

## Justice in the World: Justice in the World, 40 years Later

From the Jan-March 2011 edition of *Around Africa*, by Fr. Rocco Puopolo, Executive Director AFJN <http://afjn.org/focus-campaigns/justice-in-the-world.html>

“If you want peace, work for justice.” This pithy saying can still be found today as a bumper sticker on a number of cars in Church parking lots. It has been a long serving indicator of our desire to reconcile the brokenness of our world, a theme found in the restoration prayer of the psalmist as imagined in a dream scene of a renewed community in psalm 85, personifying characters of kindness, truth, justice and peace coming together as if long lost friends. In the words of the preface to the Constitution on the Church in the Modern World, we read, “(T)he joys and the hopes, the griefs and the anxieties of the men of this age, especially those who are poor or in any way afflicted, these are the joys and hopes, the griefs and anxieties of the followers of Christ.”

This novel intuition of solidarity with the joys and sufferings of humanity was further developed in 1971 as Bishop delegates came back to Rome for the first of many Synod meetings. At this Synod they looked at practical ways to implement Vatican II and gave particular attention on how to articulate this concern for justice. The document *Justice in the World*, released in November of that year, is the product of the bishops’ reflection and has become the reason why our church today has such a variety of justice and peace commissions on all levels, from Roman offices to local parish committees.

*Justice in the World* brought the Church's social ministry from the “fringe” (a common thought that it was up to religious communities to do these ministries) to the very center of what it means to be Christian as part of the renewal of Vatican II. A wide variety of justice and peace reflection centers as well as advocacy offices were formed to attend to the many issues that were raised by the Synod.

Our very own Africa Faith and Justice Network (AFJN) is one of these responses to this intuition by three missionary religious communities in 1983. Many Catholic high schools established a Service Week that is obligatory for seniors before they graduate. Parish Youth programs have summer work camps in Appalachia and central cities and beyond. Colleges have alternative spring breaks or practical hands-on courses where the method used is participatory action research. All of these encourage empowerment, sense of personal and communal rights, relationship building, mutual trust and respect. It was the basis for our own US Bishops’ Social Pastoral Letters reflecting on War and Peace (1983), the Economy (1986) and Mission (1986). All these can find their roots in this Synod and document.

Furthermore, the 1971 Synod fathers state that “(A)ction on behalf of justice and participation in the transformation of the world fully appear to us as a constitutive dimension of the preaching of the Gospel, or, in other words, of the Church’s mission for the redemption of the human race and its liberation from every oppressive situation” *Justice in the World* (no.6). This phrase alone electrified those who were already engaged in justice work at the time. Another line from the document continues to ring true today and challenges the current world order as we know it. “(E)conomic injustice and lack of social participation keep people from attaining their basic

human and civil rights.” (9) A third aspect of the document underlined a more integrated approach to what we understand human development to mean, leading to liberation for the oppressed and the oppressor.

At a recent AFJN staff retreat, we identified several positive developments in the strategic formation of pastoral centers and programming that support the integral human development intuition that *Justice in the World* speaks about. For example, the publication of Training for Transformation by Ann Hope and Sally Timmel served as the guide for a vast number of DELTA (Development Education Literacy Training for Adults) training sessions that empowered the people in Africa. Many dioceses on the continent have Justice and Peace (JP) commissions at the parish level and in small Christian communities in the outstations. In the diocese I served in Sierra Leone all JP local committees, initiated by the Catholic parish, are open for full participation by Traditional Religion members, other Christian Churches and Muslim communities as they search and work together for justice.

Over the years, especially in the 1990's, conflict resolution and restoration studies, programs and training were a priority to insure that post conflict reconstruction would lead to sustained peace, justice and progress for the development of African communities. Also, the Church in many countries contributed to general civic education leading up to elections, HIV/AIDS outreach and the like. In some countries, the Church is the only reputable agent of civil society. In 2009 at the Second African Synod, the bishops reviewed the progress as well as the continuing challenges regarding justice and peace in Africa. A lot of progress has been made, but our US and international press don't pay much attention or acknowledge these good news stories.

It is a historical fact that since 1971 some of the most devastating wars have been played out on the continent, most as proxy wars between the world's super powers, US and USSR, over the control of resources. Not much has changed. The arms and drug trades flourish. The number of victims of human trafficking and the movement of refugees both internally and externally has never been higher. Countries such as Mozambique, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Sudan, Uganda and Angola have had long protracted wars. Conflicts in Rwanda, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Ethiopia, Somalia, Eritrea, Zimbabwe and Mauritania/Western Sahara were shorter but just as brutal. Now the proxy tensions are between US/Europe and China. Journalistic freedom, literacy and movements for a more participatory and democratic governance are threatened today in Africa. Government criticism of Christian Radio for being political is on the rise.

*Justice in the World* deserves a read once more, not because of this anniversary, but because we need to stir the baptismal flames of grace that move us to act with justice, challenging this generation of Christians to put word into action. As a way of shedding needed light on the outcomes of this document and the contributions of many Church agents over these 40 years, this year, in our newsletter, AFJN will research, reflect and report on the many initiatives that continue to be sparked by this Synod of 1971. We may offer a webinar on these findings each year for the next three years, leading up to our 2013 Conference which will celebrate AFJN's 30th anniversary. There will also be initiatives encouraging local Africa Summits to happen in various cities throughout the US bringing these findings closer to your home.

Our corpus of Catholic social thought is rich, but much of it remains a dead letter. As many of us know, justice and peace offices are the first to merge with others, be downsized or terminated on congregational, diocesan and parish levels. I pray that the day may come when we do not need justice and peace committees, reflections centers and advocacy offices, not because of financial restraints due to the present economic crisis but because we have implemented the ways of the Reign of God and renewed relationships one with the other in true and strong solidarity.

## **Justice in the World World Synod of Catholic Bishops, 1971**

### **[Social Teaching Documents - Office for Social Justice](http://www.osjspm.org/social_teaching_documents.aspx)**

[www.osjspm.org/social\\_teaching\\_documents.aspx](http://www.osjspm.org/social_teaching_documents.aspx)

#### Introduction

1. Gathered from the whole world, in communion with all who believe in Christ and with the entire human family, and opening our hearts to the Spirit who is the whole of creation new, we have questioned ourselves about the mission of the People of God to further justice in the world.

