinking sees work as a cost of production, which in a global economy has to be as low as possible in order to be competitive. It sees workers as consumers who because of their relative low wages need to be given easy access to credit to stimulate consumption and wind up with incredible debts."

This denigration of the human person to the level of a factor of production negates and undermines the right of the worker who is fundamentally a human being. This is against the position of Pope Leo XIII who had advocated for the respect of workers' right as fundamental to the human person. This is because according to the Pontiff, human beings are ends in themselves and should not be used as mere properties and things. In a similar voice, "We must first of all recall a principle that has always been taught by the Church; the principle of the priority of labor over capital. This principle directly concerns the process of production: In this process labor is always a primary efficient cause, while capital, the whole collection of means of production, remains a mere instrument of instrumental cause."

To the question what constitutes the rights of workers, Pope Leo XIII would readily answer that among other things, "employers must never tax their workers beyond their strength or employ them in work unsuited for their sex or age.....To gather one's profit out of the need of another is

condemned by both divine and human laws. The rich must refrain from cutting down workers' salaries whether by force, by fraud or by usurious dealing" and a worker should honestly carry out the agreements freely made. He should never injure nor outrage the person of his employer. He should never use violence or cause riot or social disorder in fighting for his rights. Though the pontiff shunned all forms of violence by the employees for their rights, he was not conservative in according them the right to strike from work as a veritable means for demanding their rights.

St. John Paul II articulates the four rights of workers thus: Right to suitable employment for all those capable of it; Right to just remuneration for the work done; Right to the organization of the labor process to respect the requirements of the person and his or her life and Right to form unions. This is similar to the assertion that "All people have the right to economic initiative, to productive work, to just wages and benefits, to decent working conditions, as well as to organize and join unions or other associations."

Even in contemporary times, global supply chains link thousands of firms, large and small, across cultural and political boundaries. The workers at the end of those chains include men, women, and children whose rights are non-existent or ignored and whose level of victimization is often appalling. Obtaining protections as workers is the means by which to obtain decent living standards, basic human rights and the power to secure better wages and legal rights. Sexual abuse, forced labor, child labor, exploitation of immigrants combine with worker fear of losing livelihoods, homes, and country to create challenges for NGOs, national governments, and international labor, trade and financial organizations

attempting to ensure decent working conditions. The power of transnational Brands, the weakness of governments and labor unions in many of the developing countries, and the complexities and elusiveness inherent in supply chains make both national regulation and firm competition ineffective guardians of worker rights. The result is cheap goods for first world consumers produced in circumstances that violate the international standards and norms legislatively sanctioned by their governments. This affirms the need to reiterate workers' right even in modern times.

Workers' right is fundamental and should not be removed from them. These rights are not privileges and should not be toyed with. They exist on the same parlance as fundamental human rights; this borrows from the very nature of these rights themselves. Advancing the fundamental nature of these rights, one could argue that these workers are primarily human and all should be done not to diminish their *humanness*.

The Individual/Social Character of Work- the Nexus of Dignity and Right

By its very nature, work has both individual and social character. This is to the degree that it is the individual person who embraces work, but at the same time, the work done by the individual resonates to affect the larger life of the society. This posits the individual character of work and its social implication.

Though not limited to it, the dignifying character of work can be tied to the individual person who embraces work. Said differently, a good understanding of the dignity of work would begin with the individual. Work is rewarding to the individual

person who embraces it. This is understood to mean that the individual who embraces work would make his life and environment better by that singular decision to embrace work. Beyond the material and economic benefits wrought in work, it becomes a platform for the individual to identify with the larger societal gamut and earn for himself, a place of recognition in the ambit of the social order and among fellow human beings. Work bestows a form of unique identity on the individual that embraces it. This is not very removed from the teaching of St. Paul who has identified work as a factor that bonds the individual to the larger society. He was apt to note that Christians should avoid the company of those who have chosen to do no work. Work as it were, dignifies the individual; bestowing on him, a unique identity for recognition among folks and peers. Work furthers to connect the life of the individual to the life of the society. "Thus work bears a particular mark of man and of humanity, the mark of a person operating within a community of persons. And this mark decides its interior characteristics; in a sense it constitutes its very nature."

Another way of connecting the work of the individual to the life of the larger society is to ponder the fact that whatever work one chooses to embrace, affects the life of the society directly or by implication. The work of the individual exerts either positive or negative influences on the life of the society. This is why societies are not silent to establishing norms that would be ideals as to what type of work one should embrace. Any work that culminates in *common good* is extolled and any that threatens same is not accepted in the society. This explains why some works are considered illegal and others legal in the society.

On the other hand, the rights of workers are seen to bring to bare the social character of work. This is to the extent that these rights are established to foster healthy relationships among people in their places of work. Because human beings are social by their very nature, human dignity is not realized in isolation but is realized in community with others. The dignity of the person is lived out in society by the fulfillment of personal responsibilities. Work is one such essential responsibility which shapes and fulfills human dignity by providing for the needs of one's self and one's family. Work belongs to the vocation of every person. Work is an essential means by which the goods of the earth and the creative capacities of human beings are engaged to provide for human flourishing and the common good. Human work is the fulfillment of human dignity by engaging in and cooperating with the creative work of God. These rights are put in place also to guarantee the workers' commitment to the realisation of the organisational aims and objectives and the *common good*.

The dignity of work which is the individual character of work is connected to the workers' right and this could be termed the *interactionism* of the two characters of work. Work connects the individual to the society and the society in turn defines what should constitute work for the individual; it endorses only the work that promotes the *common good*. This interaction of the two characters of work are very crucial to the relevance of work to driving the human society forward, while protecting the interests and dignity of the individual persons that make up the society.

Some Traditional Teachings of the Church on Work: A review of some Church Documents

The interest here is to highlight some documents of the Church on work. The method would be to give basic background information to the document and from thence advance an insight into the main teachings of the document.

On the Condition of Labor (Rerum Novarum) This groundbreaking social encyclical addresses the dehumanizing conditions in which many workers labor and affirms workers' rights to just wages, rest, and fair treatment, to form unions, and to strike if necessary. Pope Leo XIII upholds individuals' right to hold private property but also notes the role of the state in facilitating distributive justice so that workers can adequately support their families and someday own property of their own. He notes the poor "have a claim to special consideration."

Leo XIII criticizes both capitalism for its tendency toward greed, concentration of wealth, and mistreatment of workers, as well as socialism, for what he understood as a rejection of private property and an under-emphasis on the dignity of each individual person.

