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June 15, 2005

Dear Democratic Colleague,

As we continue to explore the nexus between faith and politics, I want to share with you this thoughtful, historical and analytic document prepared by Neil Proto regarding Catholic social teaching and American society. Mr. Proto is a lawyer in Washington D.C., and an Adjunct Professor at Georgetown's Public Policy Institute.

I hope that you find this document a useful background as you speak with people of faith in your district.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Rosa" in a cursive, flowing script.

Rosa L. DeLauro  
Member of Congress

April 2005

**The Essential Controversy:  
The Catholic Church, Its Social Teaching in America  
and Those Who Defined It**

**Introduction**

**Framing the Controversy: The Bishops' Letters, 1980 - 1986**

In 1980, the American Bishops' Conference - an institutional arrangement not previously recognized by the pope as having authority independent of the Curia in Rome - decided to examine the fundamental issues it believed central to Catholicism and American society: nuclear weapons and war, and economic justice. The Conference drew on a long tradition of such examinations and statements within the Church beginning, for its purpose, with the issuance in 1891 of *Rerum Novarum* ("New Things"), Pope Leo XIII's encyclical on capital and labor.<sup>1</sup>

At that time, Pope Leo XIII was deeply concerned about the harsh consequences of the industrial revolution, ranging from "the ... discoveries of science; ... the changed relations between masters and workmen; in the enormous fortunes of some individuals, and the utter poverty of the masses .... " It was a time of unfettered capitalism, a call for a violent form of socialism and, within the United States, massive European immigration, shameful living conditions, ethnic, racial and religious discrimination, and the denigration of labor.<sup>2</sup>

This tradition of examination and statement within the Church, with even broader institutional and practical consequences, emerged powerfully - with particular respect to American Catholics - in Pope John XXIII's ascension and his convening of the Second Vatican Council in 1962, a rare, broad, almost three-year examination of the Church and its duty in society. At that junction, suffice it to say, Vatican II and the pope's positive view of the role of the lay community and of more communal decision-making within the Church shed a lot of "tradition." Drawing in large part from Pope Leo's *Rerum Novarum*, Pope John XXIII also issued two encyclicals: *Mater et Magistra* (Mother and Teacher: On Christianity and Social Progress) in 1961<sup>3</sup> and *Pacem in Terris* (Peace on Earth), in 1963 (issued shortly after his death).<sup>4</sup> In America, John Kennedy was President, Catholics were growing in ascendancy and the civil rights movement had stirred hearts, minds, politics, and bigotry. We also were in deadly combat with the Soviet Union (*i.e.*, the Bay of Pigs invasion in 1961 and the Cuban missile crisis in 1962). Pope John's views and actions resonated widely and deeply.

Those individuals who formed the American Bishops' Conference in 1980 came of age as young priests and were strongly tempered by Pope John, the teachings of Vatican II and the

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American experience. Many among them also were the sons of immigrants. Also, beginning in 1980, the bishops were witnessing the presidential election in progress: Reagan-Bush v. Carter-Mondale. Some of the same issues (*e.g.*, poverty, high unemployment, budget deficits, the increase in nuclear weapons and an intensification of the American-Soviet confrontation) had reemerged. They did so with even more potentially serious consequences during the election of 1984.

Two pastoral letters were issued by the Conference: *The Challenge of Peace: God's Promise and Our Response* (1983) and *Economic Justice for All: Catholic Social Teaching and the U.S. Economy* (1986).<sup>5</sup> The focus of this paper is primarily the second letter, *Economic Justice for All*. Drawing heavily on natural law, reason and scripture (including the Old Testament), the Jewish experience, and the life of Jesus – his nonviolent way and his embrace of the poor – the bishops began a very open, public process – numerous hearings, broad public participation among the lay community and the public issuance, with opportunity for comment, of draft letters – that yielded *Economic Justice for All*.

The leaders in the drafting and public dialogue included Joseph Cardinal Bernardin (Chicago) and Archbishop Rembert Weakland (Milwaukee). They sought, through this process, to articulate “Catholic social teaching”, especially a concern for the poor and labor and the dignity of family, and what they characterized as a hoped for “New American Experiment.”<sup>6</sup> They called upon all within the lay community – within government, business, and labor – to embrace this teaching and engage in a dialogue on its implementation with respect to very specific social and economic problems. The letter did *not* include proscriptions about sexual conduct (*e.g.*, abortion, homosexuality). By the early 1980s, however, Pope John Paul II was in Rome. Although consistently and strongly supportive of workers, unions and a duty towards the poor, he was, from the outset of his papacy in 1978, very uneasy about sharing his authority with a seemingly independent Bishops' Conference or the laity. With the help of the Curia, he began a process of “restoration” of both the pope's central authority within the Church and a more insistent emphasis on “traditional” teachings (*e.g.*, celibacy, protection of the unborn, Peter as a male). Pope John Paul II also had his own, different perspective on how to deal with the Soviet Union. And, almost simultaneous with his ascension, conservatism and the Republican Party attained a strong intellectual and practical presence in America. Reagan was now President.

Before the bishops' completed their letter on *Economic Justice*— the letter's content is discussed below – conservative Catholics attacked what they expected to be a criticism of capitalism and a call for the moral and “Catholic” duty of individuals, corporate interests and government to ensure the dignity, fair treatment and minimal living conditions for the poor and labor. Former Secretary of the Treasury, William Simon – a widely recognized and active conservative Catholic – and others contributed \$100,000 to form a group (with Simon as chair) composed of, among others, prominent former Republican officials (all Catholics, such as Alexander Haig, Clare Booth Luce, Frank Shakespeare, Walter Hickel and W. Peter Grace) and Michael Novak (as vice chair), a recognized, highly skilled, knowledgeable and forceful advocate for the virtue (from his own Catholic perspective) of the American free market system.<sup>7</sup>

Their critique – including in *Toward the Future: Catholic Social Thought and the U.S. Economy—A Lay Letter* (1984) and, later, *Liberty and Justice for All* (1986)<sup>8</sup> – provided its own characterization of the bishops' efforts and language, diminished their authority and

knowledge (not enough economic training), and then, with a highly skilled polemic and selective use of biblical scripture and 19<sup>th</sup> century American history, extolled the singular and Christian virtue of the free market to accomplish the highest good for the poor and labor. In broad historical terms, at stake for the Simon/Novak conservatives was the ideological imperative to correlate, or make interchangeable, the motives and effects of capitalism with the purpose and practice of democracy in America and to posit something that the Church had thoughtfully and methodically never recognized: capitalism, and the historical operation of the free market, is the correlative of Christian beliefs. In more immediate terms, the critique's sometimes subtle but overarching objective emerged with clarity: to diminish the underlying purpose and practical fullness of Catholic social teaching since *Rerum Novarum*. Eventually, at least five Republican members of Congress signed on to the Simon-Novak critique.<sup>9</sup>

Largely mute in this controversy, with minor exceptions, were recognized progressives, liberals, labor leaders and Democrats. No comparable, methodical effort emerged to affirm the bishops' purpose and their own strong affirmation of the moral and "Catholic" duty of individuals, corporate leaders and government to ensure the dignity, worth and fair treatment of the poor and labor. The consequence of such muteness, however, was plain: politically and intellectually (in and out of government and within the Church), conservatives in the Simon/Novak orientation dominated and defined the controversy. They still do.

