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## ADDRESS

# THE FUTURE OF CATHOLIC SOCIAL THOUGHT

*William J. Byron, S.J.\**

Catholic social teaching always speaks to what the Church likes to call "the social question." Good pedagogy begins with good questions. Good social theory emerges when clear thinking engages itself with truly significant social problems. This relationship of problem to theory is well known. It can serve to remind that identification of the truly significant social problem is step one in the elaboration of any identifiable strand of Catholic social doctrine. Put another way, it points to our ability or inability as a Church to ask the right social question.

One of the welcome by-products of the 1991 centennial celebration of Pope Leo XIII's cornerstone social encyclical *Rerum Novarum*<sup>1</sup> in books, articles, colloquia, seminars, and, of course, in the publication by Pope John Paul II of the commemorative encyclical *Centesimus Annus*,<sup>2</sup> was the return to currency of that special term "the social question."<sup>3</sup> Now that we are in the second century of reflection after *Rerum Novarum*, it is time to pose three related questions: who asks? who answers? and what qualifies as the truly significant social question or questions to which the thinking Church ought to be addressing itself in the immediate future?

A curious preference for the singular, rather than specification in the plural, characterizes papal usage over the past century of the term "the social question." Often the "question" is stated in quite broad, even ambiguous terms in the teaching documents that followed *Rerum Novarum*. This provides a rubric or canopy wide enough to cover a host of issues, but it also results in a loss of precision, and hence of impact, in relating Catholic social doctrine to contemporary social problems.

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\* The Pope John XXIII Lecture, Columbus School of Law, The Catholic University of America, Washington, D.C.

1. LEO XIII, *RERUM NOVARUM* (Encyclical Letter May 15, 1891), reprinted in *THE PAPAL ENCYCLICALS, 1878-1903*, at 115 (Claudia Carlen ed., 1981) [hereinafter *RERUM NOVARUM*].

2. JOHN PAUL II, *CENTESIMUS ANNUS: ON THE HUNDRETH ANNIVERSARY OF RERUM NOVARUM* (Encyclical Letter May 1, 1991).

3. *Id.* at 13.

For *Rerum Novarum*, the social question focused on "the condition of the working classes,"<sup>4</sup> on the right of workers to form associations, to organize themselves into unions and other protective arrangements, against assaults on their human dignity from the new industrialization and the threat of socialism. The social concern of Pope Leo XIII was worldwide, but his preoccupation with and articulation of the social question was more narrow—centered on the nation state of Italy and mindful of the growing influence of socialism there. Not until 1967 did Catholic social doctrine explicitly acknowledge, in the words of Pope Paul VI, "Today the principal fact that we must all recognize is that the social question has become world-wide."<sup>5</sup>

It is a frustrating exercise, for minds that work the way mine does, to attempt to match up with the title of every major document in the body of Catholic social doctrine the precise social question to which the document offers a response. The question is always general; so is the response. Whatever the question, the answer is usually framed in a few general principles accompanied by several general guidelines for programs consistent with the principles. For a universal teaching church, this is the way it has to be, I suppose. When it comes, however, to the future of Catholic social teaching, I cannot help but wonder whether the times might not require more precision of the Church and its teachers, if Catholic social thought is to have greater, even decisive impact. I have in mind precision in the statement of the question and articulation of the principles, not in the outline of specific social programs. Clear questions and sharp principles will, I believe, generate effective programs the teachers would never think of themselves. Programs will be the work of well-informed practitioners in the political, economic, and social spheres.

Who then is to ask the social question? Who will answer? And what are the significant social questions of our time?

In the matter of Catholic social teaching, the Church asks, the Church answers, and the Church identifies the significant problems around which the questions turn. But the Church is a people on pilgrimage making progress by the light of faith. The people, both tutored and untutored, ordained and unordained, experience "[t]he joys and the hopes, the griefs and the anxieties"<sup>6</sup> referenced by the Second Vatican Council's Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World. Out of the experience of all and

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4. *RERUM NOVARUM*, *supra* note 1, at 115.

