SELECTED PASSAGES FROM 
CARITAS IN VERITATE 
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I

POPULORUM PROGRESSIO 

In view of the problem of development presented today as compared with forty years ago, a fresh reading of Populorum Progressio within the context of Paul VI’s magisterium, its connection with the Second Vatican Council, and the Church’s social doctrine, recalls that the Church is at the service of the world in terms of love and truth. According to Paul, the whole Church is engaged in promoting authentic development of the whole person: Integral human development is a vocation involving responsibility in solidarity on the part of everyone. Without a transcendent vision of the person; without God, man ends up promoting a dehumanized form of development.

Pope Paul already recognized and drew attention to the global dimension of the social question. In his time, negative ideologies weakened cultures and idealized technical progress, detaching it from moral evaluation (the links between life ethics and social ethics). He repeatedly underlined the urgent need for reform in the face of great injustices and called for courageous action without delay. By turning the light of the Gospel on the social questions of his time, Paul VI saw that evangelization is the missionary aspect of the Church’s social doctrine, that progress is a vocation concerned with man’s pilgrimage through history, that a humanism open to the Absolute gives life its true meaning. This vision of development is what makes his encyclical still timely, amid the competing anthropological visions put forward in today’s society. A vocation requires a free and responsible answer, an assumption of shared responsibility. Because of the central place of charity in the Christian vocation to development, it helps to promote the whole man and the advancement and fraternity of all men, both on the natural and the supernatural plane: Christ fully reveals humanity to itself. This is the central message of Populorum Progressio, valid for today and for all time.

II

THE THEME OF DEVELOPMENT 

Forty years from the Encyclical Populorum Progressio of Pope Paul VI, I intend to revisit his teachings on integral human development, applying them to the present moment. Love in truth is a great challenge for the Church in our time, when the interdependence of nations is not matched by ethical interaction of consciences that would give rise to truly human development. An empiricist and skeptical view of life is incapable of grasping the values by which to direct it.

The human race, a single family, must be transformed into true communion. It is not in isolation that man establishes his worth, but in his relations with others and with God. The theme of development is
inclusive of all individuals and peoples within the one community of the human family illuminated by the relationship among the Persons of the Trinity. Human relationships cannot but be enriched by reference to this divine model. God desires to incorporate us into His Communion.

Some religious and cultural attitudes, however, retard or even obstruct authentic human development by giving rise to separation and disengagement, alienating people and distancing them from reality instead of bringing them together. It becomes difficult for love and truth to assert themselves, and development is impeded. In the universal human community discernment of and respect for the common good has to be based on charity and truth. Christianity contains this criterion within itself. Secularism and fundamentalism exclude the possibility of fruitful dialogue and effective cooperation between reason and religious faith. Religion always has to be purified by reason.

**Human development, closely bound up with our understanding of the soul, must include not just material growth but also spiritual growth.** Everyone experiences the many immaterial and spiritual dimensions of life. But the contemporary technological mindset loses awareness of the soul’s ontological depths, and man’s interiority is emptied of its meaning. A purely psychological point of view fails to understand the spiritual life. Despite the availability of countless therapies, when man is far from God he is unsettled and ill at ease. Social and psychological alienation, many neuroses, and slavery to drugs are attributable in part to spiritual factors. To be authentic, development requires new eyes and a new heart capable of rising above a materialistic vision of human events. By following this path, it is possible to pursue the integral development that takes its direction from charity in truth.

Charity in truth is the principal force behind development of every person and of all humanity. Charity “rejoices in the truth” (1 Cor 13:6). In Christ charity in truth becomes a vocation to love our brothers and sisters in the truth of his plan: He himself is the Truth (Jn 14:6).

Truth needs to be sought, found, and expressed within charity, but charity needs to be understood, confirmed, and practiced in the light of truth. It is creative love, redemptive love. Charity promotes and animates the wisdom capable of directing man in light of his beginning and final end. Deeds without knowledge are blind, and knowledge without love is sterile. Charity in truth requires knowledge that goes beyond human understanding; science cannot indicate by itself the path toward integral human development. Intelligence and love are not in separate compartments: love is rich in intelligence, and intelligence is full of love. Moral evaluation and scientific research must go hand in hand; charity must animate them as a harmonious interdisciplinary whole marked by unity and distinction.