## I.

### **Looking Back: Labor Unions and the Church, and the emerging "Preferential Option for the Poor"**

Prior to Pope Leo XIII's 1891 encyclical, the Church hierarchy in Europe (and, to a lesser extent in American) began to recognize, generally, two propositions: (i) the Church's teachings were not directed meaningfully to daily life, and (ii) this failure, among others, was allowing Catholic workers and Catholic immigrants to move toward socialism, class consciousness and forms of organization (some violent) to protect their families and ensure dignity and fairness from the abuses of capitalism and the governments that supported it. Many among those workers and immigrants also were moving away from Catholicism. Under prodding, but conscious of its importance, Pope Leo issued *Rerum Novarum*. Although resisted by many conservative clergy and wealthy Catholics, *Rerum Novarum* had a profound consequence: the Church had moved irreversibly into "Catholic social teaching" and life on earth.

The theology and the breadth of the encyclical are complex and, on a deeper level, require a level of knowledge and analysis beyond what is reflected here. But the encyclical's essential substantive thrust is fairly direct: Jesus favored the poor and acted on it. Here on earth, the Church should do the same (it now would have "citizen status"),<sup>10</sup> especially in support of those workers who needed the freedom to form "associations" in order to ensure fairness, dignity and a decent wage. Here are some extracts from *Rerum Novarum*:

Among the several purposes of a society, one should try to arrange for a continuous supply of work at all times and seasons; as well as to create a fund out of which the members may be effectually helped in their needs,

not only in the cases of accident, but also in sickness, old age, and distress.  
[par. 58]

\* \* \* \*

If through necessity or fear of a worse evil the workman accepted harder conditions because an employer or contractor will afford no better, he is made the victim of force and injustice ... [and that there be] some other mode of safeguarding the interests of wage-earners; the State being appealed to, should circumstances require, for its sanction and protection.  
[par. 45]

\* \* \* \*

When there is a question of defending the rights of individuals, the defenseless and the poor have a claim to special consideration. The richer class has many ways of shielding itself, and stands less in need of help from the State; whereas the mass of the poor have no resources of their own to fall back on, and must chiefly depend on the assistance of the State. It is for this reason that wage earners, since they mostly belong to the latter class, should be specially cared for and protected by the government. [par. 37]

Although the precise terminology doesn't crystallize until the late 1970's (initially articulated by Latin American Bishops) - concerning the State's, society's, and the individual's duty to provide a "preferential option for the poor" - Pope Leo XIII was credited by Pope John Paul II with effectively declaring that precise duty in *Rerum Novarum*.<sup>11</sup>

## II.

### **America: The Tension in Catholic Social Teaching**

From the outset of Pope Leo's encyclical in 1891, and for that matter since the appointment of the first American Bishop in 1789 (John Carroll), American Catholics - clergy and lay - have been in tension: those who view Catholicism as an integral and leadership force in defining the morality of evolving notions of liberty, democracy and the communal duty of individuals (with Jesus' life and life on earth as central) to the poor, the worker and those less fortunate; and those who view Catholicism as more integral to the morality of individual salvation, conduct, and charity, and the pope's singular authority to proscribe conduct (Jesus as appointing Peter, in his singular person and as a male). These two views, and the opinions that flowed from them, should not be considered as exclusive to one or the other. There is overlap and sharing. The difference, often critical in public dialogue and in the personal imperative and experience that moved individual members of the hierarchy, the clergy and the laity, was - and continues to be - in priority, emphasis and the exercise of power.

*Rerum Novarum* found personification in America from, among others, Maria Francesca Cabrini. She was born in 1850, at Sant' Angelo Lodigiano, a farming village south of Milan. She was the tenth child of Agostina and Stella Cabrini, both devout Catholics. It was a tumultuous

time in Italy: Mazzini, Cavour and Garibaldi provided a ferment of liberal ideas, political actions and a successful drive, by 1870, for national unity. Many in this movement also were "anti-clerical." The Church had often exploited land and the poor and had sided with the Monarchy and, at times, foreign colonists. Although her town was continuously divided between the Church and the forces of change, Cabrini's relatives moved in "radical circles."<sup>12</sup> Her biographer, Sister Mary Louise Sullivan, described the effect of Italy's *Risorgimento* (the "Resurgence") on Cabrini in this manner:<sup>13</sup>

Francesca Cabrini was made acutely aware of the historical realities of her time. This awareness, influenced by the intense Christian piety of her immediate household, contributed to the development of a personality open to examining the broad social and religious currents of the day, while staunchly maintaining the traditional practices of faith inculcated in her childhood.

Early on Cabrini wanted to be a missionary at a time when the Church considered it a man's calling.<sup>14</sup> Once becoming a nun, she persistently sought, and received, an audience with two Church leaders: Bishop Giovanni Battista Scalabrini and Pope Leo XIII. Both men recognized the need – shared by some Catholic clergy in America – to deal with the immigrant problem; that is, their deplorable living conditions, industrial exploitation of their skills and person, and their unwillingness to embrace the fullness of Catholicism. In 1889 – two years before *Rerum Novarum* – Pope Leo XIII, with Bishop Scalabrini's support, personally agreed to Cabrini's request to go to America.<sup>15</sup>

Mother Cabrini (as she was called in America) reflected and in important ways defined what would become essential elements in Catholic social teaching. She was powerfully independent and used her relationship with Pope Leo to defy local priests, bishops and conservative lay leaders, some of whom suggested she return to Italy.<sup>16</sup> She sought out the poorest within the Italian colony, lived with her religious order among them, raised money and opened dozens of hospitals, orphanages, and resting homes for the elderly and infirmed in Chicago, Seattle, New York, Denver, Scranton, Los Angeles, Philadelphia, New Orleans and numerous small communities in rural America. She counseled immigrants on social customs, language, religion, discrimination (religious and ethnic) and the disquieting mores of America. Under her guidance, immigrants were provided health care, social outreach skills, English comprehension and a capacity for understanding civic responsibilities.

Cabrini became an American citizen in 1909 (in Seattle) and died in 1917 (in Chicago). In 1946 she was canonized a Saint (the first American). In 1952 she was posthumously named "The Italian Immigrant of the Century," for her "unselfish devotion to humanity." President Truman sent a telegram of praise. Governor Lehman of New York served as Honorary Chair of the event. One speaker declared at the ceremony: "Her accomplishments stand as monuments for all to behold and put to shame those men whose bigotry helps raise the cry of intolerance towards the immigrant." The criticism was political and directed to government. In a manner consistent with established Catholic social teaching and the Church as a "citizen" in America, this and other speakers directly criticized the immigration restrictions on southern Europeans in the newly-enacted McCarran- Walter Act.<sup>17</sup>

At the time of Mother Cabrini's death in 1917, the conservatism in the American Catholic Church – always present – began a more prominent resurgence. It emerged in the perceived need for parish schools; a response to both Protestant domination of public schools (where biblical teaching occurred in a Protestant perspective) and a way of exercising more religious control within the Catholic community. The conservatism also emerged in the expansion as well as establishment of new universities and colleges. Conservatives dominated the local parish schools and tension existed with respect to control of the universities and colleges (Catholic University, when first established, was dominated by the progressives).<sup>18</sup> The conservatives had an additional critique: progressives were not sufficiently doctrinaire or dogmatic on critical scriptural teachings and they had anti-papal attitudes (not sufficiently deferential to the singular authority of the pope and too willing to cooperate with non-Catholics in attaining social goals). Such a critique reflected what the progressives might refer to as adherence to the "passive" and "supernatural" virtues at the cost of the "natural and active virtues."<sup>19</sup>