On Reconstructing the Social Order (Quadragesimo Anno): This encyclical, written to celebrate the fortieth anniversary of *Rerum Novarum*, reaffirms the Church's concern for workers and defends workers' rights, including just wages, and condemns the increasing disparities between the elite and suffering workers. Pope Pius XI notes the need for state intervention but also introduces the idea of "subsidiarity," or the idea that we should help those people closest to a problem to resolve it with social support as needed. He proposes reconstruction of society into new systems that would involve

all groups within society working together for the good of all. Pius XI upholds the right to private property and also says that **goods also have a social purpose** and must serve the whole human race. He warns against excessive **individualism** as well as **collectivism, communism**, and various types of **socialism** that have developed.

On Human Work (Laborem Exercens): Written on the ninetieth anniversary of the very first social encyclical, *Rerum Novarum*, Pope John Paul II presents work as a fundamental dimension of human existence through which the person achieves fulfillment as a human being. He emphasizes the dignity of labor and notes that through work, the human person can share in the activity of the Creator. John Paul II reminds readers that **labor** should be prioritized over capital—that the **worker** should be valued more than profit. For this reason, we must protect the **rights of workers** to employment, to just wages and to **organize unions**, among others. The Holy Father also calls for "**new movements of solidarity** of the workers and with the workers."

Economic Justice for All: In this pastoral letter, the Catholic bishops of the United States call for a "new American experiment" for the common good in order to **address economic issues** related to poverty, **employment**, food and **agriculture**, and **developing nations**. The bishops argue that economic policies should be evaluated based on how the poor and vulnerable are faring. Workers, owners, stockholders, investors, and consumers should all be seen as economic agents, and must play a role in ensuring that the person is at the center of economic decisions. The bishops highlight the moral implications of the U.S. and global economies, and discuss the need for government guidance to ensure that the free

market benefits, instead of hurts, the poor.

A Call to Action (Octogesima Adveniens): In an apostolic letter on the **eightieth anniversary of *Rerum Novarum*** to then-president of the Pontifical Commission on Justice and Peace Maurice Roy, the Pope Paul VI urges **local churches to develop responses** to the social and economic problems facing their communities. He reminds **Christians of their duty to participate** in working for social and political reform to promote social justice. Paul VI identifies new societal problems related to **urbanization**, the situation of **workers, women and youth, discrimination**, and attitudes towards **immigrants** from poor countries and notes that "preferential respect" should be given to the poor. Paul VI urges changes in policies on issues affecting the poor such as **trade, debt, and economic policy**, and warns against basing progress on economic growth alone. He notes the need for **political participation by the poor** and the correct use of **political power** and affirms the role of individuals and **local Christian communities** in shedding the light of faith on injustice as a way of living out the Gospel.

On the Hundredth Year (Centesimus Annus): Pope John Paul II writes to recognize the **hundredth anniversary of *Rerum Novarum***, a landmark document about the dignity of work the rights of workers which influenced many future documents. The Pope examines the **fall of communism**, brought about by the struggles of workers and the inefficient economic system that failed to protect human rights, private property, and economic freedom. At the same time, John Paul II points to the advantages and sometimes **limitations** of the market, which sometimes do not adequately respond to human needs and can prioritize profit at the expense of the

dignity of the human person. John Paul II also restates themes of Pope Leo XIII's encyclical and calls for a just society based on the rights of workers, economic initiative, and participation.

Unemployment as it Undermines the Dignity of Work and Workers' Right: Facts and Figures from Nigeria

Every human society and economy has both active and inactive populations that characterize it. The economically active ones in the economy are referred to as the population willing and able to work, and include those actively engaged in the production of goods and services and those who are unemployed. The International Labour Organization (ILO) defines the unemployed as numbers of the economically active population who are without work but available for and seeking work, including people who have lost their jobs and those who have voluntarily left work. According to Fajana (2000), unemployment refers to a situation where people who are willing and capable of working are unable to find suitable paid employment. It is one of the macro-economic problems which every responsible government is expected to monitor and regulate. The higher the unemployment rate in an economy the higher would be the poverty level and associated welfare challenges. There is no gainsaying the fact that unemployment looms large among the Nigerian population especially among the youths.

Unemployment in Nigeria is defined as the proportion of labour force that was available for work but did not work in the week preceding the survey period for at least 39 hours. Official figures from Bureau of Statistics puts the figure of unemployed at 19.70 percent, about 30 million, but this figure still did not include about 40 million other Nigerian youths captured in World Bank Statistics in 2010. By implication, it

means that if Nigeria's population is 160 million plus, then 50 percent or more of Nigerians are unemployed. The National Bureau of Statistics estimate that unemployment rate in Nigeria now stands at 21 percent.

Unemployment especially among the youths in Nigeria has been tied to myriad of factors that includes;

- Rural-urban migration: Youths move to urban areas with the probability of securing lucrative employment in the industries. In addition to this, there is the concentration of social amenities in the urban centres that make people flock to the cities.
- Rapid population growth: Going by the 2006 census in Nigeria, the nation's population was put at 140,431,790 and projections for the future indicate that the population could be over 180 million by the year 2020, given the annual growth rate of 3.2 percent. The high population growth rate has resulted in the rapid growth of the labour force, which is far outstripping the supply of jobs.
- The educational system in Nigeria: Education in Nigeria still operates with outdated school curricula and there are no good efforts to inculcate employable skills in its recipients. *Some* scholars and commentators have argued that as far as the formal sector is concerned, the average Nigeria graduate is not employable and, therefore, does not possess the skills needed by the employers of labor for a formal employment. The course contents of most tertiary education in Nigeria lack entrepreneurial contents that would have enabled graduates to become job

creators rather than job seekers.

- Rapid expansion of the educational system which directly leads to increase in the supply of educated manpower above the corresponding demand for them. This contributes to the problem of the youth unemployment in Nigeria.
- The fifth factor which could be considered the most important factor bothers on corruption. Corruption has been proven to be a very deadly cankerworm that has eaten deep into all the facets of the Nigerian economy. It is not a practice known only in the high places, it has got to the grassroots to become a common practice of the larger Nigerian population. The biggest problem to be observed with employment in Nigeria is the massive fraud that characterizes the labour market.

The concern in unemployment is to the extent that it relates to the dignity of work and the rights of workers. When someone is unemployed, the whole issue of dignity is undermined. This is the case because the unemployed has no fair ground of play to show ingenuity and contribute his/her quota to the good of the larger society. The issue of dignity of work does not come into play here at all. From whence will come the dignity since the individual is denied work? Again, unemployment is a breach of the fundamental right of the worker. This implies that unemployment has negative effects on both the individual (dignity of work) and the social (workers' rights) characters of work.

