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June 22, 2023

The Social Teaching of John Paul II

Outline

I. Introduction

- A. Understanding the preceding history as a means to grasp John Paul II's qualitative leap.
 - 1. *Rerum Novarum* (Leo XIII, 1891)
 - 2. *Quadragesimo Anno* (Pius XI, 1931)
 - 3. *Mater et Magistra* (Pope John XXIII, 1961)
 - 4. *Gaudium et Spes* (Vatican II, 1965)
 - 5. *Popolorum Progressio* (Paul VI, 1967)
- B. Scope of Catholic Social Teaching
 - 1. The *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Catholic Church* (published in 2004 and authorized by John Paul II) lists several loci for the Church's social teaching:
 - a. Marriage and Family
 - b. Human Work (the dignity of work, right to work, rights of workers, solidarity)
 - c. Economic Life (morality and the economy, private initiative and business initiative)
 - d. Political Community (authority, democratic system, civil society, interaction with religious communities)
 - e. International Community (fundamental rules, organization, cooperation for development)
 - f. Environment
 - g. Peace (fruit of justice and love, war)
 - 2. In this session, we've been asked to focus above all on "economic subjects," which fundamentally involve human work, economic life, the political community as well as culture.

II. John Paul II's Deeper Anthropological and Biblical Re-Reading of Catholic Social Teaching

- A. Christological theological anthropology — *Redemptor Hominis* (1979) as the program for his pontificate and his social teaching.
- B. Antecedents in *Gaudium et Spes*.
 - 1. Christ fully reveals man to himself and makes his supreme calling clear (GS 22):
 - 2. Man cannot discover himself except in the sincere gift of self (GS 24)
- C. Applications to other areas of his pontificate
- D. Applications within his three major social encyclicals.
- E. Summary of how Pope John Paul II provided the theological-moral framework for the Church's social teaching from the *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*.

III. *Laborem Exercens* (1981)

- A. Background
- B. Summary of Core Teachings
 - 1. Work is a fundamental dimension of the person's life on earth
 - 2. The primary basis for the value of work is the person himself
 - 3. Jesus, the way of the Church, who fully reveals the human person to himself, reveals the fundamental redemptive meaning of human work.

4. Men and women cannot be treated as “merchandise” as “objects” but rather as “subjects” at the workplace. Otherwise, their work becomes alienating.
 5. The primacy of labor over capital.
- IV.** *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis* (1987)
- A. Background
 - B. Teaching
 1. Expansion of the “subjectivity” of work, found in *Laborem exercens*, to all citizens and members of organizations.
 2. Globalization, unrestricted by ethical principles, will cause havoc on third world peoples.
 3. JP II offers a theologically grounded theory of human development that takes economics seriously but emphasizes the primary of the spiritual.
 4. Conversion on the part of the powerful is needed.
 5. Conversion is also necessary on the part of third world countries, to eliminate corruption, dictatorial and authoritarian forms of government.
- V.** *Centesimus Annus* (1991)
- A. Background
 - B. Teaching
 1. The fall of communism was above all because of a distorted anthropology, which tried to understand the human person exclusively at the level of material desires while excluding spiritual values.
 2. The Free Economy — the distinction between “good” and “bad” capitalism (CA 42)
 3. The free and virtuous society is a network of three parts — a democratic political community, a free economy and a vibrant, public moral culture.
 4. Freedom is intrinsically tied to moral truth, and hence truth and training in authentic freedom are essential for democracy.
 5. Poverty is above all a problem of exclusion
 6. Some important goods that cannot be satisfied by market forces.
 7. A need for the development of a true economic personalism (CA 30-43)
- VI.** For More
- A. *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, 2004.
http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/justpeace/documents/rc_pc_justpeace_d oc_20060526_compendio-dott-soc_en.html
 - B. *The Social Agenda: A Collection of Magisterial Texts*, Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, 2000.
 - C. John Paul II, *Centesimus Annus* —
http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_01051991_centesimus-annus_en.html
 - D. John Paul II, *Laborem Exercens* —
http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_14091981_laborem-exercens_en.html
 - E. John Paul II, *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis* —
http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_30121987_sollicitudo-rei-socialis_en.html
 - F. Benedict XVI, *Deus Caritas Est* (paragraphs 19-42)—
http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/encyclicals/documents/hf_ben-xvi_enc_20051225_deus-caritas-est_en.html
 - G. Benedict XVI, Inaugural Session of the Fifth General Conference of CELAM, part IV, “Social and Political Problems” —
http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/speeches/2007/may/documents/hf_ben-xvi_spe_20070513_conference-aparecida_en.html

A copy of my lecture notes as well as an audio recording of the talk will be uploaded to catholicpreaching.com by the end of the day.