2. Scrutinizing the "signs of the times" and seeking to detect the meaning of emerging history, while at the same time sharing the aspirations and questionings of all those who want to build a more human world, we have listened to the Word of God that we might be converted to the fulfilling of the divine plan for the salvation of the world.

3. Even though it is not for us to elaborate a very profound analysis of the situation of the world, we have nevertheless been able to perceive the serious injustices which are building around the human world a network of domination, oppression and abuses which stifle freedom and which keep the greater part of humanity from sharing in the building up and enjoyment of a more just and more loving world.

4. At the same time we have noted the inmost stirring moving the world in its depths. There are facts constituting a contribution to the furthering of justice. In associations of people and among peoples themselves there is arising a new awareness which shakes them out of any fatalistic resignation and which spurs them on to liberate themselves and to be responsible for their own destiny. Movements among people are seen which express hope in a better world and a will to change whatever has become intolerable.

5. Listening to the cry of those who suffer violence and are oppressed by unjust systems and structures, and hearing the appeal of a world that by its perversity contradicts the plan of its Creator, we have shared our awareness of the Church's vocation to be present in the heart of the world by proclaiming the Good News to the poor, freedom to the oppressed, and joy to the afflicted. The hopes and forces which are moving the world in its very foundations are not foreign to the dynamism of the Gospel, which through the power of the Holy Spirit frees people from personal sin and from its consequences in social life.

6. The uncertainty of history and the painful convergences in the ascending path of the human community direct us to sacred history; there God has revealed himself to us, and made known to us, as it is brought progressively to realization, his plan of liberation and salvation which is once and for all fulfilled in the Paschal Mystery of Christ. Action on

behalf of justice and participation in the transformation of the world fully appear to us as a constitutive dimension of the preaching of the Gospel, or, in other words, of the Church's mission for the redemption of the human race and its liberation from every oppressive situation.

I

## Justice and World Society

7. The world in which the Church lives and acts is held captive by a tremendous paradox. Never before have the forces working for bringing about a unified world society appeared so powerful and dynamic; they are rooted in the awareness of the full basic equality as well as of the human dignity of all. Since people are members of the same human family, they are indissolubly linked with one another in the one destiny of the whole world, in the responsibility for which they all share.

8. The new technological possibilities are based upon the unity of science, on the global and simultaneous character of communications and on the birth of an absolutely interdependent economic world. Moreover, people are beginning to grasp a new and more radical dimension of unity; for they perceive that their resources, as well as the precious treasures of air and water--without which there cannot be life-- and the small delicate biosphere of the whole complex of all life on earth, are not infinite, but on the contrary must be saved and preserved as a unique patrimony belonging to all human beings.

9. The paradox lies in the fact that within this perspective of unity the forces of division and antagonism seem today to be increasing in strength. Ancient divisions between nations and empires, between races and classes, today possess new technological instruments of destruction. The arms race is a threat to our highest good, which is life; it makes poor peoples and individuals yet more miserable, while making richer those already powerful; it creates a continuous danger of conflagration, and in the case of nuclear arms, it threatens to destroy all life from the face of the earth. At the same time new divisions are being born to separate people from their neighbors. Unless combated and overcome by social and political action, the influence of the new industrial and technological order favors the concentration of wealth, power and decision-making in the hands of a small public or private controlling group. Economic injustice and lack of social participation keep people from attaining their basic human and civil rights.

10. In the last twenty-five years a hope has spread through the human race that economic growth would bring about such a quantity of goods that it would be possible to feed the hungry at least with the crumbs falling from the table, but this has proved a vain hope in underdeveloped areas and in pockets of poverty in wealthier areas, because of the rapid growth of population and of the labor force, because of rural stagnation and the lack of agrarian reform, and because of the massive migratory flow to the cities, where the industries, even though endowed with huge sums of money, nevertheless

provide so few jobs that not infrequently one worker in four is left unemployed. These stifling oppressions constantly give rise to great numbers of "marginal" persons, ill-fed, inhumanly housed, illiterate and deprived of political power as well as of the suitable means of acquiring responsibility and moral dignity.

11. Furthermore, such is the demand for resources and energy by the richer nations, whether capitalist or socialist, and such are the effects of dumping by them in the atmosphere and the sea that irreparable damage would be done to the essential elements of life on earth, such as air and water, if their high rates of consumption and pollution, which are constantly on the increase, were extended to the whole of humanity.

12. The strong drive towards global unity, the unequal distribution which places decisions concerning three quarters of income, investment and trade in the hands of one third of the human race, namely the more highly developed part, the insufficiency of a merely economic progress, and the new recognition of the material limits of the biosphere--all this makes us aware of the fact that in today's world new modes of understanding human dignity are arising.

13. In the face of international systems of domination, the bringing about of justice depends more and more on the determined will for development.

14. In the developing nations and in the so-called socialist world, that determined will asserts itself especially in a struggle for forms of claiming one's rights and self-expression, a struggle caused by the evolution of the economic system itself.

15. This aspiring to justice asserts itself in advancing beyond the threshold at which begins a consciousness of enhancement of personal worth (cf. *Populorum Progressio* 15; A.A.S. 59, 1967, p. 265) with regard both to the whole person and the whole of humanity. This is expressed in an awareness of the right to development. The right to development must be seen as a dynamic interpenetration of all those fundamental human rights upon which the aspirations of individuals and nations are based.

16. This desire however will not satisfy the expectations of our time if it ignores the objective obstacles which social structures place in the way of conversion of hearts, or even of the realization of the ideal of charity. It demands on the contrary that the general condition of being marginal in society be overcome, so that an end will be put to the systematic barriers and vicious circles which oppose the collective advance towards enjoyment of adequate remuneration of the factors of production, and which strengthen the situation of discrimination with regard to access to opportunities and collective services from which a great part of the people are now excluded. If the developing nations and regions do not attain liberation through development, there is a real danger that the conditions of life created especially by colonial domination may evolve into a new form of colonialism in which the developing nations will be the victims of the interplay of international economic forces. That right to development is above all a right to hope according to the concrete measure of contemporary humanity. To respond to

such a hope, the concept of evolution must be purified of those myths and false convictions which have up to now gone with a thought-pattern subject to a kind of deterministic and automatic notion of progress.

17. By taking their future into their own hands through a determined will for progress, the developing peoples--even if they do not achieve the final goal--will authentically manifest their own personalization. And in order that they may cope with the unequal relationships within the present world complex, a certain responsible nationalism gives them the impetus needed to acquire an identity of their own. From this basic self-determination can come attempts at putting together new political groupings allowing full development to these peoples; there can also come measures necessary for overcoming the inertia which could render fruitless such an effort--as in some cases population pressure; there can also come new sacrifices which the growth of planning demands of a generation which wants to build its own future.

