

# The Need for Gratitude in Economics: A Close Look at *Caritas in veritate*

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THE TERM USED by Pope Benedict that led me to the approach I have taken in this paper is “articulated,” by which he means “in every dimension.” This term, together with his all-encompassing reliance on Christian charity, are the keys to my understanding of the encyclical *Caritas in veritate*. The full development of the whole person and of all peoples is to be articulated, that is, to proceed in every dimension, and we, each of us, have an obligation in charity to support that development. While the basis for Catholic social doctrine has always been Christian charity, Benedict makes it explicit and clear that we must, in all dimensions of our lives, recommit ourselves to living fully and supporting each other out of Christian charity. Only in this way can we hope to make progress in solving the social question.

There are three parts to this paper. Part 1 discusses Pope Benedict’s critique of contemporary society. Part 2 describes how he uses principles of Catholic social doctrine to show how Catholic social doctrine approaches these problems. Part 3 develops Benedict’s concept of the whole person as a way to show how we must live more fully out of Christian charity to meet our increased responsibilities in the new world of globalization.

## I

*Economic and Social Critique.* Addressing society’s problems, Pope Benedict XVI echoes Pope Paul VI, to whom he dedicates this encyclical letter, in stating simply and strongly: “The scandal of glaring inequalities

continues” (22).<sup>\*</sup> Grave imbalances, he tells us, are produced when economic action is conceived merely as an engine for wealth creation, disconnected from the political action that would bring about its redistribution (36,1). Although globalization presents a great opportunity for development, Pope Benedict points out that not only is the original vision of *Rerum novarum* threatened by the way that globalization is proceeding, but also that the vision itself is proving insufficient (39,1). Indeed, he tells us that although God has planted the seed of the “Civilization of Love” in every people and culture (33,2), the spirit is “often overwhelmed or suppressed by ethical and cultural considerations of an individualistic and utilitarian nature” (42,2). Further, he finds that the systemic rise in social inequality, both within and across countries, brings a loss of social cohesion and places democracy and the economy at risk, the latter through “the progressive erosion of ‘social capital’: the network of relationships of trust, dependability, and respect for rules, all of which are indispensable for any form of civil coexistence” (32,2).

Pope Benedict addresses the negative aspects of economic changes since Paul VI, who wanted economic development that would produce “real growth, of benefit to everyone and genuinely sustainable” (21). However, Pope Benedict sees economic growth weighed down by malfunctions and dramatic problems, which concern the very destiny of the human person. He lists the problems thus:

The technical forces in play, the global interrelations, the damaging effects on the real economy of badly managed and largely speculative financial dealing, large-scale migration of peoples, often provoked by some particular circumstance and then given insufficient attention, the unregulated exploitation of the earth’s resources: all this leads us today to reflect on the measures that would be necessary to provide a solution to problems that are not only new in comparison to those addressed by Pope Paul VI, but also, and above all, of decisive impact upon the present and future good of humanity (21).

Pope Benedict points out that the market is not a negative force by its

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<sup>\*</sup> The first number in parentheses refers to the section of the encyclical, the second, if needed, refers to the paragraph within that section. Unless otherwise noted, the encyclical cited is Benedict XVI’s *Caritas in veritate*.

nature, but a certain ideology can make it so. The market never exists in a pure state but is shaped by the cultural configurations that define it and give it shape and direction. He makes the case succinctly and clearly:

Often the development of peoples is considered a matter of financial engineering, the freeing up of markets, the removal of tariffs, investment in production, and institutional reforms – in other words, a purely technical matter. All these factors are of great importance, but we have to ask why technical choices made thus far have yielded rather mixed results. We need to think hard about the cause. Development will never be fully guaranteed through automatic or impersonal forces, whether they derive from the market or from international politics (71).

This technological danger of which Pope Benedict warns is clearly also a cultural phenomenon, but its method of entry into society is primarily through the market. It appears that he finds that there are two arenas in which the nineteenth-century liberalization processes that were the target of *Rerum novarum* remain with us. The first is in the area of incomes, where inequalities of income seem only to be increasing around the world. The second is in the field of technology, where we all too often simply accept that “the capital market has been significantly liberalized, and modern technological thinking can suggest that investment is merely a technical act, not a human and ethical one” (40). He adds: “The ‘technical’ worldview that follows from this vision is now so dominant that truth has come to be seen as coinciding with the possible. But when the sole criterion of truth is efficiency and utility, development is automatically denied” (70). One trait he identifies as a major problem is the excessive zeal of rich countries to protect intellectual property, especially in the field of health care (22). Another concerns the profit imperative which often ignores the duty to make a contribution to the local society when technological changes would cause damage there (40). Too often, nature is treated as though it can be technically dominated with impunity, though it has its own grammar which must be respected, and which is linked closely with the human grammar, which he terms our human ecology (48,2).

Benedict also addresses the financial crisis of the past few years. The higher unemployment associated with the crisis will make the new forms of economic marginalization even worse (25,2). More than forty years

later, the basic theme of *Populorum progressio* – progress – has become an open question, made more urgent by the economic and financial crisis (33). Under these circumstances, new divisions can be created between and within peoples, and we must avoid further deterioration and the greater imbalances that could result (42,2;67). At one point, he simply states: “*Without internal forms of solidarity and mutual trust, the market cannot completely fulfill its proper economic function. And today it is this trust which has ceased to exist, and the loss of trust is a grave loss*” (35, emphasis in original).