Very closely related to the issue of unemployment is the fact of under-employment in Nigeria. In this parlance, though the

individual is employed, he/she is underpaid. The amount of energy expended at work is not commensurate to the remuneration got for work done. This is not uncommon in the Nigeria labour market. This is a fundamental breach of workers' rights too since it is the exploitation of the services of the workers.

Evaluation: The Concern of the Church and the State

It is very disheartening to observe that the Church is most cases, is seen to be guilty of the same charges she levies against the State as it relates to the rights of workers. It is indeed a bitter pill when one ponders the fact that the Church dabbles into the tendency of not practising what it preaches. Though it is a fact that the Church has done a lot in the area of employment; creating job opportunities in their institutions and organisations in Nigeria, she is found wanting in the area of their staff welfare. It has been observed in many institutions owned by the Church that their workers are grossly underpaid relative to what is obtainable in circular institutions. There are also allusions that the working environment within church owned institutions is very strict; workers are made to work under strict working environment. In this light, the Church has some if not many questions to answer as it relates to the workers' rights in Nigeria. Underpayment and over-labouring of workers is key in the violation of workers' rights. This is not alien to work in the church setting.

The state on the other hand, has not done a great deal in curbing unemployment and its attendant menace in Nigeria. The causes of unemployment enumerated above are fundamentally the concerns of the government. The greater worry comes with the fact that the government is doing little

or nothing in those areas. The resultant effect is the continued growth in the unemployment rate in the country. One begins to wonder if the unemployment rate in the country is a deliberate attempt by politicians and leaders in the country. This becomes a possibility when one ponders the fact that 'creation of jobs' has never been found wanting in political manifestoes in Nigeria. Do politicians deliberately maintain this *status quo* simply to have a point for their campaign? Whatever the *raison d'etre* of unemployment in Nigeria is, the most important thing to note is that government is yet to do her best.

Self-employment has been posited to be a good remedy for unemployment in Nigeria. This is not without its own bottlenecks. The government should put the necessary paraphernalia in place so as to encourage this. This ranges from sensitisation for the unemployed, provision of basic amenities, improvement of the education system in the country, provision of accessible and affordable funds for intending entrepreneurs etc. The church could at least help the state in the area of sensitization and other places they could come in the whole quest to curb unemployment.

Both the Church and the State should encourage their workers by the provision of a good working environment and generally improving their staff welfare. The Church can also serve as a watchdog to the State to ensure she owns up to her responsibilities to her citizens. The problem of unemployment is hydra-headed and as such could be considered to be very complex in nature. This makes it the case that any effort to address it should be integral and incorporating. All hands must be on deck to tackle this slight on the dignity and right of the worker.

Conclusion

It is neither justifiable nor proper for the individual to stand at a distance and level blames on the Church and the State. The whole issue of unemployment is a business of all and for all; it is a concern for all. The fight against unemployment begins the individual. When this is handled properly, the question of the dignity and rights of the worker being slighted must have been resolved. It is a concern for all and must not be considered an exclusive reserve of the Church and the State. Work is not merely about the amount of energy expended. That is why it is imperative to distinguish *hard work* from *smart work*. Man shares the ability to work hard with animals and machines alike. What makes the difference is that man is able to work smart. Smart work typifies the ingenuity of man and his use of his rationality. Put differently, man should not merely work with his hands, he has got the brains to make the difference. Moving above the pangs of unemployment, one needs not just to work with his hands, he must put his brain to good use. This is imperative if he must key into the larger ambience of work in the society to carve a niche for himself. It is the brain that makes one realise what is lacking and how best to key into such an opportunity in the society.

Though the Church and the State have important roles to play in curbing unemployment and in promoting the dignity and rights of the worker, the individual person is found to be at the centre of the whole process. The individual makes the sovereign decision of whether to embrace work or otherwise, this freedom extends to choosing what work to do and how to do it. It is all a collaborative process, involving the Church, the State and the individual alike.

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CHAPTER 9



SOLIDARITY IN IGBO LAND: AN OPTION FOR GLOBAL FRATERNITY

By Rev. Fr. Anthony Anigbogu

Preamble

At the fore front of the dignity of human person is the principle of solidarity. It is the expression of the whole truth about man known by reason and faith under the influence of "encounter of the gospel message and of its demands, summarized in the supreme commandment of love of God and neighbor in justice with the problems emanating from the life of the society". In the light of the above St. John Paul II said, "We are all one family in the world. Building a community that empowers everyone to attain their full potential through which in respecting each other's dignities, rights and responsibilities; make the world a better place to live."

This is not a feeling of vague sympathy or shallow misery at the adversities of so many people, both near and far. On the contrary, it is a firm and persevering determination to commit oneself to the common good; "there can be no peace between people unless there is peace within each of them" that is to say by implication, we need the good of all and of each individual, because we are all really answerable for all.

In the course of history with regard to Igbo concept of solidarity some offences are generally regarded as abomination. For instance, in traditional Igbo society; murder was regarded as an offence against the land and the murderer was expected to hang him/herself or go for an exile for a specified period of time. Chinua Achebe describes very vividly the case of Okonkwo, "he inadvertently killed a kinsman during a funeral. The following morning, he left on a seven-year exile together with all members of his family. The community set his house and other belongings on fire.

The base of the above practice is that solidarity is supposed to improve the quality of human life irrespective of our racial, national, tribal, ideological, regional and religious sentiments. Consequent upon this, "the Church in her wisdom with the light of the Spirit has always reflected within her tradition of faith been able to provide an ever more accurate foundation and shape to this principle via Church's social teaching. This they did, by progressively explaining it in the attempt to respond coherently to the demands of the times and to the continuous developments of social life within our global family. To see to the root meaning of the concept in view, the igbo people forms our background.

2.0 The Igbo

The Igbo are one of the ethnic groups of Southern Nigeria, with very significant population found in the eastern side of the river. They speak Igbo, which includes various Igboid languages and dialects. They are one of the largest ethnic groups in Africa. According to Ottenberg, the Igbo "consist of more than two hundred independent territorial groups, each composed of one or more villages or dispersed residential

groupings". These groups are organized on the bases of patrilineal clans and lineages.

In rural Nigeria, Igbo people work mostly as crafts men, farmers and traders. Their most important crop is yam; which is celebrated annually during harvest time. Other staple crops include cassava and cocoyam. In the harvest time especial that of new yam festival solidarity is always shown among the people since all must not have the same fruitful harvest.

