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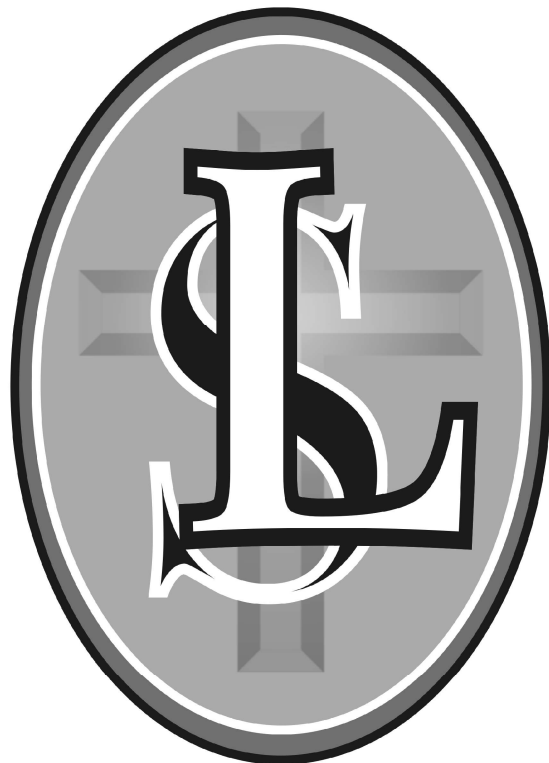
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KNOW YOUR DOCTRINE



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“BE FRUITFUL AND MULTIPLY; FILL THE EARTH AND SUBDUE IT”

(Gen 1:28)

Central to the understanding of God in the Sacred Scriptures is the image of God as the Omnipotent Creator (Gen 2:2; Job 38-41) who fashions man in His own image and invites him to work the soil, cultivate and care for the garden of Eden in which he has placed him (cfr. Gen 1:28; 2:25). In the Creator’s plan, created realities, which are good in themselves, exist for man’s use (Compendium 255). In man’s original state, work is a noble duty, a divine commission.



It is only after the Fall and precisely because of it that work becomes toil and pain due to sin. As it was meant to be, work isn’t just a means for man to participate in God’s ever creative purposes but more deeply makes man resemble his Creator God. This shines forth most clearly when the Word Incarnate chose to become like us in all things, devoting most of his earthly life to manual work at the carpenter’s bench (John Paul II, *Laborare Exercens*, 6). Whether one considers in his hidden early life of Nazareth (Mtt 13:55; Mk 6:3), or in his description of his mission as “working” like the Father (John 5:17), or in his preaching and example, it is clear that in Jesus Christ, human work has received its fullest meaning and expression. Every worker, according to St. Ambrose, is the hand of Christ that continues to create and to do good. (St. Ambrose, *De Obitu Valentiani Consolatio*, 62: PL 16, 1438). Human activity aimed at enhancing and transforming the universe can and must unleash the perfections which find their origin and model in the uncreated Word (Compendium, 262). Pauline and Johannine writings bring this to light. Work represents a fundamental dimension of human existence as participation not only in the act of creation but also in the process of redemption (*Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, n.263). This is why the Fathers of the Church do not consider work as “opus servile” but as “opus humanum.”

In the course of human history, this lofty Christian vision of human work did not always

prevail. While profound transformation and novelties, there has also been devastating scenarios of the exploitation of workers and an offence to their human dignity. The Industrial Revolution and its aftermath presented a critical challenge to which the Church had to respond forcefully and prophetically through her social teaching, affirming the universally valid and perennially relevant principles in support of workers and their rights. The new trend inaugurated by Pope Leo XIII’s *Rerum Novarum* and taken up in the

social encyclicals of subsequent Pontiffs has led to a rich Magisterial response concerning the issues of work by the Church till our day. This is particularly true of the encyclical of Pope John Paul II, *Laborem Exercens*.

It is within this framework that this issue of the Searchlight Magazine, which in two previous issues has been examining by way of a series the Social Teachings of the Church, now zooms into the question of the Christian understanding of human work according to the church’s social Magisterium. This issue features: *The Christological Dimensions of Work; Work as man’s participation in God’s Creation; Work as foundation for formation of Family Life; The Right to work and the promotion of the Right to Work; Technological Developments and Innovations in the field of Work; Work and Leisure; A Synopsis of Pope John Paul II’s Laborem Exercens; The Rights of workers* and other related articles. This issue equally introduces two of our new Formators at STAMS *Theologicum* and considers St Paul VI as the Saint of the issue. I have the honour to present to you, our most esteemed audience, the 133rd issue of the Searchlight Magazine December 2022 edition in the context of the launching of the Golden Jubilee of St Thomas Aquinas’ Major Seminary, Bambui. May God’s choicest blessings be with you all during the Christmas season and a Prosperous Year 2023.

Rev. Clement Patrick WAINDIM Jr

(Editor-in-Chief)

ANOTHER YEAR OF FORMATION BEGINS

The new Formation Year (2022/2023) began on Saturday 17th September 2022. The Seminary welcomed sixty new Seminarians into First Year Theology. These were mainly members of the fifth batch of Saint John Paul II Major Seminary Bachuo-Ntai, Mamfe. Nevertheless, ten of these are from other seminaries in the country.

ANNUAL RETREAT

The annual retreat for the 2022/ 2023 Formation year for the Seminarians of STAMS BAMBUI ran from Sunday 18 September to Friday 23 September 2022 under the theme: **“Courage in Our Christian and priestly Life.”** The preacher of the retreat was Fr. Joseph Suh Ganong, the Vocations Director for the Diocese of Kumba and an alumnus of STAMS. In the course of the retreat, Fr. Joseph exhorted the seminarians to be courageous in their prayer life, in preaching and living the Gospel values, in living the evangelical counsels, in charity, in cheerful asceticism and courage in preserving to the end in their vocation.

INAUGURAL MASS, OATH OF FIDELITY AND INSTALLATION TO THE MINISTRIES OF ACOLYTES AND LECTORS

The inaugural Mass for the 2022/2023 Formation Year took place on Tuesday 24 September 2022. The inaugural Mass was celebrated by His Grace, Andrew Nkea, Archbishop of Bamenda with 14 concelebrants. In the opening words of his homily, the Archbishop on behalf of the Bishops of the Bamenda Provincial Episcopal Conference (BAPEC), welcomed all from the long vacation especially the new Formators and the seminarians of First Year Theology. The Archbishop preached on the *Call to be Fruitful Witnesses of Christ*. The prelate called on the seminarians and Formators to be fruitful witnesses of Christ both in the Church and in the Society. Talking to the would-be lectors and acolytes, the Archbishop exhorted them to be ready to work as Christ's disciples and not as ecclesiastical business magnets. The prelate ended by calling on both Formators and seminarians to defend their faith by the lives they lead in a world where the Church is under attacks and suffers lot of persecutions. .

During the Mass, two Formators in the persons of Fr. Antoninus Tantan and Fr. Terence Lukong (OFM Cap), made the Solemn Profession of the Faith and took the Oath of Fidelity. In addition, 32 seminarians were installed lectors while 40 others were installed acolytes.

VISIT

On Sunday, 23 October 2022, the members of the Association of the Sacred Heart of Jesus and the Immaculate Heart of Mary of the Archdiocese of Bamenda (ASHJIM), paid a visit to the Seminary. This was the first visit the Seminary witnessed for the new

Formation Year 2022/2023. The members of the Association of the Sacred Heart of Jesus and the Immaculate Heart of Mary joined the Seminarians for Mass. Prior to the close of Mass, the Vice Rector, Fr. Gordian Baba, thanked them for coming as well as for the support they give the Seminary yearly.

After Mass, they had breakfast with the Seminarians in the Seminarians' refectory. In the course of breakfast, the Auxiliary welcomed them to the Seminary and introduced the Seminarians to them. In response, a representative of the Association of the Sacred Heart of Jesus and the Immaculate Heart of Mary spoke on their behalf, exhorting the Seminarians to be faithful to their call and avoid distractions. She assured the Seminarians of their constant prayers.

The Association of the Sacred Heart of Jesus and the Immaculate Heart of Mary donated foodstuffs to the Seminarians. To crown the day, the Seminarians joined the Association of the Sacred Heart of Jesus and the Immaculate Heart of Mary to celebrate the Golden Jubilee of one of their members.

ENROLMENT FOR 2022/2023 FORMATION YEAR

Level	Diocesan	Religious	Total
Theology I	47	9	56
Theology II	36	5	41
Theology III	45	10	55
Theology IV	34	0	34
Grand Total:	162	24	186

MEMBERS OF THE STAFF

Permanent Formation Team

The following priests constitute the members of the permanent formation team for 2022/2023 formation year:

Fr. Charles Berinyuy (Rector), Fr. Gordian Baba (Vice Rector and Head of Department), Fr. Edward Lukong (Bursar), Fr. Henri Peeters, Fr. Anthony Yilaka, Fr. John Berinyuy, Fr. Pascal Nsah, Fr. Augustine Kwain, Fr. Peter Foleng, Fr. Julius Ageboh, Fr. Evans Shang, Fr. Martin Njikang, Fr. Antoninus Tantan.

Visiting Professors

In addition to the members of the Permanent Formation Team, the following priests and sister serve as Visiting Professors:

Fr. Derek Che Choh, Fr. Ernest Timchia, Fr. Peter Takov, Fr. Joseph Kuate, Fr. Terence Lukong and Sr. Gloria Wirba

NOTICE! NOTICE!**Information for the attention of Ex-seminarians and Priests alumni of Saint Thomas Aquinas' Major Seminary (STAMS *Theologicum*), Bambui.**

If you wish to collect documents from the secretariat of the *Theologicum*, kindly make your request via the email address provided below:

bambuiseminary@yahoo.co.uk

Indicate clearly what kind of documents you wish to be prepared for your collection and leave a contact phone number by which you can be conveniently reached when the documents are ready for collection. Your appointment to collect documents should be on working days, that is, from Monday to Friday, during working hours, that is, from 9:00AM until Midday. Thank you for your understanding and collaboration.

Sister Secretary

NOTICE! NOTICE!

Dear brothers and sisters, we would like to remind all those who visit the Seminary, that whenever they come, they should dress decently.

NOTICE! NOTICE!

Dear Readers, we would like to inform you that **Subscription Forms** for the *Searchlight Magazine* are now available. To get the form, kindly get to any seminarian from STAMS Bambui and Subscribe for a year or more. Thanks.

A PLEA FOR MASS INTENTIONS

We use this opportunity to thank you who have been sending Mass Intentions to our Seminary.

We appeal for more intentions. Our Seminary has thirteen resident Priests, and twelve intentions could be exonerated everyday. Mass Intentions to STAMS could be sent through any Bishop's House or through any member of the STAMS family-Priest or Seminarian. Once the Mass is celebrated, the Mass Offering is used for the upkeep of the Seminary as a whole. Thus, when you send these intentions, besides reaping the assured Spiritual Benefits, you contribute to the upkeep of the Seminary materially. May God continue to bless and reward you for all your kindness towards our House of Formation for future Priests.

Rev. Fr. Charles BERINYUY SENGKA
(Rector)

A PLEA FROM STAMS LIBRARY

We plead with Priests and Christians to send copies of Sunday Newsletters, Wedding cards, Funeral booklets, Wedding booklets, Invitation cards, Thank You cards, Souvenirs of Religious Professions, Papers, Magazines and any other souvenir cards for preservation in the *archive section* of the Seminary library. We also use this opportunity to acknowledge, with profound gratitude, having received a good number of these items. However, we remain open to receive even more. You could hand any of these to any member of the STAMS family (priest or seminarian) or, if possible, bring them yourself to the Seminary.

Rev. Fr. Evans SHANG
(Father Librarian)

STAMS GOLDEN JUBILEE

In view of the Golden Jubilee of STAMS in 2023, we plead with the alumni of STAMS – Bambui who have any *photographs depicting the various stages of infrastructural development of the seminary* [e.g. the chapel (3 stages); the library (3/4 stages) etc] to kindly send them to the seminary, either in hard copy or in digital form. This can be done through any of the members of the STAMS family or via stamslibrary@gmail.com. We count on your usual collaboration and support.

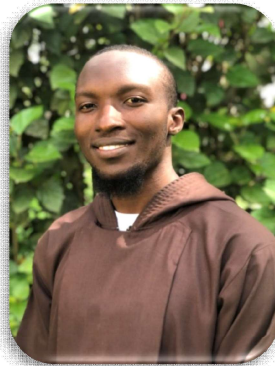
Fr. Henri PEETERS (MHM)

CHRISTOLOGICAL DIMENSIONS OF WORK



VALERY DINNYUY

THEOLOGY III



FABRICE AWEMBOM

THEOLOGY III

INTRODUCTION

In the life of Christ, we see God incarnate at work throughout his private life and in the course of his public ministry. Man having been created in the image and likeness of God has to identify with God in all aspects especially in the dimension of work. This, man does through participating in God's creative and redemptive work. But as Christians, how are we to understand the concept of work and how are we to work? By calling ourselves Christians, we decisively declare that we are followers of Christ and as such have him as our role model *par excellence*. Let us hence, consider the Christological dimension of human work, so as to better appreciate it and use it for the improvement of our society in an epoch plagued with so much creative, spiritual and moral deterioration.

1. HUMAN WORK AS A FUNDAMENTAL DIMENSION OF HUMAN EXISTENCE

Fashioned in the image and likeness of God, man is invited to cultivate and care for the garden of Eden in which God has placed him (cf. *Gen* 2:15); he is also invited to till the soil (cf. *Gen* 2:5-6). In the Creator's plan, created realities exist for man's use (cf. Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, Libreria Editrice Vaticana, Vatican City 2004, n. 255). However, man cannot use them without involving himself into work. This is to tell us that *Work is part of*

the original state of man and even precedes his fall (cf. *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, 256). Work is an intrinsic component of God's plan for humankind. It is an expression of man's full humanity (cf. *Ibid.*, 263) and it is in work that man exercises and fulfils the potential inscribed in his nature by his creator (CCC 2428).