*Political Critique.* Among the problems Pope Benedict identifies in the political arena are dangers associated with violations of human rights. This happens in the developing world, where both multinational producers and local producers sometimes violate the rights of workers (22). More important, as developing countries have been brought into competition with each other for jobs through the provision of favorable fiscal regimes and deregulation of the labor market, this downsizing of social security systems generates grave dangers in developing countries for worker rights, for human rights, and for the solidarity of traditional forms of the welfare state (25). More general problems regarding rights are that individual rights, when detached from the framework of duties, can run wild, resulting in demands to recognize and enforce nonessential alleged rights (Benedict even speaks of an alleged right to excess), while “elementary and basic rights remain unacknowledged and are violated in much of the world” (43).

Another danger that Pope Benedict sees is what he calls the binary model of market and state. This harkens back to *Centesimus annus*, wherein Pope John Paul argued that the individual person is often suffocated between the state and the marketplace (CA49,3). Pope Benedict believes that “[t]he continuing hegemony of the binary model of market-plus-State has accustomed us to think only in terms of the private business leader of a capitalistic bent on the one hand, and the state director on the other” (41,1). He sees the logic of the market as that of giving in order to acquire, while the logic of the state is that of giving out of duty; the monopoly of these two forms is corrosive of society because solidarity among persons, participation, and actions of gratuitousness do

not fit easily into these forms (41,1).

*Cultural Critique.* Paul VI warned of the dangers of “utopian and ideological visions,” such as the technocratic ideology that Pope Benedict finds prevalent today (14). In fact, Benedict defines alienation in terms of ideology: “Man is alienated when he is alone, when he is detached from reality, when he stops thinking and believing in a foundation. All of humanity is alienated when too much trust is placed in merely human projects, ideologies and false utopias” (53,1). He warns us that a danger to the necessary trade between poorer and rich countries is that this trade may become hostage to partisan ideologies (66). He warns: “Once profit becomes the exclusive goal, if it is produced by improper means and without the common good as its ultimate end, it risks destroying wealth and creating poverty” (21). A danger throughout the world comes from the social communications media which, by taking a strictly technical approach, “effectively support their subordination to economic interests’ intent on dominating the market and, not least, to attempts to impose cultural models that serve ideological and political agendas” (73).

Pope Benedict finds that a crucial battleground in the cultural struggle between the supremacy of technology and human moral responsibility lies in the field of bioethics. Here in vitro fertilization, embryonic research, the cloning of humans and production of human hybrids have become or are becoming technological possibilities, and the conscience is simply invited to take note of such technological possibilities (75). These possible scenarios reflect cultural perspectives that deny human dignity, and practices that help foster a materialistic and mechanistic understanding of human life. In the technological ideology, Pope Benedict finds: “Insignificant matters are considered shocking, yet unprecedented injustices seem to be widely tolerated. While the poor of the world continue knocking on the doors of the rich, the world of affluence runs the risk of no longer hearing those knocks, on account of a conscience that can no longer distinguish what is human” (75). Though God reveals “man to himself,” in part through the natural law, all too often we fail to recognize the call to moral truth (75), which guarantees freedom (9,2) and authentic integral human development, defending every human being in a “transcendent humanism” (18).

The process of the weakening of cultures has sped up and the technological ideology has grown. Cultures provide the means by which we define ourselves in relation to the fundamental questions of life, but they were not as strong and as able as in the time of Paul VI to withstand the direct assault by the technological ideology, whose worldwide expansion has proliferated through the rapid globalization of the last twenty-plus years (26). The increased commercialization of cultural exchange has led to both a cultural eclecticism, wherein cultures are viewed as both equivalent and interchangeable, and a cultural relativism that does not lead to authentic dialogue or true integration. Both trends result in a separation of culture from human nature, and the result is that cultures cannot define themselves in relation to a transcendent vocation. When this happens, new risks of enslavement and manipulation ensue (26). And practical atheism robs the person of the spiritual resources and of the support to cultures that the Church can provide. Further, the reductive vision of a practical atheism is exported by the rich nations to the poor nations. In Benedict's words: "This is the damage that super-development causes to authentic development when it is accompanied by moral underdevelopment" (29,2).

## II

Benedict XVI turns to the traditional concepts of Catholic social doctrine to deal with the issues. These are the beliefs and principles that the Catholic Church brings to the public square. After considering the overall theme of *Caritas in veritate*, I review Benedict's use of some of these major principles.

The theme of *Caritas in veritate* is very much in line with the general approach of Pope John XXIII's 1963 social encyclical, *Pacem in terris*, where John uses the themes of "truth, justice, charity and liberty" as the template for his discussion of how to order all our relationships: citizen to citizen, among citizens and their countries, among nations, among individuals, families, intermediate organizations, and individual states, and with the community of mankind to one another. The result of such an ordering, he believed, would be peace in society and in the world, peace

on earth (PT163). We have seen how Pope Benedict believes that modern culture relativizes truth; he begins his encyclical with a discussion of how charity, the main gift the Church has to contribute to the solution of the social question, must be firmly grounded in the truth of God's sustaining love and the nature of the person in our individual and social makeup. This grounding will allow love to be a firm foundation for us as we, as complete persons, pursue our tasks of traveling the path of full personal development of ourselves and of all persons, and of giving shape, structure, and direction to society, politics, our legal structure, economy, and culture so as to achieve unity and peace (8,38,7). He states simply: "In the present social and cultural context, where there is a widespread tendency to relativize truth, practicing charity in truth helps people to understand that adhering to the values of Christianity is not merely useful but essential for building a good society and for true integral human development" (4). He alerts us to the urgent need for reform, both because of the rapid succession of events and because the very matter at stake is the establishment of authentic fraternity (20,1). He urges us to get along with our task of making ourselves subjects of God's charity, and thereby instruments of grace, so that we may "pour forth God's charity and weave networks of charity" (5,1).