The challenge of development is closely linked to technological pro-
gress. It is a response to God’s command to till and keep the land. Technology expresses the dominion of spirit over matter; ‘freed from bondage to creatures we are more easily drawn to worship and contemplation of the Creator.’

But if the development of technology gives rise to the intoxicating idea that it is self-sufficient—an expression of absolute freedom from the limits inherent in things—it holds us back from encountering being and truth by making efficiency and utility the sole criteria. Our actions always remain subject to human limitations; our freedom is authentic only when it responds to moral responsibility. Without formation in the ethically responsible use of technology, development could come to be considered a purely technical matter. True development is impossible without upright consciences tuned to the requirements of the common good. Professional competence must be accompanied by moral consistency.

Development goes awry if humanity thinks it can re-create itself through the ‘wonders’ of technology, just as economic development is exposed as a destructive sham if it relies on the ‘wonders’ of finance to sustain consumerist growth. In the face of such Promethean presumption, we must fortify love for a freedom that is truly human because of the good that underlies it. Our freedom is shaped by our being and by its limits (the natural moral law). A ‘self’ is given to us. Each of us is outside his own control. A person’s development is compromised if he claims to be solely responsible for producing what he becomes.

A particularly crucial battleground in today’s cultural struggle between the supremacy of technology and moral responsibility is the field of bioethics, where the very possibility of integral human development is radically called into question. In this most delicate and critical area, the fundamental question asserts itself forcefully: Is man the product of his own labor or does he depend on God? In this field, scientific discoveries and the possibilities of technological intervention seem so advanced as to force a choice between reason that is open to transcendence and reason that is closed within immanence. Self-centered use of technology proves to be irrational because it implies a decisive rejection of meaning and value. Entranced by exclusive reliance on technology, reason without faith is doomed to flounder in an illusion of its own omnipotence. Only together will they save man.

Technological development is also linked to the increasingly pervasive presence of the means of social communication, an integral part of life today. The meaning and purpose of the media must be sought within an anthropological perspective: They can have a civilizing effect when geared toward a vision of the person and the common good that reflects universal values. The media can make an important contribution toward the growth in natural and supernatural communion of the human family when, inspired by charity at the service of truth, they pro-
mote the dignity of persons and universal participation in the common search for what is just.

Human beings interpret and shape the natural environment through culture, which is given direction by the responsible use of freedom in accordance with the moral law. Consequently integral human development cannot ignore coming generations, but needs to be marked by solidarity and intergenerational justice. Protection of the environment, of resources, and of the climate obliges international leaders to act jointly in good faith. The Church, too, has a responsibility to defend not only the earth, the ecological system; she must above all protect mankind (human ecology) from self-destruction. The book of nature is one and indivisible: it includes not only the environment but also life, education, sexuality, marriage, the family—the overall moral tenor of society.

Nature expresses a design of love and truth. It is prior to us; it has been given to us by God as the setting for our life. The Christian vision of nature as the fruit of God’s creation is closely related to the duties arising from our relationship to the natural environment, its responsible use with respect for the balance of creation. The Creator has given nature an inbuilt order. But nature is not more important than the human person—a naturalistic position that leads to neo-paganism or a new pantheism. These distorted notions do as much harm to development as reckless exploitation of the environment. Besides care and preservation of the environment, responsible stewardship over nature requires improved energy efficiency through a worldwide redistribution of energy resources.

Humanity is becoming increasingly interconnected. Hence a commitment is needed to promote a person-based and community-oriented cultural process of world-wide integration that is open to transcendence. Guided by charity and truth, and acting in the light of reason, a possibility opens for large-scale redistribution of wealth on a world-wide scale. But globalization also presents difficulties and dangers. The humanizing goal of solidarity is often overwhelmed or suppressed by individualistic and utilitarian ethical and cultural considerations. The principal concern must be to improve actual living conditions.