5. PAUL VI, *POPULORUM PROGRESSIO* 807 (Encyclical Letter Mar. 26, 1967), *reprinted in* SOCIAL JUSTICE 205 (Rev. Vincent P. Mainelli ed., 1978) [hereinafter *POPULORUM PROGRESSIO*].

6. SECOND VATICAN ECUMENICAL COUNCIL, PASTORAL CONSTITUTION ON THE CHURCH IN THE MODERN WORLD (*GAUDIUM ET SPES*), *in* THE DOCUMENTS OF VATICAN II 199, 199 (Walter M. Abbott, S.J. ed., 1966).

the perceptive analysis of those whose minds are trained to see significant social problems, and out of a faith-based openness to both experience and insight, the magisterium of the Church can, if it chooses to do so, shape and proclaim its social doctrine in the years ahead.

In a splendid book that looks to the past, as the subtitle puts it, to "The Social Teaching of the Papal Encyclicals, 1740-1989," Michael J. Schuck's *That They Be One* separates Catholic social thought into the pre-Leonine period (1740-1877), the Leonine period (1878-1958), and the post-Leonine period (1959-1989).<sup>7</sup> Readers are encouraged to trace the application of Catholic social principles to: (a) religious practices, (b) political practices, (c) family practices, (d) economic practices, and (e) cultural practices. These categories suggest that elements of "the" social question at any time, indeed a parcel of specific and significant social questions crying for analysis and commentary, can be drawn by competent observers in the areas of religion, politics, family life, economics and culture.

A teaching Church, not simply content with, but committed to, listening and learning before it speaks out on social issues, would stimulate great intellectual activity in Catholic circles by inviting Catholic scholars to reflect upon and articulate the significant social questions in the areas of their competence. The invitation to articulate the social question should, like the more recent social encyclicals themselves, go out to all persons of good will. The Church in the modern world can hardly content itself to remain aloof from the best in modern scholarship wherever it originates.

Michael J. Schuck's *That They Be One* examines the social teaching of papal encyclicals and ferrets out lines of coherence in the social doctrine they communicate from 1740 to the present. He finds that the "papal letters show serious interest in social relations involving not only economic affairs, but also political, religious, family, and cultural life."<sup>8</sup> The papal letters share what Schuck calls "communitarian recommendations"<sup>9</sup> and "persistent negative judgments."<sup>10</sup> The judgments, of course, are rendered against the negative forces that produced the problems the respective encyclicals address. The "communitarian recommendations" are the popes' principled and positive answers to the social question as they and their advisers chose to frame it.

The communitarian theme of papal social teaching is echoed in the title Michael Schuck put on his book. As pastors and teachers, all the popes have

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7. MICHAEL J. SCHUCK, *THAT THEY BE ONE: THE SOCIAL TEACHING OF THE PAPAL ENCYCLICALS, 1740-1989* (1991).

8. *Id.* at 191.

9. *Id.* at 192.

10. *Id.*

the task of bringing God's people closer to the ideal expressed by Jesus in his Prayer to the Father: "that they be one, even as we are one."<sup>11</sup> How to do this, would be one way of stating the social question. Papal social teaching expresses, Schuck emphasizes, a communitarian view of both self and society.

Here are some instances of articulation of the social question at various stages in the history of Catholic social teaching. They can serve to stimulate the formation of social questions as the Church approaches the beginning of the 21st century.

At the most general level, I think the social question should be stated this way: How can the human community of persons and nations live together in peace secured by justice? The protection of fundamental human dignity requires that the question be asked at all times. The organization of human life requires that it be asked, as it has been in the past, in the context of family, workplace, social interaction, civic, economic, religious, political (ranging from local to international politics) and cultural life. Two other contexts should, I believe, be added to this set as Catholic social teaching looks to the future. They are recreation and the uses of science and technology.

