

Signs of the times: Some issues that Pope Benedict XVI addresses in *Charity in Truth*: Consider & respond.

- Everything we have is a gift from God;
- without God humans can do nothing (Jn15:5);
- essential connections between: Charity/love, truth and justice (Charity begins with justice but goes beyond justice). (7)
- integral human development and the transcendent dimension of humans – the sanctity and dignity of the human person;
- sustainability and human development;
- solidarity, one human family and the common good;
- poverty and development; hunger and inequality;
- the dignity and importance of work – work and employment;
- the relationship between human rights and duties; the importance of education;
- economic justice: the moral aspects of economic life and financial speculation on the investment markets;
- relationship between business and ethics;
- the problems caused by globalisation;
- migrants and migration;
- life issues: abortion, euthanasia;
- community, life, sex education, procreation, openness to life;
- defense of marriage and the family;
- intergenerational justice;
- citizens, consumers
- food security;
- the role of Government: the responsibilities and limitations of government;
- subsidiarity;
- the role of civil society;
- global governance;
- the need for reform of the UN;
- the promotion of peace;
- natural resources and environmental responsibility/stewardship;
- international development aid;
- reductions in social security and programs for those in need;
- the need to open trade barriers for less developed countries;
- agricultural development;
- the uses and abuses of technology;
- excessive protections on knowledge and intellectual property to the detriment of poorer societies;
- global trade and alternative forms of marketing of products from developing countries (“fair trade products”);
- bioethics and the dangers of some biotechnology which manipulates life for profit;
- better integrated, improved welfare systems with greater involvement of civil society and less waste or fraud;
- microfinancing;
- the merits of enterprises which do not fit the traditional economic categories of profit or non-profit;
- collaboration with followers of other religions and with non-believers.

Linking the Pope’s 3rd Encyclical, *Charity in Truth*, to the Archdiocese’s 3rd Pastoral Priority: Regenerating the Moral and Spiritual Values of our society.

Leela's presentation at Follow-up workshop held at Living Water Community on Sat. 31 October 2009 (Follow-up to AEC Seminar at the Regional Seminary on 11 and 12 Sept., 2009)

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Msgr Jason Gordon focused in his presentation on the 1st 2 post-Synod pastoral priorities for the Archdiocese, that is: The New Evangelization and Revitalizing Catholic Culture and Identity.

I shall focus on the 3rd pastoral priority: Regenerating the moral and spiritual values of our society. As you know, CCSJ has lead responsibility for implementing the resolutions linked to this pastoral priority.

In his previous 2 encyclicals – Deus Caritas Est and Spe Salvi - Pope Benedict XVI highlighted issues such as poverty, hunger, and inequality. In this wide-ranging 3rd encyclical he identifies and analyses a broader range of social/current issues – drawing on “the Church’s social doctrine (which) illuminates with an unchanging light the new problems that are constantly emerging.” (12)

He calls us to action when he says: “*Testimony to Christ's charity, through works of justice, peace and development, is part and parcel of evangelization, because Jesus Christ, who loves us, is concerned with the whole person... The Church's social doctrine proclaims and bears witness to faith. It is an instrument and an indispensable setting for formation in faith.*”(15)

I have circulated, for your information, a list of some of the issues that are dealt with in the encyclical. This encyclical shines the light of the Gospel on our current circumstances.

The Pope makes it clear that “The Church does not have technical solutions to offer and does not claim “to interfere in any way in the politics of States.” She does, however, have a mission of truth to accomplish, in every time and circumstance, for a society that is attuned to man, to his dignity, to his vocation.”

We all know that religion has a role in the public square. As Catholics we are called to transform the world and to infuse it with Gospel values. The challenge is to discern what we need to transform. What are the issues we need to address?

Sr Angela Zukowski, University of Dayton, rightly said: “When we read the encyclical, we should consider: *“What are the signs of the times the Holy Father is calling us to look at and respond to?”* How we respond depends on whether or not our lives are rooted in a radical Christian love – the kind of love that is called for if we are to build the “civilization of love” that is mentioned in our Archdiocesan Mission Statement.

The issues he raises help us to reflect on what is wrong with our society and our world today. They help us to reflect on how far we have moved from the moral order that God imprinted in our hearts and minds. (St. Paul said that we know God’s law because it is “written on our hearts, our consciences also bearing witness”.) The issues the Pope raises also help us to focus on the

areas that we need to address urgently if we are to regenerate the moral and spiritual values of our society/world.