Nonetheless, the Igbo have the following ideology of solidarity in their communications through some hints in proverb dynamisms: "*igwe bu ike*" *togetherness is strength*. "*Oko koba anu ohia ya ejee n' osisi, m'okoba mmadu ojekuru mmadu ibe ya*" one needs the other for better accomplishment of certain things. "*Ibiri ka m biri*" live and let's live, "*Onuru Ude nwanne agabanaso*" the cries of a neighbor should never go unattended. "*Nwata kwochaa aka osoro ogaranya rie nni*" if a child washes his hand well, he eats with the elders. "*Egbe belu ugo belu, nke sir' ibe ya ebena nku kaa ya*" let each person get his due share. "*Onu-uzu adigh anu uzu nne ya n'ahia*" there are certain things one cannot accomplish no matter his efficiency and dynamism. "*Ogazi si n'ihe eji adi ibua eje n'ubi bu anya ahughi anya ahu*" two heads are better than one. "*Otu aka anaghi eke ngwugwu*" just one man is not enough to realize a difficult task. All these are different facet of concrete life situations, which serve as pointers to solidarity in Igbo parlance.

3.0 Other areas that Igbo manifest solidarity

The concept of the idea to stay together as a community and act as one is very important for the Igbo. The Igbo see the fact that to stay united in a direction or courage of action will bring a shared honor to them. Therefore, they value strongly to come together. Coming together is deterministic and central to all else. In gathering of all sorts, namely: family affiliation, marriage ceremony, funeral ceremony, new yam festival, social representation through proverbs, masquerade cult, war, wrestling, hunting, and village political affairs, the Igbo assert their emotions and psychology together through calls to order of solidarity such as sharing in brotherhood like: "*Onuru ude nwanne agbana-oso*" the cries of the neighbor should never go unattended.

3.1 Family affiliation

Igbo family unit constitutes "*umunna*" which is patrilineal. This unit is made up of "*umunne*" (*umu*-sons, *nne*-mother). The term represents children of the same nuclear family. The lineage group normally has a common male ancestor.

To enhance justice and peace, the Igbo believe that many family matters are better resolved through reconciliation than litigation. The sense of reconciliation is of paramount necessity even when fault is attributed; punishment on this regard is aimed at reintegration. The disputants' representatives and other adult members participate in the resolution. The web of socio-economic relations between disputants' e.g (spouses, family and village members, or

business partners) is relatively considered in choosing a system of justice that would not upset the status quo. Consequent upon this, it is a taboo to take matters of conflict to police and worst still to law court without first reporting to the "*umunna*" kindred. In some Igbo land a fine is levied for such nascent lack of fare play, it is good to note that, the Igbo seek justice that peace may abide through fraternal charity.

3.2 Marriage ceremony

Birth, marriage and burial are considered the three important family events in most cultures and Igbo land is not an exception.

It is common to get invited to traditional marriage (*Igbankwu*) and certainly with one witnessing. Marriage in Igbo land is not just an affair between the future husband and wife but also involves the parents, the extended families and villages. First, the groom asks his potential partner to marry him. Assuming that this is affirmative, the groom will visit the bride's household accompanied by his father. The groom's father will introduce himself and his son and explain the purpose of his visit. The bride's father welcomes the guests, invites his daughter to come and asks her if she knows the groom. Her confirmation shows that she agrees with the proposal. Then the bride's price settlement starts with groom accompanied by his father and elders visiting the bride's compound on another evening. They bring wine and kola nuts with them, which are presented to the bride's father. After being served with a meal, they will negotiate the bride's price. Usually it takes more than one evening before the final

bride's price is settled.

In addition to this traditional marriage is Church wedding which follows immediately. During this ceremony a lot of solidarity is shown by the occasion as it were, the bride's train made up of the bride's followed by her single female friends, who enter the Church dancing on the music, while the guests bless the bride's train by throwing money over the bride and her entourage. However, these aspects of throwing money, together with honoring the invitation card clearly show solidarity in praxis. It is good equally to know that some times, the traditional marriage is combined with the reception that is if, the ceremony is preceded by the Church wedding.

3.3 Funeral ceremony

Death in Igbo land is regarded as the passing away of the person from the world of existence to the spirit world. Hence, "at death one rejoins his ancestors". However, only after the second burial rites, "it is believed that the person can reach the spirit world as otherwise the departed relative would still wander between earth and the spirit world."

The honor or solidarity shown in death among the Igbo varies and is dependent on the background, title, gender, relationship with family and circumstances around the death.

The corpse is normally buried at the village in the person's compound after it has been preceded by the wake. During the funeral ceremonies, relatives and friends of the deceased pay their last respect to the dead and mourn with the bereaved in colorful ceremonies marked with singing and traditional

dances. In the olden days, the wake was accompanied by masquerades, traditional music and animal sacrifices.

In my town Awha-Ndiagu, in Ezeagu L.G.A. of Enugu State, Nigeria, a four-day is kept, during which youths observe wake in the compound of the deceased, failure to comply attracts fine of N2,000 naira. In addition to this the death of individual stops anyone from a normal daily routine work. This, I mean is solidarity in action; and it is commonly observed that when a poor man dies, the kindred and family gather together to remedy the situation financially by way of contribution or donation irrespective of the deceased standing with the community, in fact, solidarity is most common among the Igbo on the side of funeral, here empathy consumes and fans aflame the hearts of the community.

3.4 New yam festival in Igbo land (*Iri-ji*)

Yam is a very important food crop in Igbo land. Evidence of this is in the cultural significance attached to New Yam festival "*iri-ji*" in Igbo land. The traditional Igbo society is mainly agrarian. Emphasis is placed on farming and the cultivation of sufficient food to last until the next food harvest. Special emphasis is especially placed on yam cultivation. The traditional Igbo man takes pride in showing off his yam barn neatly stacked with yam tubers from top to bottom. It signifies wealth and success. In the days of old, a common question asked by a bride's father when a young man signifies his intention to marry his daughter is "how big is your yam barn"? A big yam barn means the man is hard working and can take care of his daughter.

The *iri-ji* (new yam) festival is a time of thanksgiving to the

gods for making the farm yields possible and praying for good yields for the next planting season. The *Iri-ji* festival is celebrated at different times within the various Igbo communities, varying from August until October every year. The solemn role of eating the first yam is performed by the oldest man or Eze: traditional rulers in different Igbo communities have different names in their communities. It is believed within the traditional communities that their position bestows on them the privilege of being intermediaries between their communities and the gods of the land. In fact, many traditionalists and title-holders in Igbo land will not taste the new yam until the day that is traditionally set aside for that purpose. At the *Iri-ji* festival, only dishes of yam are served. The oldest man or the traditional ruler is normally the first person to eat the new yam and thereafter every other person can eat. This feasting together brings out clearly the aspect of solidarity among the Igbo, since the Charity of joy in sharing, is seen in action.