The tension took another, now predictable form: the progressives (again, lay and clergy) continued their commitment to social reform and communal moral duty, including joining with non-Catholics. Here are some examples:

- Priests sided with and helped organize miners, common laborers and garment worker during the Haymarket (Chicago in 1883), Homestead (Pennsylvania in 1892) and Pullman (Chicago in 1894) strikes, where industrialists, with government support or acquiescence, severely repressed workers.<sup>20</sup>
- Two priests, Peter Dietz (Cincinnati) and John Ryan (Milwaukee) worked with the American Federation of Labor and established a social services school, which educated hundreds in social reform and Catholic social teaching. The school was ended, as described by one historian, "at the hands of Archbishop Moeller and some conservative Republicans .... "<sup>21</sup>
- Ryan's book, *A Living Wage* (1906), generated controversy in and out of the Church. Ryan headed (in the 1920s and 1930s), a group within the National Catholic Welfare League that crafted what became the Bishops' Program (1919), a detailed advocacy of collective bargaining for workers, a minimum wage, social security and health and employment insurance. Many Catholics - especially immigrant workers - welcomed this approach. In large measure, it became the New Deal.
- Almost simultaneous with the efforts of Ryan and others, the American hierarchy of the Church - like the conservative lay in and out of the Church, especially the wealthy (e.g., John Rockefeller (Mussolini's cooperation also was sought and received in the construction of Rockefeller Center's Palazzo d'Italia);<sup>22</sup> Morgan Banking interests; and Henry Luce, who then owned *Time*) - embraced and advocated fascism (Mussolini and the Mussolini model), with its hierarchical foundation, entwined church and state relationship, conservative social orientation,

and praise (compared to Roosevelt) of unfettered capitalism<sup>23</sup> In 1924, Cardinal O'Connell of Boston described Fascism in this way: "I have never in my life witnessed a change so pressing. I see perfect order, cleanliness, work, industrial development," and a few years later - "when accepting a high Fascist decoration" - O'Connell added that Mussolini was "a genius in the field of government, given to Italy by God to help the nation continue her rapid ascent towards the most glorious destiny. . . ."<sup>24</sup>

- Dorothy Day and Peter Maurin founded the Catholic Workers Movement in the early 1930s. Relying on Catholic social teaching, they sought to identify wholly with the poor and dispossessed and the cause of labor. Day and Maurin devoted themselves to prayer and the sacraments. They also challenged what had been characterized as "the prevailing narrow Catholic mentality that equated morality with application to indecent movies and birth control .... " <sup>25</sup> Day, it should be noted, had an abortion early in life, and was a divorced mother. She also was not originally Catholic.<sup>26</sup>
- Beginning in the mid-to-late 1930s, Catholics (lay and clergy) formed more than a hundred schools to train each other and workers in industrial labor organizing and to stop the infiltration of Communism, racketeering and bossism into labor unions. In the late 1940s and early 1950s, the Church hierarchy also acquiesced in the denigration of civil liberties by Senator Joseph McCarthy and fought the antipathy of communism toward religious beliefs.<sup>27</sup>

As seen through the historic prism of the Church, Catholic social teaching reflected a lack of reverence for the unquestioned sanctity of the existing order of things, including capitalism and any presumed virtue in the market forces.

### III

#### **Pope John XXIII and Vatican II: John Kennedy, Civil Rights and War**

Pope John's decision in 1959 to convene a Council was viewed with deep concern by the Curia. His motivation: technology and science had caused radical cultural changes and challenges to morality and Church teaching. The Curia sought to control the agenda of issues and have insiders elected to the various committees created to examine the same issues. The Council - twenty five hundred bishops and other church officials - descended on Rome in October 1962.

Prior to their arrival, Pope John laid out two basic themes in his encyclical, *Mater et Magistra*: (i) a strong affirmation of Pope Leo's *Rerum Novarum*; and (ii) an insistence on a broad role and an affirmative duty of the laity, clergy and nuns to participate in Church decision-making and the implementation of Catholic social teaching.

Calling upon the "magnificent encyclical on the Christianizing of the conditions of the working classes, *Rerum Novarum*, ... [which is] of such high importance [it] will never, surely, sink into oblivion," Pope John XXIII recognized that *Rerum Novarum* 's principles were



"discernable, too, in the subsequent legislation of a number of States," and they provided men a "vital criteria ... on the course of action they must take." [par. 8] He reiterated the Church's continued disagreement with "unrestricted competition ... and the Marxist creed," both of which were clearly contrary to "Christian teaching and the nature of man." [par. 23] He also made plain the basic obligation of the State:

[I]t has also the duty to protect the rights of all its people, and particularly of its weaker members, the workers, women and children. It can never be right for the State to shirk its obligation of working actively for the betterment of the condition of the workingman. [par. 20]

\* \* \* \*

[T]he supreme criterion in economic matters ... must not be the special interests of individuals or groups, nor unregulated competition .... On the contrary, all forms of economic enterprise must be governed by the principles of social justice and charity. [par. 38-39]

\* \* \* \*

Systems of social insurance and social security can make a most effective contribution to the overall distribution of national income in accordance with the principles of justice and equity. They can therefore be instrumental in reducing imbalances between different classes of citizens. [par.136]

Pope John also articulated, in the following way, a special and active communal duty for the laity, the clergy and nuns:

Our beloved sons, the laity, can do much to help this diffusion of Catholic social doctrine by studying it themselves and putting it into practice, and by zealously striving to make others understand it [par. 224] ... [and] [n]o Christian education can be considered complete unless it covers every kind of obligation. It must therefore aim at implanting and fostering among the faithful an awareness of their duty to carry on their economic and social activities in a Christian manner. [par. 228]

\* \* \* \*

It is practice which makes perfect, even in matters as the right use of liberty. Thus one learns Christian behavior ... by actual Christian action . . . . [par. 232]

During the Council, Pope John found ways to support the bishops' efforts (to the consternation of the Curia) to make significant and critical changes in the language and purpose

of the mass, the altar's appearance and location and the nature of the clergy's duty. The Church had been "opened" in powerful ways.

The pope's death caused unease. But his successor, Pope Paul VI, shared John's sensitivity for encouraging dialogue within the Church. Informal debate among the bishops continued at the Council on the need to reappraise the Church's teaching on artificial birth control, marital morality and the role of women. The most controversial and deeply embraced change was the shift from the Church as a "pyramidal structure to the Church as the whole people of God ... [and] on a common priesthood of the faithful; a veritable revolution in the machinery of the Church ...."<sup>28</sup>

The presidency of John Kennedy also had practical meaning for Catholic social teaching. In 1961, Michael Harrington, who worked with Dorothy Day and wrote for the *Catholic Worker*, appealed to Kennedy's thinking about the government's duty to the poor, homeless and malnourished with the publication of *The Other America*.<sup>29</sup> By 1962 and 1963, the civil rights movement – already embraced by religious leaders, including Catholics at the clergy level – reached the Catholic president and the attorney general. An important event occurred that may have been misperceived, in retrospect, by liberals, progressives and Democrats. Kennedy had consistently opposed funding for non-public schools (to the consternation of the Catholic bishops), and supported funding for birth control in foreign aid programs. His position on church-state "separation" also was well known, especially the commitment he made in Houston during the presidential election. However, when John Kennedy announced, in a brief statement on national television, that he had directed the attorney general to compel the admission of black students into the University of Alabama not once did Kennedy mention the "law" or "legal rights" or the "Constitution" as providing his rationale. Repeatedly he said that he and the nation had a "moral" duty and a "moral" obligation to ensure fairness and equality for all Americans. This was Catholic social teaching writ large.