Steve Colecchi, director of international justice and peace for the US Conference of Catholic Bishops rightly identified the crux of the matter. He says: “The pope is saying you need just structures and people who act justly...He's calling on every level of society to be rooted in an ethical vision of the human person.”

The challenge for us is to use the wisdom contained in this encyclical to guide us as we seek to fulfill the mission of our Church in T&T/the world.

The writer, Gianna, rightly states that the encyclical “jumps around to numerous specific social issues of our time, tracing them back to a lack of truth in our charity.” She says the Pope puts the “truth” back in our “charity”. Msgr Jason addressed this issue and the issue of the logic of gift that runs through the encyclical, so I will not address these.

I shall only attempt to give snapshots of some of the issues the Pope raises and which will assist us in implementing Pastoral Priority 3:

- Integral human development
- Option for the poor /the common good/welfare
- Respect for life
- The Economy
- Globalisation/Reform of the UN/World Political Authority
- The Environment

Each of these areas require a workshop on its own!

Throughout the encyclical what is striking is the interrelationship between the various issues raised e.g. respect for life cannot be divorced from all other matters of social justice and human development.

It is important as you read the encyclical to be aware of the consistency in the social teaching of the church over the centuries.

The Pope says: “It is not a case of two typologies of social doctrine, one pre-conciliar and one post-conciliar, differing from one another: on the contrary, there is a single teaching, consistent and at the same time ever new....Coherence does not mean a closed system: on the contrary, it means dynamic faithfulness to a light received.” (12)

He draws heavily on the encyclicals of Paul VI and John Paul II. He refers to a number of powerful encyclicals/exhortations e.g. Rerum Novarum (Pope Leo XIII,1891), Humanae Vitae (Pope Paul VI, 1968), Populorum Progressio (Pope Paul VI, 1967), Evangelium Vitae (Pope John Paul II, 1995), Evangelii Nuntiandi (Pope Paul VI, 1975).

In my presentation there is some repetition as some quotations are pertinent to various sections and if one is using this presentation to run about 6 sessions, such repetition helps.

INTEGRAL HUMAN DEVELOPMENT:

Clifford Longley, writing in *The Tablet*, UK (11 July 2009), identifies the fusing of “spirituality and social action under the banner of *integral human development*” as the encyclical’s “theological keynote”.

He suggests, the encyclical “emphatically unites the Church’s roles of spreading the Gospel with working for social justice”.

A central theme in the encyclical, therefore, is the concept of “integral human development” – which, the Pope says, means the development of the whole person in all his/her dimensions and of every person. This, he says, is authentic human development.

The foundation of all social justice principles are the sanctity of life and the dignity of the human person.

In the article: “What’s dignity got to do with it” (see: <http://doxsoulogy.co.uk/>) we read:

“Biblically speaking, human dignity is determined by the mystery of relationship with God... what makes humans *human*-that is to say, what ascribes *value* to human life-requires an understanding of the human person as being created for, and existing within, relationship with God.

The pursuit of a just economy and authentic development, says the Pope, “requires a transcendent vision of the person, it needs God” (11). That is, we must see humans in relationship with God.

It's because many have taken God out of the equation and have sought to place their trust mainly in themselves believing that they are, as the Pope says, their own "author" that we are in the mess we are in today. The Pope rejects the "Promethean vision of human beings which sees them as the sole architects of their own destiny".

We are also in a mess because many people today place their trust mainly in science and technology. He says: "Unlimited trust in the potential of technologies would also show itself, in the end, to be illusory."

The Pope reminds us that "Human knowledge is insufficient and the conclusions of science cannot indicate by themselves the path towards integral human development."

He also reminds us that we need God. We can do nothing without His grace. "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, which almost make us yield to discouragement, we find solace in the sayings of our Lord Jesus Christ, who teaches us: "Apart from me you can do nothing" (Jn 15:5)" (78)

The Pope draws heavily on Pope Paul VI's encyclical, *Populorum Progressio* (1967) to develop this concept. He outlines the basic conditions for humane and dignified development.

In the current economic crisis, he makes it clear that the "primary capital to be safeguarded and valued is man, the

human person in his and her integrity.” (25) – people are at the center of development.

But we do not journey alone. In Chap. 5 the Pope focuses on *The Cooperation of the Human Family*: “the human race is a single family,” he says. Development means inclusion within a wider “human family, built in solidarity on the basis of the fundamental values of justice and peace” (54).