Basic rights are violated in much of the world. Hence it is important to call for a renewed reflection on how rights presuppose duties. The sharing of reciprocal duties is a more powerful incentive to action than the mere assertion of rights. The voca-

tion to development is not based simply on human choice, but is an intrinsic part of a plan that is prior to us and constitutes a duty to be freely accepted. Subsistent Love and Truth shows us what goodness is and in what our true happiness consists. He shows us the path to true development.

Although the human being is made for gift, modern man is selfishly closed in upon himself as a consequence of original sin, present in so-
cial conditions and in the structure of society. This has given rise to serious errors in education, politics, social action and morals. The conviction that man is self-sufficient has led him to confuse happiness with material prosperity. Likewise, the conviction that the economy must be autonomous has led man to abuse the economic process in a destructive way. These convictions have led to economic, social, and political systems that trample on personal and social freedom.

Charity in truth feeds on hope. As a gratuitous gift of God, hope bursts into our lives. Truth, too, is a gift, in the same way as charity: the truth of ourselves is given to us. Truth, like love, is not something we produce; it imposes itself upon us. Because it is a gift received by everyone, charity in truth brings people together and builds community. Thus economic, social, and political development needs to make room for the principle of gratuitousness, the logic of gift, as an expression of fraternity.

III

THE WORLD TODAY

Another logic—commercial logic, the logic of the market—regulates giving and receiving between parties to a transaction (commutative justice). But without social cohesion, solidarity and mutual trust (distributive and social justice), the market cannot completely fulfill its proper economic function. Today this trust has ceased to exist—a grave loss. Economic activity (commercial logic) needs to be directed toward the pursuit of the common good. Economic activity must include friendship, solidarity, and reciprocity because that is part of human activity. It must be structured and governed in an ethical manner.

A great challenge before us is for gratuitousness and the logic of gift to find their place within normal economic activity. It is a demand of charity and of truth. For economic activity inevitably has moral implications: Every economic decision has moral consequences. Hence all the canons of justice must be respected. In a global era economic life needs both contracts (commutative justice—conditional exchanges) and the spirit of gift (forms of redistribution: distributive justice—unconditional gift). Fraternal reciprocity must be present, an economy of gratuitousness, to foster solidarity and the common good. Solidarity is a sense of responsibility on the part of everyone with regard to everyone. Without gratuitousness there can be no justice.

Today’s economic scene (the corporate world) requires a new way of understanding business enterprise, the broader significance of business activity. With attentiveness to ways of civilizing the economy, charity in truth aims at a higher goal than the mere commercial logic of exchange, profit-oriented private and public enterprise. The State’s role seems destined to grow, for political authority (local, national, international) is one of the best ways to give direction to the process of economic globalization. It is also the way to
ensure that it does not undermine the foundations of democracy.

The new elements in the development of peoples today demand new solutions in the light of an integral vision of the human person purified by charity. Further and deeper reflection on the meaning of the economy and its goals is required so as to correct its dysfunctions and deviations—a profound and far-sighted revision of the current model of development, of the earth’s ecological health, and of the cultural and moral crisis of man.

More than forty years after Populorum Progressio, its basic concern—progress—remains an open question. How difficult the process of decolonization has been because of new forms of colonialism, and because of continued dependence and grave irresponsibility within newly independent countries. The principal new feature has been the explosion of worldwide interdependence (globalization). Without the guidance of charity in truth this great opportunity could cause unprecedented damage. Hence charity in truth is about knowing and directing these powerful new forces within the perspective of that ‘civilization of love’ whose seed God has planted in every people, in every culture.

Today the social question has become a radically anthropological question. In today’s highly disillusioned culture the very origin of life is within our grasp. Biotechnology places it increasingly under man’s control: eugenic programming of births, in vitro fertilization, embryo research, the possibility of manufacturing clones and human hybrids. We must not underestimate the disturbing scenarios that threaten our future—indeed are already surreptitiously present—or the powerful new instruments the ‘culture of death’ has at its disposal. The scourge of abortion and a pro-euthanasia mindset are equally damaging assertions of control over life (its materialistic and mechanistic understanding).