Particular statements of the social question appear in papal social teaching, usually not as questions so much as descriptions of conditions that threaten peace, violate justice, or assault human dignity. In *Rerum Novarum*, Pope Leo XIII noted the coexistence of massive poverty with individual fortunes.<sup>12</sup> He pointed out how the poor need special protection that should be provided by the state and he acknowledged a proper place for the state, along with workers and productive property, in economic activity.<sup>13</sup> Pope Pius XI in *Quadragesimo Anno*<sup>14</sup> saw power and "despotic economic dictatorship"<sup>15</sup> concentrated in the hands of a few. Leo XIII had his eye on the huge income gap that engaged the attention of the socialists; Pius XI saw the same reality in terms of a power gap.<sup>16</sup> Both these popes affirm the right to private property (against socialism) and specify that workers possess the natural right of private ownership as well as the right to organize.

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11. *John* 17:22.

12. *RERUM NOVARUM*, *supra* note 1, at 115.

13. *Id.*

14. *PIUS XI, QUADRAGESIMO ANNO* (Encyclical Letter May 15, 1931), *reprinted in THE PAPAL ENCYCLICALS, 1903-1939*, at 209 (Claudia Carlen ed., 1981).

15. *Id.* at 105, *reprinted in THE PAPAL ENCYCLICALS, 1903-1939, supra* note 14, at 431.

16. *Id.*

Pope John XXIII wrote *Mater et Magistra*<sup>17</sup> "to keep alive the torch lighted by our great predecessors and to exhort all to draw from their writings light and inspiration, if they wish to resolve the social question in ways more in accord with the needs of the present time."<sup>18</sup> Those needs emerge from changes in the fields of science, technology and economics, from political innovations, and from worldwide political and economic interdependence. Both socialization and intervention by public authorities were noted by Pope John to be on the increase worldwide. This pastoral pope thought it important to note in *Mater et Magistra* that family unity and Sunday rest are parts of the social question.

In *Pacem in Terris*,<sup>19</sup> John XXIII reviewed and reaffirmed the doctrine on economic and political rights while taking special note of the emergence of women in public life. "Since women are becoming ever more conscious of their human dignity, they will not tolerate being treated as mere material instruments, but demand rights befitting a human person both in domestic and in public life."<sup>20</sup>

Not surprisingly, and not a moment too soon, this 1963 papal letter opens up the question of disarmament and calls for an end to the arms race, adding that nuclear weapons should be banned. In order to do this and to deal with other urgent problems of global proportions Pope John suggests: "[A] public authority, having world-wide power and endowed with the proper means for the efficacious pursuit of its objective, which is the universal common good in concrete form, must be set up by common accord and not imposed by force."<sup>21</sup> This is a point of exceptional importance that is bound to emerge again and again as Catholic social thought moves forward in the second century after *Rerum Novarum*.

When Pope Paul VI remarked in *Populorum Progressio* that the social question had become world-wide,<sup>22</sup> he was simply stating the obvious. Accordingly, Catholic social thought turned to the problems of economic development in the poorest parts of the world. "Today the peoples in hunger are making a dramatic appeal to the peoples blessed with abundance. The Church shudders at this cry of anguish and calls each one to give a loving response of charity to this brother's cry for help."<sup>23</sup> Catholic social doctrine

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17. JOHN XXIII, *MATER ET MAGISTRA* (Encyclical Letter May 15, 1961), reprinted in *SOCIAL JUSTICE*, *supra* note 5, at 1.

18. *Id.* at 50, reprinted in *SOCIAL JUSTICE*, *supra* note 5, at 12.

19. JOHN XXIII, *PACEM IN TERRIS* (Encyclical Letter Apr. 11, 1963), reprinted in *SOCIAL JUSTICE*, *supra* note 5, at 63 [hereinafter *PACEM IN TERRIS*].

