Globethics Repository



Political Leadership in Latin America

This page was generated automatically upon download from the Globethics Repository. More information on Globethics see https://www.globethics.net. Data and content policy of Globethics Repository see https://repository.globethics.net/pages/policy.

Item Type	Book chapter
Authors	Andrade, Paulo Fernando Carneiro de
Publisher	Globethics.net / WCC Publications
Rights	With permission of the license/copyright holder
Download date	2026-11-08 16:05:29
Link to Item	http://hdl.handle.net/20.500.12424/173452

CARNEIRO DE ANDRADE, Paulo Fernando, Political Leadership in Latin America. A Christian Perspective, in: Ch. Stückelberger and J. N.K. Mugambi (ed.), Responsible Leadership. Global and Contextual Ethical Perspectives, Geneva: WCC Publications, 2007, 280-289.

32

POLITICAL LEADERSHIP IN LATIN AMERICA. A CHRISTIAN PERSPECTIVE

Paulo Fernando Carneiro de Andrade, Brazil

1. Faith and Politics[1]

Throughout history men and women have built different societies by means of a broad range of actions, collective and individual, public and private, with a specific intentionality or not. Among these actions is political action, which is the group of human acts that have a public dimension and that relate to society's power structures. It must be observed, however, that political actions are not all the same. Militancy in syndical and neighbourhood movements as well as movements of citizenship action, voting or taking part in a political party and running for elective offices are all political actions. In this last case, there is party politics, which is a specific kind of political action in which people and social groups, articulated in political parties, create and try to implement projects for administrating the State and organising society, and also offer to represent the interests of various social sectors and classes, running for elective legislative and executive functions.[2]

Today the political-party dimension of political action is, in Western democratic societies, indispensable, although it has clearly defined limits. The strengthening of other dimensions of political action also becomes necessary to express the needs of the various social groups and to allow these groups to intervene in the administration of public matter, without having either a global project for the organisation of the State, or even the direct responsibility for its administration. In this sense, so-called popular movements, non-governmental organisations, non-party citizenship movements and campaigns are of great importance. However, these other dimensions of political action cannot, in the present model of State and society, replace party political action. Even though we can criticise the limitations of political parties' representation and underline the defects of contemporary party politics, present democracies have as their basis party political action, such that its suppression would imply today, inevitably, the imposition of authoritarianism or totalitarianism.

Nevertheless, it must be observed that we cannot exclude the possibility of, in the future, perfecting the democratic processes leading

CARNEIRO DE ANDRADE, Paulo Fernando, Political Leadership in Latin America. A Christian Perspective, in: Ch. Stückelberger and J. N.K. Mugambi (ed.), Responsible Leadership. Global and Contextual Ethical Perspectives, Geneva: WCC Publications, 2007, 280-289.

to other kinds of State constitution, in which party politics as we know it today is overcome *(Aufhebung)*.[3]

Although it may seem strange, it was only recently in the history of Christianity, that is, just less than a hundred years ago, that the legitimacy of the articulation between faith and politics was questioned. For centuries it seemed so natural for Christians that their faith had a social and political dimension that nobody questioned the pertinence of this relationship, but only the way in which this articulation should take place. It was rationalism and liberalism that decreed the radical separation of the two spheres, reducing religion to the private sphere and disarticulating what should always be articulated. Thus, this created either a faith without efficacy, restricted to the level of private practices, or an ingenuous faith, used so many times for political purposes and subordinated to them. This same way, a politics disconnected from the Transcendent and from ethical values was also created, many times making power only something to be conquered and to be used in one's own benefit or in the benefit of a small group and not for the common good. It must be observed that in a politics detached from ethical values the very notion of Common Good becomes ambiguous. If we affirm, in the one hand, the legitimacy of the articulation between faith and politics, on the other hand we must recognise that in the last decades, however, a new and alarming phenomenon has taken place in the relationship between faith and politics. That phenomenon is the relationship between a specific way of experiencing faith, which has been referred to as religious fundamentalism, and the politics which has taken place not only among Christians, but also among Muslims and Jews, crossing different nations and continents, has also been referred to as religious fundamentalism.[4]