*Human Dignity, Rights and Duties, Justice, Freedom.* We may begin a review of Benedict's use of Catholic social principles with the central principle, human dignity. In Pope Benedict's words, "*God is the guarantor of man's true development*, inasmuch as, having created him in his image; he also establishes the transcendent dignity of men and women and feeds their innate yearning to be more" (29,2). Systems of morality must build on the "inviolable dignity of the human person and the transcendent value of natural moral norms" (45,2). For example, if business ethics does not hold to these two norms, "it risks becoming subservient to existing economic and financial systems rather than correcting their dysfunctional aspects" (45,2). The social, political, economic, and cultural institutions that we develop, that we give shape and structure to, as Pope Benedict puts it, must "correspond to the deepest needs and dignity of the person" (44,2). Work, for example, must express "the essential dignity of every man and woman" (63). Essentially, this

transcendental human dignity stands at the center of Catholic social doctrine's discussions of whether a life is a fitting human life or not. A strong sense of the dignity of the person can sustain basic rights, help us in developing the institutions and intermediate organizations we need, and even guide the media to have a truly civilizing effect on society (73).

Human rights are derived from our essential human dignity as persons created in the image of God; that connection is so important that human rights risk being ignored if this transcendent foundation is diminished or taken away (56). Indeed, charity itself demands recognition and respect for the legitimate rights of individuals and peoples through its demand for justice (6). It is important for the Church to help cultivate a public conscience for basic human rights, such as the right to food and water, so that they come to be viewed as universal rights in accord with human dignity. International aid must also aim at reinforcing guarantees proper to the state of law, that is, to systems of public order that respect rights within truly democratic institutions (41,2). Human rights call for their counterpart, duties, which are necessary because they limit rights by pointing to "the anthropological and ethical framework of which rights are a part, in this way ensuring that they do not become license" (43). Duties both defend rights and promote them in service of the common good. By the promotion of this vision of rights and duties, the Church helps to ensure that governments and international bodies maintain the inviolability of basic human rights (43). Benedict discusses the fundamental human rights of workers, of migrants, and of families to decide the number of children to bring into the world as examples of such basic rights, and, of course, of the right to development (63;62;44). For their part, people are to take up their duties of development.

Benedict discusses justice in the broadest sense as giving persons what is due to them. In the context of this document, it is clear that what is due to a person is what is necessary for his or her fulfillment and integral development. Further, Benedict discusses justice in terms of recognition and respect for the legitimate rights of individuals and peoples (7); we have seen that these rights are based on our inviolable human dignity. He also discusses other forms of justice. Commutative justice is the form governing fairness in exchange; although this is a necessary form of justice regarding equivalence in exchange, it cannot by itself produce the

social cohesion necessary for markets to work. In short, markets require internal forms of solidarity and mutual trust in order to perform their function (35). The Church's social doctrine also highlights the importance of distributive and social justice for the market economy (35). Distributive justice governs what is due to the person because of his contribution to society and his needs. Social justice involves the reciprocal obligations that society has to provide what is due to the members of society while the members must contribute to the common good of society.

In his use of the concept of freedom, Benedict makes clear throughout the encyclical that development of the person and peoples depends on the use of a responsible freedom (11,1;17;40;48,2;57,1;68;70). Integral human development is a vocation and therefore involves a free assumption of responsibility in solidarity on the part of everyone (11,1;52,1). In fact, one is truly set free, and hence gains true autonomy, only when one accepts one's vocation in a spirit of humility (11,1;17). In a passage where he describes the idea that the development of peoples can be created through the "wonders" of technology, he states:

In the face of such Promethean presumption, we must fortify our love for a freedom that is not merely arbitrary, but is rendered truly human by acknowledgment of the good that underlies it. To this end, man needs to look inside himself in order to recognize the fundamental norms of the natural moral law which God has written on our hearts (68).

Benedict states that we become free by adherence to the truth of our being (1). We are set free only by service to the truth, such as the truth provided by Catholic social doctrine; this is most likely his intent when he defines the true meaning of freedom as a response to the call of being, beginning with personal being. He thus intends a responsible freedom, in apposition to an absolute freedom, as manifested by technology, that seeks to prescind from the limits inhering in things (9,2;70).

*Universal Destination of Goods?* In the 1987 *Sollicitudo rei socialis*, written on the twentieth anniversary of *Populorum progressio*, John Paul II identified the characteristic principle of Catholic social doctrine as the so-called universal destination of goods. That is, God created the world

for everyone to use, so the goods of the world are originally meant for all. This principle complements the principle of private property. John Paul states: “Private property, in fact, is under a ‘social mortgage,’ which means that it has an intrinsically social function, based upon and justified precisely by the principle of the universal destination of goods” (SRS42,5). Paul VI himself stated in *Populorum progressio* that all rights are to be subordinated to the principle of the universal destination of goods (PP 22,3).

*Caritas in veritate* never explicitly uses the term “universal destination of goods” or even “private property.” The encyclical achieves the same purpose, however, by Pope Benedict’s reaffirmation of Paul VI’s view that development is a universal vocation from God and that it concerns both every person and the whole person, that is, the person in every dimension of life (8,1;11;18;28,4;55,2;79,2). It is necessary to share the goods of the earth in order to create the unity desired by God: “The sharing of goods and resources, from which authentic development proceeds, is not guaranteed by merely technical progress and relationships of utility, but by the potential of love that overcomes evil with good (cf. Rom 12:21), opening up the path towards reciprocity of consciences and liberties” (9,1). Our duties remain those of rescuing the most vulnerable and marginalized, supporting both poor persons and poor countries in the development process, and confronting our own proclivities toward consumerism and a life of hedonism and materialism (51). John Paul’s “preferential option for the poor” becomes Benedict’s “principle of the responsibility to protect”; in both cases, the strong have the responsibility to protect the poor and the market must never become a place where the strong subdue the weak (67;36,2).