Standing in unity with the wider human family should not lead to the submersion of the identities of individuals, peoples and cultures. However, he has some words of condemnation for

“some religious and cultural traditions” which, he says, “ossify society in rigid social groupings, in magical beliefs that fail to respect the dignity of the person, and in attitudes of subjugation to occult powers. In these contexts, love and truth have difficulty asserting themselves, and authentic development is impeded. For this reason, while it may be true that development needs the religions and cultures of different peoples, it is equally true that adequate discernment is needed.” (55)

He also states that: “Secularism and fundamentalism exclude the possibility of fruitful dialogue and effective cooperation between reason and religious faith” (56).

I focus on these sections to highlight the challenge we face in regenerating the moral and spiritual values of our society.

His Grace raised this issue at the IRO Day of Thanksgiving at the Savannah (Oct 4). He said that Religious tradition must

remain part of the life and value system of T&T. He urged religious traditions and the community of religious believers “to speak about and to witness to spiritual values to the national community”. Like the Pope, he warned about neo-paganism – which includes the occult etc.

As I said earlier, we do not journey in this world alone and we need to work with others to achieve our goals. Thomas J. Reese, S.J. notes:

“Pope Benedict believes that if people understood God's love for every single human person and his divine plan for us, then believers would recognize their duty as the Pope says: “to unite their efforts with those of all men and women of good will, with the followers of other religions and with non-believers, so that this world of ours may effectively correspond to the divine plan: living as a family under the Creator's watchful eye.”

The Pope states that the main reason why humanity is failing to achieve the wellbeing of every person as we seek to progress/develop is because humanity is pursuing wealth and technology for their own sake, devoid of values, moral purpose and moral responsibility – cut-throat capitalism.

He says that if we only adopt a purely material and technical approach to solving the world's crises without a “spiritual dimension” we will fail. Here is a clear link with our Pastoral Priority 3. We need to foster this spiritual dimension in our citizens - in terms of morals and values.

He makes a clear connection between personal and structural ethics – both individuals and institutions must act in economic life with moral principles and ethical criteria:

“Development is impossible without upright men and women, without financiers and politicians whose consciences are finely attuned to the requirements of the common good.” (71)

He calls for an “ethical interaction of consciences and minds that would give rise to truly *human* development.” (9)

OPTION FOR THE POOR/THE COMMON GOOD/WELFARE

We need to link our concern for the poor with the concept of the “common good” and issues relating to ‘welfare’. In Art. 7 he says:

“Another important consideration is the common good. To love someone is to desire that person's good and to take effective steps to secure it. Besides the good of the individual, there is a good that is linked to living in society: the common good. It is the good of “all of us”, made up of individuals, families and intermediate groups who together constitute society. It is a good that is sought not for its own sake, but for the people who belong to the social community and who can only really and effectively pursue their good within it. To desire the *common good* and strive towards it *is a requirement of justice and charity*. To take a stand for the common good is on the one hand to be solicitous

for, and on the other hand to avail oneself of, that complex of institutions that give structure to the life of society, juridically, civilly, politically and culturally, making it the *pólis*, or “city”. The more we strive to secure a common good corresponding to the real needs of our neighbours, the more effectively we love them. Every Christian is called to practise this charity, in a manner corresponding to his vocation and according to the degree of influence he wields in the *pólis*. This is the institutional path — we might also call it the political path — of charity, no less excellent and effective than the kind of charity which encounters the neighbour directly, outside the institutional mediation of the *pólis*. When animated by charity, commitment to the common good has greater worth than a merely secular and political stand would have. Like all commitment to justice, it has a place within the testimony of divine charity that paves the way for eternity through temporal action. Man's earthly activity, when inspired and sustained by charity, contributes to the building of the universal *city of God*, which is the goal of the history of the human family. In an increasingly globalized society, the common good and the effort to obtain it cannot fail to assume the dimensions of the whole human family, that is to say, the community of peoples and nations, in such a way as to shape the *earthly city* in unity and peace, rendering it to some degree an anticipation and a prefiguration of the undivided *city of God* (7).

And in relation to ‘welfare’, in Art. 25 he says: "Being out of work or dependent on public or private assistance for a prolonged period undermines the freedom and creativity of the person and his family and social relationships, causing great

psychological and spiritual suffering. I would like to remind everyone, especially governments engaged in boosting the world's economic and social assets, that the *primary capital to be safeguarded and valued is man, the human person in his or her integrity*: ‘Man is the source, the focus and the aim of all economic and social life.’” (25)

Another key issue the Pope addresses is “food security”. To promote integral human development we must be concerned to eliminate world hunger, which, as the Pope says, is essential for “safeguarding the peace and stability of the planet.” He reminds us that we have adequate resources in our world but inequitable distribution is the problem we need to address.