Who could measure the negative effects for development of this kind of mentality? What is astonishing is the arbitrary and selective determination of what is put forward today as worthy of respect. Insignificant matters are considered shocking while unprecedented injustices seem to be widely tolerated and situations of human degradation are treated with indifference on account of a conscience that can no longer distinguish what is from what is not human. God reveals man to man himself. Reason and faith work hand in hand to demonstrate what is good, provided we want to see it. The natural law reveals our greatness, but also our wretchedness insofar as we fail to recognize the call to moral truth.

The economic, social, and political goal of rescuing peoples from hunger, deprivation, diseases and illiteracy is weighed down by malfunction and dramatic problems of the current crisis, political irresponsibility, badly managed and largely speculative financial dealing, migration of peoples given insufficient attention, unregulated exploitation of the
earth’s resources—all this requires a new humanistic synthesis taken up with confidence and hope. Cuts in social spending and downsizing of social security systems pose great danger for the fundamental human rights of workers. Our world is in need of cultural renewal to rediscover fundamental values. The current crisis requires us to re-plan our journey. It is an opportunity for discernment of a new vision of the future. It is appropriate to address the difficulties of the present time with confidence rather than resignation.

By liberating ourselves from ideologies that oversimplify reality, we can examine objectively the full human dimension of the problems: wealth is growing, but new forms of poverty are emerging along with dehumanizing deprivation, corruption and illegality, and diversion of international aid. A comprehensive new plan for development is a duty that needs to be discharged in the new context of international trade and finance that has brought new forms of political participation and altered the political powers of States. Those powers need to be remodeled in order to address the challenges of today’s profoundly changed environment. New forms of cooperation, international and local, are urgently needed.

In the face of human decline, food shortages, waste of social resources, unemployment and economic marginalization of persons and their families, I would like to remind everyone, especially governments, that the primary capital to be safeguarded and valued is man. What is missing is a network of economic institutions capable of guaranteeing regular access to food and water and promoting agricultural development and agrarian reform. Today the possibility of interaction between cultures has increased, but cultural eclecticism, cultural relativism, and cultural leveling do not serve true intercultural dialogue. Humanity runs new risks of enslavement and manipulation when culture is separated from our common human nature that transcends it.

The question of acceptance and respect for life cannot be detached from the development of peoples. Poverty still provokes high rates of infant mortality, while in developed countries an anti-birth mentality promotes legislation contrary to life that imposes mandatory birth control, as if cultural progress required demographic control, contraception, sterilization, and even abortion and euthanasia. Cultivating openness to life is at the center of true development. When a society moves toward the denial or suppression of life, it ends up no longer finding the necessary motivation and energy to strive for man’s true good. Acceptance of life strengthens moral fiber and makes people capable of mutual help. Nations should promote productive action marked by solidarity and respect for the fundamental right to life of every person.

Morally responsible openness to life represents a rich social and economic resource. Smaller, miniscule families risk impoverishing social relations. They are symptomatic of scant confidence in the future and moral weariness. It is thus becom-
ing a social and even economic necessity to hold up to future generations the beauty of marriage and the family, and the fact that these institutions correspond to the deepest needs and dignity of the person. States are called to promote the centrality and integrity of the family founded on marriage between a man and a woman as the primary vital cell of society, and to assume responsibility for its economic and fiscal needs.

There is a special need to defend the primary competence of the family in the area of sexuality. Problems associated with population growth concern the inalienable values of life and the family. Attention must obviously be given to responsible procreation, especially in societies that are experiencing an alarming decline in their birth rate. The Church urges respect for human values in the exercise of sexuality. It cannot be reduced to pleasure or entertainment, nor can sex education be reduced to technical instruction aimed solely at protection from disease or the 'risk' of procreation. This would be to impoverish and disregard the deeper meaning of sexuality.

Another aspect of modern life that is closely connected to development is denial of the right to religious freedom (religious fanaticism, indifference, practical atheism). Some even kill in the holy name of God (terrorism, fundamentalism). God is the guarantor of man's true development. As his beloved creatures endowed with an immortal soul, men and women have transcendent dignity and are destined to supernatural life. When the State deprives citizens of the moral and spiritual strength needed to respond generously to divine love it impedes integral human development.