2. Fundamentalism and Perversion in Politics

Here it becomes necessary to make an interpretive analysis of the contemporary fundamentalism phenomenon. In order to do that, we will use some concepts from Lacanian analysis applied to culture as approached by Slavoj Žižek.[5] We try to understand fundamentalism from the point of view of the different structural positions that the subject can occupy *in* the Symbolic Order and *in face of* it. The first position, called hysterical,[6] is characterised by the question the subject asks the Big Other (the Symbolic Order): 'What am I in the eyes of the Other? What does the Other want from me?' The subject structurally takes the position of a question; there is a distance and a displacement, a background uncertainty that asks the Other the following question over and over again: '*Che Vuoi?*' This question never

CARNEIRO DE ANDRADE, Paulo Fernando, Political Leadership in Latin America. A Christian Perspective, in: Ch. Stückelberger and J. N.K. Mugambi (ed.), Responsible Leadership. Global and Contextual Ethical Perspectives, Geneva: WCC Publications, 2007, 280-289.

finds a definitive answer and allows the subject to become, in his autonomy and his otherness, an incomplete and craving subject, always searching for something that is missing; a being made not of certainty, but of doubt.[7] The second position, called psychotic, can be characterised by the vanishing of the question: an answer appears where the question is not even made. The subject is subsumed, invaded by the Big Other. The Other speaks in him, the distance disappears, as does the distinction between him and the Other, and consequently the subject looses his autonomy. The Big Other acquires a consistency and a density that inscribes him in the sphere of the Real. In this case, the symbolic efficiency gives place to the material and direct efficiency of the word.[8] The third structural position is the one that corresponds to perversion. In it, the question is displaced to the Other. The subject has the answer to the question he imposes on the Other. He does not recognise himself as being summoned by the Symbolic Order, nor summons it with a question, but with an answer that creates the question in the Other. The subject puts himself ambivalently in two places: in the position of being an instrument for the enjoyment *(jouissance)* of the Other, that is, he recognises the Symbolic Law, putting himself in an instrumental position in face of it, and simultaneously refuses to recognise the Symbolic Law, denying its symbolic efficiency and putting himself in the position of the Law.[9]

In the religious sphere, when the subject puts himself structurally in face of the Sacred in one of the two last positions, we have what we call fundamentalism. The second position, called psychotic, gives place to a kind of fundamentalism usually labelled, in an accusatory and disqualifying tone, as fanaticism. In it, the subject looses distance from the Sacred and is absorbed by it. The Word makes him a prisoner, he is the Word itself; message and messenger become one. Maybe we can say that this position was more common in Pre-Modernity. In the third position, called perverse, and maybe the one that best qualifies what has been called today as fundamentalism, the subject puts himself simultaneously as the one who should give the Other what he knows that the Other needs and as the founder of the very Sacred. In F. Dostoevsky's *The Brothers Karamazov* the parable of the Grand Inquisitor, the story within the story, exemplifies this type of fundamentalism.[10] The scene takes place in sixteenth-century Seville. In the morning following a spectacular public religious ceremony in which a hundred heretics were burnt alive, a smooth walking man appears without making himself noticed, until he is suddenly recognised by everyone. He silently blesses the crowd that surrounds him. When asked, he cures a blind man, resuscitates a child. In that moment, the Grand Inquisitor passes by, observes what is happening, and demands the soldiers to arrest that man who was, in that moment, the centre of attention. At night the old inquisitor visits the

CARNEIRO DE ANDRADE, Paulo Fernando, Political Leadership in Latin America. A Christian Perspective, in: Ch. Stückelberger and J. N.K. Mugambi (ed.), Responsible Leadership. Global and Contextual Ethical Perspectives, Geneva: WCC Publications, 2007, 280-289.

prisoner in jail. He summons and censors him: 'Is it Thou? Thou?' but receiving no answer, he adds at once. 'Don't answer, be silent. What canst Thou say, indeed? I know too well what Thou wouldst say. And Thou hast no right to add anything to what Thou hadst said of old. Why, then, art Thou come to hinder us? For Thou hast come to hinder us, and Thou knowest that. But dost thou know what will be to-morrow? I know not who Thou art and care not to know whether it is Thou or only a semblance of Him, but to-morrow I shall condemn Thee and burn Thee at the stake as the worst of heretics. And the very people who have to-day kissed Thy feet, to-morrow at the faintest sign from me will rush to heap up the embers of Thy fire…'[11] In face of the prisoner's silence he prides himself on making men happy taking away their freedom. He condemns the prisoner for, during the temptation in the desert, to not deprive men and women of their freedom, having refused to give humanity what it truly longs for: the bread, the safeness of material wealth, and the governing from someone who decides for his subjects, freeing them from the burden of choice. Men are 'weak and vile'. What they need and long for is not freedom. Thus, he argues: 'We have corrected Thy work and have founded it upon miracle, mystery and authority. And men rejoiced that they were again led like sheep, and that the terrible gift that had brought them such suffering, was, at last, lifted from their hearts. Were we right teaching them this? Speak! Did we not love mankind, so meekly acknowledging their feebleness, lovingly lightening their burden, and permitting their weak nature even sin with our sanction? Why hast Thou come now to hinder us?'[12]