He says in Art. 27: “Life in many poor countries is still extremely insecure as a consequence of food shortages, and the situation could become worse: *hunger* still reaps enormous numbers of victims among those who, like Lazarus, are not permitted to take their place at the rich man's table, contrary to the hopes expressed by Paul VI.⁶⁴ *Feed the hungry* (cf. Mt 25: 35, 37, 42) is an ethical imperative for the universal Church, as she responds to the teachings of her Founder, the Lord Jesus, concerning solidarity and the sharing of goods. Moreover, the elimination of world hunger has also, in the global era, become a requirement for safeguarding the peace and stability of the planet...The right to food, like the right to water, has an important place within the pursuit of other rights, beginning with the fundamental right to life. It is therefore necessary to cultivate a public conscience that considers *food and access to water as*

universal rights of all human beings, without distinction or discrimination.” (27)

He implores wealthier countries to increase development aid to poor countries to help eliminate world hunger. However, he criticizes some of the agencies involved in development aid as too much of what is given as aid is often spent by these agencies in establishing expensive bureaucracies and too little filters down to the persons for whom the aid is intended. He says that aid should go directly to the people e.g. to agricultural development to improve infrastructure, irrigation systems, transport and sharing of agricultural technology.

I will address further issues relating to the ‘poor’ later on in my presentation.

RESPECT FOR LIFE

I believe that at the heart of the decline of morals and values in our society is a lack of respect for life, a lack of empathy, the erosion of conscience. The Holy Father’s encyclical is replete with examples of the way in which we fail to respect life.

Life, he reminds us, is a gift from God. In fact, everything we have, he says, is a gift from God. Msgr Jason focused on this theme of *the logic of gift* which runs through the encyclical.

In light of CCSJ's recent Media Release about the treatment of our Chinese brothers who are here as migrant workers (see our website), it is important to note what the Holy Father says about migration. He urges greater cooperation among nations and governments to address its causes and effects. He says: "Every migrant is a human person who, as such, possesses fundamental, inalienable rights that must be respected by everyone and in every circumstance." (62)

Linked to the reality of humanity's inalienable rights, is the fact that these are God-given – given to us by a God who loves us. In a most profound statement he says: "Man is not a lost atom in a random universe: he is God's creature, whom God chose to endow with an immortal soul and whom he has always loved."(29)

In quoting from *Evangelium Vitae* – The Gospel of Life, the Pope says: "The Church forcefully maintains this link between life ethics and social ethics, fully aware that "a society lacks solid foundations when, on the one hand, it asserts values such as the dignity of the person, justice and peace, but then, on the other hand, radically acts to the contrary by allowing or tolerating a variety of ways in which human life is devalued and violated, especially where it is weak or marginalized." (15)

The pope warns against "certain abstract subdivisions of the Church's social doctrine," insisting that "*respect for life . . .* cannot in any way be detached from questions concerning the

development of peoples. . . . “*Openness to life is at the center of true development.*” (12, 28)

He argues for stronger families based on marriage between a man and a woman and “responsible procreation” (44) and against mandatory birth control, abortion and euthanasia. See: “*Charity in truth* places man before the astonishing experience of gift. Gratuitousness is present in our lives in many different forms, which often go unrecognized because of a purely consumerist and utilitarian view of life. The human being is made for gift, which expresses and makes present his transcendent dimension. Sometimes modern man is wrongly convinced that he is the sole author of himself, his life and society. This is a presumption that follows from being selfishly closed in upon himself, and it is a consequence — to express it in faith terms — of *original sin.*” (34)

In Art 28 he speaks out about “Demographic control” through an “anti-birth mentality” that promotes abortion and birth control. He says this “cannot lead to morally sound development.” He is critical of those who support abortion “as if it were a form of cultural progress.”

“28. One of the most striking aspects of development in the present day is the important question of *respect for life*, which cannot in any way be detached from questions concerning the development of peoples. It is an aspect which has acquired increasing prominence in recent times, obliging us to broaden our concept of poverty and underdevelopment to include

questions connected with the acceptance of life, especially in cases where it is impeded in a variety of ways.

“Not only does the situation of poverty still provoke high rates of infant mortality in many regions, but some parts of the world still experience practices of demographic control, on the part of governments that often promote contraception and even go so far as to impose abortion. In economically developed countries, legislation contrary to life is very widespread, and it has already shaped moral attitudes and praxis, contributing to the spread of an anti-birth mentality; frequent attempts are made to export this mentality to other States as if it were a form of cultural progress.