In the face of unrelenting global interdependence there is a strongly felt need for reform of the United Nations and of international financial institutions in order to arrive at a political, juridical, and economic order that can direct international cooperation, bring about disarmament, food security, and peace, protect the environment, and regulate migration. For the overall management of globalization and a greater degree of international ordering (as Bl. John XXIII indicated some years ago), there is urgent need for a universally recognized world political authority vested with the effective power to ensure security for all, regard for justice and respect for rights, inspired by charity in truth, regulated by international law, and observing the principles of subsidiarity and solidarity for the common good—a social order that conforms to the moral order.

Without God man neither knows which way to go, nor even understands who he is. In the face of the enormous problems surrounding the development of peoples and contemplating the vast amount of work to be done, we are sustained by our faith that God is present alongside those who come together in his name to work for justice. As Paul VI said, man cannot bring about his own progress unaided, because by himself he cannot establish an au-
authentic humanism. In the interest of a truly integral humanism, the greatest service to development, then, is a Christian humanism that enkindles charity and takes its lead from truth, understanding life as a joyful task to be accomplished in a spirit of solidarity. A humanism that excludes God is inhuman. Only a humanism open to the Absolute can guide us in the promotion and building of forms of social and civic life—structures, institutions, culture, and *ethos*—without exposing us to the risk of becoming ensnared by the fashions of the moment. Amid successes and failures, what we are able to achieve is always less than we might wish for.

IV

THE SOCIAL DOCTRINE

The Church does not have technical solutions to offer; her mission is to truth in every time and circumstance. She searches for the truth that sets us free, proclaims it tirelessly, and recognizes it wherever it is manifested. Her social doctrine receives it, assembles into a unity the fragments in which it is found, and mediates it within changing life-patterns of peoples and nations. The Church’s social doctrine came into being in order to claim ‘citizenship status’ for the Christian religion, to bring the truths of faith to bear on public life, that this world may effectively correspond to the divine plan.

The Church’s social doctrine allows faith, theology, metaphysics, and science to collaborate in the service of humanity, formulating a guiding synthesis for the integral good of man in his various dimensions. What the Church’s social doctrine has always sustained, on the basis of its vision of man and society, is corroborated today by the dynamics of globalization.

There are not two typologies of social doctrine, one pre-conciliar and one post-conciliar. There is a single teaching, consistent and ever new. Coherence does not mean a closed system, but dynamic faithfulness to a light received, illuminating with an unchanging light the new problems that are constantly emerging. The social doctrine is built on the foundation of the Apostles and Fathers of the Church, as further explored by the great doctors, and attested by the saints and martyrs for justice and peace. It is the Prophetic task of the Supreme Pontiffs to give it apostolic guidance and to discern the new demands of evangelization. In this way, the Church, taught by her Lord, examines and interprets the signs of the times, offering the world ‘a global vision of the human race.’

In all cultures there are examples of ethical convergence as an expression of the one human nature willed by the Creator. A universal moral law (the natural law) ensures that the multi-faceted pluralism of cultural diversity does not become detached from the common quest for truth and goodness. Thus, adherence to the law etched on human hearts is the precondition for all constructive social cooperation. By becoming incarnate in cultures and at the same time transcending
them, the Christian faith can help them grow in universal brotherhood (solidarity) for the advancement of global development.

The Church’s social doctrine is based on man’s creation 'in the image of God' (Gen 1:27); this gives rise to the inviolable dignity of the human person and the transcendent value of natural moral norms. "Caritas in veritate" is the principle around which the Church’s social doctrine turns; it takes practical form in the criteria that govern moral action. I would like to consider two of these with special relevance to development in a globalized society: justice and the common good.

Justice, the virtue that prompts us to give the other what is “his,” is the primary path of charity. It strives to build the earthly city according to law and justice, rights and duties, relationships of gratuitousness, mercy and communion. To strive toward the common good of the social community is a requirement of justice in charity. In a globalized society it extends to the whole human family, to all peoples and nations. When animated by charity, the common good is a principal factor of development.

*The governance of globalization must be marked by the principle of subsidiarity as closely linked to the principle of solidarity and vice versa.* Subsidiarity is a form of assistance to the person via the autonomy of intermediate bodies when individuals and groups are unable to accomplish something on their own. It is stratified on different levels of government coordinated and working together (for just and equitable international trade, for example). It is always designed to foster freedom and participation through assumption of responsibility. Subsidiarity is the most effective antidote against an all-encompassing welfare state.