18. On the other hand, it is impossible to conceive true progress without recognizing the necessity--within the political system chosen--of a development composed both of economic growth and participation; and the necessity too of an increase in wealth implying as well social progress by the entire community as it overcomes regional imbalance and islands of prosperity. Participation constitutes a right which is to be applied both in the economic and in the social and political field.

19. While we again affirm the right of people to keep their own identity, we see ever more clearly that the fight against a modernization destructive of the proper characteristics of nations remains quite ineffective as long as it appeals only to sacred historical customs and venerable ways of life. If modernization is accepted with the intention that it serve the good of the nation, people will be able to create a culture which will constitute a true heritage of their own in the manner of a true social memory, one which is active and formative of authentic creative personality in the assembly of nations.

20. We see in the world a set of injustices which constitute the nucleus of today's problems and whose solution requires the undertaking of tasks and functions in every sector of society, and even on the level of the global society towards which we are speeding in this last quarter of the twentieth century. Therefore we must be prepared to take on new functions and new duties in every sector of human activity and especially in the sector of world society, if justice is really to be put into practice. Our action is to be directed above all at those people and nations which because of various forms of oppression and because of the present character of our society are silent, indeed voiceless, victims of injustice.

21. Take, for example, the case of migrants. They are often forced to leave their own country to find work, but frequently find the doors closed in their faces because of discriminatory attitudes, or, if they can enter, they are often obliged to lead an insecure life or are treated in an inhuman manner. The same is true of groups that are less well

off on the social ladder such as workers and especially farm workers who play a very great part in the process of development.

22. To be especially lamented is the condition of so many millions of refugees, and of every group or people suffering persecution--sometimes in institutionalized form--for racial or ethnic origin or on tribal grounds. This persecution on tribal grounds can at times take on the characteristics of genocide.

23. In many areas justice is seriously injured with regard to people who are suffering persecution for their faith, or who are in many ways being ceaselessly subjected by political parties and public authorities to an action of oppressive atheization, or who are deprived of religious liberty either by being kept from honoring God in public worship, or by being prevented from publicly teaching and spreading their faith, or by being prohibited from conducting their temporal affairs according to the principles of their religion.

24. Justice is also being violated by forms of oppression, both old and new, springing from restriction of the rights of individuals. This is occurring both in the form of repression by the political power and of violence on the part of private reaction, and can reach the extreme of affecting the basic conditions of personal integrity. There are well known cases of torture, especially of political prisoners, who besides are frequently denied due process or who are subjected to arbitrary procedures in their trial. Nor can we pass over the prisoners of war who even after the Geneva Convention are being treated in an inhuman manner.

25. The fight against legalized abortion and against the imposition of contraceptives and the pressures exerted against war are significant forms of defending the right to life.

26. Furthermore, contemporary consciousness demands truth in the communications systems, including the right to the image offered by the media and the opportunity to correct its manipulation. It must be stressed that the right, especially that of children and the young, to education and to morally correct conditions of life and communications media is once again being threatened in our days. The activity of families in social life is rarely and insufficiently recognized by State institutions. Nor should we forget the growing number of persons who are often abandoned by their families and by the community: the old, orphans, the sick and all kinds of people who are rejected.

27. To obtain true unity of purpose, as is demanded by the world society of human beings, a mediatory role is essential to overcome day by day the opposition, obstacles and ingrained privileges which are to be met with in the advance towards a more human society.

28. But effective mediation involves the creation of a lasting atmosphere of dialogue. A contribution to the progressive realization of this can be made by people unhampered by geopolitical, ideological or socioeconomic conditions or by the generation gap. To

restore the meaning of life by adherence to authentic values, the participation and witness of the rising generation of youth is as necessary as communication among peoples.

## The Gospel Message and the Mission of the Church

29. In the face of the present-day situation of the world, marked as it is by the grave sin of injustice, we recognize both our responsibility and our inability to overcome it by our own strength. Such a situation urges us to listen with a humble and open heart to the word of God, as he shows us new paths towards action in the cause of justice in the world.

30. In the Old Testament God reveals himself to us as the liberator of the oppressed and the defender of the poor, demanding from people faith in him and justice towards one's neighbor. It is only in the observance of the duties of justice that God is truly recognized as the liberator of the oppressed.

31. By his action and teaching Christ united in an indivisible way the relationship of people to God and the relationship of people to each other. Christ lived his life in the world as a total giving of himself to God for the salvation and liberation of people. In his preaching he proclaimed the fatherhood of God towards all people and the intervention of God's justice on behalf of the needy and the oppressed (Lk 6: 21-23). In this way he identified himself with his "least ones," as he stated: "As you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me" (Mt 25:40).

32. From the beginning the Church has lived and understood the Death and Resurrection of Christ as a call by God to conversion in the faith of Christ and in love of one another, perfected in mutual help even to the point of a voluntary sharing of material goods.

33. Faith in Christ, the Son of God and the Redeemer, and love of neighbor constitute a fundamental theme of the writers of the New Testament. According to St. Paul, the whole of the Christian life is summed up in faith effecting that love and service of neighbor which involve the fulfilment of the demands of justice. The Christian lives under the interior law of liberty, which is a permanent call to us to turn away from self-sufficiency to confidence in God and from concern for self to a sincere love of neighbor. Thus takes place his genuine liberation and the gift of himself for the freedom of others.

34. According to the Christian message, therefore, our relationship to our neighbor is bound up with our relationship to God; our response to the love of God, saving us through Christ, is shown to be effective in his love and service of people. Christian love of neighbor and justice cannot be separated. For love implies an absolute demand for justice, namely a recognition of the dignity and rights of one's neighbor. Justice attains



its inner fullness only in love. Because every person is truly a visible image of the invisible God and a sibling of Christ, the Christian finds in every person God himself and God's absolute demand for justice and love.

35. The present situation of the world, seen in the light of faith, calls us back to the very essence of the Christian message, creating in us a deep awareness of its true meaning and of its urgent demands. The mission of preaching the Gospel dictates at the present time that we should dedicate ourselves to the liberation of people even in their present existence in this world. For unless the Christian message of love and justice shows its effectiveness through action in the cause of justice in the world, it will only with difficulty gain credibility with the people of our times.