“Some non-governmental Organizations work actively to spread abortion, at times promoting the practice of sterilization in poor countries, in some cases not even informing the women concerned. Moreover, there is reason to suspect that development aid is sometimes linked to specific health-care policies which *de facto* involve the imposition of strong birth control measures. Further grounds for concern are laws permitting euthanasia as well as pressure from lobby groups, nationally and internationally, in favour of its juridical recognition.

“*Openness to life is at the centre of true development.* When a society moves towards the denial or suppression of life, it ends up no longer finding the necessary motivation and energy to strive for man's true good. If personal and social sensitivity towards the acceptance of a new life is lost, then other forms of acceptance that are valuable for society also wither away. The

acceptance of life strengthens moral fibre and makes people capable of mutual help. By cultivating openness to life, wealthy peoples can better understand the needs of poor ones, they can avoid employing huge economic and intellectual resources to satisfy the selfish desires of their own citizens, and instead, they can promote virtuous action within the perspective of production that is morally sound and marked by solidarity, respecting the fundamental right to life of every people and every individual....

44. “The notion of rights and duties in development must also take account of the problems associated with *population growth*. This is a very important aspect of authentic development, since it concerns the inalienable values of life and the family. To consider population increase as the primary cause of underdevelopment is mistaken, even from an economic point of view. Suffice it to consider, on the one hand, the significant reduction in infant mortality and the rise in average life expectancy found in economically developed countries, and on the other hand, the signs of crisis observable in societies that are registering an alarming decline in their birth rate. Due attention must obviously be given to responsible procreation, which among other things has a positive contribution to make to integral human development. The Church, in her concern for man's authentic development, urges him to have full respect for human values in the exercise of his sexuality. It cannot be reduced merely to pleasure or entertainment, nor can sex education be reduced to technical instruction aimed solely at protecting the interested parties from possible disease or the “risk” of procreation. This would be to impoverish and disregard the deeper meaning of sexuality, a meaning which needs to be

acknowledged and responsibly appropriated not only by individuals but also by the community. It is irresponsible to view sexuality merely as a source of pleasure, and likewise to regulate it through strategies of mandatory birth control. In either case materialistic ideas and policies are at work, and individuals are ultimately subjected to various forms of violence. Against such policies, there is a need to defend the primary competence of the family in the area of sexuality, as opposed to the State and its restrictive policies, and to ensure that parents are suitably prepared to undertake their responsibilities.

“Morally responsible openness to life represents a rich social and economic resource. Populous nations have been able to emerge from poverty thanks not least to the size of their population and the talents of their people. On the other hand, formerly prosperous nations are presently passing through a phase of uncertainty and in some cases decline, precisely because of their falling birth rates; this has become a crucial problem for highly affluent societies. The decline in births, falling at times beneath the so-called “replacement level”, also puts a strain on social welfare systems, increases their cost, eats into savings and hence the financial resources needed for investment, reduces the availability of qualified labourers, and narrows the “brain pool” upon which nations can draw for their needs. Furthermore, smaller and at times miniscule families run the risk of impoverishing social relations, and failing to ensure effective forms of solidarity. These situations are symptomatic of scant confidence in the future and moral weariness.

“It is thus becoming a social and even economic necessity once more 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. In view of this, States are called to *enact policies promoting the centrality and the integrity of the family* founded on marriage between a man and a woman, the primary vital cell of society, and to assume responsibility for its economic and fiscal needs, while respecting its essentially relational character...

“51. ...*the decisive issue is the overall moral tenor of society*. If there is a lack of respect for the right to life and to a natural death, if human conception, gestation and birth are made artificial, if human embryos are sacrificed to research, the conscience of society ends up losing the concept of human ecology and, along with it, that of environmental ecology. It is contradictory to insist that future generations respect the natural environment when our educational systems and laws do not help them to respect themselves.”

THE ECONOMY

The Pope offers a moral framework for economic life – to build a just economy. The global economy must be based on moral principles.

He criticizes current economic trends and behaviour in business. He says there is “clear proof . . . at the present time” of the “pernicious effects of sin” in economic life. (34)

He refers to “badly managed and largely speculative financial dealing, large-scale migration of peoples . . . [and] the unregulated exploitation of the earth’s resources.” (21)

He says: “Economy and finance, as instruments, can be used badly when those at the helm are motivated by purely selfish ends. Instruments that are good in themselves can thereby be transformed into harmful ones. But it is man's darkened reason that produces these consequences, not the instrument *per se*. Therefore it is not the instrument that must be called to account, but individuals, their moral conscience and their personal and social responsibility.” (36)

He uses strong language at times e.g. he talks about “The scandal of glaring inequalities” in our world. While he hoped that economic development would have “produce real growth, of benefit to everyone and genuinely sustainable,” he notes that “*The world's wealth is growing in absolute terms, but inequalities are on the increase,*”

He says: “The dignity of the individual and the demands of justice require that economic choices do not cause disparities in wealth to increase in an excessive and morally unacceptable manner, and that we continue to prioritize the goal of access to steady employment for everyone.”