20. *Id.* at 306, reprinted in *SOCIAL JUSTICE*, *supra* note 5, at 71.

21. *Id.* at 403, reprinted in *SOCIAL JUSTICE*, *supra* note 5, at 93.

22. *POPULORUM PROGRESSIO*, *supra* note 5, at 205.

23. *Id.*

would soon frame this response in terms of justice and eventually liberation. "Development" would be widely accepted as the "new word for peace."

It is interesting to note Pope John Paul II's comment in *Laborem Exercens*<sup>24</sup> that "human work is a key, probably the essential key, to the whole social question."<sup>25</sup> But what specifically is that question? It must somehow relate to the protection of individual autonomy and dignity within a large complex society. Human work relates to dignity, provides an avenue of participation, generates income and thus economic security for the individual and the family, and in the process contributes to healthy psychological development. Viewed in that light, work may indeed be the "essential key" in unlocking the answer to the social question. It is worth noting that Pope John Paul II expressed this idea in an encyclical written to commemorate the 90th anniversary of the publication of *Rerum Novarum*.

In 1987, this same pontiff celebrated the 30th anniversary of *Popolorum Progressio* by issuing an encyclical *On Social Concern (Sollicitudo Rei Socialis)*<sup>26</sup> in which he suggests that the moral category of "solidarity" might well be the key to the social question. Solidarity—true interrelatedness and interdependence among and between both persons and nations—is this pope's word for peace. "[I]n a world divided and beset by every type of conflict, the conviction is growing of a radical interdependence and consequently of the need for a solidarity which will take up interdependence and transfer it to the moral plane."<sup>27</sup>

All of this is just a sampling of statements of the social question over the years. Nothing has been drawn from *Humanae Vitae*, with its stress on family values, nor from the Second Vatican Council's document of "The Church in the Modern World" where much can be found to formulate fresh expressions of the social question. Similarly, various Synod documents would be useful in articulating the social question, as indeed would be statements of national bishops conferences, not least among them the U.S. bishops' pastorals on peace and the economy. I want now to complete this sampler with some excerpts from *Centesimus Annus*, Pope John Paul II's century-after review "of new things" in the spirit of *Rerum Novarum*, and then move on to speculate about new and timely expressions of the social question.

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24. JOHN PAUL II, *LABOREM EXERCENS* (Encyclical Letter Sept. 14, 1981), reprinted in 26 *THE POPE SPEAKS* 289 (1981).

25. *Id.* at 3, reprinted in 26 *THE POPE SPEAKS*, supra note 24, at 293.

26. JOHN PAUL II, *SOLLICITUDO REI SOCIALIS* (Encyclical Letter Dec. 30, 1987), reprinted in 33 *THE POPE SPEAKS* 122 (1988).

27. *Id.* at 26, reprinted in 33 *THE POPE SPEAKS*, supra note 26, at 136.

"The United Nations . . . has not yet succeeded in establishing as alternatives to war effective means for the resolution of international conflicts,"<sup>28</sup> notes John Paul II in *Centesimus Annus*. He immediately adds: "This seems to be the most urgent problem which the international community has yet to resolve."<sup>29</sup> Several paragraphs later he states: "What is needed are concrete steps to create or consolidate international structures capable of intervening through appropriate arbitration in the conflicts which arise between nations, so that each nation can uphold its own rights and reach a just agreement and peaceful settlement vis-a-vis the rights of others."<sup>30</sup> This sounds to me very much like a formulation of the social question for our times, one hundred years after *Rerum Novarum*.