3.5 Social Representation: Proverbs

An analysis of social representations of some proverbs and symbols which depict solidarity can fetch a global fraternity through Igbo conviction, ideas, and beliefs. Generally, proverbs express and form some part of the Igbo spoken words. They are in most cases succinct and pithy. They express the wisdom of the Igbo. According to Maurier, this has a normative value. However, the norm in the proverbs gives a suggestion, others advice while others impose a mode of conduct. Among the Igbo, the household saying is that "proverbs are the palm oil with which words are eaten." It is a sign of wisdom and learning. Of course, we could vividly

recognize that food cooked without palm oil is always tasteless, so is words employed without proverbs do not express adequately the communicative intent of the user.

We now briefly analyze two groups of proverbs that express solidarity in forms of: **Respect and even distribution**

- i. **Let each person get his due share** "*Egbe belu ugo belu, nke sir' ibeya ebena nku kaa ya.*"

Literally it means: "let the hawk perch and let the eagle perch, which ever refuses that the other would perch, let its wings wither". Even though the hawk and the eagle have wings, they cannot be flying always. Sometimes, there is always a need to rest the feathers. So it would be unfair then for one to refuse that the other would perch since the both knows the important of perching. Applying this to our human situation, it means that each person should have enough liberty without constraint to acquire his share of the good things of the world and hence enjoy maximum happiness. No one should, be an obstacle on the way of others.

The Boko Haram uprising and the idea of Islamazation of certain country should be cleaned up entirely from the ideology of the Islam. Right of Religious, socio-economic, national, ethnic, political and ideological differences et cetra implied by this Igbo proverb here, should integrate social justice without prejudice to one's fundamentalism.

ii. Togetherness: (The need for the other)

Two heads are better than one “*Ogazi si n’ihe eji adi ibua eje n’ubi bu anya ahughi anya ahu.*”

Put literally: “*Ogazi* the bird said, that it is more profitable to go to the farm in pairs so that what one eye does not see, another eye would see”. This bird normally flies around the farm in the evening to look for food. That is, at the time the owner of the farm had gone home after the day’s work. It is rare to find one alone. The advantage is that whichever one discovers something to eat beckons at the others to come around. So the eyes of the two birds discover better than the eyes of one bird.

Otu aka anaghi eke ngwugwu – just one man is not enough to realize a difficult task.

The literal meaning of the proverb is: “one hand does not tie a parcel”. In many parts of Igbo land, “a parcel is normally wrapped with banana leaves and tied with tiny ropes.”

The proverb stresses the fact that this task is always difficult if not impossible for one hand to realize. The message the proverb is that for a difficult task, it is always better to look for the assistance of others. One man may realize the task but the quality may not be the same if more than one person realizes it.

4.0 How can solidarity become a global affair?

The heart of solidarity is the life of Jesus, because it is through the incarnation that God is in a very real way in solidarity with humanity and that we are in solidarity with God. The historical reality of the life of Jesus as a human being lifts solidarity beyond the fellowship of people into something altogether more mystical and powerful. In addition, because we know, as Christians, that all of us are formed in the image of God, loving our neighbor (as an act of solidarity) becomes also an act of solidarity towards and with God. Every act of solidarity, understood in this light, becomes an act of communion with God; an action in which we transmit and reflect the love with which God loves both the person who is object of the action and with which we love God. The ability to recognize God in every individual person and to recognize every individual in God is necessary for authentic human development. Our belief in this and our faith as Christians draws us ever more strongly into a state of unity with each other and with God. A strong background on this is offered better on Catholic Social Teaching of the Church.

4.1 The Church teaching on solidarity

Several organs of the Holy See are dedicated to social issues. The pontifical council for Justice and peace is tasked with promoting “Justice and Peace in the world, in the light of the Gospel and of the social teaching of the church” it works to clarify, expand upon and develop new teachings in the areas of peace, justice and human rights. The council also collaborates with local and international catholic organizations working in those areas, and works with the social welfare organs of the United Nations, through the Secretariat of State. The pontifical council *Cor Unum* is the Holy See’s primary organ devoted to charitable works. The council supervises the activities of *caritas International*. It

also operates through John Paul II's foundation for the Sahel and the *populorum progressio* foundation. The pontifical Academy works with various dicasteries, especially the council for justice and peace, to contribute to the development of the Church's social teachings.

The principles of catholic social teaching, though in most cases far older in origin, first began to be combined together into a system in the late nineteenth century, since then, successive Popes have added to and developed the church's body of social teaching, principally through the medium of encyclical letters. However, the catholic social teaching is the body of doctrine developed by the Catholic Church on matters of social justice, involving issues of poverty and wealth, economics, social organization and the role of the state. Its foundations are widely considered to have been laid by Pope Leo XIII's 1891 encyclical letter "*Rerum novarum*" which advocated economic distributionism and condemned both capitalism and socialism, although its roots can be traced to the writings of catholic thinkers such as St. Thomas Aquinas and St. Augustine of Hippo, and is also derived from concepts present in the Bible and the cultures of the ancient Near East.

4.1.1 Pope Paul VI

He toed the line of his predecessor by giving attention to the disparities in wealth and development between the industrialized West and the Third World countries in his 1967 encyclical "*Populorum Progressio*" the development of people, it asserts that free international trade alone is not adequate to correct these disparities and supports the role of internal organizations in addressing this need. Paul called on rich nations to meet their moral obligation to the poor nations, pointing out the relationship between development and peace.

The intention of the church is not to take sides but to be an advocate for basic human dignity: "There can be no progress towards the complete development of individuals without the simultaneous development of all humanity in the spirit of solidarity" as experienced in human affairs, the church seeks as a solitary goal:

To carry forward the work of Christ Himself under the lead of the befriending spirit." ... But, since the church lives in history, she ought to "scrutinize the signs of the times and interpret them in the light of the Gospel." Sharing the noblest aspirations of men and women and suffering when she sees them not satisfied, but wishes to help them attain their full flowing, and that is why she offers all people what she possesses as her characteristic attribute: a global vision of man and of the human race.

4.1.2 Second Vatican council

The primary document from the second Vatican council concerning social teachings is *Gaudium es spses*, the 'pastoral constitution on the church and the modern world', which is considered one of the chief accomplishments of the council. Unlike earlier documents, this is an expression of all bishops, and covers a wide range of issues of the relationship of social concerns and Christian action. At its care, the document asserts the fundamental dignity of each human being, and declares the church's solidarity with both those who suffer, and those who would comfort the suffering. "The joys and the hopes, the grieves and the anxieties of the people of this age, especially those who are poor or in any way afflicted these are the joys and hopes, the grieves and anxieties of the followers

of Christ.”