He says labour unions should be respected; self-interest should be tempered with reciprocity; and consumers should practice responsible consumption. Investors and consumers have moral responsibilities and must realize that “purchasing is always a moral — and not simply economic — act.” (66)

He states that the failure of the world to redistribute the proceeds of economic growth and reduce poverty is because economics is currently detached from social responsibilities and moral values. What is needed is a change of values. He focuses on the moral dimension of economic life.

"The economy needs ethics in order to function correctly -- not any ethics, but an ethics which is people centered" (45).

He makes it clear that there is a need for some kind of regulation: “The market is not, and must not become, the place where the strong subdue the weak (36)...the conviction that the economy must be autonomous, that it must be shielded from “influences” of a moral character, has led man to abuse the economic process in a thoroughly destructive way. In the long term, these convictions have led to economic, social and political systems that trample upon personal and social freedom, and are therefore unable to deliver the justice that they promise.(34)"(see Chapter 3: Fraternity, Economic Development and Civil Society).

Businesses should not solely address the interests of their shareholders and seek to maximize profits. Rights should be

accompanied by responsibilities e.g. towards workers and the environment.

“35. The market is subject to the principles of so-called *commutative justice*, which regulates the relations of giving and receiving between parties to a transaction. But the social doctrine of the Church has unceasingly highlighted the importance of *distributive justice* and *social justice* for the market economy, not only because it belongs within a broader social and political context, but also because of the wider network of relations within which it operates. In fact, if the market is governed solely by the principle of the equivalence in value of exchanged goods, it cannot produce the social cohesion that it requires in order to function well. *Without internal forms of solidarity and mutual trust, the market cannot completely fulfil its proper economic function.* And today it is this trust which has ceased to exist, and the loss of trust is a grave loss. It was timely when Paul VI in *Populorum Progressio* insisted that the economic system itself would benefit from the wide-ranging practice of justice, inasmuch as the first to gain from the development of poor countries would be rich ones.

According to the Pope, it was not just a matter of correcting dysfunctions through assistance. The poor are not to be considered a “burden”, but a resource, even from the purely economic point of view. It is nevertheless erroneous to hold that the market economy has an inbuilt need for a quota of poverty and underdevelopment in order to function at its best. It is in the interests of the market to promote emancipation, but in order to do so effectively, it cannot rely only on itself, because it is not

able to produce by itself something that lies outside its competence. It must draw its moral energies from other subjects that are capable of generating them.

36. “Economic activity cannot solve all social problems through the simple application of *commercial logic*. This needs to be *directed towards the pursuit of the common good*, for which the political community in particular must also take responsibility. Therefore, it must be borne in mind that grave imbalances are produced when economic action, conceived merely as an engine for wealth creation, is detached from political action, conceived as a means for pursuing justice through redistribution.

“The Church has always held that economic action is not to be regarded as something opposed to society. In and of itself, the market is not, and must not become, the place where the strong subdue the weak...

37. “The Church's social doctrine has always maintained that *justice must be applied to every phase of economic activity*, because this is always concerned with man and his needs. Locating resources, financing, production, consumption and all the other phases in the economic cycle inevitably have moral implications. *Thus every economic decision has a moral consequence...* economic activity is no longer circumscribed within territorial limits...”

“Investors and consumers have moral responsibilities; realizing purchasing is always a moral — and not simply an economic — act.” (66)

He says: “Profit is useful if it serves as a means towards an end...once profit becomes the exclusive goal, if it is produced by improper means and without the common good as its ultimate end, it risks destroying wealth and creating poverty.”

We know that to some extent the world is in crisis today because of corruption and illegality. The Pope says: “Corruption and illegality are unfortunately evident in the conduct of the economic and political class in rich countries...as well as in poor ones... Financiers must rediscover the genuinely ethical foundation of their activity, so as not to abuse the sophisticated instruments which can serve to betray the interests of savers.”

Globalisation/Reform of UN/World Political authority.