2. HUMAN WORK AS A PARTICIPATION IN GOD'S ACT OF CREATION AND REDEMPTION

The divine command which man receives to cultivate and exercise dominion over the earth is an invitation to a participation in God's act of creation. Cultivating the earth as used here, means not abandoning it to itself and exercising dominion over it, but taking care of it (cf. *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, 255). Also, it is important to note that through man's work and industriousness, he makes creation more beautiful. And when human work becomes directed towards charity as its final end, it becomes an occasion for contemplation (cf. *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, 266) and this gives work a spiritual character. According to the Fathers of the Church, man governs the world with God by means of work (cf. Saint John Chrysostom, *Homily on Acts*, in *Acta Apostolorum Homiliae* 35,3); this is to say that together with God man is the lord of the earth and accomplishes good things for himself and for others. Through work, man summons the social and community energies that increase the common good (cf. Theodoret of Cyr, *On Providence, Orationes* 5-7), and uses them for the benefit of those who are most in need (cf. *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, 266).

3. JESUS AND THE APPRECIATION OF WORK

The people of Nazareth, Jesus' tribesmen, knew him as a carpenter. They identified him with his work (cf. *Mt.* 13:55, *Mk.* 6:3). This gives us a clue of Jesus' deep appreciation for work and his commitment to it. "He, who being God

became like us in all things, devoted most of the years of his life on earth to manual work at the carpenter's bench" (John Paul II, Encyclical Letter *Laborem Exercens*, 6) in the workshop of Joseph to whom he was obedient. (cf. Lk. 2:51). By working with his own hands, by his daily contact with matter to which he gave form by his craftsmanship, Jesus sanctified human labour and endowed it with a special significance for our development. (Pope Francis, Encyclical Letter *Laudato Si*, 98)

Slavery in its various forms constitutes a threat to the wellbeing of man. Work too can become a form of slavery when we forget that work is "for man" and not man "for Work." Work will find its proper place, meaning and value only if it is oriented to this one thing that is necessary; salvation

Being an example himself, Jesus exhorts us in his preaching to appreciate work. He condemns the behaviour of the useless servant who hides his talent in the ground (cf. Mt. 25:14-30) and praises the faithful and prudent servant whom the master finds at work doing the duties entrusted to him (cf. Mt. 24:46). For these workers, the general principle according to which "a labourer deserves his wages" (Lk. 10:7) applies. Hence, for Jesus, work is not a burden to be endured but "a means of honouring the gifts and talents received from the Creator." (*Catechism of the Catholic Church* n. 2427). It is a participation in the work of evangelization.

4. JESUS AND ENSLAVEMENT TO WORK

Slavery in its various forms constitutes a threat to the wellbeing of man. Work too can become a form of slavery when we forget that work is "for man" and not man "for Work" (Cf. John Paul II, Encyclical Letter *Laborem Exercens*, 6). The 3rd commandment: "You shall keep holy the Sabbath" (Ex. 20:8) represents already a biblical warning against enslavement to work. The commandment of the Sabbath rest constitutes a barrier against becoming slaves to work (cf. *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, n. 258). Jesus equally emphasized in his teaching that man should not be enslaved by work. Before all else, he must be concerned about his soul; gaining the whole world is not the purpose of his life (cf. Mt 8:36). The treasures of the earth, in fact, are consumed, while those in heaven are imperishable. It is on these latter treasures, that men and women must set their hearts (cf. Mt. 6:19-21). When commitment to work, however laudable it may appear to be,

becomes an obstacle on the path to salvation, it becomes slavery. Work will find its proper place, meaning and value only if it is oriented to this one thing that is necessary; salvation (cf. Lk. 10:40-42). (cf. *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, n. 260). The saints understood this. An example is St. Francis of Assisi who exhorted his brothers to commit themselves to work, but guard against extinguishing the spirit of holy prayer and devotion to which all temporal things must lead. (cf. Francis of Assisi, *The Later Rule* chap. 5)

5. WORK AT THE SERVICE OF MANKIND: JESUS, THE SABBATH AND THE MEANING OF WORK

Human work has eschatological significance and implications. But these are not completely cut off from its temporal value. It is equally meant to meet up with man's temporal needs. We see this in Christ, who worked tirelessly, accomplishing powerful deeds to free men and women from sickness, suffering and death, even on the Sabbath, to the scandal of the Pharisees and Scribes who had formalized the Sabbath observance, emptying it of its original significance (cf. Mt. 12:9-14). Thus, Jesus by healing people on the Sabbath reaffirmed it in its original meaning: "The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath" (Mk. 2:27). Freeing people from evil, practising brotherhood and sharing, give to work its noblest meaning; that which allows humanity to set out on the path to the eternal Sabbath, when rest will become the festive celebration to which men and women inwardly aspire. It is precisely in orienting humanity towards this experience of God's Sabbath and of his fellowship of life, that work is the inauguration on earth of the new creation

(cf. *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, n. 261).

CONCLUSION

In a nutshell, work represents a fundamental dimension of human existence. Through it, man participates in God's act of creation and redemption. Jesus himself was a worker. He grew up at the carpenter's bench, described his mission as that of working and his

disciples as workers in the Lord's harvest. But Jesus equally warns against making an idol of work. The ultimate meaning of work is not to be found in work itself, but in God who is the origin of life and the final goal of man. In Jesus Christ, human work is redeemed and sanctified, it becomes a service raised to the grandeur of God. Hence, we are all invited to walk in his footprints by embracing work as a means of honouring the talents God has bestowed on us.

WORK AS MAN'S PARTICIPATION IN GOD'S CREATION

INTRODUCTION

An initial difficulty in developing the concept of work lies in the fluidity of the term itself, which can be applied to a wide range of human activities. Work is an analogous concept applicable to an indefinite range of human activities. Due to this ambiguity, John Locke distinguishes two types; that is, "*work of our hands*"; perhaps better, it connotes a more creative kind of human activity and "*the labor of our body*", which is the tool required to serve the biological necessities of life, tiring activity that needs to be done over and over. (JOHN LOCKE, *Second Treatise on Government*, 26). An examination of work as man's participation in God's creation shall be approached from three epochs in history.

1. DEVELOPMENT OF WORK THROUGH TIME

Through the passage of time, the concept of work has undergone a lot of development. This is most evident in the Patristic period, the modern period and the contemporary period. In the writings of many Fathers of the Church, work was seen as a tool for the acquisition of virtues and a means of living. Hence, the Benedictines saw the importance of work and had as motto: "*Ora et Labora*", which was used to fight idleness in asceticism. John Cassian used an analogy to best express this by making reference to Paul the Hermit, indicating how he used to make baskets, although there was no reason, he



IDRIS TIANJI
THEOLOGY II



CYRIL NKEH
THEOLOGY I

was doing that to provide alms for the poor by working a small plot of land. So, at the end of the year he would burn the baskets he had made. (Cfr. JOHN CASSIAN, *De institutis Coenobiorum*, bk 10, 24). This implies that work was seen as a means for acquiring virtues, not as an activity worthwhile in itself.

Theologians like St. Thomas Aquinas, came to appreciate quite fully that human persons are called to share in God's governance of the universe. (Cfr. ST. THOMAS AQUINAS, *Summa Contra Gentiles*, 3-21). Similarly, Francis de Sales, sought to instruct those leading ordinary lives as workers about offering their work to God as an act of love (Cfr. ST. FRANCIS DE SALES, *Introduction to a Devout Life*, see introductory page).

Human work is creative, that is productive, and there is surely a sense in which human persons "fulfill" themselves through work and participate in a certain sense, in the "Creative"

work of God. (Cfr. Judith DWYER, *the New Dictionary of Social Thought*, The Liturgical Press, Minnesota 1994, 996). Similarly, other authors have shown that work has a Sacramental meaning. This is if it plays a part in the Christian's Sacramental life and can be seen as an exercise of the Christian's baptismal priesthood and a means of furthering the unity among humankind, rooted in our unity in the Body of Christ that is realized most deeply in the Eucharist. (Cfr. H. McCABE, "*Theology and Work: A Thought Perspective*," 220-221). Now, let us focus our attention on God's work of creation.

2. GOD'S WORK OF CREATION

In the creation story, God is presented as the author of all creation. To examine this, it is imperative to have a view of this creative work through the New and Old Testaments.

2.1. OLD TESTAMENT

The Old Testament presents God as the Omnipotent Creator (Gen 2:2, Job 38-41, Ps 104 and 147) who fashions man in his own image and invites him to work the soil (Gen 2:5-6) and cultivate and care for the garden of Eden in which he has placed him (Gen 2:15). The dominion exercised by man over all other living creatures, however, is not to be despotic or reckless; on the contrary he is to "cultivate and care for" (Gen 2:15) the goods created by God. In the Creator's plan, created realities, which are good in themselves, exist for man's use. Work is part of the original state of man and precedes his Fall; it is therefore not a punishment or curse. (Cfr. Gen 3:6-8). Also, work has a place of honour because it is a source of riches, or at least of the conditions for a decent life, and is in principle, an effective instrument against poverty. (Cfr. *Compendium of Catholic Social Doctrine*, 145).

2.2. NEW TESTAMENT

The apex of biblical teaching on work is the commandment of the Sabbath rest. Rest gives men and women the possibility to remember and experience anew God's work, from creation to redemption, to recognize themselves as his work (Cfr. *Ibid.* 145). Jesus also encourages us to appreciate work, where he himself, having "become like us in all things, devoted most of the years of his life on earth to *manual work* at the carpenter's bench" (Cfr. JOHN PAUL II,

Encyclical Letter *Laborem Exercens*, n. 6). He describes his mission as that of working, "My Father is working still, and I am working" (Jn 5:17), and his disciples as workers in the harvest of the Lord, for the evangelization of humanity (Cfr. Matt 9:37-38). Lastly, work represents a fundamental dimension of human existence as participation not only in the act of creation but

"All who have accomplished great things have had a great aim, have fixed their gaze on a goal which was high, one which sometimes seemed impossible."

Orison Swett Marden

also in that of redemption. The Church sees work as an expression of man's full humanity, in his historical condition and his eschatological orientation. (Cfr. *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, n. 2427). Man's free and responsible action reveals his intimate relationship with the Creator and his Creative Power.

3. THE DUTY TO CULTIVATE AND CARE FOR THE EARTH

God is the omnipotent Creator who fashions man in his image and invites him to work the soil and cultivate and care for the Garden of Eden in which he has placed him. (Gen 2:15). God entrusted to the first man the task of subduing the earth and exercising dominion over every living creature. (Gen 1:28). But this dominion is far from being despotic or reckless, rather he is to 'cultivate and care for' (Gen 2:15) the goods created by God. Cultivating the earth means not abandoning it to itself, exercising dominion means taking care of it as a wise king cares for his people and a shepherd his sheep, thus it is man's duty to work.

3.1. THE DUTY TO WORK

Man created in the image and likeness of God has the fundamental duty to work. The necessity of this duty cannot be undermined.

3.1.1. Work as a Necessity

The Second Vatican Council teaches, "Work is a fundamental right and a good for

mankind” (*Gaudium et Spes*, n.26), a useful good, worthy of man because it is an appropriate way for him to give expression to and enhance his human dignity. The Church teaches the value of work not only because it is always something that belongs to the person but also because of its nature as something necessary (Cfr. Pope Leo XIII *Rerum Novarum* 128). Every man has the duty, imposed by nature and his Creator, of preserving his existence, which he holds from God. He has therefore the right – imposed by nature and not by society- of finding in his work the means of providing for himself and his children.

3.1.2. Work and the Building of the Universe

Human beings share in God’s providence, for God has entrusted to them the task not only of providing for themselves but also for the entire universe. Thomas Aquinas distinguished four distinct ‘orders’ to which human intelligence

is related. Among the orders is the order that the human intelligence brings about through human enterprise. Through work, human persons bring this order into existence and in this way contribute to the unity of the universe, which is a unity of action based on the inner connection of causalities (Cfr. THOMAS AQUINAS, *Summa Theologiae* I, 104, 2 ad 1).

CONCLUSION

Humans are called to care for the universe and not to destroy it. Unless they come to see their work as an activity in which they render glory to God, respecting God’s dominion over the universe and the intrinsic finalities of created things, man cannot claim to be properly fulfilling his mission of building up the universe. God manifests his love to us in the incarnation and he calls us to share in this love. Man’s response to this call must itself be incarnated in actions, in works carried out in union with God and God’s incarnate Son.

WORK AS THE FOUNDATION FOR THE FORMATION OF FAMILY LIFE



BENAZIA ALEMNGU

THEOLOGY III



VALENTINE NSANI

THEOLOGY II

appointments, which may be harmful to the wellbeing of the family, are to be looked into (Cf. PONTIFICAL COUNCIL FOR JUSTICE AND PEACE, *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, Paulines Publications Africa, Nairobi 2004, n.294). This topic will seek to reconcile the great divide between work and the family and see them as necessary complements for a better society.

1. DUTY TO WORK

Man has a boundless duty to work. Through work, man governs the world with God; together with God, he is its lord and accomplishes good things for himself and for others. Idleness is harmful to man’s being, whereas activity is good for his body and soul (Cf. PONTIFICAL COUNCIL FOR JUSTICE AND PEACE, *Compendium of the*

INTRODUCTION

In working, man makes provision for the welfare of the family as well as its sustenance. The work of man can either make or mar his family. Hence, there is the need of a complementary relationship between man’s work and his family. Transfers and

Social Doctrine of the Church, Paulines Publications Africa, Nairobi 2004, n.577). Christians are called to work not only to provide themselves with bread, but also in acceptance of their poorer neighbors, to whom the Lord has commanded them to give food, drink, clothing, welcome, care and companionship (Cf. Mt 25:35-36). Every worker, Saint Ambrose contends, is the hand of Christ that continues to create and to do good (Cf. *Ibid.* n.579). By his work, man, who has a share in the divine art and wisdom, makes creation, the cosmos already ordered by the Father, more beautiful.

2. THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE FAMILY AND WORK

“The family constitutes one of the most important places for shaping the social and ethical order of human work”. (Cf. LEO XIII, Encyclical Letter *Rerum Novarum*, n.104). This relationship has its roots in the relation existing between the person and his right to possess the fruit of his labour and concerns not only the individual as a singular person but also as a member of a family, understood as a “domestic society (Cf. *Ibid.*). Work is essential insofar as it represents the condition that makes it possible to establish a family, for the means by which the family is maintained and sustained are obtained through work. Work also conditions the process of development, since a family afflicted by unemployment runs the risk of not fully achieving its ends (Cf. JOHN PAUL II, Encyclical Letter *Laborem Exercens*, n. 60-62). The reality can be expressed both in economic terms and through the great resources of solidarity that the family

A man who works with his hands is a labourer; a man who works with his hands and his brain is a craftsman; a man who works with his hands and his brain and his heart is an artist.

Louis Nizer)

possesses and that are often an important support for those within the family who are without work or who are seeking employment. Above all and more fundamentally, it is a contribution that is made by educating to the meaning of work and by offering direction and support for the professional choices made (Cf. *Ibid.*, n.250). Work therefore makes possible the development of the family and provides for the sustenance, stability and fruitfulness of one’s family (Cf. FRANCIS, Apostolic Exhortation *Amoris Laetitia*, n.23).

2. 1. WAGE AS A NECESSARY TOOL IN THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN FAMILY AND WORK

In order to protect this relationship between family and work, an element that must be appreciated and safeguarded is that of a just wage, a wage sufficient to maintain a family and allow it to live decently (Cf. PONTIFICAL COUNCIL FOR JUSTICE AND PEACE, *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, n. 564). This allows for savings that will permit the acquisition of property as a guarantee of freedom. The right to property is closely connected with the existence of families, which protect themselves from need thanks also to savings and to the building up of family property.

2.2. HOW TO MAKE A FAMILY WAGE A CONCRETE REALITY

There can be several different ways to make a family wage a concrete reality. Various forms of important social provisions help to bring it about, for example, family subsidies and other contributions for dependent family members, and also remuneration for the domestic work done by one of the parents. Also, particular attention must be given to the

STOP AND THINK

Work is worship. (French proverb)

Never was good work done without much trouble. (Chinese proverb)

Work is no disgrace: the disgrace is idleness. (Greek proverb)

issue of the work of women in the family, more generally to the recognition of the so-called work of “housekeeping”, which also involves the responsibility of men as husbands and fathers. The work of housekeeping, starting with that of the mother, precisely because it is a service directed and devoted to the quality of life, constitutes a type of activity that is eminently personal and personalizing, and that must be socially recognized and valued (Cf. PONTIFICAL COUNCIL FOR JUSTICE AND PEACE, *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, n. 567). At the same time, care must be taken to eliminate all the obstacles that prevent a husband and wife from making free decisions concerning their procreative responsibilities and, in particular, those that do not allow women to carry out their maternal role fully. (Cf. PONTIFICAL COUNCIL FOR JUSTICE AND PEACE, *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, n. 569).

3. THE ROLE OF MOTHERS WITHIN THE FAMILY

In the family we cannot ignore the indispensable effort of mothers who tirelessly work to assist their husbands and ensure the wellbeing of their children. The *Book of Proverbs* presents the labour of mothers as winning the praise of their husbands and children (*Proverbs* 31:10-31). Consequently, the mentality, which honors women more for their work outside the home than for their

work within the family, must be overcome. This requires that men should truly esteem and love women with total respect for their personal dignity, and that society should create and develop conditions favouring work in homes. (Cf. JOHN PAUL II, Apostolic Exhortation *Familiaris consortio* (22 November 1981), n. 23).

4. CHARITY AS THE FINAL GOAL OF WORK IN THE FOUNDATION AND FORMATION OF FAMILY

Human work directed to charity as its final goal, becomes an occasion for contemplation; it becomes devout prayer, vigilantly rising towards and in anxious hope of the day that will not end.

CONCLUSION

As seen, work has a fundamental place in the formation of family life. If it is not given its place, the family will live an indecent life. At the same time, man needs to have rest from the work done. Take this advice ‘what the Savior promises in the retirement is “rest for your souls”. Rest is a gift; it is not earned; it is not the payment for finishing a job; it is the dowry of grace. True rest is the stilling of passions, the control of wavering ambitions, and the joy of a quiet conscience. (Cf. Fulton J. SHEEN, *Way To Happiness*, St Paul Prints, Mumbai 1998, 109.)

STOP AND LAUGH

A Jesuit and a Franciscan were lunching together on a Friday. There were two pieces of fish on the dish, one large and the other very small. The Jesuit helped himself with the large piece and put the small one on the Franciscan's plate.

“It that Jesuitry?” asked the Franciscan.

“What do you mean?” said the Jesuit.

“Only this,” the Franciscan replied. “I have been trained in Holy Poverty. Had I served the fish, I should have put the large piece on your plate, and the small piece on mine.”

That is exactly what you have got, isn't it? Said the Jesuit. What are you complaining about?”

THE RIGHT TO WORK AND THE PROMOTION OF THE RIGHT TO WORK

INTRODUCTION

Rights are regarded as protective devices used to address situations where power is being exercised in a manner that controls human beings by manipulation or coercion, such that they are unable to affirm their dignity and humanity (Cfr, *The New Dictionary of Theology*, ALAN FALCONER). Being the voice of the voiceless and the moral authority of the society, the Church could not remain silent in the face of this ill, which plagues her children. The Church became actively involved in every discussion which concerns the right of a person which cuts across every aspect of our lives, most especially work. In this article, we will be looking at the necessity of work, the role of the state to promote the right of workers, the part played by the family and the right of women to work.

1. THE NECESSITY OF WORK

It is God's will that man should engage in work, an activity which encompasses all those human efforts which aim at improved conditions of life. It is through the process of work that man cares for and transforms the earth and its resources and perfects nature as well. Work is a fundamental right and a good for mankind, a useful good, worthy of man because it is an appropriate way for him to give expression to and enhance his human dignity. The Church teaches the value of work not only because it is always something that belongs to the person but also because of its nature as something necessary. (Cfr. *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, n. 287). Work is needed to form and maintain a family, to have a right to property and to contribute to the common good of the human family. In considering the moral implications that the question of work has for social life, the Church cannot fail to indicate unemployment as a real social disaster, (John Paul II, Encyclical Letter *Laborem Exercens*, 73.), above all with regard to the younger generations.



AUGUSTINE EBOTT

THEOLOGY II



KYRIAN NNADI

THEOLOGY II

Work is a good belonging to all people and must be made available to all who are capable of engaging in it. "Full employment" therefore remains a mandatory objective for every economic system oriented towards justice and the common good. As a matter of fact, a society in which the right to work is thwarted or systematically denied, and in which economic policies do not allow workers to reach satisfactory levels of employment, "cannot be justified from an ethical point of view, nor can that society attain social peace. (JOHN PAUL II, *Centesimus Annus*, n.83) Having considered how necessary work is, we shall proceed to see the part played by the state to ensure that the right of its citizens to work are upheld.

2. THE ROLE OF THE STATE AND CIVIL SOCIETY IN PROMOTING THE RIGHT TO WORK.

The correct ordering of social life implies that all have a right to work; this means resolving the problem of unemployment and layoffs. Fulfillment of this right is the primary responsibility of each individual and of private initiatives. The duty of the state does not consist so much in directly guaranteeing the right to work of every citizen. The state has the duty to promote active employment policies, that is, policies that will encourage the creation of employment opportunities within the national territory, providing the production sector with incentives to this end. Better still, her duty is to sustain business activities by creating conditions

which will encourage job opportunities, by stimulating those activities where they are lacking or by supporting them in moments of crises. (Cfr. JOHN PAUL II, *Centisimus Annus*, 83). Nevertheless, should it be necessary, the state must itself provide jobs and guaranteeing the means of subsistence to those who are involuntarily out of work. (Cfr. LEO XIII, *Rerum Novarum*, n. 29).

It is necessary to be aware of the fact that human work is a right upon which the promotion of social justice and civil peace directly depend. To promote the right to work, it is important that there be “an open process by which society organize[s] itself. With this organized system, meaningful self-organization can be found in the numerous initiatives, business and social, characterized by forms of participation, cooperation and self-management that manifest the joining of energies in solidarity. (*Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church* no. 293). Hence, solving the unemployment problem requires the cooperation of all those concerned, both at the national and the international level. It is evident from the above, that the state is doing its utmost best to promote the right of workers. Hence the family which is the foundation of the state also has a significant role to play.

3. THE FAMILY AND THE RIGHT TO WORK

Work is “a foundation for the formation of family life, which is a natural right and something that man is called to.” It ensures a means of subsistence and serves as a guarantee for raising children. (JOHN PAUL II, Encyclical Letter *Laborem Exercens*, nn.60-62). In this regard, it becomes clear that work and family cannot be disassociated hence it is necessary that businesses, professional organizations, labour unions and the state promote policies that, from an employment point of view, do not penalize but rather support the family. This is because family life and work mutually affect one another in different ways. Traveling great distances to the workplace, physical and psychological fatigue all reduce the time devoted to the family. Also, situations of unemployment have material and spiritual repercussions on families, just as tensions and family crises have negative influences on attitudes and productivity in the area of work. (Cf. HOLY SEE, *Charter of the Rights of the Family*, art 10, Vatican Polyglot Press, Vatican City 1983, 13-14).

4. WOMEN AND THE RIGHT TO WORK

The presence of women in the work place has to be guaranteed, since we all are called to serve one another and to cooperate with God in the unfolding of his creation. In this light, work stands as a demand of fraternal charity, a duty towards God and a normal way to self-preservation. (Cfr. H. PESCHKE, *Christian Ethics* V. II, 1978, 495). The persistence of many forms of discrimination offensive to the dignity and vocation of women in the area of work must be combatted. The first indispensable step in this direction is the concrete possibility of access to professional formation. As a matter of fact, recognition and defense of women’s rights in the context of work generally depend on the organization of work, which must take into account the dignity and vocation of women. These difficulties, unfortunately, have not been overcome, as is demonstrated wherever there are situations that demoralize women, making them objects of a very real exploitation. There is an urgent need to recognize effectively the right of women in the workplace especially in aspects of pay, insurance and security. (JOHN PAUL II, Apostolic Exhortation *Familiaris Consortio*, n. 74).

CONCLUSION

Given the importance of work in every society and its indispensable contribution in the growth and development of our environment and to the welfare of humans, it should be properly checked in order to ensure that every human person finds fulfilment in whatever thing one is called to do. However, in performing ones responsibility, there should be some liberty for the individual to explore other possibilities, which will enhance ones skill and improve the nature of the work.

There are moments when things go well, and one feels encouraged. There are difficult moments, and one feels overwhelmed. But it is senseless to speak of optimism or pessimism. The only important thing is to know that if one works well in a potato field, the potatoes will grow. If one works well among men, they will grow. That is reality. The rest is smoke.

Dando Dolci

HUMAN WORK AND LEISURE



ALAIN PHILIPPE MVONDO

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THEOLOGY I

INTRODUCTION

Work is an essential element in the life of man. It is through work that man is able to satisfy and meet up with his daily demands. It is no doubt; therefore, that man's life is built up every day from work. Pope Saint John Paul II puts it beautifully thus: "work contains the unceasing measure of human toil and suffering and also of the harm and injustice which penetrates deeply into social life within individual nations and on the international level" (Cf. Pope JOHN PAUL II, Encyclical Letter *Laborem Exercens*, n. 6). As necessary as work is to man, so too is rest. Work is a sacred thing. The lazy man does not glorify God. It is essential for man to take off some time to relax, drink a beer with friends, go to the beach or celebrate with family. He needs rest so that the body and spirit can be rejuvenated.

1. DEFINITION OF WORK

Work is any activity by man, whether manual or intellectual, whatever its nature or circumstances. It means any human activity that can and must be recognized as work, in the midst of all the many activities of which man is capable and to which he is predisposed by his very nature, by virtue of humanity itself (Pope JOHN PAUL II, Encyclical Letter *Laborem Exercens*, nn. 5-6). Jesus Christ, the Son of God, having become like us in everything except sin, "devoted most of the years of his life on earth to manual work at the carpenter's bench, in the workshop of Joseph (Cfr. PONTIFICAL COUNCIL FOR

JUSTICE AND PEACE, *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, Paulines Publications Africa, Nairobi 2004, n.146). Jesus, therefore, is a perfect example for us to follow as far as work is concerned.

2. IMPORTANCE OF WORK

Work is of great importance to man and the human society. Through work, each man contributes to the growth of society as well as experiences self-realization and fulfilment.

2.1. WORK REPRESENTS A FUNDAMENTAL DIMENSION OF HUMAN EXISTENCE

As we go on working daily, we participate not only in the act of creation, but also in the act of redemption. Those who put up with the rigour of work act in unison with Christ the head who worked daily while on earth. Work is an expression of man's full humanity, in his historical condition and in his eschatological orientation. (Cfr. PONTIFICAL COUNCIL FOR JUSTICE AND PEACE, *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, n.147).

2.2. WORK AS A SOURCE OF HONOUR AND RICHES

Work helps us gain a sense of pride and self-satisfaction by reaffirming that you can support yourself. When we work, we contribute to the economic and social growth of our community. However, one must not succumb to the temptation of making an idol of work, for the ultimate and definitive meaning of life is not to be found in work, but in God (Cfr. PONTIFICAL COUNCIL FOR JUSTICE AND PEACE, *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, n.148).

2.3. WORK ENABLES MAN TO SHARE IN THE DIVINE CRAFTSMANSHIP

Through work, man continues to participate in God's work of creation. "Man has

a share in the divine art and wisdom-makes creation, the cosmos already ordered by the Father, more beautiful” (Cfr. IRENAEUS, *Adversus Haereses*, 32) The whole universe gets a face lift by the continuous work of God’s creation through the mortal hands of man his creature.