5.0 What does it mean to practice solidarity?

Solidarity is much more than an idealistic principle for organizing society; basically it is a moral value. More than this, solidarity exists not only between individuals but also within and between social institutions. So we can speak (and think) of solidarity between nations, between towns, between parishes. A concrete way in which this solidarity is expressed is in twinning arrangements between towns or parishes in different countries. Also just as there can be structural sin, for example racism which is institutionalized within an organization, there can also be structural solidarity where relations of mutuality and interdependence are institutionalized and celebrated.

Signs of solidarity in practice are: love and service of neighbor, for an instance the simple gesture of checking on an elderly neighbor; social action, for example setting up a winter shelter for homeless people or campaigning to stop the deportation of an asylum seeker; and mutual respect, for example buying a copy of the Big Issue rather than giving money to a beggar, or any serious engagement with people across a divided whether of race, religion, age or social background. Finally, it is the practice of solidarity, even in simple ways, to guarantee the common good and the fostering of integral human development.

5.1 Solidarity and love/caritas

For solidarity to be a Christian practice it must be permeated by love (caritas). The life, death and resurrection of Jesus connect solidarity and charity (caritas). In fact solidarity is the expression of caritas, or to put it another way, love is the verb

of solidarity. Solidarity is the virtue and the practice underlying the commandment to love one's neighbor as oneself. (Matthew 10:40-42, 20:25; Mark 10:42-45; Luke 22:25-27)

If we all really lived the value of solidarity there would be both global peace and strenuous action to halt and reverse climate change: “opus solidarities pax” (peace is the fruit of solidarity).

6.0 Evaluation and conclusion

It is quite indisputable that we co-exist accidentally to one another irrespective of our non-consent to such offer. What is, is a reality as fathomed by the existentialist and If such concept is universally upheld by us then there would be no objection to the naturalness of our dependency on the other since incompleteness was first pinpointed by the Creator Himself after creating Adam, this gives way to the person of Eve as a suitable helpmate. However, man's incapacity as seen in his constant quest for completeness can never be overlooked, St. Augustine would say that 'our soul cannot rest until, it rests in God'. We actually need the other, for no one is all knowing.

Consequently, the fact that we are on daily bases confronted with many situations of inequality, poverty and injustice, as signs not only of a profound lack of fraternity, but also of the absence of a culture of solidarity; new ideologies characterized by rampant individualism, egocentrism and materialistic consumerism, weaken social bonds, which inject the popular concept “throw away” mentality leading to contempt for, and the abandonment of, the weakest and those considered 'useless'. In this way human coexistence increasingly tends to resemble a mere do out which is both pragmatic and selfish in our way of life, religious practice,

ethnic, economic and Ideological differences. Nevertheless, borrowing a leaf from the Igbo world view on solidarity as 'a way of Coming together which is deterministic and central to all else' would add meaning to the global world on the aspect of fraternity. It is a simple fact that we cannot live and exist well independently of others, we are interdependent beings. Solidarity looks upon this interdependence as something good, something positive, a thing to be cherished. The image Saint Paul gives us of the Body of Christ (that we are all individual parts that together make up the Body of Christ) gives us a visual way to think of this.

Before the modern age it has been almost impossible to connect so easily with people around the world. Modern technology has made it possible to build relationships and help and support those in different parts of the world, in many ways making the world a lot smaller. In his social encyclical Pope Benedict XVI pointed out that "As society becomes ever more globalized, it makes us neighbors but does not make us brothers". Solidarity is simply the demand of fraternity, that we treat each other as neighbors.

Consequent upon these, one would ask what connotation comes to mind around the concept of solidarity. And a Marxist would simply say, it is the term or the bedrock of the Big Society or a trade union slogan or another way of reducing the world to right wing family values.

Solidarity is a truly multi-faceted concept. Think of it as a masterfully cut diamond where each of the faces reflects light in a different but beautiful way. At the core, the centre of the diamond, the uniting and united view is the understanding of solidarity that comes from Catholic Social Teaching. What's more, solidarity is itself the most mystical and yet

deeply human of the founding concepts of the social teaching of the Church.

Solidarity is a truly universal bond, linking together all human beings, living and dead, of every nation, race and belief. More than that, for Christians, solidarity is the bond synonymous with the life of Jesus as God and man, which links all human beings with God. That is why all the different facets of solidarity are to some extent true, because they are all perspectives that flow from the experiences of being human.

Finally, In order to practice solidarity at its most basic level; a deep touch with the demand of justice and peace which is inherent in the golden rules and the ten commandants of God is required. This unquestionably should be a fundamental option sought by all to promote peace in the world surrounded by violence and conflict.

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CHAPTER 10

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BOOK REVIEW

TITLE: *Laudato Si: On the Care for our Common World*
(English Translation)

AUTHOR: Pope Francis

PUBLISHERS: St Pauls in Nigeria by arrangement with
Liberia Editrice Vaticana

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YEAR: 2015

REVIEWER: Dr. Matthew Ikechukwu Nwafor

This is the second encyclical by Pope Francis even though many people like to consider it as the first since *Lumen Fidei* (The Light of Faith) which was published in 2013 was a finished work to what Pope Benedict XVI started before his resignation. It might be of a very important interest to note that the literal translation of *Laudato si* is not "On the Care for our Common World" as found affixed to the theme. That appendage arose because of the content of the encyclical or the central message it passes across to the world. The rather

exact translation of the complete dictum "*LAUDATO SI, mi' Signore*" that belongs to the Osco-Umbrian branch of the Italic languages is: "Praise be to you, my Lord" having been adopted from the "Canticle of the Sun" which was a kind of poem and a prayer used by St Francis of Assisi in praise of God for the beauty of creation.

This is one of the special encyclicals by Popes in history following the involving feature of its theme and the inclusive nature of its audience demonstrated in the following expression: "Now, faced as we are with global environmental deterioration, I wish to address every person living on this planet" (n.3). Little wonder why some individuals have chosen to describe it as "A Love Letter to Humanity" or "An Environmental Encyclical." However, contrary to the insulated notion that *Laudato si*, is an encyclical on climate change, a phrase that occurred only twelve times in the text, we shall prefer to describe it as a **Human Interest Encyclical** considering the encompassing ideas shared by the pope which are connected to human environment, human socialization, human spirituality (relationship with God), human fundamental option for the poor and so on. Even though the Pope invites all humanity as his penultimate predecessor Pope St John Paul II did to "a global ecological conversion" which consists of repentance from "sins against creation", the contents of the encyclical cut across the social, the political, economy, religion, morality and spirituality hence, the pope's assent to Patriarch Bartholomew's view that the

environmental problems which humanity suffers have ethical and spiritual roots (Cf. N.9).