Globalization: "The risk for our time is that the *de facto* interdependence of people and nations is **not** matched by ethical interaction of consciences and minds that would give rise to truly human development." (9)

The Pope emphasizes the human face of globalization. He is not opposed to a globalized economy. He says if it's done correctly it has the potential to redistribute wealth around the globe. But if it is badly directed and if the problems are not fixed, then globalization can increase poverty and inequality and we will

see more of the kind of crisis we are currently experiencing. (see Art 36 above also).

In one of the most profound statements in this document, the Pope states that “as society becomes ever more globalized, it makes us neighbours but does not make us brothers. Reason, by itself, is capable of grasping the equality between men and of giving stability to their civic coexistence, but it cannot establish fraternity.”

True “*development of peoples depends, above all, on a recognition that the human race is a single family working together in true communion, not simply a group of subjects who happen to live side by side.*”

He says that Pope Paul VI “had an articulated vision of development.” This vision was understood by Pope Paul VI “to indicate the goal of rescuing peoples, first and foremost, from hunger, deprivation, endemic diseases and illiteracy.”

The Pope calls for “a true world political authority...so that the concept of the family of nations can acquire real teeth”(67) to address the challenges facing the world’s people. However, he warns that such an international order could “produce a dangerous universal power of a tyrannical nature” and we must guard against this.

It is important to note that he does not mean that the UN should be replaced with a ‘World Government’, as some writers have claimed. In fact, in Art 67 and 41 he speaks against a World Government. In Art 57 he emphasizes the need for subsidiarity –

dispersed Political Authority. This is a key social justice principle.

He says: “In the face of the unrelenting growth of global interdependence, there is a strongly felt need, even in the midst of a global recession, for a reform of the United Nations Organization, and likewise of economic institutions and international finance, so that the concept of the family of nations can acquire real teeth.

“One also senses the urgent need to find innovative ways of implementing the principle of the responsibility to protect and of giving poorer nations an effective voice in shared decision-making...To manage the global economy; to revive economies hit by the crisis; to avoid any deterioration of the present crisis and the greater imbalances that would result; to bring about integral and timely disarmament, food security, and peace; to guarantee the protection of the environment and to regulate migration; for all this, there is urgent need of a true world political authority.” (67)

He says that development is “impossible without upright men and women, without financiers and politicians whose consciences are finely attuned to the common good” (71).

“Financiers must rediscover the genuinely ethical foundation of their activity, so as not to abuse the sophisticated instruments which can serve to betray the interest of savers. Right intention,

transparency, and the search for positive results are mutually compatible and must never be detached from one another. (65)” He calls for both new attitudes and new structures to promote solidarity and accountability within the global economy.

THE ENVIRONMENT

“When nature, including the human being, is viewed as the result of mere chance or evolutionary determinism, our sense of responsibility wanes. In nature, the believer recognizes the wonderful result of God's creative activity, which we may use responsibly to satisfy our legitimate needs, material or otherwise, while respecting the intrinsic balance of creation. If this vision is lost, we end up either considering nature an untouchable taboo or, on the contrary, abusing it.” (48)

In Arts. 48 – 52 of the encyclical, the Pope focuses specifically on the moral dimensions of the environment. He says that:

“The Church has a responsibility towards creation and she must assert this responsibility in the public sphere. In so doing, she must defend not only earth, water and air as gifts of creation that belong to everyone. She must above all protect mankind from self-destruction. There is need for what might be called a human

ecology, correctly understood. The deterioration of nature is in fact closely connected to the culture that shapes human coexistence: *when “human ecology” is respected within society, environmental ecology also benefits.* (51)

The Pope links natural ecology and “human ecology.” He urges us to care for the earth and care for “the least of these” (Matthew 25) - “it would be wrong to uphold one set of duties while trampling on the other.” (51)

He says: “Today the subject of development is also closely related to the duties arising from *our relationship to the natural environment*. The environment is God's gift to everyone, and in our use of it we have a responsibility towards the poor, towards future generations and towards humanity as a whole. When nature, including the human being, is viewed as the result of mere chance or evolutionary determinism, our sense of responsibility wanes. In nature, the believer recognizes the wonderful result of God's creative activity, which we may use responsibly to satisfy our legitimate needs, material or otherwise, while respecting the intrinsic balance of creation. If this vision is lost, we end up either considering nature an untouchable taboo or, on the contrary, abusing it. Neither attitude is consonant with the Christian vision of nature as the fruit of God's creation.” (48)

He stresses the need for “*inter-generational justice*”:

“ projects for integral human development cannot ignore coming generations, but need to be *marked by solidarity and inter-generational justice*, while taking into account a variety of

contexts: ecological, juridical, economic, political and cultural”(48)