3. REST FROM WORK AS A RIGHT

God our heavenly Father, according to the Genesis account, rested on the seventh day from all the work which he had done (Gen 2:2). As a result, men and women created in the image and likeness of God are to enjoy sufficient rest and free time that will allow them to tend to their family, culture, social and religious life (VATICAN II ECUMENICAL COUNCIL, Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World *Gaudium et spes*, n.67). Sundays and solemnities are days that are to be observed by all believers through refraining from engaging in work or activities that hinder the worship owed to God. (Cf. ANONYMOUS, *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (CCC), Libreria Editrice Vaticana, Citta del Vaticano 1998, n.2185).

3.1. SUNDAY AS A DAY OF REST

We as Christians should remember that Sunday is an appropriate time for reflection, silence, study and meditation that fosters the growth of the interior Christian life. (Cfr. PONTIFICAL COUNCIL FOR JUSTICE AND PEACE *Compendium of the social doctrine of the Church*, n. 285). As we rest on this day, we should bear in mind that it is a day of liberation that allows us to take part in the “festal gathering and the assembly of the firstborns who are enrolled in heaven” (Heb 12: 22-23), not forgetting the celebration of the Holy Eucharist.

STOP AND LAUGH

Teacher: “unselfishness means going without something you need, voluntarily. Can you give me an example, Jimmy?”

Jimmy: “yes, sometimes I go without a bath when I need one!”

3.2. THE ROLE OF AUTHORITIES IN ENSURING REST AND DIVINE WORSHIP

It is the responsibility of civil authorities to ensure that her citizens have enough rest and leisure from the point of view of efficiency and economic productivity as well divine worship. Christians in respect to religious freedom and of the common good of all, should seek to have Sundays and other Church Holy Days recognized as legal holidays. “Christians are supposed to give everyone a public example of prayer, respect and joy, and defend their traditions as a precious contribution to the spiritual life of society” (ANONYMOUS, *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (CCC), n. 2188).

4. WHAT IS LEISURE

Leisure is freedom provided by the cessation of activities especially time free from work or duties (*The American heritage idioms dictionary*). Human life has a rhythm of work and rest. It means that the former and the latter are correlated and intertwined; one cannot hold without the other so to say.

4.1. EXAMPLES OF LEISURE ACTIVITIES

It is worth noting that not any kind of activity can be considered as leisure. We have to go after those activities which can be of help to our intellectual up building. These are some of the activities: painting of a picture, the crossword, the learning of a language, listening to some music, going on a trip. All these activities help to boost the human memory.

4.2. THE NECESSITY OF LEISURE

The book of *Genesis* tells us that God rested on the seventh day after all the work he had been doing (Gen 2:2). From a biblical standpoint, therefore, we perceive that rest or leisure, after work, is of great necessity. And this time of leisure should help one to enjoy adequate moments to cultivate his family, cultural, social and religious lives (VATICAN II ECUMENICAL COUNCIL, Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World *Gaudium et spes*, 67). We must also take into consideration the fact that the positive effects of leisure time include better problem solving, improved work ethic, and improved

creativity. Leisure helps to create a new spirit, build companionship, and it relaxes the mind.

4.3. THE ABUSES OF LEISURE

It is often said that an idle mind is a devil's workshop. Leisure can therefore be as dangerous when abuses set in. Some of these abuses includes gambling, drinking alcohol and smoking, doing drugs and betting. These only harm the victims in the short or long run. One should

always use one's leisure time properly and not abuse it.

CONCLUSION

Leisure is to be appreciated. And the time of leisure should not be considered as a licentious moment. It is commonly said that excess harms. Too much time dedicated to leisure can be detrimental to our own self. Let us therefore create an equilibrium between the time at work and the time of leisure.

THE RIGHTS OF WORKERS



SERGE NGASSA

THEOLOGY II



WILSON DIANG

THEOLOGY II

INTRODUCTION

In Genesis 1-2, God is found working and in Genesis 2:15(New Jerusalem Bible), God empowers man to work in the following words: “Yahweh God took the man and settled him in the Garden of Eden to cultivate and take care of it.” The word translated *cultivate* in the Greek version is *ergon* meaning work in all dimensions of the word, that is, physical, mental, and social. After the fall of “Man” in the garden of Eden, work in which Man continued and shared in the creative power of God became corrupted(Genesis 3:17-19), thus in need of redemption. In order that man work and his call to this end be respected and promoted, the Church has insistently

promoted workers' right though acknowledging the ills in the working society, indicative of fallen human nature (Cf. PONTIFICAL COUNCIL FOR JUSTICE AND PEACE, *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, Paulines Publications Africa, Nairobi 2004, n. 301). As man is the center of everything in this world, work is in the nature of man and has its bearing in his divine transcendent dignity. (Cf. PONTIFICAL COUNCIL FOR JUSTICE AND PEACE, *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, n.165). Given the centrality of work, we are going to examine some rights that belong to workers, in the light of the Church's social teaching.

1. THE RIGHT TO A JUST WAGE

A just wage, says the Catechism of the Catholic Church, is the legitimate fruit of work (Cf. ANONYMOUS, *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (CCC), Libreria Editrice Vaticana, Vatican 1998, n.2434). Every worker deserves to be remunerated for the services he or she renders. Pope John Paul II says, “Remuneration is the most important means for achieving justice in work relationships” (Cf. JOHN PAUL II, *Laborem Exercens*, n.19). It should be noted that the

agreement reached at between the employer and the employee as salary does not qualify as a 'just wage.' This is because a just wage must not be below the level of subsistence. A salary gives the worker a chance to gain access to the goods of the earth, and refusal to grant this in due time and in proportion to work done is a sign of great injustice (Cf. Lev 19:13, Jas 5:4, Dt 24:14-15). Therefore, workers have a right to their salaries and have the right to demand for them when not paid. Moreover, they should not be cheated based on "a wage agreement."

2. RIGHT TO STRIKE

The doctrine of the Church recognizes the right to strike, when it cannot it cannot be avoided or at least, when it is necessary to obtain a proportionate benefit (Cf. ANONYMOUS, *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, n.2435). This only becomes possible when all other methods of resolving the disputes have failed. These rights often arise from the poor working conditions, poor wages and other factors. As much as these strikes are permitted, they must be peaceful; violence is unacceptable and especially when accompanied by objectives that are not directly linked to the working conditions or are contrary to the common good.

3. THE RIGHT OF ASSOCIATION

State action in defense of the wage earner is to be taken in co-operation with, and not in substitution for man's own right of association. The wage-earner has the right to help himself through the unions, which may be of workers alone or of employers and workers together (LEO XIII, *Rerum Novarum*, n.36). The state has no right to deny men their right to association unless the association is contrary to the public wellbeing and trade unions are not of themselves contrary to public wellbeing. (Rodger CHARLES, *The Christian Social Conscience*, Mercier Press, Netherlands 1970, 42-43).

4. WORK AS A DUTY ON THE PART OF MAN

Work is for man, not man for work (Cf. ANONYMOUS, *Catechism of the*

Everyone who works has the right to just and favourable remuneration insuring for himself and his family an existence worthy of human dignity... (United Nations Declaration of Human Rights, Art. 23)

Catholic Church, n.2428). The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* makes us to understand that man has the duty to work and not be idle to provide for his family and to contribute to the growth of society. Pope John Paul II says, "man must work out of regard for others, especially his own family, but also for the society he belongs to and the whole human family of which he is a member" (Cf. JOHN PAUL II, *Laborem Exercens*, n. 16). Therefore, "the right to work which is a duty has to be promoted and protected by society, even if it conflicts with other potential rights. But the civil community should not confine itself solely to protecting the workers' rights, but it should also see to it that the necessary economic and social conditions are created to guarantee everyone the concrete exercise of his rights." (cfr. R. Rossi, *Human Labour*, 31).

CONCLUSION

In this article, we saw that work from the start was good and was sanctified by God (Genesis 2:1-3) and He in turn commissioned man to work as a share in His creative power. Original Sin hindered this and man down the ages has had to fight to obtain a fair treatment in terms of his work. In work places, man fights against unjust treatments which in extreme cases, have resulted to violent means. In Her call as mother and teacher, the Church has tasked herself as the conscience of society and the voice of the voiceless, to remind employers and institutions of the utmost importance of the respect of the right of workers. This work stressed this and hopes it helps in healing the disgruntled workers and bring changes in institutions.

DIMENSIONS OF CONFLICT IN THE AREA OF WORK

INTRODUCTION

In the Industrial Age, taking up a paid profession seems natural to everyone. Professional position does not only determine a person's social prestige, but, the level of his or her income as well (Cfr J. HOFFNER, *Christian Social Teaching*, LUC, Bratislava 1983, 126). Success in life and professional success are almost identical. The seriousness with which modern man considers work and profession should not blind us from realizing the fact that the working world of the Industrial Age is full of conflicts. These conflicts are generally viewed by people as being harmful to work because they breed hostility and mistrust among workers, interfere with the structural functioning in the area of work, and in extreme cases, cause a breakdown of organizations (Cfr O. OHBUCH-M.SUZUKI, "Three Dimensions of Conflict Issues and their Effects on Resolution Strategies in Organizational Settings", in *The International Journal of Conflict Management*, 14 (2003), 61). It shall therefore be our singular task in this article to examine the various dimensions of conflict in the area of work.

1. THE WAGE SYSTEM CONFLICT

The wage system often shows traits of bitterness that take on new forms with the changing of social and economic milieus. In the past, the origin of conflict in the area of work was found above all in the fact that the entrepreneurs, following the principle of maximum profit, tried to establish the lowest possible wages for the work done by the employees who had put their powers at the disposal of the entrepreneurs (Cfr JOHN PAUL II, Encyclical Letter *Laborem Exercens*, 11). The situation is not different in the present advanced industrial society where a great number of workers gainfully employed in dependent positions practice their professions as wage and salary earners (Cfr J. HOFFNER, *Christian Social Teaching*, 126). Pope Pius XI in his encyclical letter *Quadragesimo Anno* calls this system the capitalistic economy, that is, one in which "some provide capital while others provide labour for a joint economic activity" (PIUS XI, Encyclical Letter *Quadragesimo Anno* (15 May 1931), n. 100). Even if the wage system does not seize the whole man and violate his freedom of conscience, his political freedom and his economic freedom, that is, the free choice of profession and workplace, nonetheless, as experience teaches,



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THEOLOGY III

certain crises threaten us here as well. Will the employee not be suspicious that the wages paid do not correspond to his or her performance? Will the economy not be shaken time and again by serious wage disputes? These have brought and continue to bring about strong conflict in the area of work.

2. TECHNICALIZATION OF WORK CONFLICT

In our present day, the phenomenon of 'technicalization of work' shows aspects that are new and maybe more disturbing: scientific and technological advancement and the globalization of markets, expose workers to the risk of being exploited by the mechanisms of the economy and by the unrestricted quest for productivity (Cfr JOHN PAUL II, "Address to the Pontifical Academy of Social Sciences" (6 March 1999), n. 2, in *L'Osservatore Romano*, English edition, 17 March 1999, p. 3). Diverse engines and machine tools professionally adjusted to one another determine the work process of the modern factory. Serious doubts are raised against this *technicalizing of work*. Man is apparently considered only as a function and a factor of production within the detached structure of technical equipment. This has condemned man to boring, monotonous, nerve-racking, mechanical work and turned him into the forced rhythm of the conveyor belt (Cfr J. HOFFNER, *Christian Social Teaching*, 127). This type of system under which the modern man works, it goes without saying, cannot be void of any kind of conflict.

3. INJUSTICE AND DISCRIMINATION CONFLICT

Injustice and discrimination have been a great source of conflict in the area of work. In

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some companies and industries, some workers become victims of injustice and are discriminated against in law or in fact on account of their race, origin, colour, culture, sex or religion. These acts of injustice and discrimination possess a character of very great consequence by reason of the tension which they stir up in the area of work (Cfr R. CHARLES, *An Introduction to Catholic Social Teaching*, Family Publications, Oxford 1999, 30). Workers who feel dishonoured and ill-treated as a result of injustice and discrimination are humanly bound to cry aloud and if an immediate positive response is not given to their cry, conflict and strife become the end result.

4. CONFLICT RESULTING FROM THE EXPLOITATION OF WORKERS

It would be erroneous to think that the process of overcoming the dependence of work on material is capable of overpowering hostility in the area of work. The reference here is not only to child labour, underpaid work and exploitation of workers but also to more subtle forms of exploitation of new sources of work, overworking, work-as-career that often takes on more importance than other human and necessary aspects, and excessive demands of work that make family life unstable and sometimes impossible. (Cfr PONTIFICAL COUNCIL FOR JUSTICE AND PEACE, *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, Libreria Editrice Vaticana, Citta del Vaticano 2004, n. 280). These forms of exploitation are sources of conflict in the area of work.

5. THE CHURCH'S RESPONSE TO CONFLICT IN THE AREA OF WORK

With regard to the aspects of conflict examined above, which are founded in the characteristic features of the working professional world, the following is to be noted from the viewpoint of the Catholic social teaching.

5.1. RESPONSE TO THE WAGE SYSTEM CONFLICT

With respect to the conflict generated by the wage system, it should be noted primarily that in the area of work, the relation between the employer and employee is not purely economic: a man's work is not a commodity to be bought or sold as the market price dictates. All work and production is primarily for the benefit of the entire society, and all who work - at whatever level - have a stake in the community as persons, as sons and daughters of God, not as statistics. The wage earner is therefore indisputably a subject and not an object of national economy in the same way as the employer. Thus the criterion for wages and salaries should be the need for men to live as fully human

persons (Cfr BISHOP'S CONFERENCE OF ENGLAND AND WALES, *Statement Concerning Moral Questions*, Catholic Truth Society, London 1971, 9).

5.2. RESPONSE TO TECHNICALIZATION OF WORK CONFLICT

With regard to the conflict brought about by technology and mechanization of work, Pope John Paul II who regards technology as "man's ally" warns against the danger of an uncontrolled technological development which would cease to be man's ally and become almost his enemy when the mechanization of work replaces him, taking away all personal satisfaction and the motivation to ingenuity and responsibility, when it removes many workers from their previous employment, or when, through exalting the machine, it reduces man to the status of its slave (Cfr JOHN PAUL II, Encyclical Letter *Laborem Exercens*, n. 19). To avoid conflict from this aspect of work, an organization of the workplace that shows consideration for man should thus strive to adapt the work space, the work time and the things connected with work (machines, tools, etc) to man in a suitable way (Cfr J. HOFFNER, *Christian Social Teaching*, 131).

