

child might be born with a disability, she can legally have her baby disabled of its very life.

The violent act of rape offends our national conscience. But the victim of rape can legally compound the violence by ending the life of her new unborn baby. We now have two victims of violence. When have two wrongs ever made a right?

Our national conscience must be sutured back together into a consistent body of law that protects all life — not just the normal, the convenient, and the planned. Expanding our legal rights to liberty, the pursuit of happiness, equal employ-

ment, and equal access is a cruel joke if by willfulness cloaked in euphemism we deny to anyone his or her right to be born into this world of expanded freedoms.

When will this violence stop? The war will stop only when men and women stop drowning their paternal and maternal sensibilities in the cold toilet of heartless, dishonest rhetoric, and when all little lives, including the imperfect and the inconvenient, are recognized for who they are — very precious gifts to us from God, His own children, to be cherished and protected. ■

ON THE PERSEVERANCE OF AUTHENTIC CATHOLICS

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Is ECONOMIC JUSTICE Possible in This World? (Is Chastity?)

I first became aware of the existence of Catholic social teaching when I was in high school and read R.H. Tawney's *Religion and the Rise of Capitalism*. Later I discovered the papal social encyclicals and the voluminous secondary literature of commentaries and studies. And later still I became sufficiently acquainted with it so that I began to talk to others and eventually to write about it.

Speaking only of those Catholics who manifest a desire to be orthodox and to conform their beliefs to the Magisterium, I encounter some who know and wholeheartedly accept Catholic social teaching. But even among orthodox Catholics there are many who, in effect, undercut it in various ways. There are, first, libertarians, or near-libertarians, who attribute to the free market some

quasi-divine ability to sort out the rights and wrongs of human behavior and who oppose any, or almost any, interference with its workings. A few of this group do not disguise their rejection of Catholic social teaching. Because it does not accord with their own ideas, they regard the papal teaching with open derision. Despite this, they manage to retain a reputation for orthodoxy.

A larger group is less forthright. They, though equally attached to *laissez faire*, are not so bold about their rejection of the Church's social teaching. Sometimes, by selective quotation or by silence, they even attempt to make it seem as if the popes agreed with them. This group also maintains a reputation for orthodoxy.

Last, there are the Catholics who clearly indicate, sometimes openly, sometimes by implication, that Catholic social teaching, while laudable, is unworldly and impractical, altogether impossible to implement in this life. It is with this last group that I am chiefly concerned in this article. And although I do not agree with this group,

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I will concede them one point, namely, that it is very difficult to bring about any kind of just social order.

Doubts about the feasibility of implementing Catholic social teaching are easy to understand. Aside from the initial problem of persuading the majority, especially those in positions of power, that social justice according to the Church's vision is something to be striven for, the logistical problems of making a transition seem overwhelming. The economy is a network of financial and legal relationships and an infrastructure of manufacturers, distributors, means of transportation, centers of population, and so on. Gigantic sums of money have been invested in certain ways, and the owners of those sums are not likely to accept meekly any diminution of their profits. If we decided, for example, that we wanted to foster the family farm, we would have to deal with the fact that such farms are declining in number, their owners are aging, and there are fewer young people interested in farming.

Moreover, because of the complexity and interrelatedness of the economy, as soon as you begin to deal with one sector, another sector becomes involved. Banking and credit, for example, touch all the other sectors intimately. Production involves transportation and questions of tariffs and free-trade agreements. And since worldwide free-trade agreements have been negotiated and signed, one country could only with difficulty institute policies radically at variance with the rest of the world. Altogether it seems that implementing Catholic social teaching is an impossible task.