Returning to the specific categories listed earlier, I want now to put them under the perennial or "canopy" statement of the social question, and then insert in each a formulation of a correspondingly significant social question for our time. The over-arching social question, the question of the development of human persons in full human dignity, not alone but in true human community, will, in my view, always be: How can the human community of persons and nations live together in peace secured by justice? The question rests on an unwavering commitment to and concern for the protection of human dignity. The question is at once personal and communitarian, national and international. It subdivides readily and applies easily to religious concerns, political life, family life, economic activities and cultural life. Future applications, I believe, should extend to the category of leisure activity and to the uses of science and technology. Within each of these categories a genuine social question calls out for an answer. Simply listing the categories in this fashion serves to remind that the social question, and hence the Church's social doctrine, is not restricted to the economic dimension of human activity.

#### A. Religion

In the world of religion, I would frame the social question in terms of violence. Some would put the focus elsewhere. Freedom of expression, movement and choice within a hierarchically-structured religious body that respects freedom of conscience but restricts other freedoms for religious purposes would, I know, be identified by many as a more significant social question. Others would think it important to ask how religion can play a public role in social life without violating others' rights to religious freedom. That

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28. JOHN PAUL II, *CENTESIMUS ANNUS* 21 (Encyclical Letter May 2, 1991) reprinted in 36 *THE POPE SPEAKS* 273, 286 (1991).

29. *Id.*, reprinted in 36 *THE POPE SPEAKS*, *supra* note 28, at 286.

30. *Id.* at 27, reprinted in 36 *THE POPE SPEAKS*, *supra* note 28, at 290.



question is, of course, important. But I would focus on violence as a proper and, in our day, neglected religious concern. I think religious misunderstanding lies at the root of much of the violence in our world. I also think religion's failure to communicate effectively a moral vision of respect for life results in widespread toleration of violence in countless forms among persons who claim to have strong religious commitments. Moreover, I think the presence of the so-called "just war" theory in our religious tradition compels us now not only to re-examine the theory in light of the technology of modern warfare, but also to consider adaptations and applications of the theory to conditions of violence in everyday life.

### B. *Politics*

In the political arena there is always the question of participation—denied in totalitarian states, willfully neglected in democracies. But the pressing social-political question, I believe, is the one targeted by Pope John Paul II in *Centesimus Annus*, namely, the need to find an effective international device for the settlement of international differences.

### C. *Family Life*

In family life, the question, as I see it, is how to shore up the interpersonal commitments that make marriages permanent and thus create an environment of stability for family life, the bedrock of societal stability. Socially accepted changes in household definitions and "relationships" must not be accepted as changes in the definition of family. The Church knows better and should never hesitate to say so in its social teaching. In that same body of social teaching, the Church should be saying something about population; if not under the rubric of family, then in the economic category where population can be discussed, as it must be, in tandem with the question of economic development; or, perhaps, population belongs in the separate category I have introduced: the uses of science and technology.

### D. *The Economy*

The economic category central to any discussion of social concerns is a particularly challenging one when it comes to formulating the social question. Poverty is an all-pervasive social issue; the Church will always be guided by an option of preference and protection for the poor. Gaps between rich and poor around the world and around the corner cry out for remedy. How to close those gaps is, I believe, the enduring social question in the economic area. Elimination of poverty is the top priority issue.

As I indicated, population questions cannot be answered without reference to economic development. Many other economic problems emerge as

candidates to be matched up with the social question in the economic area. There is, for instance, the overemphasis on economic success in industrialized societies (a religious issue perhaps) and with it an excessive individualism that creates mischief not only in economic relationships, but family life as well. Some would say compensation policies and practices—the ratio, for example, of top executive compensation to that of hourly wage-earners—are out of control in advanced countries; they remain remarkably free of meaningful links to productivity. Just to mention productivity is to suggest that attention must be paid in policy debates to education for purely economic reasons, as well as for reasons of personal fulfillment.

As economic life grows more complex, the danger of damage to individual fulfillment and dignity rises accordingly. Both the economic organization and the task it exacts can stifle human initiative. This is the “stuff” of a good social question, as is grinding poverty, the basic cause of hunger in the world. There are economic culprits behind the environmental crisis. Full employment, many theorists would assert, remains the best hope for economic security and social welfare in modern society. Why not make this the social question today? One must analyze all of these issues within historical currents that invite market-oriented mechanisms, balanced by appropriate state activity, to provide the solutions. Will they work? Will framing an issue within the context of a “social question” raise its visibility and hence, the probability of action?