Robert Kennedy was more overtly moved by the same social teaching. His conduct as a senator - visible efforts to bring attention to poverty and discrimination in Appalachia, the Mississippi Delta and among migrant farm workers in California - was reflective of Catholic social teaching. "[I]t was Bobby Kennedy," *New York Times* reporter Anna Quindlen wrote in 1993, "who seemed to embody the fusion of religious and political ideals. . . . It was Bobby who became the single representative of that idea that God and the greater good called to serve the disenfranchised ... [with] all the warmth and yen for social justice ... from the teachings of the second Vatican Council ...."<sup>30</sup>

In 1971, a *Washington Post* article titled "Catholic Radicals: Shock, Challenge," demonstrated the depth and legitimacy of Catholic social teaching and the comfort nuns and priests had to implement it. They lived in poverty; worked with non-Catholics; and their activism was non-violent but direct: picketing draft boards, housing resisters and articulating effectively a view of Catholicism based on Jesus' life and the freedom allowed by John XXIII. Some priests and nuns, the *Post* stated, derived their activism from political activities opposing communism in the 1950s.<sup>31</sup> The Church hierarchy – largely supportive of the government – was uneasy. But here is what then Bishop Bernardin said, as quoted in the *Post*:

Some say the net result of the peace movement has been to polarize Catholics and there is some element of truth in this. At the very least, however, I think it is very clear that the Catholic peace movement has prompted American Catholics to confront grave issues of morality and public policy, and in doing so its effect has been positive.

Within a short period of time, Bishop Bernardin – emerging, as his biographer Eugene Kennedy put it, "at the head of a new cohort of leaders in Catholicism" – also confronted directly the emerging theological and political challenge to the distinctive characteristic of Catholic social teaching in America.<sup>32</sup> The meaning of that confrontation resonates today.

In January 1973, Bernardin was invited to the White House by President Nixon to participate in a grand East Room commemoration of the President's reelection, along with Reverend Billy Graham and Rabbi Edgar Magnin, both frequent visitors to the White House. As Kennedy described it, Bernardin was disquieted by Nixon's Inaugural Address, where the president "enunciated a primitivist Republican theme of rugged individualism, of prosperity, in effect, as God's reward to the Puritan strivings of Wasp America .... 'In our own lives,' Nixon said, 'let each ask not what will the government do for me, but what can I do for myself?' The thrust of his intentions was clear. His administration would take aim at what he perceived as the humanitarian excesses, the soft liberal concerns for the community at large that had characterized the Democratic overtures from Franklin D. Roosevelt to Lyndon B. Johnson." <sup>33</sup>

At the White House ceremony, both Rabbi Magnin and Reverend Graham spoke warmly of the president, as Nixon "beamed at such endorsements of his carefully contrived agenda. All eyes [then] turned to the dark-haired Catholic archbishop ...." Bernardin "in phrases whose meaning could not be misunderstood ... counter pointed Nixon's emphasis on rugged individualism. The task, [Bernardin] said, catching the president's dark-hooded eyes, 'is to eradicate that enervating individualism, based on selfish interests, that often works against the common good. That kind of individualism is illustrated in the demands for *absolute* rights for individuals without due concern for the rights of others, in the apathetic turning-off of politics because it is not immediately self-fulfilling, in a God-and-me theology that ignore the institution and realities of social concern .... The philosophy of this extreme individualism is directly counter to the spirit of biblical religion which emphasizes our relationship to others, our responsibility to neighbors which is the expression of our response to God....'"<sup>34</sup>

Kennedy concluded that on reflection, Bishop Bernardin was "satisfied that he had undramatically but unmistakably delivered a message both about Catholic values and the manipulation resistant character of the church ...." <sup>35</sup> In historical terms, Bernardin also had reaffirmed the historical and fundamental foundation of Catholic social teaching: neither capitalism nor the articulation of its meaning by a democratically elected president was correlated to Catholic belief.

## IV

### **The Bishops' Letter on *Economic Justice for All*, and the Conservative Strategic Attack**

The concerns about nuclear weapons and war have deep roots in the Church. Pope John XXIII expressed those concerns in 1963 in *Pacem in Terris*. The bishop's decision to address nuclear weapons and war in 1980 was consistent with that tradition, although their action also was disquieting to conservatives and those in the Reagan Administration. There was a concerted response to affect the content of *The Challenge of Peace*, including by Reagan's national security advisor, William Clark.

The Reagan-Bush ascendancy raised domestic unease as well. "Concern over the foreseeable human impact of cuts in social spending and overtly pro-business policies prompted Auxiliary Bishop Peter Rosazza of Hartford to propose that the Bishops [also] produce a statement on capitalism .... [Rosazza's] motion at the 1980 Bishops' meeting initiated what became *Economic Justice for All* .... [His] proposal ... was modified in the early stages ... to focus on the existing U.S. economy rather than on capitalism as a system."<sup>36</sup>

More, of course, was tempering the evolving religious and civic dialogue. *Roe v. Wade* and its moral and political implications also were now central to that public dialogue. The court decision and its implications largely occupied the political and intellectual imperatives of many progressives and liberals, especially *vis a vis* the Church. Slowly emerging as well – although not to crystallize until later in the decade – was the Democratic Party's movement to a more "centrist" social and economic orientation. In important political settings, the lessons and meaning of Catholic social teaching – that, even unwittingly, had tempered strongly the Party's approach to public and individual duty – were perceived as changing. To some observers and activists, those Catholic teachings were being deliberately diminished in emphasis.

In 1983 and 1984, as the public participatory process utilized by the bishops continued, Cardinal Bernardin began to articulate a "consistent ethic of life." In two major lectures, at Fordham and St. Louis University, he expressed his view that the "Catholic moral position and the public place of the Church ... in the American debate" can make a "significant defense of life in a comprehensive and consistent manner." He saw opposition to abortion, the death penalty and war and support for the quality of life as "respect for life." He described it this way at Fordham.<sup>37</sup>

If one contends, as we do, that the right of every fetus to be born should be protected by civil law ... then our moral, political and economic responsibilities do not stop at the moment of birth. Those who defend the right to life of the weakest among us must be equally visible in support of the quality of life of the powerless among us: the old and the young, the hungry and the homeless, the undocumented immigrant and the unemployed worker. Such a quality of life posture translates into specific political and economic positions on tax policy, employment generation, welfare policy, nutrition and feeding programs, and health care. Consistency means we cannot have it both ways. We cannot urge a compassionate society and vigorous public policy to protect the

rights of the Unborn and then argue that compassion and significant public programs on behalf of the needy undermine the moral fabric of society or are beyond the proper scope of governmental responsibility.

Such a "consistent ethic" reflected what Cardinal Bernardin later characterized at St. Louis University as the "seamless garment." He intended the "consistent ethic" to have practical application, including to the decisions of government and the conduct of political parties: "A consistent ethic of life seeks to present a coherent linkage among a diverse set of policies. It can and should be used to test party platforms, public policies, and political candidates."