His statement on the right to a just wage (63) points in the same direction as the principle of the universal destination of goods, for wages are the means by which most people gain possession of goods. Benedict’s statements on the dangers of the growing inequality of incomes and wealth are supported by his repeated call for redistribution. Abandoning mechanisms of wealth redistribution hinders the achievement of lasting development, while economic actions for wealth creation that are detached from politics as a means of pursuing justice through redistribution produce grave imbalances (32,4;36). Likewise, economic life, which requires

contracts and systems to support them, also needs just laws and forms of redistribution governed by politics (37,2). The increased growth attributable to globalization itself opens up the possibility of a large-scale redistribution of wealth (42,2). And not only wealth but energy resources must be redistributed so that poor countries do not lose out to those who are first to claim the spoils (49,2).

*Solidarity.* Solidarity is an essential principle in Catholic social doctrine. It is, in the words of John Paul II, “the moral obligation, according to the degree of each one’s responsibility, to take into consideration, in personal decisions and decisions of government, this relationship of universality, this interdependence which exists between their conduct and the poverty and underdevelopment of so many millions of people.” He discusses it further as “a firm and persevering determination to commit oneself to the common good; that is to say to the good of all and of each individual, because we are all really responsible for all” (SRS38,6). Continuing with John Paul, solidarity operates as a principle of political and social organization as well as a virtue.

Benedict XVI takes up the concept wholeheartedly: “Solidarity is first and foremost a sense of responsibility on the part of everyone with regard to everyone, and it cannot therefore be merely delegated to the State” (38). Critiquing the monopolies of the logic of the market and that of the state, he finds that much is lost thereby: “solidarity in relations between citizens, participation and adherence, actions of gratuitousness, all of which stand in contrast with *giving in order to acquire* (the logic of exchange) and *giving through duty* (the logic of public obligation, imposed by State law)” (39,2). Economic forms based on solidarity build up society; indeed, both the market and politics, not just civic society, need individuals open to reciprocal gift (39,2). Integral human development, the development of all persons and of the whole person, as a vocation, involves a free assumption of responsibility in solidarity on the part of everyone (11).

Some specific examples of Benedict’s use of the concept of solidarity include the following: We are to feed the hungry of the world, following an ethical imperative for the universal Church laid down for us by her Founder (27). We are to show support for poor countries via financial plans inspired by solidarity, so they can take steps to meet their own

citizens' demands for consumer goods and development and contribute toward sustaining the demand for the goods of the rich countries (27). The market itself requires solidarity, for without internal forms of solidarity and mutual trust, the market is unable to fulfill its proper economic function (35). The state exhibits solidarity in its now traditional role of establishing systems of social security, both in rich countries and in poor countries (25). We are all to exhibit solidarity with coming generations and be attuned to practicing intergenerational justice, in a variety of contexts, ecological, juridical, economic, political, and cultural (48). In the field of energy, rich nations must exercise solidarity with the poorest by lowering their domestic use of energy, redistributing energy resources so that the poorest countries may have energy for development purposes (49,2).

*Subsidiarity.* Benedict does not define subsidiarity, but John Paul does so in the 1991 encyclical *Centesimus annus*:

Here again the principle of subsidiarity must be respected: a community of a higher order should not interfere in the internal life of a community of a lower order, depriving the latter of its functions, but rather should support it in case of need and help to coordinate its activity with the activities of the rest of society, always with a view to the common good (CA48,4).

Pope Benedict uses the concept of subsidiarity in his discussion of governance of the process of globalization. This process requires authority since a common good, the global common good, is involved, but the authority "must be organized in a subsidiary and stratified way" (57;67). He urges the articulation of political authority at the local, national, and international levels; by this he means a dispersed political authority, effective on different levels, as a way of directing economic globalization and not undermining the foundations of democracy (41,2). He uses the concept of subsidiarity throughout the document, as when he discusses globalization in terms of the increasing interconnectedness of humanity and how this will produce benefits as individuals and peoples take up their respective responsibilities, both singly and collectively (42). Especially in countries excluded or marginalized from the more influential circles of the

global economy, it is important to move ahead with subsidiarity-based projects which affirm rights but also provide for the weak and vulnerable to take up their responsibilities (47).

The principle of subsidiarity must work closely with that of solidarity. Subsidiarity without solidarity gives way to social privatism, he informs us, with the individualistic, utilitarian, materialistic, even hedonistic dangers he warns us about throughout the document (58). At the same time, solidarity without the truth of subsidiarity gives way to paternalistic social assistance that demeans those in need. The latter kind of aid can lock people into dependence and, he tells us, “even foster situations of localized oppression and exploitation in the receiving country” (58). Aid programs, acts of solidarity, must be supported by the grass roots participation that exemplifies subsidiarity (58). Should anyone think, however, that subsidiarity operates to limit the extent of solidarity, perhaps as states’ rights act as a limit to federal power, notice how Pope Benedict uses the concept of subsidiarity. He describes it as a particular manifestation of charity, a guiding criterion for fraternal cooperation between believers and nonbelievers, first and foremost a form of assistance to the person via the autonomy of intermediate bodies (57). So he uses subsidiarity in such a way as to facilitate solidarity, to find the proper way in which to support others in taking up their duties in the development process (43;47).