5.3. RESPONSE TO INJUSTICE AND DISCRIMINATION CONFLICT

The Fathers of the Second Vatican Council reject every kind of discrimination which affects fundamental rights, whether it be social and cultural discrimination, or based on sex, race, colour, class, language or religion (Cfr VATICAN COUNCIL II, Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World *Gaudium et Spes*, (7 December 1965), n. 29). These must therefore be curtailed in the area of work because they are irreconcilable with God's design.

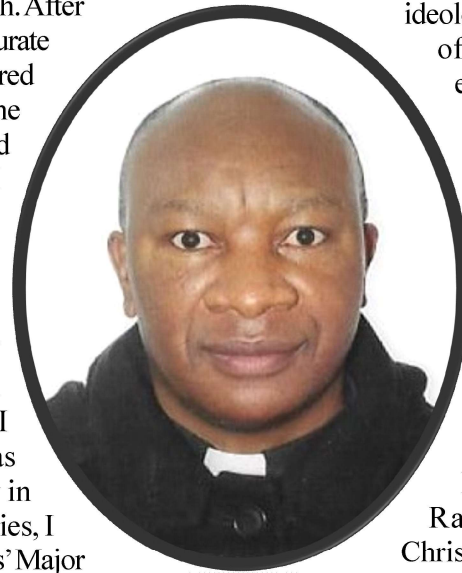
CONCLUSION

It has been our fervent undertaking to examine the various dimensions of conflict in the area of work in this article. We realize that the various aspects which bring about conflict in the domain of work, directly or indirectly, hinge on the relationship between the employer and the employee which, in one way or the other, is being greatly affected negatively by the above examined or some other related dimensions of conflict not mentioned in this article. Given the fact that we live and work in a society full of human frailty, we cannot completely avoid conflict in the domain of work, but we can largely help to curb and resolve many conflicts if the teachings of the Church on human work are practiced.

THE SEARCHLIGHT MAGAZINE INTERVIEWS FR ANTONINUS TANTAN

S.L: Greetings, Dear Father. It is with joy that the editorial board of the Searchlight Magazine grants you this interview. Could you please, make yourself known to our readers?

Fr. A. Tantan: Thank you very much for this opportunity to share my life and a few thoughts with Searchlight. I am Fr. Antoninus Somi Tantan, Priest of the Archdiocese of Bamenda, ordained in 1998. I hail from Kumbo Diocese, specifically from Sop Parish. After my ordination in 1998, I was sent as curate to Esu Parish. In 2000, I was transferred to Bafut Parish where I served for one year and in 2001, I was appointed Parish Priest of Widikum. Here, I served until 2007, then I was moved to Saint John Vianney Spiritual Formation Centre, Bafut as Spiritual Director, Bursar and Vocations' Director for the Archdiocese of Bamenda. In 2013, I was transferred to Kedjom Keku Parish where I served for a year. From there, I was sent for studies to Florence - Italy in 2014. Upon completion of my studies, I was sent to the Saint Thomas Aquinas' Major Seminary, Bambui where I am at present.



S.L: After your departure from Vianney Centre and your brief stay in Kedjom Keku, did it ever cross your mind that you will return as a Formator in the Major Seminary?

Fr. A. Tantan: To say the least, it has never crossed my mind that I will ever be a Formator in the Major Seminary. I have always preferred and enjoyed working in the Parish. But at this moment, this is God's will for me. The priesthood is full of surprises and God has many surprises for each of us.

S.L: Many who are versed with you easily notice your deep spiritual life. Looking at you teach Dogmatic Theology instead of Spiritual Theology, any word for our curious readers?

Fr. A. Tantan: Deep spiritual life? I am a sinner struggling with my imperfections and counting on God's merciful love. As for teaching Dogmatic Theology and not Spiritual Theology I have two things to say: First, my Bishop sent me to study Dogmatic Theology. He could have equally sent me to study a different subject. Secondly, priests will always be challenged by their bishops to specialize in any ecclesial discipline given the needs of the local Church. In addition, it is important to note that Catholic teaching,

irrespective of discipline, draws from one source – revealed truths. These truths are presented from different perspectives. Spiritual theology deals with the same truths looked at from another angle.

S.L: Joseph Ratzinger/Pope Benedict XVI said Revelation is a person and not some set of theological beliefs or clarifications on the divine. So, in an age where many have forgotten or discarded their faith for ideologies, how does a genuine knowledge of Dogma shape our lives and our encounter with God.

Fr. A. Tantan: Saint Paul warns us not to conform ourselves to the thinking of the present age but to let our minds be transformed by God (cf. Rom 12:2). We live in an age that has discarded faith in God for ideologies and worldly philosophies; an era that sees dogma, the divinely-revealed teaching, as outdated. It is within this context that, citing one of his mentors Romano Guardini, Ratzinger says: "The essence of Christianity is not an idea, not a system of thought, not a plan of action. The essence of Christianity is a Person- Jesus Christ Himself." (J. RATZINGER, "Guardini on Christ in our Century," in *Crisis Magazine*, (1 June 1996). For him, Revelation is a Person. This is the thought that cuts through Ratzinger's theology. He has always been hard on those who deviate from the truth revealed by Christ to cling to ideologies. In his homily to cardinals gathered at the Mass for the Election of a new Roman Pontiff after the passing on to glory of John Paul II, Ratzinger then a Cardinal, said among other things:

How many winds of doctrine we have known in recent decades, how many ideological currents, how many ways of thinking... The small boat of thought of many Christians has often been tossed about by these waves - thrown from one extreme to the other: from Marxism to liberalism, even to libertinism; from collectivism to radical individualism; from atheism to a vague religious mysticism; from agnosticism to syncretism, and so forth. Every day new sects are created and what Saint Paul says about human trickery comes true, with cunning which tries to draw those into error (cf Eph 4, 14). Having a clear faith, based on the Creed of the Church, is often labelled today as a fundamentalism. Whereas, relativism, which is letting

oneself be tossed and ‘swept along by every wind of teaching,’ looks like the only attitude (acceptable) to today’s standards. We are moving towards a dictatorship of relativism which does not recognize anything as for certain and which has as its highest goal one’s own ego and one’s own desires. (Cf. J. F. THORNTON & S. B. VARENNE, (ed.), *The Essential Pope Benedict XVI: His Central Writings and Speeches*, HarperCollins Pub., New York 2008, 22).

As is evident from the above citation, Ratzinger presents the actual challenges of the Church today- many doctrines and ideologies that the Church has to battle with. He talks of a dictatorship of relativism which has as its highest goal one’s own ego. In the same homily, Ratzinger equally presents the answer to these challenges. He says:

However, we have a different goal: the Son of God, true man. He is the measure of true humanism. Being an ‘Adult’ means having a faith which does not follow the waves of today’s fashions or the latest novelties. A faith which is deeply rooted in friendship with Christ is adult and mature. It is this friendship which opens us up to all that is good and gives us the knowledge to judge true from false, and deceit from truth. We must become mature in this adult faith; we must guide the flock of Christ to this faith. (*Ibid.*, 23).

Ratzinger goes on to emphasize that it is this faith –only faith – that creates unity and takes form in love. He goes further to say, “Make truth in love, as the basic formula of Christian existence. In Christ, truth and love coincide. To the extent that we draw near to Christ in our life, truth and love merge. Love without truth would be blind; truth without love would be like ‘a resounding gong or a clashing cymbal’(1 Cor13:1)” (*Ibid.*).

Amidst the ideologies of today how does a genuine knowledge of dogma shape our lives and our encounter with God? Dogma, defined from the Catholic Church’s point of view is “a truth revealed by God, which the Magisterium of the Church declares as binding.” Dogma is not an opinion; it is not a decision that is arrived at after majority vote; dogma is rooted in a person –Jesus Christ and can only be understood in the light of Jesus Christ, who is God’s self-revelation and who is the Way, the Truth and the Life. He is the deepest expression of God’s Love.

Our understanding of dogma should lead us to an encounter with Christ who is the fullness of revelation. He has revealed to us what it means to be a person and to live a life for others. He alone gives life its true meaning.

Any effort to deepen our knowledge of Christ should be preceded by faith, a mature faith that goes beyond the ideologies and novelties of present day. As Ratzinger puts it, it should be a faith which is deeply rooted

in friendship with Christ and which helps one to distinguish what is false from what is true. Friendship with Jesus entails dying to ourselves and letting him shape our lives.

S.L: In Chinua Achebe’s *Things Fall Apart*, one of the interlocutors retorted when told that Jesus was the Son of God. “Then God has a wife.” Flowing from this, how can Christianity be explained in African categories without sacrificing its core beliefs but remaining truly African?

Fr. A. Tantan: It is not strange for a traditional pagan African, upon hearing that God has a son, to conclude that he must have a wife. It is a logical conclusion because if a man has a son, he must naturally have a wife or must have had him with a woman. But talking about God brings us to a totally different realm. God is “wholly other.” He does not fit into our human categories. The way that God has a Son is different from the way humans beings beget their own sons. The Fatherhood of God is not the same as human fatherhood. This brings us to the theological discussion of the nature of God who is one but three Persons, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The Church confesses that there is one God in three persons, the “consubstantial Trinity” and that the divine persons do not share the one divinity among themselves but each of them is God whole and entire: The Father is that which the Son is, the Son that which the Father is, the Father and the Son that which the Holy Spirit is, i.e. by nature one God. In the words of the Fourth Lateran Council (1215), “Each of the persons is that supreme reality, viz., the divine substance, essence or nature” (*The Catechism of the Catholic Church*, Libreria Editrice Vaticana, Citta del Vaticano 1994, n. 253). In the Godhead, it is the Father who generates, the Son who is begotten, and the Holy Spirit who proceeds.

Theologically speaking, by calling God ‘Father’, the language of faith indicates that God is the first origin of everything and transcendent authority; and that he is at the same time goodness and loving care for all his children (*Ibid.*, n. 239). God transcends all human categories and human distinctions between the sexes. He is neither man nor woman: he is God. He also transcends human fatherhood and motherhood, although he is their origin and standard: no one is father as God is Father.

The fact that God has a Son, Jesus Christ, is informed by our Christian faith. Jesus was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit and is true God and true Man. He revealed that God is Father in an unheard-of sense: he is Father not only in being Creator; he is eternally Father in relation to his only Son, who is eternally Son only in relation to his Father: “No one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and any one to whom the Son chooses to reveal him. (Mt11:27).

The second part of your question is to show how Christianity can be explained in African categories without sacrificing its core values. In the Post-synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Ecclesia in Africa*, the Synod Fathers deliberated on the Church in Africa and its evangelizing mission and proposed various ways in which the Good News could be better proclaimed in Africa. In this document the Synod Fathers said among other things:

By reason of its deep conviction that “*the synthesis between culture and faith is not only a demand of culture but also of faith*”, because “a faith that does not become culture is not fully accepted, not entirely thought out, not faithfully lived”, the Special Assembly for Africa of the Synod of Bishops considered inculturation a priority and an urgent task in the life of Africa’s particular Churches. Only in this way can the Gospel be firmly implanted in the Continent’s Christian communities. Following in the footsteps of the Second Vatican Council, the Synod Fathers interpreted inculturation as a process that includes the whole of Christian existence — theology, liturgy, customs, structures — without of course compromising what is of divine right and the great discipline of the Church, confirmed in the course of centuries by remarkable fruits of virtue and heroism (JOHN PAUL II, Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Ecclesia in Africa*, (14 September 1995), n. 78.).

The synod Fathers captured in this message how the Gospel can be brought to the people in Africa while keeping intact the Gospel message and African values. They considered inculturation a priority and an urgent task in the life of Africa’s particular churches. As they say, “a faith that does not become culture is not fully accepted, not entirely thought out, not faithfully lived.”

The theological foundation of inculturation is the Incarnation. Just as “the Word became flesh and dwelt among us” (*Jn* 1:14), so too the Good News, the Word of Jesus Christ proclaimed to the nations, *must take root* in the life-situation of the hearers of the Word. Inculturation is precisely this insertion of the Gospel message into cultures. For the Incarnation of the Son of God, precisely because it was complete and concrete, was also an incarnation in a particular culture.

Inculturation is a movement towards full evangelization. It seeks to dispose people to receive Jesus Christ in an integral manner. It touches them on the personal, cultural, economic and political levels so that they can live a holy life in total union with God the Father, through the action of the Holy Spirit.

The challenge of inculturation in Africa consists in ensuring that the followers of Christ will ever more fully assimilate the Gospel message, while remaining faithful to all authentic African values (*Ibid*). Inculturation of the faith in every area of Christian and human life is an arduous task which can only be carried out with the help of the

Spirit of the Lord who leads the Church to the whole truth (cf. *Jn* 16:13).

It is by looking at the Mystery of the Incarnation and of the Redemption that the values and counter-values of cultures are to be discerned. Just as the Word of God became like us in everything but sin, so too the inculturation of the Good News takes on all authentic human values, purifying them from sin and restoring to them their full meaning.

Inculturation is a difficult and delicate task, since it raises the question of the Church’s fidelity to the Gospel and the Apostolic Tradition amidst the constant evolution of cultures. Rightly therefore the Synod Fathers observed: “Considering the rapid changes in the cultural, social, economic and political domains, our local Churches must be involved in the process of inculturation in an ongoing manner, respecting the two following criteria: compatibility with the Christian message and communion with the universal Church ... In all cases, care must be taken to avoid syncretism.” (*Ibid.*, n. 62).

To proclaim Jesus Christ is to reveal to people their inalienable dignity, received from God through the Incarnation of his Only Son. “Since it has been entrusted to the Church to reveal the mystery of God, who is the ultimate goal of man she opens up to man at the same time the meaning of his own existence, that is, the innermost truth about himself.” (*Ibid.*, n. 69).

The Synod recalls that to evangelize is to proclaim by word and witness of life the Good News of Jesus Christ, crucified, died and risen, the Way, the Truth and the Life. The Synod Fathers invite all to bear witness to the Gospel in word and deed. “You shall be my witnesses” (*Acts* 1:8). Bearing this witness should be within the context of inculturation.