36. The Church has received from Christ the mission of preaching the Gospel message, which contains a call to people to turn away from sin to the love of the Father, universal kinship and a consequent demand for justice in the world. This is the reason why the Church has the right, indeed the duty, to proclaim justice on the social, national and international level, and to denounce instances of injustice, when the fundamental rights of people and their very salvation demand it. The Church, indeed, is not alone responsible for justice in the world; however, she has a proper and specific responsibility which is identified with her mission of giving witness before the world of the need for love and justice contained in the Gospel message, a witness to be carried out in Church institutions themselves and in the lives of Christians.

37. Of itself it does not belong to the Church, insofar as she is a religious and hierarchical community, to offer concrete solutions in the social, economic and political spheres for justice in the world. Her mission involves defending and promoting the dignity and fundamental rights of the human person.

38. The members of the Church, as members of society, have the same right and duty to promote the common good as do other citizens. Christians ought to fulfil their temporal obligations with fidelity and competence. They should act as a leaven in the world, in their family, professional, social, cultural and political life. They must accept their responsibilities in this entire area under the influence of the Gospel and the teaching of the Church. In this way they testify to the power of the Holy Spirit through their action in the service of people in those things which are decisive for the existence and the future of humanity. While in such activities they generally act on their own initiative without involving the responsibility of the ecclesiastical hierarchy, in a sense they do involve the responsibility of the Church whose members they are.

### The Practice of Justice

39. Many Christians are drawn to give authentic witness on behalf of justice by various modes of action for justice, action inspired by love in accordance with the grace which

they have received from God. For some of them, this action finds its place in the sphere of social and political conflicts in which Christians bear witness to the Gospel by pointing out that in history there are sources of progress other than conflict, namely love and right. This priority of love in history draws other Christians to prefer the way of non-violent action and work in the area of public opinion.

40. While the Church is bound to give witness to justice, she recognizes that anyone who ventures to speak to people about justice must first be just in their eyes. Hence we must undertake an examination of the modes of acting and of the possessions and life style found within the Church herself.

41. Within the Church rights must be preserved. No one should be deprived of his ordinary rights because he is associated with the Church in one way or another. Those who serve the Church by their labor, including priests and religious, should receive a sufficient livelihood and enjoy that social security which is customary in their region. Lay people should be given fair wages and a system for promotion. We reiterate the recommendations that lay people should exercise more important functions with regard to Church property and should share in its administration.

42. We also urge that women should have their own share of responsibility and participation in the community life of society and likewise of the Church.

43. We propose that this matter be subjected to a serious study employing adequate means: for instance, a mixed commission of men and women, religious and lay people, of differing situations and competence.

44. The Church recognizes everyone's right to suitable freedom of expression and thought. This includes the right of everyone to be heard in a spirit of dialogue which preserves a legitimate diversity within the Church.

45. The form of judicial procedure should give the accused the right to know his accusers and also the right to a proper defense. To be complete, justice should include speed in its procedure. This is especially necessary in marriage cases.

46. Finally, the members of the Church should have some share in the drawing up of decisions, in accordance with the rules given by the Second Vatican Ecumenical Council and the Holy See, for instance with regard to the setting up of councils at all levels.

47. In regard to temporal possessions, whatever be their use, it must never happen that the evangelical witness which the Church is required to give becomes ambiguous. The preservation of certain positions of privilege must constantly be submitted to the test of this principle. Although in general it is difficult to draw a line between what is needed for right use and what is demanded by prophetic witness, we must certainly keep firmly to this principle: our faith demands of us a certain sparingness in use, and the Church is

obliged to live and administer its own goods in such a way that the Gospel is proclaimed to the poor. If instead the Church appears to be among the rich and the powerful of this world its credibility is diminished.

48. Our examination of conscience now comes to the life style of all: bishops, priests, religious and lay people. In the case of needy peoples it must be asked whether belonging to the Church places people on a rich island within an ambient of poverty. In societies enjoying a higher level of consumer spending, it must be asked whether our life style exemplifies that sparingness with regard to consumption which we preach to others as necessary in order that so many millions of hungry people throughout the world may be fed.

49. Christians' specific contribution to justice is the day-to-day life of individual believers acting like the leaven of the Gospel in their family, their school, their work and their social and civic life. Included with this are the perspectives and meaning which the faithful can give to human effort. Accordingly, educational method must be such as to teach people to live their lives in its entire reality and in accord with the evangelical principles of personal and social morality which are expressed in the vital Christian witness of one's life.

50. The obstacles to the progress which we wish for ourselves and for humankind are obvious. The method of education very frequently still in use today encourages narrow individualism. Part of the human family lives immersed in a mentality which exalts possessions. The school and the communications media, which are often obstructed by the established order, allow the formation only of people desired by that order, that is to say, people in its image, not new people but a copy of people as they are.

51. But education demands a renewal of heart, a renewal based on the recognition of sin in its individual and social manifestations. It will also inculcate a truly and entirely human way of life in justice, love and simplicity. It will likewise awaken a critical sense, which will lead us to reflect on the society in which we live and on its values; it will make people ready to renounce these values when they cease to promote justice for all people. In the developing countries, the principal aim of this education for justice consists in an attempt to awaken consciences to a knowledge of the concrete situation and in a call to secure a total improvement; by these means the transformation of the world has already begun.

52. Since this education makes people decidedly more human, it will help them to be no longer the object of manipulation by communications media or political forces. It will instead enable them to take in hand their own destinies and bring about communities which are truly human.

53. Accordingly, this education is deservedly called a continuing education, for it concerns every person and every age. It is also a practical education: it comes through action, participation and vital contact with the reality of injustice.

54. Education for justice is imparted first in the family. We are well aware that not only Church institutions but also other schools, trade unions and political parties are collaborating in this.

55. The content of this education necessarily involves respect for the person and for his or her dignity. Since it is world justice which is in question here, the unity of the human family within which, according to God's plan, a human being is born must first of all be seriously affirmed. Christians find a sign of this solidarity in the fact that all human beings are destined to become in Christ sharers in the divine nature.