Osama Bin Laden's Al-Qaeda offers a contemporary Islamic version of this fundamentalist position. Its terrorist acts apparently do not have a purpose nor demand anything. The same way, its interpretation of Islam does not follow explicitly any of the great schools or traditional spiritual masters. Bin Laden is moved by a superegoic categorical imperative: he must give the Other what the Other searches but does not have, and will not be able to have, except by means of this one subject who has, and only he has, the power to satisfy him. Death, pain and terror inflicted to the Other are, even more than punishment, an answer to what the subject in this structural position 'knows' that the Other desires, needs, craves. The answer is what raises the question.

We can perceive this same structural position in some neo-pentecostalist manifestations and in certain Christian groups that give political support to the Republican Party in the United States.[13] The claim made by Tom DeLay, former Republican majority leader in the American House of Representatives, being himself considered a fundamentalist in North America, expresses this position: 'Only Christianity offers a lifestyle that relates to the realities we find in the world – only

CARNEIRO DE ANDRADE, Paulo Fernando, Political Leadership in Latin America. A Christian Perspective, in: Ch. Stückelberger and J. N.K. Mugambi (ed.), Responsible Leadership. Global and Contextual Ethical Perspectives, Geneva: WCC Publications, 2007, 280-289.

Christianity!'[14] In this speech there is no place for any kind of difference, nor for dialogue, nor for the recognition of the Other in a perspective of otherness. Only Christianity, as interpreted by the one who gives the speech, can respond to the needs of the Other. It is an answer given before the question. The subject knows something about the Other, even if the Other does know it yet, and this subject must give something to the Other, for his own happiness. When this kind of fundamentalist faith is related to politics, this last one becomes a mere instrument for the imposition of the truth about the Other on the Other, this truth being carried by the fundamentalist subject.

In a secular manner, we have the same kind of structure when a political party, even without any religious inspiration, judges itself the only interpreter of the people or of popular aspirations. Or yet, when political leaders put themselves in the position of being the only carriers of a knowledge and of a competence that makes them the only ones capable of deciding wisely and justly the matters of public interest. No critiques can be made, no dissonant voices can arise or, even worse, be accepted. The only sentence, repeated as a mantra, is: 'Trust me'.

In contrast to these two structural positions that represent two possible forms of fundamentalism, there is the first one, in which the subject recognises the Symbolic Order without being neither subsumed by it nor becoming an instrument. In religious terms it is this position that allows us to keep creatural distance, maintaining, may it be the absolute and totally Other character of the Sacred, or human autonomy founded in the free and gratuitous gift of freedom. This position unfolds in a spirituality which we recognise as being authentically Christian, and which includes a continuous search to perceive the will of the Creator in each moment of history. The question about what God wants from us *(Che Vuoi?)* in this given moment, a question which we always pose and to which we return unceasingly, always demands from us a double look: one on the Revelation and one on the reality in which we want to perceive the answer to be given to God's questioning.

If we want to articulate faith and political action it becomes necessary, in this perspective, to maintain this double look. On the one hand the theological look on the Scriptures and on Tradition, in which and through which the Word of the Living God is passed on to us. On the other hand, the look from Social and Human Sciences, which allow us to understand the world more deeply.

3. Political Leadership in a Christian Perspective

Thus, in a non-fundamentalist Christian perspective, an appropriate Christian formation for political action should not only look at

CARNEIRO DE ANDRADE, Paulo Fernando, Political Leadership in Latin America. A Christian Perspective, in: Ch. Stückelberger and J. N.K. Mugambi (ed.), Responsible Leadership. Global and Contextual Ethical Perspectives, Geneva: WCC Publications, 2007, 280-289.

the Scriptures and Tradition, but also at the sociological, historical, and philosophical studies as well as the political and juridical sciences that allow a more profound approach to the reality in which one acts.