Explaining this stance, the Pope notes that one of the major problems with our common home especially that of pollution and climate change arises from what he described as "rapidication" or "the throwaway culture" which hinges on consumerism. Much of this lethal lifestyle is attributed as the malaise of the rich and developed countries who incur a lot of suffering for other poorer developing countries. The pope is not saying what is far from our daily observations in our society that has given in to 'fast-fast brand' lucidly exhibited in our fast food, fast technology, fast textile and so on; which, though in themselves are not wrong, yet become a source of anxiety when they cause harm to the world and to the quality of life of much of humanity (Cf. n. 18). The adverse effect from this constitutes what he described as "the social dimension of global change" which he evaluated as a sign that "the growth of the past two centuries has not always led to an integral development and an improvement in the quality of life" (n.46).

And then the pope made another remark which only those of his likes who think deeply about the true meaning of life do. Even though the pope approached it purely from a social point of view, he expressed the same trepidation that many neuroscientists like the German Manfred Spitzer did about what he described as 'Digital Dementia.' This disorder occurs

in young people as a result of incessant exposure to computer and other digital gadgets and media that render some parts of the brain inactive and eventually deformed. One of the solutions Spitzer proffered to this challenge resonates with the great invitation of the pope on our attitude towards “media and digital world.” According to the pope, the digital world and media have succeeded in overloading us with information which eventually ends in confusion or what he described as “mental pollution.” He and Spitzer therefore agreed that real relationship with others or “interacting with the real world: from confronting physical obstacles to problem solving to social interactions” (www.rferl.mobi/a/computer-exposure-digital-dementia/25073023.html) is essential not only in developing the brain to achieve its potentials but also “in learning how to live wisely, to think deeply and to love generously” (n.47) which assuages this tragedy of mental pollution.

From a moral dimension, the pope decried reduction in the birth rate as an approach to resolving some of the hardships humanity faces as a result of climate degradation especially that of hunger. This in his opinion has further led to another unfortunate situation which is also a form of neglect to human environment; that is, the non-protection of the unborn whose lives are wasted at ease. Instead of centering the whole problem on the rise in population which he described as an escapist way, the pope blamed it on “extreme and selective

consumerism” that is tantamount to stealing from the table of the poor (Cf. n.50). This according to him is also the root cause of the inequality that exists among individuals and nations. For instance, the Jesuit C.P. Varkey wrote about two decades ago (with no significant change today) that “the U.S. has only 5% of the world's population, but it uses 25% of the world's energy and emits 22% of all carbon dioxide. India, on the other hand, 16% of the world's population; but it uses only 3% of world's energy (compared to 25% in the U.S.) and produces only 3% of carbon dioxide (*Be Human Be Holy*, 10th Print, 2013, p.81). The pope therefore charged the rich countries with “ecological debts” (Cf nn.51-52 for a wider understanding) in the arena of international relations.

In the whole of chapter two, the pope made a hermeneutical excursion into the right construal of Christian anthropology in relation to human environment that is found in the book of Genesis but which must be studied in the light of the Gospel. He lamented how an amateurish exegesis of the biblical passage of Gen. 1:28 down the centuries has ruptured the divine mandate to care for our environment. The compartmentalized approach to the message of the scripture which occurs when we read it in fragments is the cause of this poor construal. To rectify this, the pope took our minds to the second creation account in Genesis (2:1.5) where the scripture specified the kind of dominion God gave to human beings over creation. It is the dominion not of subjugation, abuse or misuse but primarily that of communion and then caretaking,

service, conservation and preservation which do not negate the utilization of the products of creation. With reference and analysis of various events in the life of Jesus in the Gospel, the Supreme Pontiff revealed what supposed to be the right attitude to creation (Cf. nn.96-100). He cautioned that “the Bible has no place for a tyrannical anthropocentrism unconcerned for other creatures” (n.68).

In another controversial but important recommendation, the pope called for a diversification of our bearing towards a better world beyond what technology or what he described as “technocratic paradigm” that tends to colonize human life in the contemporary society has offered. He acknowledged the input of technology in the society by enumerating its various contributions in improving human life (Cf. nn.102-105) but spoke in grimace against assuming it to be “an undifferentiated and one-dimensional paradigm which is what leads to the neglect of the useful and diagnostic “data generated by other fields of knowledge, including philosophy and social ethics” (n.110). I think what the pope wants to relay here is that if humanity wants to preserve its earthly home and maintain it to a good and gainful level, it must be open to the information from other fields of learning like philosophy which beyond material good wrought through technology asks some teleological questions about life and its goals. Negligence to this leaves our technology without guard and without direction and edifying purpose thus making us

victims of frankenstein who are casualties to their own handiwork. For instance, the various genetic manipulations done by our biological engineers in humans, animals and plants are of great concern to the pope and indeed to any future-oriented reflecting mind in our time. While the pope was still calling for caution on interventions in the genes of plants and animals, we witnessed recently the so called *Genome Editing* that alters the DNA of fetus in their embryonic development. Apart from the British government which has approved this practice, it has received wide condemnation by many genetic experts for its ethical implication and its unpredictable effects on the future of humanity. Here is a clear case of trivializing the sacredness of human life. This is one out of the many ways this is done in our time. Does the pope then suggest a return to the Stone Age? The encyclical answered curiously that it does not imply this but he is only calling our attention to the “need to slow down and look at reality in a different way...” (n.114).

Similarly, the pope condemned Modern Anthropocentrism that works in tandem with technocratic paradigm which views nature and cosmos as mere object of utility and as raw material to be hammered into useful shape. He also criticized the other extreme which attaches no special value to human beings but sees them as “simply one being among others, the product of chance or physical determinism” (n.118). Against the positions of these two intemperate groups, he called for an adequate anthropology which must be present before we

expect the right ecology. Misguided anthropocentrism causes misguided, injudicious and imprudent lifestyle which commonly manifests in “practical relativism”. The pope described this as the major foundation of ecological crisis and the latter is but “one small sign of the ethical, cultural and spiritual crisis of modernity” (Cf. n.119). Because of the interconnectedness that exists between human environment and human lifestyle, the pope asserts that “we cannot presume to heal our relationship with nature and the environment without healing all fundamental human relationships” (n.119). This is where the profound and palpable fact of the relationship between peace and justice to the development of human environment is most expressed. What can be truer than the fact that when justice and equitability are shown in the sharing and use of human resources among individuals and nations, there will be no wastage and its resulting pollutions. And more still, there will be no war which is the most threatening means of environmental pollution considering the use of the atomic and nuclear bombs that carry hazardous chemical components that have lasting harmful effect on both human life and his environment.