The Simon/Novak conservatives were uneasy. The bishops - and Cardinal Bernardin especially - were affirming what had long been reasoned, witnessed and settled: at base, Catholic social teaching had consistently recognized that no correlation existed between Catholicism and the inherently self-centeredness practice of capitalism and the individualistic "freedom" of the free market. In addition to William Simon's often indelicate characterizations of the bishops' skill and intention, the Simon/Novak preemptive, deliberative and more comprehensive critique of the bishops' efforts was in *Toward the Future*. Their Lay Committee held hearings from July through September 1984, accompanied by a sophisticated public relations campaign. The resulting argument in *Toward the Future* was based, in part, on an oddly-crafted historical proposition central to its reasoning. Although *Rerum Novarum* was a witnessed response to the urban industrial revolution in the 1880s and 1890s, including in the United States, Simon/Novak posited the following proposition: "Catholic social thought grew up in an agrarian age", or, as put earlier in the critique, " ... Catholic teaching on the social virtue was developed in and for a pre-capitalist, pre-democratic era ...." <sup>38</sup>

Written on what its authors made to appear to be a blank slate, *Toward the Future* sought to bring Catholic social teaching, as if for the first time, "into fruitful contact with American institutions and experience ...." including "a new stress upon personal initiative ... " and the "[c]apitalist ... new emphasis on enterprise ...." Acknowledging that "Pope John Paul II is clearly in favor of a 'reformed' capitalism," the authors, nonetheless, believed that "Catholic social thought needs to examine more carefully the institutional causes of economic creativity...." <sup>39</sup>

*Toward the Future* drew heavily on selectively-parsed praise - from Catholic Bishops in the 1850s about the meaning of democracy, Tocqueville in the 1830s about the American penchant for forming associations and ventures<sup>40</sup>, and Lincoln (in his "own answer to Marx", ) on the character-building value of manual labor<sup>41</sup> - that, when supported by the amount given in individual charitable contributions and the number of new business associations established in 1983, demonstrated what had, presumably, not been fully appreciated by the Church about the "freedom" driven Christian virtues of capitalism.<sup>42</sup>

Largely ignored by the authors were any of the historically documented, harsh consequences of the "free market" (like the industrial revolution and the Depression) or the Church's consistent criticism of capitalism and the Church's affirmation of the duty of government and the communal duty to protect workers and the poor. Ignored as well was Tocqueville's prescient disquiet - witnessed by the Church in America and explicated with clarity by Pope Leo XIII 60 years later- about the corrosive effect to democracy posed by capitalism: <sup>43</sup>

I am of [the] opinion, on the whole, that the manufacturing aristocracy [in America] which is growing up under our eyes is one of the harshest which ever existed in the world .... [T]he friends of democracy should keep their eyes anxiously fixed in this direction; for if ever a permanent inequality of conditions and aristocracy penetrate into the world, it may be predicted that this is the gate by which they will enter.

Tocqueville's opinion was empirically based. He had observed that "[w]hen competition ... lessen [a manufacturer's] profits, he can reduce the wages of his workmen almost at will." Workmen, he continued, have "long been impoverished by oppression .... This state of dependence and wretchedness ... forms an exception to the general rule [in America], contrary to the rest of the community; but for this very reason, no circumstance is more important or more deserving of the especial consideration of the legislator ...." <sup>44</sup>

The Simon/Novak critique described the selectively-parsed praise as reflective of the Christian virtues of the American economy – individual freedom to act and associate *for business purposes*, the profit motive and the full expression of "self-interest" ("In economic matters, self interest... can encompass motives of holiness ....") <sup>45</sup>. Simon/Novak's benign description of the actual operation of capitalism in America – to elucidate and affirm these propositions of virtue – read like a story of warm-hearted men engaged in small business ventures, in an economically and culturally homogeneous rural setting, undertaken in the nineteenth century (although they do praise McDonalds). With a disquieting tongue in cheek they also "applaud the desire of so many Americans to seek employment ... even though we are aware that human dignity is independent of paid employment." <sup>46</sup> Calling on scripture and carefully selected extracts from the words of Pope John Paul II to support the profit motive, they make plain that "God is the God of liberty ... and of the random ... who respects the individuality of ... every human being"; that is, the God-bestowed "liberty" of individuals to engage in the "holiness" of self interest and capitalism. <sup>47</sup>

In tone, if not intent, the decidedly more lucid and historically explanatory *Toward the Future* reflected advertising executive Bruce Barton's 1925 book, *The Man Nobody Knows*. A very popular best seller (through Presidents Coolidge and Hoover, until the 1929 crash), Barton, relying on biblical scripture, concluded that Jesus was the "Founder of Modern Business"; and that, for example, the financial "fortune and immortality" of the founder of AT&T or the late night work of corporate partners at J.P. Morgan and Company – perhaps on "a million dollar deal" – was based on adherence to, and their success derived from, the conduct and words of Jesus. <sup>48</sup> There are, of course, important differences. Simon/Novak sought institutional change in the Church by directly and publicly confronting the bishops. They also sought, in a more nuanced and intellectual way than Barton, to affirm the free market orientation (within and without the United States) in broader historical and ideological imperatives for all to emulate; and, of particular consequence within America with its now large Catholic population, Simon/Novak sought to correlate, or make interchangeable, Catholicism, capitalism and democracy.

The bishops' letter on *Economic Justice for All* – issued shortly after *Toward the Future* – stated, at the outset: "Economic decisions have human consequences and moral content: they help or hurt people, strengthen or weaken family life, advance or diminish the quality of Justice

in our land." [par. 1] Although a lengthy and comprehensive document, containing both teachings and specific, informed calls for action by all Catholics, the following excerpts from the letter reflected the bishops' perspective and position on Catholic social teaching:

Followers of Christ must avoid a tragic separation between faith and everyday life. [par.5] .... In our letter, we write as pastors, not public officials. We speak as moral teachers, not economic technicians. We seek ... to lift up the human and ethical dimensions of economic life, aspects too often neglected in public discussion. We bring to this task a dual heritage of Catholic social teaching and traditional American values. [par.7] We also remember those who have been left behind in our progress. [par. 9] As bishops, in proclaiming the Gospel for these times we also manage institutions, balance budgets, meet payrolls. In this we see the human face of the economy. We feel the hurts and pains of our people. We feel the pain of our sisters and brothers who are poor, unemployed, homeless, living on the edge. The poor and vulnerable are on our doorsteps, in our parishes, in our service agencies, and in our shelters. We see too much hunger and injustice, too much suffering and despair .... [par. 10]

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Society as a whole ... has the moral responsibility to enhance human dignity and protect human rights .... [G]overnment has ... a positive moral responsibility in safeguarding human rights and ensuring that the minimum conditions of human dignity are met for all. [par.18]

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We call for a new national commitment to full employment. We say it is a social scandal that one of every seven Americans is poor .... We support measures to halt the loss of family farms and to resist the growing concentration in the ownership of agricultural resources. [par. 19]

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We need a spirituality that calls forth and supports lay initiative and witness not just to our churches but also in business, in the labor movement, in the professions, in education, and in public life.... We cannot separate what we believe from how we act in the marketplace ... for this is where we make our primary contribution to the pursuit of economic justice. [par.25]

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The fundamental moral criterion for all economic decisions, policies and institutions is this: They must be at the service of *all people, especially the poor*. [par.24] No one may claim the name of Christian and be comfortable in the face of hunger, homelessness, insecurity, and injustice found in this country.[par.27]

Within this spiritual, moral and "American" framework, the letter addressed specific problems - the effects of overseas competition, unemployment, environmental degradation, poverty among women, children, blacks, Hispanics and Native Americans and the "lack of mutually supportive relation between family life and economic life," deficits, interest rates, corporate mergers and takeovers and new technology and science.<sup>49</sup> With specific respect to individual duty in the private sector, the bishops wrote: "Without constructive guidance in

making decisions with serious moral implications, men and women who hold positions of responsibility in corporations or government find their duties exacting a heavy price. We want these reflections to help them contribute to a more just economy." [par.24]

Pope John Paul II did not immediately affirm or even embrace the letter. On a visit to America shortly after it was issued, his failure to reference it in numerous public discussion (even when "confronted" by nuns and priests asking him questions about the letter's underlying purpose; the "questioning", of course, reflective of a Second Vatican Council sense of freedom and duty), was viewed as a powerful signal of his discomfort. As subsequent events demonstrated (in 1991, he wholly endorsed the letter's purpose and principles without, again, referring to it), Pope John Paul's discomfort was largely with the bishops' exertion of authority. The "opening" for conservatives – who may have expected the pope's reaction, although they didn't need it to challenge the bishops or engage the country – was readily enhanced.