Benedict believes strongly that it is subsidiarity which can keep us from the dangers of the heartless and inordinate expansion of the social assistance state, as it was termed by John Paul II:

By considering reciprocity as the heart of what it is to be a human being, subsidiarity is the most effective antidote against any form of all-encompassing welfare state. It is able to take account both of the manifold articulation of plans – and therefore of the plurality of subjects – as well as the coordination of those plans. Hence the principle of subsidiarity is particularly well-suited to managing globalization and directing it towards authentic human development (57).

Benedict calls for rich nations to apply the principle of subsidiarity to a review of their internal social assistance and welfare policies. The result would be to create better integrated welfare systems which would save

resources; those resources could then be shared with the developing nations. Subsidiarity and solidarity could work together in this as in other projects (60,1). On the other end of the economy, financiers must rediscover that finance is an instrument, not an end in itself, and they must make their way back to the ethical foundation that shows that the true goal of finance is the development of the whole person and of all peoples. In fact, the entire economy itself, as an instrument, must be used ethically so as to create the conditions for the development of peoples (65).

### III

Pope Benedict has such a high regard for *Populorum progressio* that he terms it “the *Rerum Novarum* of the present age, shedding light upon humanity’s journey towards unity” (8,2). Although Paul VI was applying on a global scale the insights of *Rerum novarum*, Pope Benedict finds Pope Leo’s idea that the civil order “for its self-regulation, also needed intervention from the State for purposes of redistribution,” to be both threatened and insufficient to meet the demands of a fully humane economy (8,2).

Nonetheless, Paul VI laid the foundation for the approach which Pope Benedict wishes to take in *Caritas in veritate*. There are three essential elements that Benedict takes from *Populorum progressio*: The first is that Pope Paul refined the social question to that of the full and complete development of the whole person and of all peoples, in every dimension of life. The second element is that the Church, in its practice of charity, has essentially been in the business of promoting such development of the whole person from the time of its foundation in its mission of seeking unity among humans. The third element revolves around his belief that the social question has become a radically anthropological question; that is, the Church’s doctrine concerning what it means to be a person can serve as our guide in the task of promoting the full development of persons.

(1) Benedict explains why he places such importance in Pope Paul’s encyclical on development:

Paul VI clearly understood that the social question had become worldwide and he grasped the interconnection between the impetus towards the unification of humanity and the Christian ideal of a single family of peoples in solidarity and fraternity. *In the notion of development, understood in human and Christian terms, he identified the heart of the Christian social message, and he proposed Christian charity as the principal force at the service of development* (13, emphasis in original).

(2) Benedict points to Pope Paul's assertion of two truths linking the Church's practice of charity with the development of the person. The first truth is that "*the whole Church, in all her being and acting – when she proclaims, when she celebrates, when she performs works of charity – is engaged in promoting integral human development. . . .*" The second truth is that *authentic human development concerns the whole of the person in every single dimension*" (11, emphasis in original). Human progress needs the perspective of eternal life. Otherwise, "it runs the risk of being reduced to the mere accumulation of wealth; humanity thus loses the courage to be at the service of higher goods, at the service of the great and disinterested initiatives called forth by universal charity" (11).

(3) With the focus firmly on development, the social question turns on the anthropological question. What does it mean to be a person? Benedict addresses the question throughout *Caritas in veritate*. The person is composed of reason and will (19), but we require material as well as spiritual growth, for we are a unity of body and soul (77). We are drawn to the truth of God's plan for us, and that is where we find our good. We all have the inner impulse to love authentically. This drive to find truth and love is a vocation planted in the hearts and minds of each of us (1). We are meant for communion (3;4;6,2), and we achieve this by taking steps to secure the good of others, both personally and by striving to attain the common good (7). Benedict stresses the need for spiritual development in line with Pope Paul's highest level of human conditions, that is, "conditions that, finally and above all, are more human: faith, a gift of God accepted by the good will of man, and unity in the charity of Christ, Who calls us all to share as sons in the life of the living God, the Father of all men" (PP21).

The theme running throughout *Caritas in veritate* is that of the "whole man" or whole person. Benedict discusses the whole person in the various

dimensions of life. Integral development requires the integration of the person into political, economic, social, juridical, and cultural life. He stresses as well the essential ties between environmental ecology and what he terms our human ecology. He has further linked life ethics and social ethics as a part of this focus on the whole person. (See appendix below.) I wish, however, to focus my remarks on spiritual life, which appears to be at the center of Benedict's vision of what makes us most fully human. Our vocation to a spiritual life is brought home in a particularly compelling way toward the end of the encyclical, in the following passage:

*Development needs Christians with their arms raised towards God* in prayer, Christians moved by the knowledge that TRUTH-filled LOVE, *caritas in veritate*, from which authentic development proceeds, is not produced by us, but given to us. For this reason, even in the most difficult and complex times, besides recognizing what is happening, we must above all else turn to God's LOVE. Development requires attention to the spiritual life, a serious consideration of the experiences of trust in God, spiritual fellowship in Christ, reliance upon God's providence and mercy, LOVE and forgiveness, self-denial, acceptance of others, JUSTICE and PEACE. All this is essential if "hearts of stone" are to be transformed into "hearts of flesh" (Ezek 36:26), rendering life on earth "divine" and thus more worthy of humanity (79).

He follows up: "Development will never be fully guaranteed through automatic or impersonal forces, whether they derive from the market or from international politics. *Development is impossible without upright men and women, without financiers and politicians whose consciences are finely attuned to the requirements of the common good*" (71, emphasis in original).