Another formulation of the social question in the economic area would ask how we might contain the virus of materialism in the world community and in all of its separate political and familial parts. Perhaps this issue is more “cultural” than “economic” at its root, but it must be faced at a time when we are losing, here in the United States, our sense of community, both national and conjugal. The materialism, not the “magic,” of the marketplace is accelerating this loss of a sense of community and driving us in the direction of surrender to “forces” we cannot control. This may not be a strategic social question in the economic category, but it looms larger by the day as a question we cannot afford to ignore.

### *E. Culture*

Next, the cultural category calls for an expression of the social question. I view culture not in Matthew Arnold’s narrow sense of “the acquainting ourselves with the best that has been known and said in the world, and thus with the history of the human spirit.”<sup>31</sup> I prefer Bernard Lonergan’s definition: “A culture is a set of meanings and values informing a common way of

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31. MATTHEW ARNOLD, *LITERATURE AND DOGMA: AN ESSAY TOWARDS A BETTER APPREHENSION OF THE BIBLE* xi (1874).

life, and there are as many cultures as there are distinct sets of meanings and values."<sup>32</sup>

A dominant cultural value in the United States (and in much of the world) is an emphasis on material possessions to the exclusion of serious attachment to the immaterial domain where commitments and convictions reside, where spiritual realities like love, justice, and knowledge are rooted and grow. But materialism has already been mentioned and may indeed cut across several of these categories.

If the social question is to meet the problem of racism, the culture category provides the best fit for addressing that issue. The effects of racism show up in the political and economic categories as well, but at bottom racism is a cultural problem. It is not, however, the one I would select as the issue at this time.

In the cultural arena, I would attempt to phrase the social question for a teaching Church today in terms of the rights and dignity of women in contemporary society. I do not pretend to be able to pinpoint the right question, but neither do I think the attempt to state the question should not be made. Many persons, notably women, should be working now to get the question right so that the target is set for a timely response from Catholic social doctrine. To repeat a point I made at the outset: good social theory emerges when clear thinking engages itself with truly significant social questions. The women's question is of true and timely social significance. It must be phrased correctly, not in the sense of "political correctness," but with social, anthropological, historical and theological precision.

I noted in passing that Pope John XXIII made special mention of women in *Pacem in Terris* and remarked that women "will not tolerate being treated as mere material instruments, but demand rights befitting a human person in domestic and public life."<sup>33</sup>

Recall that a culture is defined by a shared set of meanings and values. In the category of culture, therefore, the social question centering on women might be assembled from a set of questions like these: What is the meaning of women in any society? Why is the value of women an issue in contemporary society? Where is the balance for today's women in asserting rights and assuming duties that "befit[ ] a human person?"<sup>34</sup>

The issues raised by this line of inquiry spill over into all the other categories and touch the "canopy" question of peace and justice that will concern the Church in all ages. The women's question should be phrased properly and answered directly, even if not definitively, without delay.

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32. BERNARD LONERGAN, *METHOD IN THEOLOGY* 301 (1979).

33. *PACEM IN TERRIS*, *supra* note 19, at 71.

34. *Id.*

### F. Science and Technology

The uses of science and technology merit inclusion in the set of categories thinking persons should employ in formulating the compelling social questions for our time. I would choose access to health care as the social issue here, recognizing that others would see this as an economic or political issue, or even a cultural issue where providers of health care are driven by motives other than responsibility to meet human need. Or perhaps it would be better simply to look at the uses of science and technology in society at a given moment and apply informed social criticism to those uses at that moment. Ethical controls on the uses of science and technology will always be an important social question.