56. The basic principles whereby the influence of the Gospel has made itself felt in contemporary social life are to be found in the body of teaching set out in a gradual and timely way from the encyclical *Rerum Novarum* to the letter *Octogesima Adveniens*. As never before, the Church has, through the Second Vatican Council's constitution *Gaudium et Spes*, better understood the situation in the modern world, in which Christian works out their salvation by deeds of justice. *Pacem in Terris* gave us an authentic charter of human rights. In *Mater et Magistra* international justice begins to take first place; it finds more elaborate expression in *Populorum Progressio*, in the form of a true and suitable treatise on the right to development, and in *Octogesima Adveniens* is found a summary of guidelines for political action.

57. Like the apostle Paul, we insist, welcome or unwelcome, that the Word of God should be present in the center of human situations. Our interventions are intended to be an expression of that faith which is today binding on our lives and on the lives of the faithful. We all desire that these interventions should always be in conformity with circumstances of place and time. Our mission demands that we should courageously denounce injustice, with charity, prudence and firmness, in sincere dialogue with all parties concerned. We know that our denunciations can secure assent to the extent that they are an expression of our lives and are manifested in continuous action.

58. The liturgy, which we preside over and which is the heart of the Church's life, can greatly serve education for justice. For it is a thanksgiving to the Father in Christ, which through its communitarian form places before our eyes the bonds of our brotherhood and again and again reminds us of the Church's mission. The liturgy of the word, catechesis and the celebration of the sacraments have the power to help us to discover the teaching of the prophets, the Lord and the Apostles on the subject of justice. The preparation for baptism is the beginning of the formation of the Christian conscience. The practice of penance should emphasize the social dimension of sin and of the sacrament. Finally, the Eucharist forms the community and places it at the service of people.

59. That the Church may really be the sign of that solidarity which the family of nations desires, it should show in its own life greater cooperation between the Churches of rich and poor regions through spiritual communion and division of human and material resources. The present generous arrangements for assistance between Churches could

be made more effective by real coordination (Sacred Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples and the Pontifical Council "Cor Unum"), through their overall view in regard to the common administration of the gifts of God, and through social solidarity, which would always encourage autonomy and responsibility on the part of the beneficiaries in the determination of criteria and the choice of concrete programs and their realization.

60. This planning must in no way be restricted to economic programs; it should instead stimulate activities capable of developing that human and spiritual formation which will serve as the leaven needed for the integral development of the human being.

61. Well aware of what has already been done in this field, together with the Second Vatican Ecumenical Council we very highly commend cooperation with our separated Christian brethren for the promotion of justice in the world, for bringing about development of peoples and for establishing peace. This cooperation concerns first and foremost activities for securing human dignity and people's fundamental rights, especially the right to religious liberty. This is the source of our common efforts against discrimination on the grounds of differences of religion, race and color, culture and the like. Collaboration extends also to the study of the teaching of the Gospel insofar as it is the source of inspiration for all Christian activity. Let the Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity and the Pontifical Commission Justice and Peace devote themselves in common counsel to developing effectively this ecumenical collaboration.

62. In the same spirit we likewise commend collaboration with all believers in God in the fostering of social justice, peace and freedom; indeed we commend collaboration also with those who, even though they do not recognize the Author of the world, nevertheless, in their esteem for human values, seek justice sincerely and by honorable means.

63. Since the Synod is of a universal character, it is dealing with those questions of justice which directly concern the entire human family. Hence, recognizing the importance of international cooperation for social and economic development, we praise above all else the inestimable work which has been done among the poorer peoples by the local Churches, the missionaries and the organizations supporting them; and we intend to foster those initiatives and institutions which are working for peace, international justice and the development of people. We therefore urge Catholics to consider well the following propositions:64. (1) Let recognition be given to the fact that international order is rooted in the inalienable rights and dignity of the human being. Let the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights be ratified by all Governments who have not yet adhered to it, and let it be fully observed by all.

65. (2) Let the United Nations -- which because of its unique purpose should promote participation by all nations -- and international organizations be supported insofar as they are the beginning of a system capable of restraining the armaments race, discouraging trade in weapons, securing disarmament and settling conflicts by peaceful

methods of legal action, arbitration and international police action. It is absolutely necessary that international conflicts should not be settled by war, but that other methods better befitting human nature should be found. Let a strategy of non-violence be fostered also, and let conscientious objection be recognized and regulated by law in each nation.

66. (3) Let the aims of the Second Development Decade be fostered. These include the transfer of a precise percentage of the annual income of the richer countries to the developing nations, fairer prices for raw materials, the opening of the markets of the richer nations and, in some fields, preferential treatment for exports of manufactured goods from the developing nations. These aims represent first guidelines for a graduated taxation of income as well as for an economic and social plan for the entire world. We grieve whenever richer nations turn their backs on this ideal goal of worldwide sharing and responsibility. We hope that no such weakening of international solidarity will take away their force from the trade discussions being prepared by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD).

67. (4) The concentration of power which consists in almost total domination of economics, research, investment, freight charges, sea transport and securities should be progressively balanced by institutional arrangements for strengthening power and opportunities with regard to responsible decision by the developing nations and by full and equal participation in international organizations concerned with development. Their recent de facto exclusion from discussions on world trade and also the monetary arrangements which vitally affect their destiny are an example of lack of power which is inadmissible in a just and responsible world order.

68. (5) Although we recognize that international agencies can be perfected and strengthened, as can any human instrument, we stress also the importance of the specialized agencies of the United Nations, in particular those directly concerned with the immediate and more acute questions of world poverty in the field of agrarian reform and agricultural development, health, education, employment, housing, and rapidly increasing urbanization. We feel we must point out in a special way the need for some fund to provide sufficient food and protein for the real mental and physical development of children. In the face of the population explosion we repeat the words by which Pope Paul VI defined the functions of public authority in his encyclical *Populorum Progressio*: "There is no doubt that public authorities can intervene, within the limit of their competence, by favoring the availability of appropriate information and by adopting suitable measures, provided that these be in conformity with the moral law and that they absolutely respect the rightful freedom of married couples" (37; A.A.S. 59, 1967, p. 276).

69. (6) Let governments continue with their individual contributions to a development fund, but let them also look for a way whereby most of their endeavors may follow multilateral channels, fully preserving the responsibility of the developing nations, which must be associated in decision-making concerning priorities and investments.

70. (7) We consider that we must also stress the new worldwide preoccupation which will be dealt with for the first time in the conference on the human environment to be held in Stockholm in June 1972. It is impossible to see what right the richer nations have to keep up their claim to increase their own material demands, if the consequence is either that others remain in misery or that the danger of destroying the very physical foundations of life on earth is precipitated. Those who are already rich are bound to accept a less material way of life, with less waste, in order to avoid the destruction of the heritage which they are obliged by absolute justice to share with all other members of the human race.