Benedict points throughout the document to the necessary direction in the spiritual life to which we are called, in living fully and in building our consciences. On the one hand, he points to isolation, alienation, self-sufficiency, ideology, and illusion as causes of underdevelopment; on the other, communion, solidarity, and living God's plan as our vocation build up the community and are thus primary sources of development.

First, isolation. Benedict discusses isolation as one of the deepest forms of poverty, including material forms, stemming from the inability to love. We have a tragic tendency to close in on ourselves, but as persons,

we are alienated when we are alone, detached from reality. A passage from the same paragraph advances the thought:

All of humanity is alienated when too much trust is placed in merely human projects, ideologies and false utopias. Today humanity appears much more interactive than in the past: this shared sense of being close to one another must be transformed into true communion. *The development of peoples depends, above all, on recognition that the human race is a single family working together in true communion, not simply a group of subjects who happen to live side by side* (53).

As spiritual beings, we are defined by interpersonal relations. It is not through isolation that we establish our worth but by placing ourselves in relation with others and with God (53,3). The peoples of the developing world are primarily responsible for their development, but not in isolation, for the dynamics of inclusion are not automatic, but must be built up, in cooperation and communion with others. All the peoples of the world, in developed and developing countries, must participate in the development process (47,1). His perspective on communion is illuminated by the relationship between the Persons of the Trinity within the one divine Substance, a relationship to which we are called as well (54):

Relationships between human beings throughout history cannot but be enriched by reference to this divine model. In particular, *in the light of the revealed mystery of the Trinity*, we understand that true openness does not mean loss of individual identity but profound interpenetration. This also emerges from the common human experiences of love and truth. Just as the sacramental love of spouses unites them spiritually in “one flesh” (Gen 2:24; Mt 19:5; Eph 5:31) and makes out of the two a real and relational unity, so in an analogous way truth unites spirits and causes them to think in unison, attracting them as a unity to itself (54).

So we may think of one movement of the spiritual life he intends for us as the movement from isolation to communion.

Another facet of this movement of the spiritual life can be seen as the movement from the way of self-sufficiency to that of solidarity. He warns us that although I may become wrongly convinced that I am the sole

author of myself, of my life and society, that error is a consequence of being selfishly closed in on myself, of original sin, which is present in social conditions and in the structure of society (34). Our institutions are not sufficient to guarantee fulfillment of the right to development, however much we may have once thought them to be so (11). Progress of a merely economic and technological sort is insufficient (23); human knowledge itself is insufficient and “the conclusions of science cannot indicate by themselves the path towards integral human development” (30). Further, we treat technology as self-sufficient when we focus on the “how” questions, not the “why” questions, self-centered use of technology closes the door to transcendence (70;74).

Early in the encyclical, in a search for the causes of underdevelopment, Benedict turns to the will, which neglects the duties of solidarity, that sense of responsibility on the part of everyone with regard to everyone (19,1). He finds the cause of underdevelopment in the lack of brotherhood between individuals and peoples, something which may not be attained by human effort alone (19,1). As a vocation, he tells us, integral human development involves “a free assumption of responsibility in solidarity on the part of everyone” (11). Such development requires a transcendent vision; it requires God because “without him, development is either denied, or entrusted exclusively to man, who falls into the trap of thinking he can bring about his own salvation, and ends up promoting a dehumanized form of development” (11). He is clear on the importance of solidarity in his introductory sentence to the paragraph on the Trinity as the model of relation: “The theme of development can be identified with the inclusion-in-relation of all individuals and peoples within the one community of the human family, built in solidarity on the basis of the fundamental values of justice and peace” (54).

Another dimension of the movement of the spiritual life is the movement from ideology and illusion to the reality of living God’s plan for us in charity and truth. Ideologies often oversimplify the reality of life, whereas integral human development, which requires a full understanding both of the identity of the partners in development and of the processes of development, requires a commitment to foster interaction at different levels of human knowledge (26,30). Understanding development requires the contribution of disciplines such as metaphysics and theology, as well

as politics, economics, and knowledge of societies and cultures (53,2). The prevalent ideology, on the other hand, is the technocratic ideology, which threatens to take over the entire development process and hence runs the risk of detaching progress from its moral evaluation and hence from our responsibility (14); this is because it limits the order of reason to technical considerations only and does not take account of transcendent values. Note that Benedict includes within technical solutions financial engineering such as freeing up of markets, removal of tariffs, and related institutional reforms, for he sees these operating in a purely technical manner and emerging from a technical mindset (71). A major danger of globalization is that technology might “become an ideological power that threatens to confine us within an *a priori* that holds us back from encountering being and truth” (70). He discusses this danger in terms of a messianism that gives promises under the illusion of creating paradise in this world, but always denies the transcendent dimension of development (CA25,3;CV17).

Rather than falling into the grasp of such an ideology or illusion, we are called to find the truth of our lives in God’s plan for us, in the vocation to love our brothers and sisters in the truth of his plan for us. It is in finding and adhering to this truth, defending it, articulating it with humility, bearing witness to it in our lives that we become free (1). The following passage lays out this point well:

Truth, and the love which it reveals, cannot be produced: they can only be received as a gift. Their ultimate source is not, and cannot be, mankind, but only God, who is himself Truth and Love. This principle is extremely important for society and for development, since neither can be a purely human product; the vocation to development on the part of individuals and peoples is not based simply on human choice, but is an intrinsic part of a plan that is prior to us and constitutes for all of us a duty to be freely accepted. That which is prior to us and constitutes us – subsistent Love and Truth – shows us what goodness is, and in what our true happiness consists. *It shows us the road to true development* (52, emphasis in original).