As for the theological aspects, throughout its history Christianity established a long social teaching tradition, through which it tried to perceive the Gospel's values and principles that have social occurrence. The central nucleus of Christian Social Ethics lies in the evangelical preference for the poor. This is the basic criterion from which the other criteria and values present in the great Christian social tradition shall be ordained. Far from being discriminatory in relation to other social groups, it makes us see Christ in the poor and clamours us all to take on the cause of the poor as if it was our own, making it real in the promotion of justice (Matt 25:31-46; Luke 10:29-37; Luke 12:33-34).

God's preferential love for the poor does not base itself upon a merit of the poor, but it obeys the logic of gratuity and necessity. According to the Scriptures, God loves them preferentially because they are needy (Luke 15:1-24). In the 1960s various ecclesiastical sectors, especially religious men and women, created a movement for coming closer to the poor all over Latin America. Many times, this movement demanded that they shared the same living and working conditions of the poor, leading them to search for theoretical instruments that could explain the causes of poverty in our continent. The contact experience with the real poor, experiencing their real living conditions, coming close to them, as did the Samaritan who came close to the man who had been a victim of outlaws on the road and was injured and exhausted (Luke 10:29-37), made the more traditional explanations about the cause of poverty (backwardness, ignorance, indolence) become unreasonable.

In contrast, the critical interpretations of Latin American poverty, proposed either by the Dependency theories or by Marxist sociology, started to be more accepted as being more plausible in face of what was experienced. The poor began to be understood as marginalised and, above all, exploited and oppressed. Theology and pastoral practice now have as their central matter how to spread and live the Gospel in a continent where men and women are exploited and despoiled. When we reject the traditional explanations about the cause of poverty we also change our relation with the poor, who are not understood as ignorant or indolent anymore and go from being the object of social action to being the subject of political transformation. In this context it became clear that economic oppression maintained by political domination was the causer of poverty, which demanded solidarity and engagement in liberation practices. The effort for development was not enough; it was necessary to overcome the unjust structures that oppress the poor.

CARNEIRO DE ANDRADE, Paulo Fernando, Political Leadership in Latin America. A Christian Perspective, in: Ch. Stückelberger and J. N.K. Mugambi (ed.), Responsible Leadership. Global and Contextual Ethical Perspectives, Geneva: WCC Publications, 2007, 280-289.

If on the one hand we can claim that the preference for the poor is a constant in Christian tradition,[15] on the other hand we should underline how peculiarly this preference was updated in Latin America. The new point was, as we have already stressed, the change in perspective that transforms the poor into the subject of the story and proposes another look: to see the world with the eyes of the poor. It should be observed that, in a first moment, in the Latin American pastoral context the poor were identified originally with low income rural and urban workers. This concept was enriched over the years, either by a more complex analysis of the oppression mechanisms, or by the recognition of other forms of domination, such as the sexist and the ethnic-racial, causers of other realities in need of liberation.

A new sensibility in relation to the so-called 'marginalised' was also created. This originates a broader concept of 'poor', which includes various groups with their different necessities and demands. Because of that, it becomes more complex to think of an alternative to the present society, making simplified images of an ideal society fall flat. In part, this need for making the matter more complex, together with the crisis of the real socialism, provoked a rupture in utopian thinking, leading many agents to enter profound subjectivity crises. The reconstruction of the utopian horizon presents itself as a great challenge: is it still plausible to think of a global alternative society project? In what terms? In this new society, what would be the role of market and property? How will this change from our society to an alternative one take place? Today we have fewer answers to all these questions than we did yesterday, which does not mean, however, that the past fights have been pointless nor that we are still not convinced that it is possible to organise a society in a more just and fraternal way.

We must understand the Christian social tradition from this fundamental hermeneutic-theological point of view, characterised by the evangelical preference for the poor. In this social tradition we must identify dynamic aspects and a nucleus of constant, irradiating teachings. Among the more constant teachings we can underline the following ones:

- the dignity of the human being;
- human rights;
- the relationship person-society, in which society is seen as something that exists only in socially united people and for their service;
- the Common Good;
- solidarity and subsidising as regulating principles of social life;
- conceiving social life as organic;
- the right and the obligation of responsible participation in social life;

CARNEIRO DE ANDRADE, Paulo Fernando, Political Leadership in Latin America. A Christian Perspective, in: Ch. Stückelberger and J. N.K. Mugambi (ed.), Responsible Leadership. Global and Contextual Ethical Perspectives, Geneva: WCC Publications, 2007, 280-289.