71. (8) In order that the right to development may be fulfilled by action:

(a) people should not be hindered from attaining development in accordance with their own culture;

(b) through mutual cooperation, all peoples should be able to become the principal architects of their own economic and social development;

(c) every people, as active and responsible members of human society, should be able to cooperate for the attainment of the common good on an equal footing with other peoples.

72. The examination of conscience which we have made together, regarding the Church's involvement in action for justice, will remain ineffective if it is not given flesh in the life of our local Churches at all their levels. We also ask the episcopal conferences to continue to pursue the perspectives which we have had in view during the days of this meeting and to put our recommendations into practice, for instance by setting up centers of social and theological research.

73. We also ask that there be recommended to the Pontifical Commission Justice and Peace, the Council of the Secretariat of the Synod and to competent authorities, the description, consideration and deeper study of the wishes and desires of our assembly, and that these bodies should bring to a successful conclusion what we have begun.

### A Word of Hope

74. The power of the Spirit, who raised Christ from the dead, is continuously at work in the world. Through the generous sons and daughters of the Church likewise, the People of God is present in the midst of the poor and of those who suffer oppression and persecution; it lives in its own flesh and its own heart the Passion of Christ and bears witness to his resurrection.

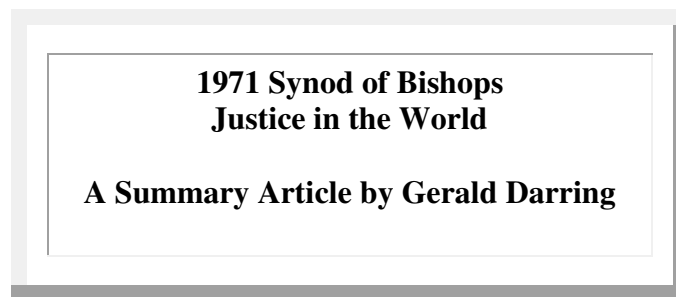
75. The entire creation has been groaning till now in an act of giving birth, as it waits for the glory of the children of God to be revealed (cf. Rom 8:22). Let Christians therefore be convinced that they will yet find the fruits of their own nature and effort cleansed of

all impurities in the new earth which God is now preparing for them, and in which there will be the kingdom of justice and love, a kingdom which will be fully perfected when the Lord will come himself.

76. Hope in the coming kingdom is already beginning to take root in the hearts of people. The radical transformation of the world in the Paschal Mystery of the Lord gives full meaning to the efforts of people, and in particular of the young, to lessen injustice, violence and hatred and to advance all together in justice, freedom, kinship and love.

77. At the same time as it proclaims the Gospel of the Lord, its Redeemer and Savior, the Church calls on all, especially the poor, the oppressed and the afflicted, to cooperate with God to bring about liberation from every sin and to build a world which will reach the fullness of creation only when it becomes the work of people for people.

[http://www.osjspm.org/justice\\_in\\_the\\_world](http://www.osjspm.org/justice_in_the_world).



### **[Justice in the World: Summary Article](http://www.shc.edu/theolibrary/resources/summary_justice.htm)**

[www.shc.edu/theolibrary/resources/summary\\_justice.htm](http://www.shc.edu/theolibrary/resources/summary_justice.htm)

The representative bishops, gathered in synod, acknowledge that it is not their job to elaborate a profound analysis of the situation of the world (a. 3). The starting point of their treatment of justice and injustice is the tremendous paradox they see in the world: powerful forces are working to bring about a unified world society at the same time that forces of division and antagonism seem to be increasing in strength (a. 7-9).

The bishops are very concerned that the world by its perversity contradicts the plan of its creator (a. 5). They are concerned about oppression, unjust structures and systems, about a set of injustices which constitute the nucleus of today's problems (a. 20). They express alarm at the serious injustices which are building around people a network of domination, oppression, and abuses (a. 3); people suffering violence and being oppressed by unjust systems and structures (a. 5); the stifling oppressions of today's world which produce large numbers of marginal people, ill-fed, inhumanly housed, illiterate, and politically powerless (a. 10); international systems of domination (a. 13); social structures which place obstacles in the way of conversion and the realization of charity, and systematic barriers standing in the way of solving social problems (a. 16);



various forms of oppression which result in silent, voiceless victims of injustice (a. 20); oppressive atheization (a. 23); forms of oppression that restrict individual rights, such as political repression, torture, inhuman treatment of political prisoners and prisoners of war (a. 24). They announce the hope that the People of God be present in the midst of the poor and of those who suffer oppression and persecution (a. 74), and they call on the poor, the oppressed and the afflicted, to cooperate in building a just world (a. 77).

In the course of their discussion of oppressive structures and systems, the bishops touch on various specific world problems.

They speak of the environment, saying that the demand for resources and energy endanger the essential elements of life on earth (a. 11): natural resources, air, water, and the small delicate biosphere of the whole complex of all life on earth must be saved and preserved as a unique patrimony belonging to the whole human race (a. 8).

They assert that the arms race is a threat to life; it makes poor people yet more miserable, while making richer those already powerful; it endangers peace and threatens to destroy all life (a. 9).

They note that basic human rights and civil rights are being obstructed by economic injustice (a. 9). They make specific mention of these injustices: hunger, poverty, rapid population growth, rural stagnation, lack of agrarian reform, urban migration, unemployment (a. 10); the unequal distribution which places decisions concerning three quarters of income, investment and trade in the hands of one third of the human race (a. 12), or, in other words, unequal relationships within the present world complex (a. 17); discrimination in access to opportunities and collective services (a. 16); migrant workers often facing discrimination or insecurity (a. 21); the many millions of refugees and others persecuted for racial, ethnic, or tribal reasons (a. 22) or because of their faith (a. 23); and the many millions of people abandoned by their families and by the community: the old, orphans, the sick, and all kinds of people who are rejected (a. 26).

The bishops discuss these realities in terms of sin. They teach that the world is marked by the grave sin of injustice (a. 29). Aware of the evangelical principles of both personal and social morality (a. 49), they speak of the social manifestations of sin (a. 51) and the social dimension of sin (a. 58), and they teach with Christian hope that the Holy Spirit frees people from personal sin and from its consequences in social life (a. 5).