In Arts 48 and 50 he urges us to “exercise responsible stewardship over nature, in order to protect it, to enjoy its fruits and to cultivate it in new ways, with the assistance of advanced technologies, so that it can worthily accommodate and feed the world's population. On this earth there is room for everyone: here the entire human family must find the resources to live with dignity, through the help of nature itself — God's gift to his children — and through hard work and creativity. At the same time we must recognize our grave duty to hand the earth on to future generations in such a condition that they too can worthily inhabit it and continue to cultivate it. This means being committed to making joint decisions “after pondering responsibly the road to be taken, decisions aimed at strengthening that *covenant between human beings and the environment*, which should mirror the creative love of God, from whom we come and towards whom we are journeying”. Let us hope that the international community and individual governments will succeed in countering harmful ways of treating the environment...

“...the protection of the environment, of resources and of the climate obliges all international leaders to act jointly and to show a readiness to work in good faith, respecting the law and promoting solidarity with the weakest regions of the planet.”
(50)

He says: “One of the greatest challenges facing the economy is to achieve the most efficient use — not abuse — of natural resources, based on a realization that the notion of “efficiency” is not value-free.”(50)

He urges us to restrain consumption, use renewable energy technology, and help the poorest people and countries to deal with environmental challenges.

“The way humanity treats the environment influences the way it treats itself, and vice versa. This invites contemporary society to a serious review of its life-style, which, in many parts of the world, is prone to hedonism and consumerism, regardless of their harmful consequences. What is needed is an effective shift in mentality which can lead to the adoption of new life-styles.”
(51)

He says: “Nature, especially in our time, is so integrated into the dynamics of society and culture that by now it hardly constitutes an independent variable. Desertification and the decline in productivity in some agricultural areas are also the result of impoverishment and underdevelopment among their inhabitants... How many natural resources are squandered by wars!(51)

“In order to protect nature”, he says, “it is not enough to intervene with economic incentives or deterrents; not even an apposite education is sufficient. These are important steps, but *the decisive issue is the overall moral tenor of society.* If there is a lack of respect for the right to life and to a natural death, if human conception, gestation and birth are made artificial, if

human embryos are sacrificed to research, the conscience of society ends up losing the concept of human ecology and, along with it, that of environmental ecology. It is contradictory to insist that future generations respect the natural environment when our educational systems and laws do not help them to respect themselves. (51)

“The book of nature is one and indivisible: it takes in not only the environment but also life, sexuality, marriage, the family, social relations: in a word, integral human development. Our duties towards the environment are linked to our duties towards the human person, considered in himself and in relation to others. It would be wrong to uphold one set of duties while trampling on the other. Herein lies a grave contradiction in our mentality and practice today: one which demeans the person, disrupts the environment and damages society. (51)

CCSJ is in the process of finalizing a draft Archdiocesan policy on the Environment – as part of our efforts to implement Synod Resolution. If we are to regenerate the moral and spiritual values of society we need to do as our Archdiocesan Mission statement says and reconcile ourselves with God, neighbour, creation and self.

Conclusion: Hope is an essential virtue which underpins our lives as Catholics. As Dr Hayden Ramsay said: “People who lack hope may develop the vices of despair (inability to believe one can move on) ...hope may well be the most relevant virtue for our age.”

Father Federico Lombardi, director of the Vatican press, said that, "...despite the crisis we are going through, the Encyclical offers a message of hope: Humanity has a mission and the means to transform the world and progress in justice and love in human relations, even in the social and economic field."

The Encyclical ends on a note of hope. The Pope says:

"The current crisis obliges us to re-plan our journey, to set ourselves new rules and to discover new forms of commitment, to build on positive experiences and to reject negative ones. The crisis thus becomes *an opportunity for discernment, in which to shape a new vision for the future.*" (21)

Let us be encouraged by the Holy Father's words. He says:

"As we contemplate 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. . . . *God's love calls us to move beyond the limited and the ephemeral, it gives us the courage to continue seeking and working for the benefit of all.*"

And as we move forward, let us seek to deepen our own spirituality. The Holy Father says: "Development needs Christians with their arms raised towards God in prayer... Development requires attention to the spiritual life..." (78)

So, as we seek to think and act anew and to practise *caritas in veritate*: genuine love founded on truth, let us go forward in prayer, and in the hope and love of Christ; confident in our

ability, and through God's Grace, to build His kingdom of justice, peace, love, truth and freedom in our country and in our world today. May God bless us all.