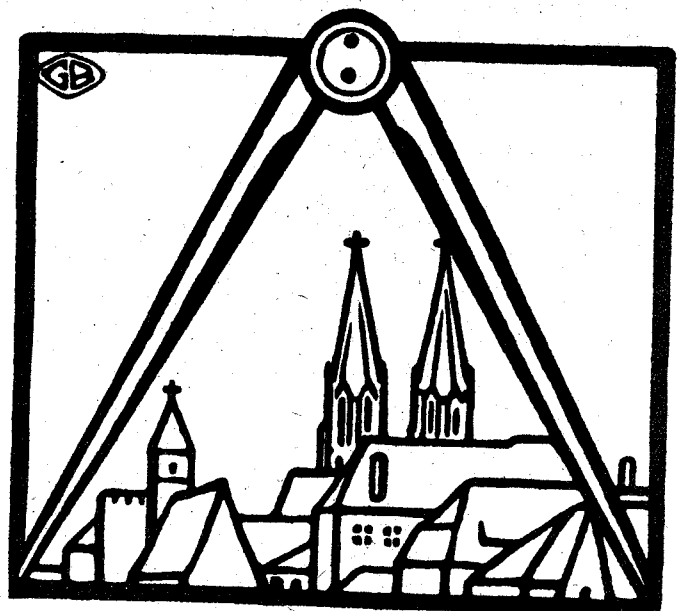
But I would like to compare the difficulty of the task with the difficulties involved in another area of Catholic morality: chastity. Is it feasible to expect the world to become chaste? Here the problems seem at least as daunting. In our own country and in most of the West, we have not just indifference to chastity, but outright hostility. Many are convinced that chastity is not just impossible, but psychologically unhealthy, an example of cultural repression, the unfortunate legacy of the "pale Galilean," from whose breath "the world has grown gray" (Swinburne). Governments and international organizations are actively working against chastity, in the name of preventing pregnancy. Added to this, of course, is the fact that

even for those ardently committed to chastity, it is a constant struggle simply to keep oneself and one's children chaste.

All this and more is true, yet those who doubt the feasibility of Catholic social teaching rarely take as doubtful a view of chastity. Suggest to them that perhaps we should accommodate ourselves to the sexual frailties of human nature, and one is called a neo-Modernist, a traitor to the Faith, a worldling. Nor do I disagree with that diagnosis. I am as committed as anyone to preaching chastity and doing everything possible to uphold it. All I ask is that we extend the same courtesy to this other crucial area of Christian morals, the social doctrine of the Church. It would seem to me that, whatever obstacles there are to achieving worldwide economic justice, the obstacles to achieving worldwide chastity are just as great. But in neither case are these obstacles a reason to abandon the struggle.

There is, moreover, a special reason for regarding the social doctrine of the Church as something we should actually seek to implement. A specific condemnation has been reserved for those who belittle it, including those who merely give it lip service. Pius XI wrote in his encyclical *Ubi Arcano* (1922) about the great number of those

who profess Catholic teaching...concerning the rights and duties of laborers on land or in industry...and yet by their



spoken and written word, and the whole tenor of their lives, act as if the teaching and oft-repeated precepts of the Sovereign Pontiffs...had lost their efficacy or were completely out of date. In all this We recognize a kind of moral, judicial, and social Modernism, and We condemn it as strongly as We do dogmatic Modernism.

Orthodox Catholics rightly hate doctrinal Modernism, and are rightly dismayed at its resurgence following the Second Vatican Council. But should we not equally hate social Modernism, and "condemn it as strongly as" the other? If our orthodoxy and loyalty to the Magisterium are genuine, then it should be evident in every area, not just where we find it convenient or where it fits with our political opinions.

I suspect that some Catholics who deny the importance of the Church's social teaching hold opinions more akin to the Lutheran tradition — that this world is utterly corrupt, and that because man himself is radically corrupt, his institutions are also. Thus the most we can hope for is that individuals are saved; the social order had best be left to the Devil. But such a notion is quite opposed to any Catholic conception of things. These words of Pius XI, from his encyclical *Quas Primas* (1925), give a striking picture of what the Church holds out as her ideal:

If princes and magistrates duly elected are filled with the persuasion that they rule, not by their own right, but by the mandate and in place of the Divine King, they will exercise their authority piously and wisely, and they will make laws and administer them while having in view the common good and also the human dignity of their subjects. The result will be a stable peace and tranquillity.... Men will see in their kings or in their rulers men like themselves, perhaps unworthy or open to criticism, but they will not on that account refuse obedience if they see reflected in them the authority of Christ, God and Man. Peace and harmony, too, will result, for with the spread and the universal extent of the Kingdom of Christ men will become more and more conscious of the link that

binds them together, and thus many conflicts will be either prevented entirely, or at least their bitterness will be diminished.