A major thread running throughout the text, then, is liberation: the Old Testament God is liberator of the oppressed (a. 30); God's plan of liberation and salvation was fulfilled once and for all in the Paschal Mystery of Christ (a. 6); a new awareness spurs people on to liberate themselves and to be responsible for their own destiny (a. 4); genuine liberation takes place when people turn away self-sufficiency to confidence in God and from concern for self to love of neighbor (a. 33); the Church has a mission for the

redemption of the human race and its liberation from every oppressive situation (a. 6); the mission of preaching the Gospel dictates that we should work for people's liberation in their present circumstances in this world (a. 35); we must all cooperate with God to bring about liberation from every sin (a. 77).

Liberation implies a demand for change: the general condition of being marginal in society must be overcome (16). The bishops assert that it does not belong to the church to offer concrete solutions for justice in the world (a. 37), but they are willing to mention certain things that will make a difference in the world.

The bishops tell all the people and nations of the world that: the right to development must be seen as a dynamic interpenetration of all those fundamental human rights on which personal and national aspirations are based (a. 15); the concept of evolution must be purified of all that results in a kind of deterministic and automatic notion of progress (a. 16); there must be effective mediation in an atmosphere of dialogue (a. 28); all governments should ratify the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights (a. 64); the United Nations should be supported in all its efforts for peace (a. 65); international conflicts should be settled by means other than war, and conscientious objection should be granted legal recognition (a. 65); the aims of the Second Development Decade should be fostered (a. 66); there should be new institutional arrangements for granting decision-making power and equal participation to developing nations in international organizations concerned with development (a. 67); the specialized agencies of the United Nations should be strengthened (a. 68); multilateral channels should be used for development aid (a. 69); the rich should accept a less material way of life, with less waste, in order to avoid the destruction of the environment (a. 70); and the right to development should be fulfilled by allowing people to attain development in accordance with their own culture, by enabling people to become the principal architects of their own economic and social development, and by making it possible for everyone to cooperate on an equal footing for the attainment of the common good (a. 71).

The bishops address certain messages specifically at the people of the developing countries. They must have a determined will for development (a. 13). They must take their future into their own hands through a determined will for progress, responsible nationalism, new political groupings, measures necessary for overcoming inertia, and sacrifices demanded by the growth of planning (a. 17). The developing nations must experience both an increase in wealth and social progress by the entire community (a. 18). Modernization should be accepted in a way that serves people's needs and preserves their cultural heritages (a. 19). Education for justice in the developing countries should involve awakening consciences to a knowledge of the concrete situation (a. 51). In the end, the bishops call on everyone, but especially the poor, the oppressed and the afflicted, to cooperate with God to bring about liberation from every sin and to build a just world (a. 77).

A major concern of the bishops is where the church belongs in the effort to establish

justice in the world. At the very opening of the document they state that in the synodal preparations and discussions they questioned themselves about the mission of the People of God to further justice in the world (a. 1). They then proceed to teach by their example the means to be used by the church in working for justice: scrutinizing the signs of the times, seeking to detect the meaning of emerging history, sharing the aspirations and questionings of other justice workers, and listening to the Word of God (a. 2).

The bishops insist that the Word of God should be present in the center of human situations (a. 57). They lead us in listening to the Word of God because it shows us new paths towards action in the cause of justice in the world (a. 29). God is revealed in the Old Testament as the liberator of the oppressed and the defender of the poor (a. 30). Christ lived his life as a giving of himself to God for the salvation and liberation of people (a. 31). Thus, the Christian message presents love as implying an absolute demand for justice, and justice as attaining its inner fullness only in love (a. 34).

The bishops present the church's role in the effort for justice as being fulfilled in three functions: proclamation/education, witness, and action.

Proclamation and education.

The church has a mission which involves defending and promoting the dignity and fundamental rights of the human person (a. 37). Therefore the church has the right and the duty to proclaim justice on the social, national, and international level, and to denounce instances of injustice (a. 36). Our mission demands that we should courageously denounce injustice, with charity, prudence, and firmness (a. 57). It also demands that we be present in the heart of the world by proclaiming the Good News to the poor, freedom to the oppressed, and joy to the afflicted (a. 5).

The basic principles applying the Gospel to contemporary social life are found in the documents of the church from *Rerum Novarum* to *Octogesima Adveniens* (a. 56). These principles should be carried over into our systems of education, which should not encourage narrow individualism (a. 50). Education should promote a human way of life in justice, love and simplicity (a. 51), and it should come through action, participation, and vital contact with injustice (a. 53). Its content should involve respect for the dignity of the human person (a. 55). Our educational efforts should include setting up centers of social and theological research (a. 72), and we should remember that the liturgy can greatly serve education for justice (a. 58).

Witness: The church has a mission to give witness before the world of the need for love and justice, a witness to be carried out in church institutions and in the lives of Christians (a. 36). The church is bound to give witness to justice and recognizes that whoever ventures to speak to others about justice must first be just in their eyes (a. 40).

One should not be deprived of one's ordinary rights because one is associated with the

church in one way or another (a. 41). Such rights include: the right of lay people to fair wages and opportunities for promotion (a. 41); the right of women to a share of responsibility and participation (a. 42); the right to suitable freedom of expression and thought (a. 44); the rights to know one's accusers and to a proper defense (a. 45); and the right to share in decision-making (a. 46).

Our evangelical and prophetic witness demands of us a certain sparingness in the use of possessions, and the Church is obliged to live and administer its own goods in such a way that the Gospel is proclaimed to the poor (a. 47). There is also the vital Christian witness of one's life (a. 49): our lifestyle must exemplify that sparingness with regard to consumption which we preach to others so that the hungry can be fed (a. 48). Moreover, our denunciations of injustice must be an expression of our lives (a. 57).

That the church may be a sign of solidarity, it should show in its own life greater cooperation between the churches of rich and poor regions (a. 59), with our separated Christian brothers and sisters for the promotion of justice in the world (a. 61), and with believers and nonbelievers in the fostering of social justice, peace and freedom (a. 62).

Action: The bishops teach that the Christian message of love and justice must show its effectiveness through action in the cause of justice (a. 35), action inspired by love in accordance with God's grace (a. 39). Our denunciations of injustice must be manifested in continuous action (a. 57).

The Christian works out his or her salvation by deeds of justice (a. 56). Christians should act as a leaven in their family, professional, social, cultural and political life, testifying to the power of the Spirit through their action in service to others (a. 38). Some action finds its place in the sphere of social and political conflicts; other Christians prefer the way of nonviolent action (a. 39).