S.L: Any final words?

Fr. A. Tantan: I am grateful for this opportunity you have given me to share a few thoughts with you. I would like to join my voice with the voices of others to thank God as we begin the first phase of celebrations of the Golden Jubilee of Saint Thomas Aquinas’ Major Seminary, Bambui whose peak celebration is December next year, 2023. It is a very important event and we thank God for this precious gift to our local Church. Our hearts turn to God in gratitude to the founding members, formators, alumni, domestic workers, benefactors and the Christian faithful who have supported and continue to sustain this seminary in many ways. It is also an opportune moment to make an evaluation of all these years since its creation in 1973 and to see how we can contribute to the continuous growth of this house of formation. May our Jubilee theme: “To live a life worthy of our calling” (*Eph* 4:1) always be our inspiration as we celebrate this great event. Thank you.

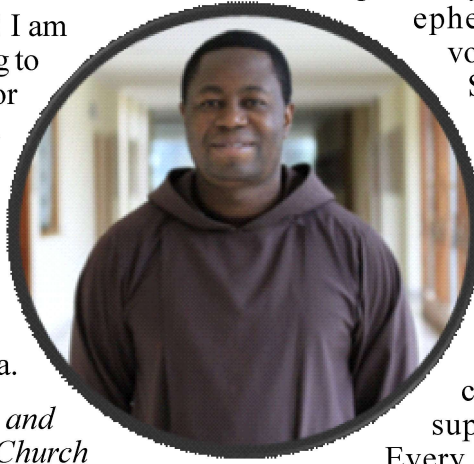


**THE SEARCHLIGHT MAGAZINE INTERVIEWS FR.
TERENCE SAHVEN LUKONG OFM CAP.**



S.L: *The editors of the Searchlight Magazine are happy to have you on this platform. Can our readers get to know you?*

Fr. Lukong: The pleasure is mine! I am Fr. Terence Sahven Lukong. I belong to the Order of Capuchin Friars Minor in the Universal Church. Am precisely aggregated to the Saint Francis Capuchin Custody in Cameroon, to which am equally incardinated. I am a member of the Capuchin Friary Bambui, which is a formation and Students' house within the Archdiocese of Bamenda.



S.L: *Which course do you teach and what is its place in the life of the Church and the seminarians?*

Fr. Lukong: I received a mandate from the Bishops of the Bamenda Ecclesiastical Province via the communique of the 73rd Ordinary Meeting of their Provincial Episcopal conference, to take up the task of a lecturer in STAMS, for this academic year. I lecture Church Law conventionally known as Canon Law. Canon Law like any other Ecclesiastical discipline has a vital role to play in the life of the Church. It is first and foremost a theologically driven project which transforms itself into a ministry that upholds the freedom of believers and the good order of the community. Canon Law is one of the theological courses that the Church prescribes for the formation of candidates for the ordained ministries. Seminarians are trained in view of ministry in the Church and in the name of the Church. Hence, the study of Canon Law should be one of the tools that equips them and mould them into effective future ministers of the Church.

S.L: *Many even Catholics detest the mere mention of the expression Canon Law. How does Canon Law help in the salvation of souls when many consider it instead as a hindrance?*

Fr. Lukong: I do agree with you that the concept or idea of Law at first sight scares and seems to be a weapon that hampers freedom. This too is not foreign to Canon Law. Many perceive it from the point of view of restrictions, censures, obligations, etc. This of course should fall under the rubric of misconception, since we read in Galatians 4:4-5 that Christ Himself was a Subject of the Law. Canon Law by its nature is Theological and does not aim

only at safeguarding harmony, Order and good governance in the Church. The goal of Canon Law goes beyond the material and the ephemeral. The purpose and vocation of Canon Law is the Salvation of souls. This is clearly spelt out in the last Canon of the 1983 Code of Canon Law as the supreme Law of the Church. "... *Ecclesia Suprema Semper lex esse debet.*" This means that the ratio of every law process in the Church always considers as bottom line the supreme good of the faithful.

Every single norm in the Church therefore should be viewed as an exhortation and as a sure guide towards salvation. The Code of Canon Law, which enshrines most of the canonical norms, can adequately be considered and treated as a spiritual book. *The Code* inter alia protects and safeguards the right to a spiritual life, a right to freedom of conscience, a right to worship according to one's own rite and freedom to follow one's form of spirituality. The same *Code* in Canon 210 admonishes all Christ's Faithful to lead a holy life irrespective of status. This buttresses the fact that Canon Law should not be viewed as a *hindrance* but rather as a bridge towards the attainment of Salvation.

S.L: *The insistence on freedom and human rights have been seen as a hideout for ideologies such as abortion, gender identity, LGBTQ, amongst others. As a legal luminary, can you clarify us on the concepts of freedom and human rights and the relevance of a proper understanding of them in contemporary society?*

Fr. Lukong: One would feel in the world today a strong relativist influence in delicate issues touching on the dignity of the human person. Ideologies abound, theories are founded and supported democratically; Traditional teachings are attacked and mocked as antiquated, freedom is defined as license and consciences are gradually locked up in dark boxes under the canopy of a fight for rights and freedom. I strongly believe that what we refer to as freedom and rights should be those elements that give meaning to our existence, that honour our dignity, that consider the common good and that finally opens up to the Summum Bonum which is God Himself. That is why Divine Law and

Natural Law enshrined in the Magisterium of the Church should be re-echoed unceasingly to this contemporary society. The Church's teachings are not based on democracy but on divine mission. The Church takes consideration of contemporary issues but is not tele-guided by these since Her divine mission is to Teach and Educate. Pope Saint John XXIII in his famous and beautiful encyclical promulgated on the 15th of May 1961, entitled *Mater et Magistra* referring to the Church as Mother and Teacher underscored the role of the

Church in the world irrespective of times, persons and places.

S.L: *Is there any other thing you want to tell our readers?*

Fr. Lukong: I wish to encourage the readers in their human and spiritual formation. We have the duty to nurture and cater for our faith. Reading and sharing the Searchlight Magazine is a sure means of assuring one's continual formation as well as the one of others. Thanks for your Time! God bless you!

TECHNOLOGICAL DEVELOPMENT AND INNOVATION IN THE FIELD OF WORK

INTRODUCTION

We are part of a technological era capable of producing incredible advances of things no one could have ever imagined two centuries ago. The modern world sees this era as an age of progress, and to talk of progress means more machines, more autonomy for research and more innovations. Like every notion of progress, this new age has come with its merits and demerits, especially in relation to the human person and to work. It is in this light that we undertake a brief look at the Church's Social Teaching in relation to technological developments and innovation in the field of work. This inquiry will unfold as follows: clarification of concepts; technological developments and innovations in the field of work. We shall also attempt a brief evaluation following the social teachings of the Catholic Church.

1. CLARIFICATION OF TERMS

It is imperative for us to clarify some terms, starting with technology. The word 'technology' is made of two Greek words: *techne* (to make, to produce, to build, to do) and *logos* (science, discourse). Consequently, we can simply say that technology is the study



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THEOLOGY III



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and knowledge of the practical (Cfr. *Cambridge International Dictionary of English*, Cambridge University Press, p. 1495). We can also define technology from the point of view of Jacques Ellul for whom technique (meaning technology), is a rational organization of behavior using different means to arrive at a given end, whether or not it uses or depends upon machines, computers, or scientific or technical knowledge of any sort (Cfr. B. L. Marthaler et alii (eds.), *The New Catholic Encyclopedia*, Gale, Washington D.C. 2003, 783). *Technological development*, therefore, is the growth or progress in the field of technology. On her part, *innovation* is the introduction of changes and new ideas. From here, we can then say that *technological innovation* is the introduction of changes and new ideas in the sphere of technology.

2. TECHNOLOGICAL DEVELOPMENTS AND INNOVATIONS VIS-À-VIS WORK

The 20th century is the century with one of the greatest advances in scientific research and innovation. Such that technology has swallowed up every reality of our world. Hence, we see a movement from industry to services of technological innovations and from dependent stable work to a variety of jobs.

2.1. FROM INDUSTRY TO SERVICES OF TECHNOLOGICAL INNOVATIONS

According to the Church's Social Doctrine, "Work, above all within the economic systems of the more developed countries, is going through a phase that marks the passage from an industrial-type economy to an economy essentially built on services and technological innovations" (PONTIFICAL COUNCIL FOR JUSTICE AND PEACE, *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, 2004, n. 313). In the former, industrial type economy used to be more concentrated on a particular work and means of production which equally gave room for some stability. But with the latter, services and activities with a predominant informational content show a much greater rapidity of growth than traditional primary and secondary sectors. Hence, "the world of work is being enriched with new professions, while others are disappearing with a shift from dependent work to a variety of jobs." (*Ibid.*)

2.2. FROM DEPENDENT STABLE WORK TO A VARIETY OF WORK ACTIVITIES

With the observation of the new jobs created by technological innovations, the Church remarks that "the transition currently underway signals the move from dependent work with no prescribed time limit, understood as a stable job, to a series of jobs characterized by many kinds of job activities" (*Ibid.*, n. 313). This is a kind of rebuff in the field of work since the world then becomes immersed into a kind of fluid or waste culture and consequently, into a work system of indifference and lack of concern for human dignity. In this transition, we observe the swing from the world of a unified, definite, and

In industry and agriculture man's work has today in many cases ceased to be mainly manual, for the toil of human hands and muscles is aided by more and more highly perfected machinery.

recognized concept of work to a universe of jobs where there is a great variety, fluidity, and a wealth of promises which actually raise a number of concerns; the uncertainty of work, structural unemployment, and lack of current systems of social security. Because of these innovations, the world of work is soaked into the phenomenon of globalization with resurgent consequences falling more on the smaller world economies. What assessment therefore can we make of this new reality of technology in relation to work?

3. EVALUATION

The contributions of technological developments and innovations in the field of work are plausible. Yet, "the historical forms in which human work is expressed change, but not its permanent requirements, which are summed up in the respect of the inalienable rights of workers" (*Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, n. 319). What interests us here is the inalienable human rights of workers, which we also understand as his inalienable dignity. In the following lines we shall see how technological developments have helped improve the inalienable rights of workers and has also led to their violation in the field of work.

3.1. THE BENEFITS OF TECHNOLOGICAL DEVELOPMENTS AND INNOVATION

It is not a secret to anybody that technology, fruit of the human intellect, has greatly improved the lifestyle of human beings here on earth. It has done so, more particularly in the field of work as stated by Pope Saint John Paul II when he says: "in industry and agriculture man's work has today in many cases ceased to be mainly manual, for the toil of human hands and muscles is aided by more

We must also recognize that every creature is God's image, and that the world is God's free gift, and we are called to imitate God's generosity in self-sacrifice and good works. With this, technology will no more be an end in itself, but the means to the end of man, his eternal salvation.

and more highly perfected machinery" (JOHN PAUL II, Encyclical Letter *Laborem exercens* (14th September 1981), n. 5). Furthermore, the Pope sees technology as man's ally which has helped to facilitate, perfect and accelerate human work. It has also augmented the quantity and improved the quality of human work products.

3.2. THE DEMERITS OF TECHNOLOGICAL DEVELOPMENTS AND INNOVATIONS

Observing what is happening in the world, we see that technology seems to have taken the lead and is lording it over humanity. Those in possession of the latest technological advancements are the masters who act according to their own desires without any consideration and can oppress the poor and do to others what pleases them. From this background, we can conclude that technology has divided the world in one way or the other. This division and oppression are the cries raised by Pope Leo XIII in *Rerum Novarum* as "the changed relations between master and workmen, the enormous imbalance in the society seen in the owning of enormous fortunes by some few individuals to the detriment of very poor masses and the prevailing moral degeneracy." The Pope, further notes that the industrial revolution gave rise to classes in the society where the industrialized marginalized the poor, their workers, as he contends: "by degrees it has come to pass that working have been surrendered, isolated and helpless, to the hardheartedness of employers and the greed of unchecked competition [...] In addition, the hiring of labor and the conduct of trade are concentrated in the hands of comparatively few; so that the small number of very rich

men have been able to lay upon the teeming masses of the laboring poor a yoke little better than slavery itself" (LEO XIII, *Rerum Novarum*, (15 May 1891), n 3). Technological developments have also reduced man to a slave, made him who had a job unemployed because the machine is preferred to him (*Laborem Exercens* (14th September 1981), n. 5). As such, these innovations have in a certain way downgraded man's dignity.

This preference of machines to human beings has brought about Capitalism and contributed to pollution of mother earth our common home. There arises, therefore, the need for an integral ecological conversion. However, if new forms of solidarity are envisioned and brought about, the consideration of the interdependence that unites workers among themselves should be considered. The efforts to complementize technological innovation and the need to safeguard human work, as well as economic growth and development compatible with the environment. (*Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, n. 319). We must also recognize that every creature is God's image, and that the world is God's free gift, and we are called to imitate God's generosity in self-sacrifice and good works. (Cfr. FRANCIS, Encyclical Letter *Laudato Si'*, (18 June 2015), n. 220). With this, technology will no more be an end in itself, but the means to the end of man, his eternal salvation.

CONCLUSION

In itself, we can state that technological developments and innovations have brought great relief to man in various ways: in farming, medical care, transport amongst others. Yet, the gap between employers and employees' conditions continue to be deplorable. A better world therefore, will be that which puts man first in its agenda and not profit. A better global work economy will equally guarantee stability and respect for human dignity, especially for the poor, and not, as Pope Francis remarks, a technocratic and anthropocentrism which leads to a kind of schizophrenia. This will actually make our world a better place to live in. (Cfr. FRANCIS, Encyclical Letter *Laudato Si'*, (18 June 2015), nn.101-136).

A SYNOPSIS OF *LABOREM EXERCENS*

INTRODUCTION

Laborem Exercens is an Encyclical Letter published by Pope John Paul II on September 14, 1981 on the occasion of the ninetieth anniversary of *Rerum novarum* of Pope Leo XIII. This document is devoted to human work and to man in the vast context of the reality of work. The Church considers it her task always to call attention to the dignity and rights of those who work, and to ensure authentic progress by man and society. The aim of this write up is to provide a brief summary of this Encyclical.