Specific areas where the Church’s traditional teaching can provide guidance: *greater access to education*, a precondition for the complete formation of persons; peace-building; tourism that is able to promote mutual understanding; collaboration in addressing today’s problems of migration; unemployment and underemployment; the right to a just wage and personal security for workers and their families; work freely chosen that expresses the essential dignity of every man and woman and permits workers to organize and make their voices heard; improved formation in professional skills and technology; welfare policies and systems; rediscovery of the ethical foundations of financial structures and operating methods that serve the interests of savers; protection from the risks of usury and despair for the weakest sectors of society; genuinely transparent marketing and purchasing procedures that respect moral principles and the social responsibility of consumers; harnessing energy. In all of these areas, if love is wise it can find ways to work in accord with provident and just expediency, especially at a time of general economic downturn.

Charity is at the heart of the Church’s social doctrine. It gives
substance to personal relationships to God and neighbor—friends, family members, small groups; and to social, economic, and political relationships. In light of reason and faith, it gives direction to moral responsibility—social, juridical, cultural, political, and economic. In the present social and cultural context, where there is no longer any real place for God in the world, culture relativizes truth and falls prey to subjective emotions and opinions. Charity promotes communication and communion that leads to human development by moving beyond cultural and historical limitations.

Development needs Christians with their arms raised in prayer, moved by the knowledge that truth-filled love, caritas in veritate is given to us. Recognizing what is happening, even in the most difficult times, we must turn above all to God’s love, rendering life on earth ‘divine’ and thus more worthy of humanity. God is at the beginning of all that is good, all that leads to salvation. Through her intercession, may the Virgin Mary, proclaimed Mater Ecclesiae by Paul VI (Mother of the Church), and honored by Christians as Speculum Iustitiae and Regina Pacis (Mirror of Justice, Queen of Peace), protect us and obtain for us the strength, hope, and joy to continue our dedication to the task of bringing about ‘development of the whole man and of all men.’

[The Encyclical is documented by 159 notes, drawn almost entirely from the Papal and Conciliar Magisterium of the Church: Paul VI (principally Populorum Progressio) and the documents of the Second Vatican Council (principally Gaudium et Spes). Other quotations are from Leo XIII, Pius XI, John XXIII (Pacem in Terris), John Paul II (principally Sollicitudo Rei Socialis, commemorating the twentieth anniversary of Populorum Progressio, and Centesimus Annus), and Benedict XVI.]

[This digest of Pope Benedict’s words and the organizational scheme were prepared by Dr. John A. Gueguen, Professor Emeritus, Illinois State University: jguegu@ilstu.edu]

CARITAS IN VERITATE

Background

“If all the sons and daughters of the Church would know how to be tireless missionaries of the Gospel, a new flourishing of holiness and renewal would spring up in this world that thirsts for love and for truth.” Pope John Paul I (1978).

“The Cross is being increasingly banished from theology and reinterpreted as just a vexing mischance or a purely political event. The Cross as reconciliation, as a means of forgiving and saving, is incompatible with a certain modern mode of thought. Only when the relationship between truth and love is rightly comprehended can the Cross be comprehensible in its true theological depth. Forgiveness has to do with
truth. That is why it requires the Son’s Cross and our conversion. Forgiveness is, in fact, the restoration of truth, the renewal of being, and the vanquishing of the lies that lurk in every sin; sin is by nature a departure from the truth of one’s own nature and, by consequence, from the truth of God the Creator.” Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger, Co-Workers of the Truth (1992).

“Repentance is truth. It tries to see things as they really are…. Repentance seeks to know the truth. And with the truth of what he has done, man comes to God and says, “I am guilty before you. I admit it….I love you. I judge myself as you judge me. But you are love, and I appeal to this love. With all that I am I give myself to the mystery of your love….Human repentance corresponds to divine forgiveness. To the living God who is able to forgive there corresponds the man of living faith who is able to repent. Both constitute a single mystery of holy life.” Romano Guardini, The Living God (1997).