Nonetheless, *Rerum Novarum* in its original iteration, and its explicit reiteration and affirmation by the bishops in *Economic Justice for All* in 1986, so severely discomfited conservative Catholics, in and out of the Church, they believed it warranted a detailed discrediting and, at times, a less than subtle ridicule. They had the playing field largely to themselves.

## V

### **Pope John Paul II: Reaffirming *Rerum Novarum* in His Own Authority, and the Conservative Effort to Define It**

The historic context for *Centesimus Annus*, in 1991, was critical to understanding it. The world was witnessing the fundamental demise of Marxism and socialism in a Communist setting, especially through the Solidarity movement in the pope's native Poland. It was a time of choice in selecting new forms of government and social obligations. The pope was intent on providing Church teaching on both.

*Centesimus Annus* commemorated the hundredth anniversary of *Rerum Novarum*. It also "honors those encyclicals and other documents ... that have helped to make Pope Leo's encyclical present and alive in history, thus constituting what would come to be called the Church's 'social doctrine,' 'social teaching' or even 'social magisterium.'" [par.2] Pope John Paul II reiterated the Church's "defense and approval of the establishment of ... trade unions [which] ... 'cannot ... be prohibited by the State.'" [par. 7] And, he also stated, the workers' "right to a 'just wage,' which cannot be left to the 'free consent of the parties' ... " [par. 8], but, in order to ensure the worker is not made "the victim of force and injustice," a wage reflective of fairness and justice must be assured by the "public authority." [par. 8] This right was an affirmation of *Rerum Novarum*.

So, too, was Pope John Paul's criticism of capitalism: "Unfortunately, even today one finds instances of contracts between employers and employees which lack reference to the elementary justice regarding the employment of children and women, working hours, the hygienic conditions of the workplace and fair play .... " In this context, the pope selected out the capitalism of the liberal state for special criticism: "The State cannot limit itself to 'favoring one portion of the citizens,' namely the rich and prosperous, nor can it 'neglect the other,' which



clearly represents the majority of society .... When there is a question of defending the rights of individuals, the defenseless and the poor have a claim to special consideration." [par. 10] The pope also embraced as his own the Christian doctrine - implicit in *Rerum Novarum*, articulated by the Latin American Bishops in 1971 and the Bishops' letter in 1986 - of the "preferential option for the poor." He wrote: "Rereading the [1891] encyclical in light of contemporary realities ... is an excellent testimony to the continuity within the Church of the so-called 'preferential option for the poor' .... " [par. 11]

Much of the remainder of *Centesimus Annus* was devoted to the tumultuous political changes in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union, the reasons for the failure of Marxism (anticipated, in part, in *Rerum Novarum*), and the need to provide Catholic thought to the evaluation of new choices for nations and individuals. In this context, Pope John Paul again focused on the communal duty of all participants and, in doing so, reiterated the State's duty with respect to two principles central to Catholic social teaching: subsidiary (decisions must be made by those most directly affected), and solidarity ("the State must contribute ... [d]irectly and according to the principle of solidarity, by defending the weakest, by placing certain limits on the autonomy of the parties who determine working conditions, and by ensuring in every case the necessary minimum support for the unemployed worker.") [par. 15]

In encouraging a direction away from socialism and Marxism as he experienced and witnessed it, the pope stated that, "It would appear that ... the free market is the most efficient instrument for utilizing resources and effectively responding to needs." He immediately reaffirmed, again, his concerns for its vices: "But there are many human needs which find no place in the market. It is a strict duty of justice and truth not to allow fundamental human needs to remain unsatisfied, and not to allow those burdened by such needs to perish." [par. 34] And later in the encyclical: "[T]hese mechanisms [of the 'central place to the person's desires and preference'] carry the risk of an 'idolatry' of the market, an idolatry which ignores the existence of goods and services which by their nature are not and cannot be mere commodities." [par. 40] Furthermore, he added, "the historical experience of the West, for its part, shows that ... alienation - and the loss of the authentic meaning of life - is a reality in Western societies too. This happens in consumerism .... Alienation is found also at work, when it is organized so as to ensure maximum returns and profits with no concern [ for] the worker .... " [par. 41] There also must be a "strong juridical framework which places [the free economy] at the service of human freedom .... " [par. 42]

Earlier in the encyclical, the pope stated that there is an "error ... in an understanding of freedom, which detaches it from obedience to truth, and consequently from the duty to respect the rights of others. The essence of freedom then becomes self-love carried to the point of contempt for God and neighbor, a self-love which leads to an unbridled affirmation of self-interest and which refuse to be limited by any demand of justice." [par. 17] "In the countries of the West, different forms of poverty are being experienced by groups which live on the margins of society, by the elderly and the sick, by the victims of consumerism, and even more immediate by so many refugees and migrants."

The pope also added the following, in the context of the choices now confronting those emerging from Communist totalitarianism and his unease about what "freedom" might bring: there must be an "explicit recognition of ... rights. Among the most important ... must be ... the

right of the child to develop in the mother's womb from the moment of conception; the right to live in a united family and in a moral environment conducive to the growth of the child's personality .... " [par. 47]

*Centesimus Annus* was read by the Simon/Novak conservatives as an endorsement of capitalism and the "free market", virtually without qualification. The pope's disquiet and realistic understanding of the meaning of "self interest" as so often exercised in the practice of the "free market" and explicitly recognized in the encyclical was of no consequence. Here is what William Simon said in an interview in response to a question about the "preferential option for the poor," the essential moral underpinning of *Economic Justice* and Pope John Paul's encyclical:<sup>50</sup>

Somebody once said that preferential option for the poor sounds like a bad English translation of a bad Spanish translation of a dumb German idea. And there is no question that the preferential option has been used to promote a socialist agenda and state-center development schemes in the Third World. But I think the pope has taken a decisive step in the right direction with *Centesimus Annus*, which stresses that the poor are empowered best through participation in a free economy. That is what I mean by a preferential option for the poor ...