- the right to freedom; and
- universal destination for the goods of the earth.

The permanent values present in this Tradition are: *truth, freedom, justice, solidarity, peace, and charity or Christian love*. We must observe that this nucleus of principles and values is considered permanent, especially because of its greater centrality in Christian Social Teaching. However, it also presents a not-always linear historic development. We can analogically apply to this nucleus the same hermeneutic method proposed by J. Alfaro, in a Catholic scope, for the interpretation of dogma.[16] According to the model proposed by J. Alfaro,[17] we should try to understand this central nucleus in a *retrospective* perspective – to search for the signification and the delimitation of the proclaimed truths since their pre-history –, in an *introspective* one – insertion of the affirmations, criteria and values presented in the hierarchy of the revealed truths bearing in mind the salvation of men and women and of all the Creation – and in a *prospective* one – an always renewed comprehension of this content, so that it can be vitally and constantly assimilated in a given moment and in a given culture.

In political and social grounds, the task of perceiving the correct Christian action in a precise historical context (prospective perspective) can only be achieved if the double look is maintained: one on the Scriptures and Tradition, and one on reality. Revealed texts give us a set of criteria and values that, however, can only be historically efficient as long as they highlight concrete options and practices among the possible ones in a given historical context. Thus, the political formation of Christian militants must include theological aspects but also technical ones, which allow the political agents to recognise the possible options and practices in their context, as well as the presumable consequences of their actions. In this way only can we make real political action that, being Christian, is a true contribution to the construction of a more fraternal world, in accordance with God's love for His creation.

A political pastoral formation must count on a wide variety of actions and instruments. It must be locally organised but regionally and internationally articulated. The creation of local schools of political formation can prove to be an important experience that permits the formation of a specialised group that can produce documents and processes of permanent formation and instruments of pastoral action for the strong moments of electoral times. The capillarity of the communities allows us to think of a process of permanent formation that having the poor as a subject is not a formation for the other, but a formation with the other. Latin American Christian churches' decades of experience in popular education originated many methods and a vast capital of knowledge of how to proceed to a formational process

CARNEIRO DE ANDRADE, Paulo Fernando, Political Leadership in Latin America. A Christian Perspective, in: Ch. Stückelberger and J. N.K. Mugambi (ed.), Responsible Leadership. Global and Contextual Ethical Perspectives, Geneva: WCC Publications, 2007, 280-289.

that permits the person to be the subject of his own formation and that the formational process takes place in strong articulation with the subject's practice.

If on the one hand we can underline the need for permanent and systematic formation aimed at everyone, it is not less important, at these schools, to think about the formation of a body of popular pastoral agents who can assume leadership positions in the political formation process and in political action itself. However, together with political formation, it is necessary to create an Assistance Pastoral for the ones who are engaged in the party political process. In not a few cases Christian militants complain that they feel abandoned by their communities and their pastors.

Permanent political formation is, by means of an appropriate ecclesial action that includes assistance to militants directly engaged in the political process, the best contribution that the Christian churches can give, be it for the overcoming of neo-fundamentalism, which can cause so much damage to society, be it to contribute for the construction of a more just society that is more in accordance with evangelical values, which are not exclusive of the Christian, but are values that correspond to what is most central and intimate in the human being and in all Creation.

NOTES

1 See Andrade, P., *A participação política dos cristãos. Critérios teológico-pastorais* in REB 54 (215), pp. 629-642. This first article was later incorporated in: *Texto Base da Campanha da Fraternidade da Conferência Nacional dos Bispos do Brasil (CNBB) de 1996: Justiça e Paz se Abraçarão*.

2 See Bobbio, N., *Teoria geral da política. A Filosofia Política e as lições dos Clássicos* (M. Bovero (ed.)), Rio de Janeiro: Campus, 2000.

3 Bobbio, N., *Il Futuro della democrazia*, Turin: Einaudi, 1984; Bauman, Z., *Em busca da Política*, Rio de Janeiro: Jorge Zahar Editor, 1999.