1. WORK AND MAN

The Church is convinced that work is a fundamental dimension of man's existence on earth, but the source of this conviction is above all the revealed word of God. In the very first pages of the Book of Genesis lies the source of her conviction; "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it. Man "subdues the earth" much more when he begins to cultivate it and then to transform its products, adapting them to his own use. In industry and agriculture man's work ceased to be mainly manual, but more highly perfected with machinery by the gradual development of science and technology. However, technology can become almost his enemy, as when the mechanization of work "supplants" him, taking away all personal satisfaction and the incentive to creativity and responsibility, when it deprives many workers of their previous employment, or when, through exalting the machine, it reduces man to the status of its slave.

The Holy Father added that man is the subject of work, he performs various actions belonging to the work process; these actions must all serve to realize his humanity. And so this "dominion" spoken of in the biblical text



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FIDELIS NEBA

THEOLOGY III

refers not only to the objective dimension of work, but at the same time to its subjective dimension; a process whereby the human race subdues the earth, work corresponds to this basic biblical concept only when throughout the process man manifests himself and confirms himself as the one who "dominates." Christian truth about work has opposed the various trends of materialistic and economic thought. For certain supporters of such ideas, work was understood and treated as a sort of "merchandise" that the worker, especially the industrial worker, sells to the employer, who at the same time is the possessor of the capital, that is to say, of all the working tools and means that make production possible. There is a reversal of the order; Man is treated as an instrument of production, whereas he alone, independent of the work he does, ought to be treated as the effective subject of work and its true maker and creator. This reversal is called capitalism.

As far as the solidarity of workers is concerned, the Pope postulates that solidarity and common action addressed to workers was the reaction against the degradation of man as the subject of work and against the accompanying exploitation in the field of wages, working conditions and social security for the worker. This reaction united the working world in a community marked by great solidarity in order to achieve social justice. Through work, man not only

transforms nature, adapting it to his own needs, but he also achieves fulfilment as a human being and indeed in a sense becomes “more a human being.”

2. CONFLICT BETWEEN LABOR AND CAPITAL IN THE PRESENT PHASE OF HISTORY

In this chapter under consideration, the Pope placed emphasis on the labour system. A labour system can be right, if in its very basis it overcomes the opposition between labour and capital. Through his work he enters into two inheritances: the inheritance of what is given to the whole of humanity in the resources of nature and the inheritance of what others have already developed on the basis of those resources, primarily by developing technology. Christian tradition has always understood the right to private property within the broader context of the right common to all to use the goods of the whole of creation: The right to private property is subordinated to the right to common use, to the fact that goods are meant for everyone. The Church's teaching has always expressed the strong and deep conviction that man's work concerns not only the economy but also, and especially, personal values.

3. RIGHTS OF WORKERS

Within the broad context of human rights the Holy Father pointed out that work in all its many senses, is an obligation and it is also a source of rights on the part of the worker. Respect for this right constitutes the fundamental condition for peace in the modern world. The pope highlights that man must work for two reasons: first because the Creator has commanded it and secondly because of his own humanity which requires work in order to be maintained and developed. Furthermore, the Pope considered the direct and indirect employers. Here, the Pope targets institutes and people who are responsible in laying down policies for the conduct of workers. The Pope insists that a policy is correct only when the objective rights of the worker are fully respected. For the Pope, employment shapes both economic and cultural life of the society. Commenting on the disabled in the society, the Holy Father says that the disabled person

is one of us and participates fully in the same humanity that we possess. It would be radically unworthy of man and a denial of our common humanity to admit to the life of the community, and thus admit to work, only those who are fully functional; to do so would be to practice a serious form of discrimination, that of the strong and healthy against the weak and sick. The Pope states that people have the right to leave their home country to seek for better working conditions or employments in different countries and the countries receiving them should treat them like members of that country.

Work in all its many senses, is an obligation and it is also a source of rights on the part of the worker. Respect for this right constitutes the fundamental condition for peace in the modern world.

As far as wages and other social benefits are concerned, the Holy Father stated that, to ensure a good working relationship between the employer and the employee, the worker must have remuneration equivalent to the work done. In addition, the worker must have a good working condition. Furthermore, the Pope highlights the importance of trade unions, which for him help to make sure that the right of workers are fully respected in all sectors; Trade Unions are indeed a mouthpiece for the struggle for social justice and so Union's demands cannot be turned into a kind of group or class egoism.

4. ELEMENTS FOR A SPIRITUALITY OF WORK

The pope dedicated the last chapter of this encyclical on the spirituality of work in the Christian sense. The Holy Father noted that an inner effort on the part of the human spirit, guided by faith, hope and charity, is needed in order that through these points the work of the individual human being may be given the meaning which it has in the eyes of God. The Pope noted that it is a particular duty of the Church to form a spirituality of

work which will help all people to come closer, through work, to God, the creator and redeemer, to participate in his salvific plan for man and the world and to deepen their friendship with Christ. This Christian spirituality of work should be a heritage shared by all. The Pope noted that this is a “Gospel of work,” because he who proclaimed it was himself a man of work, a craftsman like Joseph of Nazareth that is Jesus Christ; a carpenter.

Finally, the Holy Father ended this encyclical with the reflection of work in the light of the Cross and the Resurrection of

Christ. The Pope noted that all work, whether manual or intellectual, is inevitably linked with toil as the book of Genesis expresses it. Sweat and toil, which work necessarily involves in the present condition of the human race, present the Christian and everyone who is called to follow Christ with the possibility of sharing lovingly in the work that Christ came to do. The pope ended this encyclical by calling on all Christians not to see work only in earthly progress, but also in the development of the kingdom of God.

LA SOLIDARITE PARMI LES TRAVAILLEURS



**VIANNEY-MARTIAL
DORO-NZINRINTOU**

THEOLOGY II



BASILE OUAMBO TAKODJOU

THEOLOGY I

INTRODUCTION

Vivre et être heureux, pourvoir à ses besoins par ses propres moyens, avoir de bonnes conditions de travail demeure important dans la vie. Mais être solidaire, c'est encore très nécessaire. Cela demande parfois et très souvent que l'on ait le courage, le temps et voire l'argent surtout dans notre monde d'aujourd'hui où les valeurs humaines se dégradent. Au-delà de tout, la solidarité parmi les travailleurs est essentielle. Car se soutenir les uns les autres est une condition *sine qua non* pour créer un monde plus beau, meilleur, plus juste et plus complet. C'est un principe

moral de s'engager mutuellement en tant que personnes, vivant et travaillant ensemble. C'est ce que le *Compendium de la Doctrine Sociale de l'Eglise* nous présente explicitement. On ne peut qu'admettre que la solidarité est “... une véritable vertu morale” (Cf. *Compendium de la Doctrine Sociale de l'Eglise* n° 193/1941). Le principe moral de la vie en société veut que tous travaillent pour le bien commun et que personne n'opprime l'autre.

Que tous aient la volonté et la ferme détermination pour préserver le bien de tous pour une société meilleure ; en étant responsable de chacun. Tout effort doit converger à mettre en pratique cette vision de solidarité.

1. L'ÉPANOUISSEMENT PAR LE TRAVAIL ET LES TRAVAILLEURS : EXPRESSION DE LA SOLIDARITÉ

Elevée au rang de vertu sociale et fondamentale, la solidarité se veut aussi la

Un travail qui épanouit vient de l'effort des travailleurs à coopérer pour l'organisation sociétale dans la solidarité.

justice qui est un élément capital pour le bien commun de tous. Au sens évangélique du terme, on se perd pour la sauvegarde de l'autre et se tient toujours prêt à servir les uns les autres (Lc 22 :26-27). Et pour le sacrifice afin de ne pas opprimer l'autre ni l'exploiter, les travailleurs, les employeurs, doivent exprimer la solidarité. Car si l'homme est un être de relation, il se reconnaît d'abord dépendant de Dieu et il est créé en relation avec les autres. Son épanouissement prend ses racines dans sa relation avec Dieu, avec sa famille et avec ses collaborateurs au lieu du travail. Un travail qui épanouit vient de l'effort des travailleurs à coopérer pour l'organisation sociétale dans la solidarité. Le *Compendium* nous rappelle vivement que *“la solidarité doit être saisie avant tout dans sa valeur de principe ordonnateur des institutions, en vertu duquel les « structures du péché » qui dominent les rapports entre les personnes et les peuples doivent être dépassés et transformés en structures de solidarité...”* (Cf. JEAN PAUL II, *Encyclique, Sollicitudo rei in socialis*, 36-37; Cf. JEAN PAUL II, Exhortation apostolique *Reconciliatio et Paenitentia*, 16). Nous pouvons par là comprendre que la solidarité donne l'assurance de combattre les corruptions dans les milieux du travail au nom du bien commun et briser toute barrière des inégalités parmi les travailleurs dans les syndicats et les entreprises. C'est un impératif que les rapports entre les humains soient régis par les structures de la solidarité en vu du bien de tous.

2. IMPORTANCE DES SYNDICATS DANS LA CONSTRUCTION DE L'ORDRE SOCIAL

La solidarité, comme nous l'avons déjà dit, est ce qui nous rend solide ensemble. L'enseignement de l'Eglise valorise le rôle

fondamental des syndicats de travailleurs surtout dans les associations qui luttent à défendre leurs intérêts vitaux. Il est nécessaire que le but poursuivi dans le bénévolat des Associations dépendant des droits humains (Médecins Sans Frontières, Associations qui aident des personnes en difficultés et autres) soit pour l'évolution de la société. C'est ainsi que le message central du *Compendium de la Doctrine Sociale de L'Eglise* met en exergue les liens intrinsèques entre *“...solidarité et bien commun, solidarité et destination universelle des biens, solidarité et égalité entre les hommes et les peuples, solidarité et paix dans le monde”* (Cf. *Congrégation pour l'Education Catholique, Orientations pour l'étude et l'enseignement de la doctrine sociale de l'Eglise dans la formation sacerdotale*, 27, Typographie Vaticane, Rome 1981, 33. In *Compendium de la Doctrine Sociale de l'Eglise* n°194). Il s'avère important pour les syndicats de se former en sections pour l'organisation de la société. La bonne organisation de la vie économique en

La bonne organisation de la vie économique en société et l'éducation des consciences des travailleurs pour l'ordre social dépend de l'initiative des syndicats dont l'existence est cruciale.

société et l'éducation des consciences des travailleurs pour l'ordre social dépend de l'initiative des syndicats dont l'existence est cruciale. Le syndicat et autres formes de groupes de travailleurs s'associent aux autres sujets pour gérer la chose publique. Ainsi, il est essentiel pour le développement de l'ordre social que les syndicats influencent la vie à tout niveau.

3. QUE DIRE DES NOUVELLES FORMES DE SOLIDARITES ENTRE LES TRAVAILLEURS ?

Au regard de la vitesse nucléaire que connaît de plus en plus la mondialisation, il s'avère que les syndicats, bien que fortement importants pour la sauvegarde des intérêts communs des travailleurs, se trouvent de plus

L'Eglise invite les travailleurs à ouvrir les yeux et à procéder à un *aggiornamento* de leurs formes de solidarités qui, jusqu'ici, ne se bornaient qu'aux syndicats.

en plus rétrécis dans leurs champs d'action. C'est partant de cette logique que, de manière salubre, l'Eglise invite les travailleurs à ouvrir les yeux et à procéder à un *aggiornamento* de leurs formes de solidarités qui, jusqu'ici, ne se bornaient qu'aux syndicats. En ce sens, le Pape, Jean-Paul II affirme qu'aujourd'hui les syndicats sont appelés à agir sous de nouvelles formes (Cf. JEAN-PAUL II, Encyclique *Laborem Exercens*, 20). Dès lors, ils ne peuvent le faire qu'en amplifiant leur rayon d'action de solidarité de façon à ce que soient protégés, non seulement les catégories traditionnelles de travailleurs, mais aussi les travailleurs aux contrats atypiques ou à durée déterminée ; les travailleurs qui courent le risque de perdre leurs emplois à cause de la fusion des entreprises ; les sans-emplois, les immigrés, les travailleurs saisonniers, sans oublier ceux qui, victimes d'un manque de recyclage professionnel, se sont vus expulsés de leurs milieux professionnels.

Tous ces challenges devraient, plus que jamais, inviter les travailleurs à repenser le sens du mot « solidarité » entre eux-mêmes, et à œuvrer pour la redécouverte de la valeur subjective du travail. En le faisant, ils seront en même de s'interroger sur le sujet du travail et sur les conditions dans lesquelles vivent les travailleurs. Ainsi, le Saint Père Jean-Paul II rappelle une fois de plus qu'« *il faut toujours qu'il y ait de nouveaux mouvements de solidarité des travailleurs et de solidarité avec les travailleurs.* » (Cf. JEAN-PAUL II, Encyclique *Laborem Exercens*, 20). En outre, la solidarité entre ces derniers se veut être non plus seulement formelle, mais aussi et surtout concrète et effective.

En outre, les travailleurs ne devraient pas seulement se figer sur les avantages que leur procure leur appartenance à un syndicat quelconque, mais, dans l'optique d'une meilleure prise en charge, ils devraient mettre sur

pied des sources de richesse, mieux encore d'autofinancement, afin de pallier aisément aux éventuels problèmes qu'ils rencontrent généralement dans le monde de l'emploi tels que cité plus haut. En bref, il est impératif que les travailleurs persévèrent dans une solidarité effective qui va au-delà des simples associations purement syndicales.