The general solution which the pope proffered to the problem of ecological crisis and its constituent factors is found in what he captioned “Integral Ecology” which he explained in the fourth chapter of the encyclical. This kind of ecology is in his words, “one which clearly respects its human and social

dimensions” (n.137). If we are among those who wish to call this encyclical an “environmental encyclical”, we must also understand the pope very clearly. He said: “When we speak of the “environment”, what we really mean is a relationship existing between nature and the society which lives in it” (n.139). What must be clear therefore, is that environment is not just an inert entity but an organic and living existence triggered by the relationship between the abstract being and the conscious beings operating in it. It is when this relationship is maintained in its right and cordial proportion that ecological wholeness is assured. The foundation of this relationship to be sure, must be laid on love understood from the perspective of Teilhard de Chardin: “love means completing oneself in someone other than oneself.” (“The Place of Man in Teilhard de Chardin's Theory of Evolution” by I.k Nwakaeze-Ogugua in *WAJOPS*, 2007, Vol.10). With this perception of love at the background, those features that must be integrated to ensure a holistic ecology will be assured. For instance, we cannot reasonably expect any proper relationship between social well being, economic growth and the environment if this principle of love is neglected. The cogent call of the pope to incorporate “the history, culture and architecture of each place” (n.143) even in the process of globalization cannot be achieved when the “big fishes” cannot discern the need for the “smaller fishes” in the struggle for our environmental wholeness. Even the principle of the common good and the yearning for justice which the Pontiff also

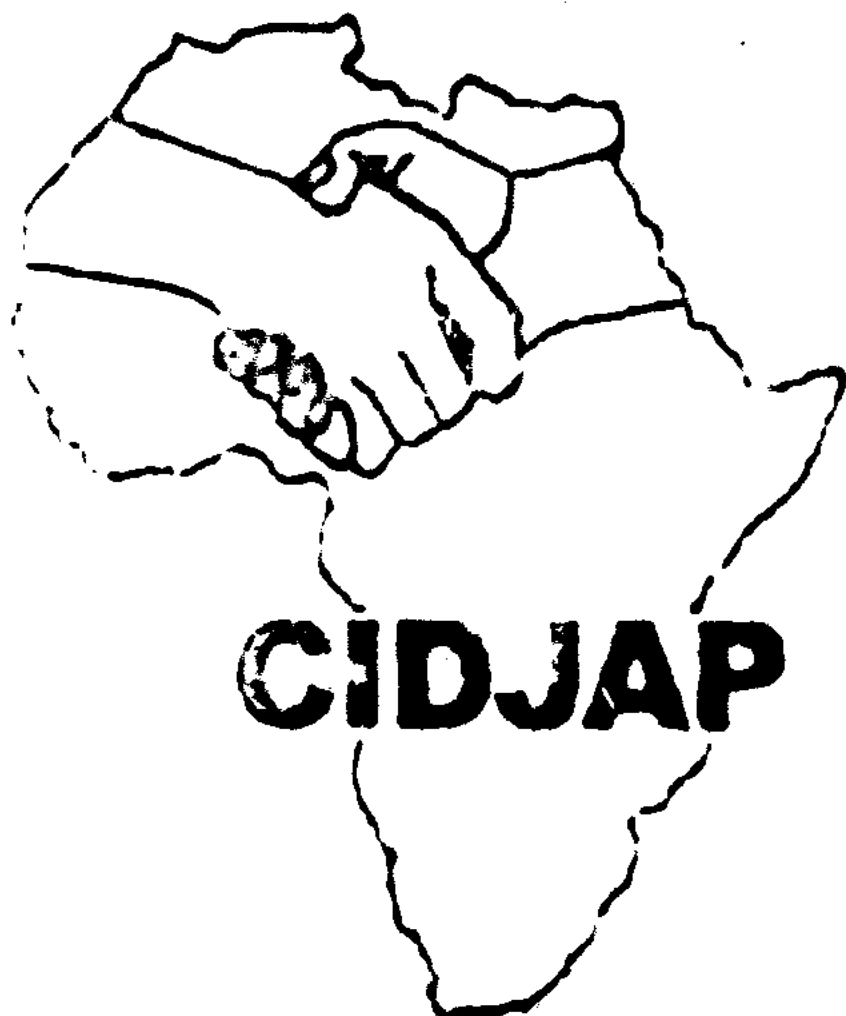
spotted as needful in achieving an integral ecology (nn.156-162) will be an illusion if love is not given its rightful position.

Finally, the pope suggests some proactive measures to be adopted in safeguarding our environment. He advised that dialogue should be employed between conflicting sectors of life and fields of study. Other invitations he made include: respect for the sovereignty of other nations, ecological education and spirituality, ecological conversion, joy, peace, proper understanding and use of the sacraments and the good knowledge of the theology of the trinity vis-à-vis creatures as our model in taking care of nature.

The beauty of this encyclical and its relevance surely force recognition which the whole world: leaders as well as common people have done. Yet, not very surprising though as it is usual of every trailblazing work are some reservations and fears which many have expressed with regard to it. For some who wish to be more evangelical than John the Baptist, the pope over-stepped his bounds, concentrating on mundane issues that do not really matter much for the salvation of the soul. People of this kind unconsciously fall prey to the creed of one of the extremist groups condemned by the pope who propagate "tyrannical anthropocentrism" that have all the regards for human beings with none for other creatures. This group must note as St Paul did (Romans 8:19-23), that Jesus' salvation was for the entire creation though that of humans is supreme. Sequel to this, since humans stand as the mid-way

between other creatures and God, they must as intelligent existents ensure that the existence of other beings is guarded and treated with respect.

Again, evangelization has not one way approach of sermonizing and quoting passages of the scripture at random. Most often people of other belief systems and even non-believers see this method as unattractive and give little or no attention to the Gospel message we dispatch through it. But the pope's approach in using a theme that addresses general human concern to relay the message of the Gospel in this admirable way actually attracts the attention of many including those who would ordinarily not have interest. Once more, the related reproach on the pope for delving into an area that requires expertise does not weigh strong ton when he himself had already announced his intention not to take the place of experts on the matter but to call the attention of the world to those distinct signs which indicate that things have gone wrong in our environment (Cf. n.61). The truth is that we do not require experts to tell us what we can observe ourselves. Professionals could come in at some point to give wider explanation and proffer more expansive scientific solutions but some fundamental questions have to be asked about the cause of the problem with some basic solutions given to tackle them. This is what the pope has done as a philosopher, a theologian and an ethicist.



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