Although a more thoughtful, at least rhetorically, analysis existed (especially from Novak), Simon's characterization defined -largely and loudly - what was presumed to be the "religious/lay" attitude with respect to the meaning of Catholic social teaching. Similar characterizations came from within *The Wall Street Journal* ("Capitalism is the economic corollary of the Christian understanding of man's nature and destiny .... " (May 1, 1991)); *The Washington Times* (" ... the leader of the largest institutional religious body in the world has given his own moral sanction to the free economy." (May 3, 1991)); and Simon/Novak in *The National Catholic Reporter* ("Many Americans have criticized our welfare state for its inefficiency and expense, for weakening the family and for turning the poor into passive clients with little incentive to help themselves ... He calls on all of us to help the poor in more 'neighborly and personal ways' .... "(May 24, 1991)).<sup>51</sup> In its editorial, however, *The National Catholic Reporter* read the encyclical differently: "This is a far cry from the high-rolling, union-busting, deregulated capitalism of the Reagan-Bush years, yet commentators in the United States, Catholics among them, are already saying that the document endorses capitalism and ends the argument about socialism or a 'third way.' In fact, it does not end the argument; it opens it up .... " (May 10, 1991). And, on National Public Radio (May 2, 1991), came the following view: "The latest encyclical focuses on the practical materialism of market economies, their unbridled search for profit, consumerism, and selfishness without solidarity.... The [pope] calls for state intervention to regulate market economies through a strong legal system that also takes into consideration the ethical and religious needs of the human person ... [and] ... the pope's concern that what he calls the viruses of Western capitalism now threaten to contaminate the lands of Eastern Europe, recently liberated from Marxist ideology." <sup>52</sup>

By the early 1990s, Cardinal Bernardin and others within the American church hierarchy, although fully embracing the Church's fundamental doctrines on abortion and the death penalty, were plainly and more frequently criticized within and without the Church. Pope John Paul II had elevated two individuals to cardinal, John O'Connor to New York and Bernard Law to

Boston. Both, albeit in different ways, embraced fully both the Curia's insistence on "restoration" of the pope's singular authority (and a more direct relationship between themselves and Rome) and, by implication from the pope's core theological emphasis, the diminishment in emphasis of the practical fullness of Catholic social teaching and the value of dialogue within the Church and among the laity to ensure its attainment.<sup>53</sup> Bernardin and those who shared his view were not deterred, although in historical terms it is quite plain that for some years *few* individuals outside of the church - especially among those who had once powerfully embraced the same moral and policy imperatives - were providing him and his colleagues' substantive, rhetorical or political encouragement.

In 1996, only a few weeks away from being diagnosed with pancreatic cancer, Cardinal Bernardin, with the support of Roger Cardinal Mahony of Los Angeles, developed an initiative he termed "Common Ground." It should be viewed, in part, as an evolution from or institutional context for his belief in the "consistent ethic of life" and for, what was obvious to him and others, the need for dialogue among all elements of the Church. His intent, as Kennedy described it, was to "provide a forum in which Catholics, much like members of a family, would be able to resolve their apparent differences through dialogues with each other.... If each side listened to the other, understandings would resolve difficulties."

In "Called to be Catholic: Church in a Time of Peril," presented in August 1996, Cardinal Bernardin posed the question: "Will the Catholic Church in the United States enter the new millennium as a Church of promise or as a Church on the defensive?" He believed "American Catholics must reconstitute the conditions for addressing our differences constructively' ... [which] could only be achieved by seeking 'a common ground centered on faith in Jesus, marked by accountability to the living Catholic tradition, and ruled by a renewed spirit of civility, dialogue, generosity, and broad and serious consultation.'"<sup>54</sup> The response within the Church hierarchy was unusual in that it happened publicly. The response also was harsh, immediate and, certainly in retrospect, readily predictable. Cardinal Law led it.

Bernardin's positions "are not very helpful," Law said. "Dissent from revealed truth or the authoritative teaching of the Church cannot be 'dialogued away.'"<sup>55</sup> Cardinal Hickey of Washington added that Bernardin's proposal "does not give the Magisterium (the teaching authority of the Church) its due." Undeterred and now carrying the diagnosis of death, Cardinal Bernardin addressed his deep belief in Catholic social teaching and the need for a consistent ethic of life that ensured that "religious values [are brought] to bear on the nation's problems. He sharply criticized congressional changes in welfare and health care, saying that 'the extended policy debates on these issues, in my view, failed to meet basic standards of responsibility' towards the sick and children .... [E]valuated 'from the standpoint of those for whom we bear moral responsibility, change does not equal reform, it looks more like abandonment.'" In a poignant reminder to some, who perhaps too vigorously had separated their moral values derived from Catholicism from their role as public officials, Cardinal Bernardin said that a "policy of excluding religious vision, discourse and insights from our search is a price too high to pay. Without vision, people perish."<sup>56</sup>

### **Conclusion**

This paper is largely a general historical and analytical survey, not a theological one. It is intended only as a framework for dialogue and an impetus for further analysis. Its focus is

primarily the period between 1980 and 1986, when the essential controversy over the meaning of Catholic social teaching in America seemed to form. Two broad conclusions, however, are readily apparent.

1. **The Resilience, or Endurance, of Catholic Social Teaching.** Since the formal issuance of *Rerum Novarum*, with its own reliance on the life and intention of Jesus, through the issuance and subsequent affirmation of *Centesimus Annus* by Pope John Paul II, the Catholic Church has recognized and bound itself and those who share its faith to a commitment to serve and protect, and to insist on the protection of, the lives and welfare and integrity of the poor and workers. The Church has, throughout that time, been especially concerned, at times severely critical of elementary aspects of the "free market" and, without equivocation, has looked to Catholics - in their individual capacity regardless of vocation, and to government, in its communal duty - to affirmatively protect and ensure the worth, integrity and welfare of those least able to do so. That teaching is not a mere general assertion of principles. It contains specific moral and Catholic obligations, some of which are set out in this paper and referenced in its endnotes.

The historical commitment, *when* it has been manifested in practical terms, of progressive Catholics and Democrats to confront and alleviate poverty and to protect and enhance the rights and lives of workers - especially from the harm and inequity that has often tempered capitalism and the market forces - reflects the Catholic social teaching in *Rerum Novarum*, *Economic Justice for All* and *Centesimus Annus*. So, too, does the Democrat position on the minimum wage, medical support for the elderly, social security, some aspects of farm policy, the protection of immigrants and minorities and much more. It also is evident, *when* it has been manifested in practical terms, in the need for more effective regulation of corporate conduct and the "free market." That historical commitment is evident as well in the criticism of such conduct found, for example, in the actions of those individuals who masterminded years of Enron abuses of employees, shareholders, families and communities - in many cases irreparably - and in the actions (or the failure to act) of those government regulators who allowed those abuses to happen over such a long period of time.

The clergy's once practical support for the formation of labor unions and the rights and welfare of workers seems, at once, a duty now largely neglected and one worthy of renewed dialogue. The recent efforts of labor - especially the critical effort to organize low paid and often readily expended employees in Wal-Mart (among others), or migrant workers or service workers - may be tempered by the moral imperatives that once invoked the support of the Catholic Church and are still articulated as essential to Catholic social teaching.

2. **The Simon/Novak Model and the "De-emphasis" within the Catholic Church.** Conservatives have redefined Catholic social teaching in the Simon-Novak model; that is, to be lived and attained by individuals through the virtues of capitalism, the "free market" and "self interest." They have sought to correlate, or align, capitalism with Catholicism and democracy, at times and in a manner that suggests they are practically interchangeable. In broad historical terms, the stakes for Catholic social teaching are important. Put differently, the Simon/Novak perspective is, at base, an economic model that continues to resonate; one that minimizes or eliminates a societal, or governmental, communal duty to attain the precepts, means and goals of Catholic social teaching with respect to the poor, minorities, the elderly and workers. Generally,

the American Church hierarchy's de-emphasis of its historic commitment to its social teaching (to some, its practical abandonment of the playing field) has ensured conservatives the freedom to give practical meaning to the proposition, as Simon/Novak put it in *Liberty for All*, "In economic matters, self interest. . . can encompass motives of holiness ...."