4 Safran, W. (ed.), *The Secular and the Sacred. Nation, Religion and Politics*, London: Frank Cass Publishers, 2003; Jelen, T./Wilcox, C. (eds), *Religion and Politics in Comparative Perspective. The One, the Few, and the Many*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002; Brasil Carvalho da Fonseca, A., 'Enfrentando o Mal aqui fora. A Igreja Universal do Reino de Deus e sua prática política', in: Caminhos 1 (2), 2003, pp. 11-32; Silveira Campos, L., 'O Bem e o Mal nas representações de Novos Pentecostais Brasileiros quanto à economia, in: *Caminhos* 1 (2), 2003, pp. 33-68.

5 Of the vast work of Slavoj Žižek we make reference here especially to the books: *The Metastases of Enjoyment. Six Essays on Woman and Causality*, New York: Verso, 1994; *The Ticklist Subject. The Absent Centre of Political Ontology*, New York: Verso, 1999; *Il Grande Altro. Nazionalismo, godimento, cultura di massa* (M. Senaldi (ed.)), Milan: Feltrinelli, 1999; *The Fragile Absolute. Or, Why is the Christian Legacy Worth Fighting For?*, New York: Verso, 2000; *Il godimento como fattore político*, Milan: Raffaello Cortina Editore, 2001; *On belief*, New York: Routledge, 2001; *Tredice volte Lenin. Per sovvertire il fallimento del presente*, Milan: Feltrinelli, 2003. *Bem vindo ao Deserto do Real*, São Paulo: Boitempo, 2003.

6 It is important here to distinguish between the structural position of the subject in face of the Symbolic Order and the 'personality' of concrete individuals. This distinction must be understood in a way similar to the widely known distinction between *person* and *individual* in the Social Anthropology field (see Mauss, M., 'Uma categoria do Espírito Humano: a noção de pessoa e a de "eu"', in: Mauss, M., *Sociologia e Antropologia*, São Paulo: Cosac & Naify, 2003,

CARNEIRO DE ANDRADE, Paulo Fernando, Political Leadership in Latin America. A Christian Perspective, in: Ch. Stückelberger and J. N.K. Mugambi (ed.), Responsible Leadership. Global and Contextual Ethical Perspectives, Geneva: WCC Publications, 2007, 280-289.

pp. 369-397). What is claimed in these pages about the possible structural positions of the subject in face of the Symbolic Order and the discourses and practices that are created when one occupies such positions does not allow us, without any more information, to characterise the concrete individuals who, in a given moment and in a certain situation, make use of these discourses and practices, as pathological personalities, accusing them of being hysterical, perverse or psychotic, and making a kind of false pseudo-psychologic diagnosis which may be condemned in all aspects. See Dejours, C., *A banalização da injustiça social*, Rio de Janeiro: Fundação Getúlio Vargas Editora, 1999, pp. 77-81, especially note 12 in pp. 78-79.

[7] Žižek, S., *The Metastases of Enjoyment, op. cit.*, p. 83.

[8] Žižek, S., *The Ticklist Subject, op. cit.*, pp. 322-323.

[9] *Ibidem*, pp. 322-334; Lacan, J., 'Kant com Sade', in: *Escritos*, Rio de Janeiro: Campo Freudiano Brasileiro /Jorge Zahar Editor, 1998, pp. 776-803; Julien, P., *Psicose, perversão, neurose. A leitura de Jacques Lacan*, Rio de Janeiro: Companhia de Freud, 2004.

[10] Dostoievski, F., *Os irmãos Karamázovi*, Rio de Janeiro: Abril Cultural, 1970, pp. 184-194.

[11] *Ibidem*, p. 187. Our highlighting.

[12] *Ibid.*, pp. 187-192.

[13] Green, J./Rozell, M./Wilcox, C. (eds), *The Christian Right in American Politics. Marching to the Millennium*, Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 2003.

[14] See Della Cava, R., 'A direita cristã e o Partido Republicano', in: *Religião e Sociedade* 23 (1), 2003, p. 10.

[15] See the doctrine of the church's priests about the poor in Bravo, R.S., *Doctrina Social y Econômica de los Padres de la Iglesia*, Madrid: Compi, 1967, and the issue of the poor in the Middle Ages in Molat, M., *Les pauvres au Moyen Age*, Paris: Hachette, 1978.

[16] See Alfaro, J., 'La Teologia di fronte al Magistério', in: Latourrelle R./O'Collins, G. (eds), *Problemi e prospecttive di teologia fondamentale*, Brescia: Queriniana, 1980, pp. 413-432, especially pp. 425-432.

[17] *Ibidem*, pp. 425-432.