So we are to bring into our spiritual lives *all* the elements and dimensions of our lives, the economic, the political, the social (especially regarding the common good), and the cultural, because we are fully

human in every single dimension of our lives. The goal is to live fully and deeply in the love of Christ and to develop consciences that are able to see in globalization, for example, the increased interaction among peoples that can extend the networks of charity which we are called to weave (5,1), the processes of subsidiarity which will allow us to exhibit and extend solidarity in ways which are most conducive to the development of persons and peoples, and in which politicians and financiers are imbued with a sense of the common good. This common good extends necessarily in our globalized society to assume the dimensions of the whole human family, the community of peoples and nations (7).

We must engage the world as well as live a deeply spiritual life, and the three movements discussed above help lead us into communion with source of the love that will animate and encourage us in such engagement. We are able by living spiritually to accept more fully the gift of grace, to accept the love coming to us from God; this is creative love, redemptive love, “‘poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit’ (Rom 5:5). As the objects of God’s love, men and women become subjects of charity, we are called to make ourselves instruments of grace, so as to pour forth God’s charity and to weave networks of charity” (5,1). This love is the wellspring of the gratuitousness (or gratitude) which we are called to bring as fully human beings into all our endeavors. Pope Benedict tells us in the words of Paul VI: “Indeed, ‘the individual who is animated by true charity labours skilfully to discover the causes of misery, to find the means to combat it, to overcome it resolutely’” (30). The goal is to build “a society according to freedom and justice, in the ideal and historical perspective of a civilization animated by love” (13). The following passage captures this sense:

*God’s love calls us to move beyond the limited and the ephemeral, it gives us the courage to continue seeking and working for the benefit of all, even if this cannot be achieved immediately and if what we are able to achieve, alongside political authorities and those working in the field of economics, is always less than we might wish. God gives us the strength to fight and to suffer for love of the common good, because he is our All, our greatest hope (78, emphasis in original).*

This gratitude, or gratuitousness, is intended to convey the sense of the

free gift of self to which John Paul urged us, of giving without counting the cost, of an unexpected but most welcomed gift (34), of the love that happens among members of a family (often called *fraternity* in the document). Benedict urges us, thus empowered and emboldened, to bring this sense of gratuitousness into normal economic activity, for the economy is a sector of human activity (36,4;45,2; see 36,3). He states clearly:

What is needed, therefore, is a market that permits the free operation, in conditions of equal opportunity, of enterprises in pursuit of different institutional ends. Alongside profit-oriented private enterprise and the various types of public enterprise, there must be room for commercial entities based on mutualist principles and pursuing social ends to take root and express themselves. It is from their reciprocal encounter in the marketplace that one may expect hybrid forms of commercial behavior to emerge, and hence an attentiveness to ways of *civilizing the economy*. Charity in truth, in this case, requires that shape and structure be given to those types of economic initiative which, without rejecting profit, aim at a higher goal than the mere logic of the exchange of equivalents, of profit as an end in itself (38).

Benedict points us to the need for urgent reform both due to the rapid succession of events and because what is at stake is the establishment of authentic fraternity (20,1). And indeed, both the market and politics need persons who are open to reciprocal gift (39,2). To defeat underdevelopment, he tells us, exchange-based transactions must be improved, for example, through transparency, honesty, and responsibility; public welfare structures based on a true subsidiarity must be put into place, but above all, economic forms based on solidarity and marked by quotas of gratuitousness and communion must emerge in the world context (36,4;39,2). As he puts it, this is not a “third sector,” but a broad composite reality embracing the private and public spheres, one which includes profit as a means for achieving human and social ends (46).

Benedict states at one point that gratuitousness is present in our lives in many different forms, but they often go unrecognized because of our purely consumerist and utilitarian view of life (34,1). I am firmly convinced that he is correct, and I am prompted at this point to give some concrete examples of gratuitousness in everyday economic life, examples

with which I am familiar. Here are three short stories.

(1) I will begin with a wonderful story of a woman I met from Kansas City, who worked in a realty company populated with aggressive realtors who easily and quickly sized up the wealthier clientele walking through the door and snapped up their business. She decided that she would not compete with them but would view her work as a vocation, that of putting ordinary, middle-class Americans into good homes at fair prices. She voluntarily chose to take a lower return at work, in good measure for the sake of a greater good.

(2) One of my sustaining memories is of the dinner conversations I grew up with at home. My dad was an automobile mechanic and self-made man who owned his shop and who worried about the condition of his men. When work was slack and my mother, the accountant, wanted to let go of a worker or two, my dad balked. Lalo was saving to go to college to become a teacher, Romeo drank and he might harm himself or his family, Higinio had a number of kids, and so on. So my father would first take the hit himself, then if conditions did not improve, he would ration work so that the workers each lost a day of work a week. He worked very hard not to have to release a worker.

(3) In the past few years, a young couple started a restaurant in Denver on Colfax Street and called it SAME, So All May Eat. They were determined that at this little restaurant no one without money would go hungry. Instead of a cash register, there is a box for contributions where one can contribute what one wants or can afford. If a diner has no money, he or she is asked to work for the meal, perhaps by washing dishes, but there is no strict requirement to work. The couple both kept their regular jobs for a while to subsidize the business, then the wife quit her job to oversee the operations more closely. The husband works at the restaurant but has kept his outside job in order to keep the family going and to subsidize the restaurant.