Pius XI sees here a social and political order that is permeated with the spirit of Jesus Christ. Far from being necessarily alienated from Him, those who hold political power are expected to rule "in place of the Divine King."

The serious difficulties that exist, then, are not good reasons for Catholics to fail to embrace their Church's social teachings. But there is one enormous and daunting difficulty. This is the need for an organized and co-ordinated approach to social questions. In the case of chastity, generally all that is required is an individual exercise of will, strengthened by divine grace. We are not depending on others' decisions as to whether we will be chaste or not. But this is not true with regard to social and economic justice. If a person has savings, what is he to do with them? Even if he simply places them in a savings account, how is he to know what the financial institution does with the money? Is it loaned out for good or evil purposes? Businesses are involved in a complicated system of prices, to a great extent beyond their control. And although much more could be done, especially by large corporations, to pay just wages right now, still the entire system of wages is larger than one company or entrepreneur. No economic actor is entirely his own master. Amintore Fanfani, in his *Catholicism, Protestantism and Capitalism*, says:

I remember that in a little village in Tuscany there were only two bakeries. The owner of the one wished to close on Sunday, but was unable to do so because his rival kept open, and had he himself failed to follow suit he would have lost his customers who, being restaurant-keepers, wanted fresh bread on Sundays as well as weekdays.

The more complicated the economy, the more does such interdependence exist. In short, in social morality we often depend upon the decisions of other people; our individual responsibility is not enough.

What is needed, then, is some kind of co-operation among economic actors. In 1931, in his encyclical *Quadragesimo Anno*, Pius XI had already

called for such co-operation to solve the grave problems of society: co-operation between different employers, between employers and employees, and among the various nations. One would have to be a fool not to realize that to secure such co-operation would be extremely hard. But there is one thing that tends to make it even harder than it needs to be. What is that? It is to do nothing, not even to request such co-operation, not even to present it as an ideal. That is basically our situation today. Next to nothing is being done to secure economic justice.

When we think about working toward a just social order, we should keep in mind the limitations of living in a fallen world. As Cardinal Ratzinger wrote in *A Turning Point for Europe?*, speaking of *mishpat*, the Hebrew word for justice:

Reason and will must attempt to make concrete and to put into practice the criterion of God's *mishpat*, set up by faith, in changing historical situations, always in the essential imperfectibility of man's action within history. It is not permitted to man to set up the "Kingdom," but he is charged to go toward the Kingdom through justice and love.... Faith's hope always goes infinitely farther than all our realizations, reaching to the realm of the eternal; but precisely the fact that this hope is given to us gives us the courage to take up again and again, despite all inadequacy, the struggle for a just order....

Just as in our work for chastity, or any other virtue, so in our work for social justice, we should be aware of "the essential imperfectibility of man's action within history," but also that we are "charged to go toward the Kingdom through justice and love."

In view of the many grave problems in the world today — the horrible reality of abortion, the pressures for legal acceptance of euthanasia, the attacks on the family by militant homosexuals and others, the defection of hundreds of thousands of Catholics from the Church — is now the time for us, for anyone, to work actively for the establishment of economic justice? I believe it is, or rather, can be. I concede that abortion and euthanasia are graver issues, for it is a worse

injustice to take someone's life than his job or home. But everyone has a different vocation, and those who think they are called to work in pursuit of justice in economic life ought not to be criticized by, nor to criticize, those who believe they are called to work to prevent the murder of the unborn or the aged. There are many legitimate apostolates in Christ's Mystical Body.