### G. Recreation

Recreation is the final category on my list. We are using it badly in economically advanced societies; there is not enough of it for refugees and marginalized people. Recreation presupposes a modicum of economic security; it also implies the presence of leisure (not enforced idleness) in a human life. In my view, the social question should examine how recreation time is used. Censorship is not the question I have in mind; creativity is. I am also thinking of the yardstick of human dignity as measure of the diminishment or enlargement of human personhood for both providers and consumers of recreational activity. Dehumanizing recreation raises questions—social questions—that must not go unanswered.

I bring these reflections to a close with wise words from an unlikely source. They are wise as far as they go but they do not go far enough. I cite them only to point to the trap set by this kind of thinking, a trap that could significantly impede the progress of Catholic social thinking in the years ahead. Robert M. Pirsig, in *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance* wrote:

I think that if we are going to reform the world and make it a better place to live in, the way to do it is not with talk about relationships of a political nature . . . or with programs full of things for people to do. I think that kind of approach starts at the end and presumes the end is the beginning. Programs of a political nature are important *end products* of social quality that can be effective only if the underlying structure of social values is right. The social values are right only if the individual values are right. The place to improve the world is first in one's own heart and head and hands, and then work outward from there. Other people can talk about how to expand the destiny of mankind. I just want to

talk about how to fix a motorcycle. I think that what I have to say has more lasting value.<sup>35</sup>

Everyone in the Catholic faith community, whether they fix motorcycles, repair fractures, teach classes, write books, raise families, drive trucks, farm the land, run the parishes or preside over corporations, has something to say at both the formulation and response end of the social question. Prompted by all the rest of us, the magisterium will eventually ask. And assisted by those who can stake a claim on the attention of the teaching Church by virtue of the quality of what they contribute to asking and answering the social question, the magisterium will eventually answer. Meanwhile, all of us—teachers and taught in the Church—can get on with the task of making sure our personal values are right, that we keep the commitments we make, that we respect life in all its forms, and that the territory between our ears and beneath our feet can, so far as it is in our power to choose, be marked by the reign of peace and justice. But that is not enough. We have to avoid the trap of withdrawal from the fray. Every significant social question can be traced to fault lines in human institutions. Only by working within those institutions can the fault lines be repaired. Only by participation in human processes, political for the most part, can we create new institutions to provide just exchanges, promote just relationships, and provide peace.

Clear thinking on the part of the theorists will help the activists see what to do. But it will not eliminate the frustrations thinkers and doers will encounter in the process which must include both sets of participants. Catholic social thinkers must not withdraw. Catholic social activists must not go off “half-cocked.” As a seasoned social critic once remarked, “the world is populated by those who think but do not act and those who act but do not think.”<sup>36</sup> We have to put both thought and action in harness to move the Catholic contribution to social justice forward in the second century after *Rerum Novarum*.

It would be a wonderful thing for both church and society if bishops' conferences and their advisers, along with Catholic intellectuals and social-service providers around the world, could, after contact with people on all the margins, agree upon a comprehensive set of categories that cover social life, and come up with appropriate social questions to which a thinking and teaching Church would have something important to say in each of those categories. The categories and questions that I have highlighted here simply suggest the range of the exercise this sort of thinking is likely to produce.

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35. ROBERT M. PIRSIG, *ZEN AND THE ART OF MOTORCYCLE MAINTENANCE* 267 (Bantam Books 1981) (1974).

36. AMMON HENNACY, *THE BOOK OF AMMON* 398 (1965).

Consideration of these questions today serves, I hope, to honor the memory of Pope John XXIII. Pursuit of these questions in the daily business of teaching and research at the Columbus School of Law of The Catholic University of America would, I feel safe in saying, delight the heart of Pope Leo XIII and contribute immeasurably to the fulfillment of the dream he had for this university when he chartered it in 1887. May those who gather here to teach and learn in the century ahead use their many gifts for the advancement, through the law, of Catholic social thought.