*Conclusion.* Benedict makes a point fundamental to the reading of *Caritas in veritate* in the following statement: “While in the past it was possible to argue that justice had to come first and gratuitousness could follow afterwards, as a complement, today it is clear that without gratuitousness, there can be no justice in the first place.” (38) The free gift

of self in all our relationships, in all the dimensions in which we live our lives, is not an optional matter if we are to obtain justice. Rather, Benedict teaches that it is required if we are to have any hope of obtaining justice. He makes the argument throughout the course of the encyclical; and here we may review his reasons for this belief. Unless we are living deeply enough out of the love of the Holy Spirit, based on our faith, unless we are open to grace, unless we mobilize ourselves at the level of the heart, we are unable to see our proper role in the culture, politics, economics, and social life around us. Our intellect is darkened – darkened reason, in his words – and is no longer able to guide us in the proper way to act in the world (36,2). This inability to see is especially true amid the dysfunctions, injustices, and ideologies he describes as characteristics of the current economic processes associated with globalization. With consciences no longer attuned to the needs of the common good, reason alone is unable to guide us toward our proper path. Further, with a will not animated by charity, we lack the courage to act on behalf of social justice. Benedict believes that reason and will must act together, and hence we need charity in truth, *caritas in veritate*, infused into all aspects of our lives. This would dispel ideologies and allow a clearer vision of the unity to which we are called. Finally and importantly, it would lead us to the ongoing source that is God’s love, essential to animate us to act for social justice.

In reading Benedict, I am reminded of both Mother Teresa and John Paul II. Mother Teresa urged us to train ourselves to look for human need and then to work to meet that need. This included having her sisters set up homes to care for dying AIDS patients at a time when people with AIDS were treated like modern-day lepers. One of our students volunteered at her New York City AIDS home in the 1990s and came back emotionally and spiritually drained. There was little or no response from the patients who were so close to death; they just blankly stared back at the volunteers and the sisters. The sisters, for their part, were not emotionally or spiritually drained; for as they explained, they relied on the love of God to support them in their daily work, and it was this love that they could pass on to their patients while truly expecting nothing back from them. I believe that this vignette captures the message of Benedict in *Caritas in veritate*. John Paul II urged us to a similar spiritual outlook in his exhortation to us to “change the spiritual attitudes which define each

individual's relationship with self, with neighbor, with even the remotest human communities, and with nature itself; and all of this in view of higher values such as the common good or, to quote the felicitous expression of the Encyclical *Populorum Progressio*, the full development 'of the whole individual and of all people'" (SRS38,3). It is indeed the work of a lifetime to expand progressively the circle of those with whom we can share fraternal love – the very love of God; it is, however, the call and the foundation of Catholic social doctrine.

Benedict urges us to enter into loving relationships with all persons, but especially with those who are marginalized and exploited in economic, social, and political spheres. He informs us that there is an urgent need for reform, not only because of the rapid succession of events and problems, but because the very matter at stake is the establishment of authentic fraternity. In his warnings about the binary model of market-plus-state being corrosive of society, about the market's inability to establish fraternity, the weakening of cultures, the dangers of the domination of the spirit of globalization by considerations of an individualistic and utilitarian nature – his complaint is that forces of isolation, self-sufficiency, illusion, and ideology are in danger of dominating our view of what it means to be a person. If we do not take up this task, then we are perpetuating the great modern failing, or perhaps sin of omission, of not reaching out to others with the sincere gift of self. Benedict's alternative consists of establishing relationships and institutions of true communion, establishing solidarity among peoples, and living out God's loving Trinitarian plan for us. He believes that for us to develop into full and complete persons, we must learn how to give this gift of self, how to bring total gratuitousness – the gratuitousness that we have received for the sake of others – into all the dimensions of our lives. In his view this is a necessary condition to the solution of the social question.

*Appendix.* Benedict points to the importance of integrating life ethics and social ethics as a part of his strategy to promote the whole person. Life ethics are essential to integral human development, and the pope suggests a number of reasons for this. He begins with John Paul II's argument in *Evangelium vitae* that "a society lacks solid foundations when, on the one hand, it asserts values such as the dignity of the person,

justice and peace, but then, on the other hand, radically acts to the contrary by allowing or tolerating a variety of ways in which human life is devalued and violated, especially where it is weak or marginalized” (15,2). Benedict argues that the acceptance of life strengthens moral fiber and renders people capable of mutual help. Wealthy peoples, in particular, by cultivating openness to life, learn to understand better the needs of poor ones. They “can avoid employing huge economic and intellectual resources to satisfy the selfish desires of their own citizens, and instead, they can promote virtuous action within the perspective of production that is morally sound and marked by solidarity, respecting the fundamental right to life of every people and every individual” (28,4).

In his promotion of the whole person, Benedict insists as well on a closer union of environmental ecology and human ecology. As a gift by God to everyone, the natural environment calls forth duties arising from our relationship with it. Our responsibility wanes as it is seen as the result of mere evolutionary determinism; by contrast, if it is seen as a result of God’s creative work, available for our responsible use for satisfying legitimate needs, we are more apt to take up our duties rather than abuse it (48,1). The way we treat the environment influences the way we treat each other, and vice versa. Benedict turns to John Paul in urging us to shift our mentality to adopt, instead of lifestyles of hedonism and consumerism without regard to consequences, lifestyles “in which the quest for truth, beauty, goodness and communion with others for the sake of common growth are the factors which determine consumer choices, savings and investments” (51,1). Violations of solidarity and civic friendship harm the environment, as deterioration of the natural environment upsets relations in society. For example, desertification often reflects impoverishment and underdevelopment among the inhabitants of the region. Peace is essential in this regard, for wars devastate the environment (51,1).

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