So, what can be done to bring about economic justice? In the first place, there is a great need for education, for nurturing the understanding of and the desire for economic justice. So many have been warped in their thinking and habits by dog-eat-dog capitalism and consumerism that they do not realize the necessity of applying ethical criteria to economic activity. They do not understand that an economy has to be judged by how well it is performing its function. What is an economy's function? To provide the necessary and helpful material goods for the human race so that we can then in turn devote our energies to more important matters — to our families and friends, to learning, to God. If an economy has instead fixed our attention on acquiring more and more material goods (many of them useless), if it has disrupted settled communities by shifting about jobs for no compelling reason, if it has enabled some men to grow rich not by making useful goods but by manipulating money and monetary instruments, then that economy is a failure, no matter its abundance of glittery things. Americans tend to congratulate themselves because the shelves in our stores are full. But this is not how to evaluate an economy. As John Paul II wrote in *Centesimus Annus* (no. 36), it is "necessary to create lifestyles in which the quest for truth, beauty, goodness and communion with others...are the factors which determine consumer choices, savings and investment." I submit that in our economy this is far from being the case.

In the much-maligned days before the Second Vatican Council there existed among many Catholics a consciousness that there was something wrong with the economy, and that it had to be reshaped in accordance with papal teaching. This consciousness was simply one aspect of the relative health of the Catholic mind at the time — Catholics took the Faith seriously, including the

social apostolate. And this being the case, actual initiatives were undertaken to bring about a greater degree of social justice. There were, for example, labor schools and the Association of Catholic Trade Unionists, that tried to give people engaged in union activity an understanding of social doctrine. Fr. John Cronin wrote not only his *Catholic Social Principles* but also another book, *Catholic Social Action*, which he termed "a guide and manual for social action." Hilaire Belloc's *The Restoration of Property* suggested legislative proposals to bring about a society with a more just distribution of property. Despite the drastic weakening of Catholic life and loyalty since the 1960s, some of this type of work can still be done. There is room for such worthy projects as union organizing of low-paid service workers, and formation of credit unions in rural or poor urban areas. There is even room for a vocation as a legislator, although such an occupation is hazard-

ous for the soul, given the temptations to intellectual and moral sellout that Catholics in politics face today.

Because the Church is presently so plagued with moral and doctrinal controversies, several of which threaten the very foundations of the Faith, many Catholics are not paying attention to the Church's vision of a just society. But since social doctrine is an integral part of the Gospel, any attempt to restore the Catholic mind, and discipline and doctrinal order in the Church, must include a due emphasis on social justice. If this is done, if we begin to think as Catholics in every department of our lives, then there may be scope for more than *ad hoc* projects. Until that time, we must study social doctrine, absorb it, teach it to others. In this way we will be doing much to restore the Faith, as well as to prepare for establishing a just economy. It is nearly all we can do now, but it is essential to do it. ■

TO DEMONIZE OR NOT TO DEMONIZE?

David R. Carlin

OUR OPPONENTS IN THE CULTURE OF DEATH

Voltaire once said, "If God did not exist, it would be necessary to invent him." We can give this a 20th-century twist by saying, "If Hitler did not exist, it would be necessary to invent him."

Of course, ages prior to our own did not lack someone who personified evil: Satan has always been available. But in the latter part of the modern era, many find it difficult to believe in supernatural beings of any type, especially the diabolical type. Yet even those who feel secure only on

the "solid" ground of naturalism have witnessed what appears to be evil incarnate, in an actual human being, one who was seen, heard, photographed, and recorded.

Thus Hitler has provided many people with a kind of universal standard of evil, like the standard meter they keep in Paris. Sometimes he is utilized by way of mitigation — e.g., "Granted, X is very bad, but he's nowhere near as bad as Hitler." More often, however, he's used by way of rhetorical attack — e.g., when we suggest that someone bears a moral resemblance to Hitler, or shares certain principles with him, or is tending in a Hitlerian direction.

This rhetoric, it should be noted, is made use of by both Right and Left. Prolifers often compare the American abortion-on-demand regime to

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