Viewed through this conservative economic perspective and with the Church's emphasis largely elsewhere, the so-called, recently established "faith-based initiative", is intended – within some church-state guidelines – to encourage primarily religiously-supported individual "charity", without the complement of a societal communal duty or the full effort required of the State that every pope since Leo XIII has articulated with clarity. In the 1930s, 1940s, 1950s and well into the 1970s, progressives, in and out of the Church, found ways (some probably quite imaginative) to support labor, civic and religious groups that addressed the needs of the poor, minorities, elderly, the poorly-housed, the underfed and immigrants. When President Carter appointed a Catholic priest to be the Assistant Secretary of Housing and Urban Development for Neighborhoods, Voluntary Associations and Consumer Protection, it's likely the Democrats and progressive Catholics expected that Monsignor Geno Baroni understood and would act on the underlying principles of his vocational life. In the end, progressives, liberals, labor and the Democrats provided this support in a context of individual, corporate, *communal and governmental* duty. Although *rarely articulated*, that support was consistent with Catholic social teaching beginning with Pope Leo's *Rerum Novarum*.

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1 Encyclical of Pope Leo XIII, *Rerum Novarum* ("New Things"), promulgated May 15, 1891 (hereinafter *Rerum Novarum*).

2 *Rerum Novarum* , par. 1.

3 Encyclical of Pope John XXIII, *Mater et Magistra* (Mother and Teacher: On Christianity and Social Progress), promulgated on May 15, 1961. (hereinafter *Mater et Magistra*).

4 Encyclical of Pope John XXIII, *Pacem in Terris* (Peace on Earth), promulgated April 11, 1963.

5 Pastoral Letters of the U.S. Catholic Bishops, *The Challenge of Peace: God's Promise and Our Response* (1983) and *Economic Justice for All: Catholic Social Teaching and the U.S. Economy* (1986) (hereinafter *Economic Justice for All*).

6 *Economic Justice for All*, par. 21. The purpose of the "Experiment" is "to implement economic rights, to broaden the sharing of economic power, and to make economic decisions more accountable to the common good."

7 *Toward the Future: Catholic Social Thought and the U.S. Economy – A Lay Letter* (1984), was published largely with Simon's financial support (hereinafter *Toward the Future*). See Berryman, *Our Unfinished Business*, ix, cited below at note 36.

8 *Toward the Future and Liberty and Justice for All* (1986).

9 The members were Congressmen Thomas Corcoran (Illinois), Henry Hyde (Illinois), Guy Molinari (New York), Joseph Skeen (New Mexico) and Vincent Weber (Minnesota).

10 See Pope John Paul's Encyclical, *Centesimus Annus* (On the Hundred Anniversary of *Rerum Novarum*), par. 5 (hereinafter referred to as *Centesimus Annus*) : "The Pope's approach

in publishing *Rerum Novarum* gave the Church 'citizen status' as it were amid the changing realities of public life, and this standing would be more fully confirmed later on."

11 *Centesimus Annus*, par. 11: "The contents of [Pope Leo's] text is an excellent testimony to the continuity within the Church of the so-called 'preferential option for the poor' ...."

12 Sullivan, Mary Louise, MSC, *Mother Cabrini, Italian Immigrant of the Century*. New York, Center for Migration Studies (1992), 18 (hereinafter *Mother Cabrini*).

13 *Mother Cabrini*, 18

14 *Mother Cabrini*, 36.

15 *Mother Cabrini*, 38-41

16 *Mother Cabrini*, 3, 79.

17 *Mother Cabrini*, 1.

18 Bokenkotter, Thomas. *A Concise History of the Catholic Church*. Doubleday, New York (2004), 371 (hereinafter *Concise History*).

19 *Concise History*, 376.

20 *Concise History*, 377.

21 *Concise History*, 377.

22 Daniel Okrent, *Great Fortune, The Epic of Rockefeller Center*. Viking, New York (2003), 280-281.

23 *Concise History*, 377; Salvenmini, Gaetano, *Italian Fascist Activities in the United States*. Center for Migration Studies, New York (1977). This book is the previously unpublished work of Salvenmini, a vehement anti-fascist, who was exiled and then sought refuge in the United States. He taught at the New School in New York, Harvard and Yale. See, especially, Chapter 4, "Roman Catholic Priests", 145-164.

24 Gaetano Salvemini, *Italian Fascists Activities in the United States*. Center for Migration Studies, New York (1977), 147 (see generally 145-164)

25 *Concise History*, 379-380. 26. See, for example, James Forest, "The Catholic Worker Movement, A Biography of Dorothy Day", written for the *Encyclopedia of American Catholic History* and also found at [www.catholicworker.org](http://www.catholicworker.org).

27 *Concise History*, 380.

28 *Concise History*, 406.

29 Harrington, Michael, *The Other America, Poverty in the United States*. The Macmillan Company, New York (1963).

28 *RFK, Collected Speeches*. Guthman, Edwin O. and Allen, Richard C., Ed. Viking Press, New York (1993) (Comments by Anna Quindlen, xxix-xxx).

31 "Catholic Radicals: Shock, Challenge", *Washington Post*, (March 7, 1971), A1.

32 Eugene Kennedy, *Bernardin: Life To The Full, A Biography*. Bonus Books, Inc., Chicago (1989, 1997) 112 (hereinafter "Kennedy").

33 Kennedy, 113.

34 Kennedy, 114

35 Kenndey,114.

36 Berryman, Phillip, *Our Unfinished Business, The US. Catholic Bishops' Letters on Peace and the Economy*, Pantheon, New York (1989), x, 75-76. (hereinafter "Berryman")

37 "A Consistent Ethic of Life: An American-Catholic Dialogue", Gannon Lecture, Fordham University (December 6, 1983) "A Consistent Ethic of Life: Continuing the Dialogue," The William Wade Lecture Series, St. Louis University (March 11, 1984).

38 *Toward the Future*, 27,7.

39 *Toward the Future*, 26.

40 *Toward the Future*, 10.

41 *Toward the Future*, 16.

42 *Toward the Future*, 18.

43 Alex De Tocqueville, *Democracy in Americ*. Mentor Book edition,New York (1956), 220.

44 *Democracy in America*, 228.

45 *Toward the Future*, 39.

46 *Toward the Future*, 57.

47 *Toward the Future*, 76.

48 Bruce Barton, *The Man Nobody Knows*. Ivan R. Dee, Inc ,Chicago (2000),79-81. See, generally, 75-89 and Introduction. The original was published in 1925 by Bobbs-Merrill.

49 *Economic Justice for All*: unemployment and economic solutions [par. 13 8-169]; poverty and economic inequality among women, children, racial minorities and guidelines for action [par.170-215; food, agriculture and family farms and actions to deal with each [par.216-250].

50 Interview with William Simon, *Religion & Liberty* (September/October 1991, quoted in May/June 2001 issue).

51 These excerpts are found in *Religion & Liberty*, a publication of the Acton Institute for the Study of Religion and Liberty, (May and June 1991, Vol. 1, Number 3).

52 *Religion & Liberty*, May and June 1991.

53 Kennedy, 257 et al.

54 Kennedy, 326-327.

55 Kennedy, 327.

56 Kennedy, 335-336.