CONCLUSION

En guise de synthèse, nous retenons à la lumière de la doctrine sociale de l'Eglise Catholique de rite romain et aussi à partir d'un angle philosophique, anthropologique et sociologique que le monde professionnel est exclusivement l'apanage des êtres doués de raison. Cette faculté qui les distingue des autres êtres les pousse non pas à rester solitaires, mais solidaires. C'est donc cette solidarité qui constitue l'âme de leurs différentes actions quotidiennes tant du point de vue individuel que collectif. Ainsi, destinés à lutter pour la même cause, les travailleurs sont sans cesse invités à se regrouper en syndicats pour ne pas que leurs droits soient piétinés et surtout pour qu'aucun membre d'un corps de métier quelconque ne se sente délaissé, exploité ou marginalisé, mais profite autant que possible des fruits de son dur labeur. Dès lors, il va sans dire que tout travailleur, pour le bien de tous, est perpétuellement invité à faire mourir en lui les gênes de l'égoïsme afin de ne plus se focaliser sur son égo, mais sur le bien commun du corps auquel il appartient. Par ailleurs, les différents syndicats, plus que jamais, doivent tout mettre en œuvre pour parvenir à une meilleure prise en charge d'eux-mêmes.

Ne dit-on pas souvent que, seul on va plus vite, mais ensemble, on va plus loin ?

Dès lors, il va sans dire que tout travailleur, pour le bien de tous, est perpétuellement invité à faire mourir en lui les gênes de l'égoïsme afin de ne plus se focaliser sur son égo, mais sur le bien commun du corps auquel il appartient.



SACRED MUSIC AND INSTRUMENTATIONS



INTRODUCTION

Sacred Music refers to Gregorian chant; sacred polyphony, modern sacred music, sacred organ music, popular religious singing and religious music. The use of Instrumentations which is the focal point of this article, serves only as an accompaniment to Sacred Music and of course, only where appropriate. In the course of this work, we shall elucidate more on this.

1. REGARDING MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS

1.1. SOME GENERAL PRINCIPLES

The following are principles on the use of musical instruments in the Sacred Liturgy.

In view of the nature of the Sacred Liturgy, its holiness and its dignity, the use of any kind of musical instrument should in itself be perfect. It would therefore be better to entirely omit the Playing of instruments (whether the organ alone or other instruments) than to permit it to be done indecorously. And in general it is better to do something well on a small scale than to attempt something elaborate without sufficient resources to do it properly. (Cfr. *SACRED CONGREGATION FOR RITES, De Musica Sacra et Sacra Liturgia*, n. 60)

It is necessary to preserve the difference between sacred and profane music. There are musical instruments which by origin and nature such as the classical organ are directly fit for Sacred music or others, as certain string and bow instruments, which are more easily adapted to

liturgical use; while others, instead, are by common opinion proper to profane music and entirely unfit for sacred use. (*De Musica Sacra et Sacra Liturgia*, n. 60).

Finally, only those musical instruments which are played by the personal action of the artist may be admitted to the Sacred Liturgy, and not those which are operated automatically or mechanically. (beats, as is a common phenomenon now-a-day)

1.2. SACRED INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC

During liturgical functions, especially on the more solemn days, musical instruments other than the organ may also be used especially those with strings that are played with a small bow (Guitars, Violins, Harps etc) either with the organ or without it, in musical performances or in accompaniment to song. *De Musica Sacra et Sacra Liturgia*, n. 68. Strictly observing however those laws which derive from the principles enunciated above in number 60, which are:

- Ø That musical instruments used must be in accord with sacred usage;
- Ø That the sound of these instruments be produced in such manner and with such gravity (with a sort of religious chastity) as to avoid the sound of profane music and to foster the devotion of the faithful;
- Ø That the choir director, the organist, and the artists be skilled in the use of the instruments and familiar

with the laws of Sacred Music. Robert Mitchel writes “the highest concern of the professional Church musician must be to identify and participate in the Mission of the

Those musical instruments which by common consent and usage are suited only for profane music must be absolutely prohibited in liturgical functions and pious exercises.

THE CHRISTMAS CRIB AND ITS THEOLOGICAL SIGNIFICANCE



BENJAMIN DZEKELA

THEOLOGY III



EMMANUEL-KEN BAWALA

THEOLOGY II

INTRODUCTION

There are a number of traditions that exist, which are designed to help Christian families in their preparation for the feast of Our Lord's Nativity. Some of these include: writing of Christmas letters and cards, the lighting of the Christmas tree and the setting up of the Christmas crib. Among these traditions, we shall focus on the Christmas crib. In most of our Churches, we find a representation of the Bethlehem scene (a crib with the baby Jesus) and at the end of Mass, the Christians are all invited to pay a visit to this site. This act according to St. Francis of Assisi should provoke in the Christian a sense of the majesty of God who humbled himself and took human flesh. In this article, we shall examine the origin of the crib; its role and place in the family; and its theological significance.

1. THE ORIGIN OF THE CHRISTMAS CRIB

Pictures of the story of Bethlehem and the Christ child in the manger have been used in the Church from the first centuries. However, the crib in its present form originated with St. Francis of Assisi. Through his famous celebration at Greccio (Italy) on Christmas Eve, with a Bethlehem scene including live animals, he made the crib popular (Cfr. F. WEISER, *Religious Customs in The Family*, Tan Books & Publishers, USA 1998, 53). Francis sought a real-life experience of the birth of Christ as it originally happened in Bethlehem centuries ago as well as to share it with the world of his time.

St. Francis in the year 1223, called a friend about two weeks before Christmas and told him that he wants to enact the memory of the infant who was born in Bethlehem, how he was deprived of all comforts babies enjoy, how he was bedded in a manger on hay, between an ass and an ox. This was done as Francis had desired and as the joyful day approached, the brethren (other Franciscans) were called from many communities, together with men and women of the neighborhood. They brought with them candles and torches to brighten the night. Greccio became the new Bethlehem and that night was radiant with joy. The crowds drew near and rejoiced in the novelty of the celebration. Their voices resounded from the woods, as they sang in praise of God the whole night. A solemn Mass was celebrated that night at the crib, with St. Francis who was a deacon, taking the gospel and preaching a delightful sermon to the people, speaking about the nativity of the poor king and the humble town of Bethlehem (Cfr. F. WEISER, *Religious Customs in The Family*, 54-55). Since then, it has become a familiar custom in Christian homes all over the world.

2. THE CRIB IN CHRISTIAN HOMES

It is a familiar practice to see the Christmas crib built in homes during the Christmas period. It is not only completely religious in significance, but also presents to the children in a beautiful way the central event that we commemorate on this great feast (Cfr. F. WEISER, *Religious Customs in The Family*, 53). The crib assumes the character of a religious shrine in the house of the faithful during Christmas season. It should be placed in an honoured position, on a table or some other place not too high for the children to see easily, with dignified decorations. The crib is unveiled on Christmas eve. Parents and children gather before the crib and one of the older children reads the Gospel of the Bethlehem narrative. Prayers are said and a Christmas carol is sung. At the end of this rite, the members of the family wish each other a blessed and merry Christmas, for it is at this

moment that Christmas really starts in the home and its high point will be the celebration of Mass and reception of Communion. The articles needed will include: the images of the Holy Family, of shepherds, Magi and animals. Once they are acquired, they can be used for many successive years. This is one of the ways of catechizing and passing on the faith, which parents should not neglect, because beginning from childhood and at every stage of our lives, it teaches us to contemplate Jesus and experience God's love.

3. THEOLOGICAL SIGNIFICANCE

The enchanting image of the Christmas crib never ceases to arouse amazement and wonder in the mind of the Christian people. The depiction of Jesus' birth is a simple and joyful proclamation of the mystery of the incarnation of the son of God. The nativity scene is like a living Gospel rising up from the pages of Sacred Scriptures (Cfr, POPE FRANCIS, Apostolic Letter *Admirabile Signum* (1 December 2019), n. 1). Losing sight of the great mystery of Christmas, one fails to grasp the decisive element in Christianity, without which one cannot enter the kingdom of heaven. In this part, the following will be considered: the place and manner of encountering God and God as a child.

3.1. PLACE AND MANNER OF ENCOUNTER

It is important for us to begin by considering the location of Greccio. It is a small town in the Rieti valley in Umbria, around the northeast of Rome. Francis loved the inhabitants of this place in a special way because of their poverty and simplicity and he often went there to rest (Cfr, J. RATZINGER, *The Blessing of Christmas*, Ignatius Press, San Francisco 2007, 72). He was also attracted by a cell that was extremely poor and remote, since there was nothing there to disturb him in his contemplation of heavenly things. This place was characterized with a spirit of poverty, simplicity and silence, which enables that part of man responsible for contemplating creation and listening to it to speak. It is only in silence that we come to the realization of our inadequateness, that we have a true and real encounter with God.

There was a noble man from the aristocratic ancestry named John, who never clinged to his nobility of blood, but rather wished to attain nobility of soul, had a vision the night that Bethlehem was re-enacted in Greccio. He saw a

little child lying in the manger without moving. This vision signified that up to that time, the child Jesus had been lying in a slumber of forgetfulness in many hearts. However, through his servant Francis, the remembrance of this child was awakened, and indelibly imprinted on men's memory (Cfr, J. RATZINGER, *The Blessing of Christmas*, 73).

3.2. GOD AS A CHILD

It is in the child Jesus that we see most clearly the selflessness of God's love. God comes without weapons, because he does not want to conquer the outside but to win us over, by transforming us from within. God took such vulnerability to lead us to himself. One of Jesus' titles is "Son of God". His existence as a child corresponds in a unique way to his divinity, which is that of the "Son". Hence, his existence as a child shows us how we can come to God and it makes explicit what we find in Scriptures: "Unless you turn and become like children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven" (Mt 18:3). (Cfr, J. RATZINGER, *The Blessing of Christmas*, 76). The revelation of God in the child Jesus is a definitive way of him becoming "Immanuel, God with us". There is no longer any barrier of height or distance to separate us from him, for as a child he has drawn so near to us that we can address him in intimate language without any feeling of embarrassment. We have direct access to the heart of this child and we can become his friends.

CONCLUSION

Let us go over to Bethlehem and see. For once upon a time, Christian folks went over with great hardship and risk to visit the actual spot, where the infant redeemer was born, breathing the native air of our Lord. This was a privilege, but only few persons had the chance. St. Francis of Assisi gave us an alternative to the demanding journey of the pilgrim, by bringing Bethlehem into our midst through the Christmas crib (Cfr, Aloysius ROCHE, *The Crib: Meditations*, Catholic Press, London 1961, 3). As we contemplate the Christmas story, we are invited to set out on a spiritual journey, drawn by the humility of God who became man in order to encounter every man and woman. Thus as we set up the crib yearly, let us see it as a shrine of faith, hope and charity, which enables us to love each other unconditionally.

HEAVEN (CCC 1023-1029)

Those who die in God's grace and friendship and are perfectly purified live for ever with Christ. They are like God for ever, for they "see him as he is," face to face:

By virtue of our apostolic authority, we define the following: According to the general disposition of God, the souls of all the saints ... and other faithful who died after receiving Christ's holy Baptism (provided they were not in need of purification when they died, ... or, if they then did need or will need some purification, when they have been purified after death, ...) already before they take up their bodies again and before the general judgment - and this since the Ascension of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ into heaven - have been, are and will be in heaven, in the heavenly Kingdom and celestial paradise with Christ, joined to the company of the holy angels. Since the Passion and death of our Lord Jesus Christ, these souls have seen and do see the divine essence with an intuitive vision, and even face to face, without the mediation of any creature.

This perfect life with the Most Holy Trinity - this communion of life and love with the Trinity, with the Virgin Mary, the angels and all the blessed - is called "heaven." Heaven is the ultimate end and fulfillment of the deepest human longings, the state of supreme, definitive happiness.

To live in heaven is "to be with Christ." The elect live "in Christ," but they retain, or rather find, their true identity, their own name.

For life is to be with Christ; where Christ is, there is life, there is the kingdom.

By his death and Resurrection, Jesus Christ has "opened" heaven to us. The life of the blessed consists in the full and perfect possession of the fruits of the redemption accomplished by Christ. He makes partners in his heavenly glorification those who have believed in him and remained faithful to his will. Heaven is the blessed community of all who are perfectly incorporated into Christ.

This mystery of blessed communion with God and all who are in Christ is beyond all understanding and description. Scripture speaks of it in images: life, light, peace, wedding feast, wine of the kingdom, the Father's house, the heavenly Jerusalem, paradise: "no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man conceived, what God has prepared for those who love him."

Because of his transcendence, God cannot be seen as he is, unless he himself opens up his mystery to man's immediate contemplation and

gives him the capacity for it. The Church calls this contemplation of God in his heavenly glory "the beatific vision":

How great will your glory and happiness be, to be allowed to see God, to be honored with sharing the joy of salvation and eternal light with Christ your Lord and God, ... to delight in the joy of immortality in the Kingdom of heaven with the righteous and God's friends.

In the glory of heaven the blessed continue joyfully to fulfill God's will in relation to other men and to all creation. Already they reign with Christ; with him "they shall reign for ever and ever."

THE FINAL PURIFICATION, OR PURGATORY (CCC 1030-1032)

All who die in God's grace and friendship, but still imperfectly purified, are indeed assured of their eternal salvation; but after death they undergo purification, so as to achieve the holiness necessary to enter the joy of heaven.

The Church gives the name *Purgatory* to this final purification of the elect, which is entirely different from the punishment of the damned. The Church formulated her doctrine of faith on Purgatory especially at the Councils of Florence and Trent. The tradition of the Church, by reference to certain texts of Scripture, speaks of a cleansing fire:

As for certain lesser faults, we must believe that, before the Final Judgment, there is a purifying fire. He who is truth says that whoever utters blasphemy against the Holy Spirit will be pardoned neither in this age nor in the age to come. From this sentence we understand that certain offenses can be forgiven in this age, but certain others in the age to come.

This teaching is also based on the practice of prayer for the dead, already mentioned in Sacred Scripture: "Therefore [Judas Maccabeus] made atonement for the dead, that they might be delivered from their sin." From the beginning the Church has honored the memory of the dead and offered prayers in suffrage for them, above all the Eucharistic sacrifice, so that, thus purified, they may attain the beatific vision of God. The Church also commends almsgiving, indulgences, and works of penance undertaken on behalf of the dead:

Let us help and commemorate them. If Job's sons were purified by their father's sacrifice, why would we doubt that our offerings for the dead bring them some consolation? Let us not hesitate to help those who have died and to offer our prayers for them.