In teaching about action for justice, the bishops of the synod make a statement which has turned out to be one of the most quoted in all the documents of Catholic social teaching: "Action on behalf of justice and participation in the transformation of the world fully appear to us as a constitutive dimension of the preaching of the Gospel, or, in other words, of the Church's mission for the redemption of the human race and its liberation from every oppressive situation" (a. 6).

**1971 Synod of Bishops  
Justice in the World**

**Critical Comments Selected by Gerald  
Darring**

*Justice in the World: Critical Comments*

[www.shc.edu/theolibrary/resources/comments\\_justice.htm](http://www.shc.edu/theolibrary/resources/comments_justice.htm) -

Arthur McCormack. Tablet (20 November 1971) 1115. "The Synod was of historic importance. First of all it put the Church, openly and publicly and with very wide agreement, squarely on the side of those who are against injustice, on the side of the poor and oppressed and those millions whose voices are not heard often enough. The Synod has put the theme of justice, and especially social justice and concern for this world, into the very center of the Church's life.... The question of poverty and justice in the Church itself was given due importance, though not to the extent that it overshadowed the real world problems or gave the impression of an introverted Church only concerned with itself."

Andrew M. Greeley. America (20 November 1971) 424. "The Church looks ridiculous to nonbelievers as its leaders offer pontifical advice to virtually every other human institution about the need for justice and freedom, but show precious little interest in reforming their own institution. (And at least some Catholics are also embarrassed by the fact that most of the facile comment made on complex issues of international politics and economics were singularly innocent of the sophistication that can only come from expert advice.)"

Henry Ten Kortenaar. Commonweal 26 November 1971) 197. "Bishop Carter of Canada was right when he said that it is one thing to discuss justice among fellow-bishops in an affluent country, and another to hear those prophetic voices from other parts of the world. This prophetic tone was not entirely reflected, however, in the final document. Its theology is a good deal more challenging than that on the priesthood; some of its practical conclusions, on international and ecumenical cooperation for development, etc., are excellent; it also denounces some of the major ills of the modern world (armaments, pollution, discrimination, etc.), but does not name any concrete situations of injustice, as several bishops had asked. Among the reasons given for this silence were the impossibility of naming them all, the difficulty of determining where concrete injustice lies, and the danger that some bishops might get in trouble at home."

Gregory Baum. National Catholic Reporter (10 December 1971) 8. "The synod, it

would seem, has adopted the vocabulary from the social thinking in South America. It speaks easily of 'liberation'.... In the North American context, the teaching regarding liberation and the raising of consciousness sounds quite radical. We associate this sort of approach with Catholics of the Left. Most Americans are embarrassed by this trend of the Catholic Church's official teaching. It is not likely that this approach to morality will influence the preaching and teaching in North America."

John B. Sheerin, C.S.P. *Catholic World* (December 1971) 99. "The Synod discussion on peace and social justice was encouraging, if not world-shaking. The Synod talks brought us abreast of World Council of Churches pronouncements. Yet one wonders if there is much point in making official pronouncements. The younger generation claim that the organized Churches are forever crying 'Lord, Lord' but failing to do the will of God."

John F.X. Harriott, S.J. *Month* (January 1972) 17-18. The document contains these advances: 1) "It officially acknowledges the face and concept of structural or institutionalized injustice especially on the international level." 2) "Where the Council was vague about injustice in the Church, the Synodal document is specific." 3) Liberation in Christ and in society is not longer regarded purely as an inner spiritual conversion but includes all the conditions of life. 4) "The document speaks of the right to development." 5) "Local Churches will feel entitled to make political judgments instead of leaving them exclusively to the Holy See." 6) Education is seen not as acceptance of traditional values but as "conscientization and criticism of structures, standards and values obtaining in various societies." 7) "Social reform has been firmly included as an essential element of the pastoral ministry at all levels." 8) Nationalism is looked at more positively.

Peter J. Henriot, S.J. *Chicago Studies* (1972) 115-16. "What makes the Synod document uniquely important, and worth more than the usual passing notice, is its emphasis upon the theme of social sin. That emphasis is the key to what I argue can be considered a 'new' theology of the Church's social involvement--'new' at least in the sense that it has never before been so clearly explicated in an authoritative Roman document. Theologically, it helps us to understand more completely and adequately both 1) why the Church is socially involved, and 2) how the Church is socially involved."

Vincent McNamara. *Furrow* (1972) 587. "It is a well-known fact that many hoped that the synod document would condemn specific injustices rather than engage in generalities. This does involve taking sides, opting for the poor, offending people. But this is the very tradition which the Church has inherited in this matter from the prophets and Christ."

Richard A. McCormick, S.J. "Notes on Moral Theology." *Theological Studies* (April-September 1972) . The Synod document "builds on several skeletal assertions. (1) There is the notion of social sin.... (2) The Synod asserts that action on behalf of justice

is 'a constitutive dimension of the preaching of the gospel.' (3) Why? Because in the Christian message love of God and neighbor are inseparable. And love of neighbor is inseparable from justice to the neighbor. (4) The Church's specific responsibility is not to offer concrete solutions in the social, economic, and political spheres. Rather it is to defend the dignity of the human person.... The one criticism that could be brought against the synodal statement is that it did not get sufficiently down to specifics."

Gary MacEoin. *Cross Currents* (1975) 189. "A preparatory commission drafted a document with as many scraps as Joseph's coat. Nobody was satisfied. With inadequate discussion, the Synod rejected the draft, offering a new hodgepodge of suggestions, which were later issued as the Synod's statement, but again with inevitable superficiality and lack of internal cohesion."

Joseph Gremillion. *The Gospel of Peace and Justice* (1976) 21. "Through the 1971 Synod the Catholic Church reaches and registers a new peak awareness of unjust structures and of the need for liberation and reform. This assures for Justice in the World, so succinct and striking, a unique place among the documents of the aggiornamento. Its moral authority is further strengthened because it is the collegial product of pastors freely selected by their brother bishops from all nations and cultures."

David Hollenbach. *Claims in Conflict*. New York: Paulist Press, 1979, p. 89. "Though *Justice in the World* lacks the systematic approach to rights found in *Pacem in Terris*, it provides a social analysis and a fundamental normative vision of the present situation which point the way to the implementation of Pope John's charter of rights."

Charles M. Murphy. *Theological Studies* (1983) 308-09. "The heart of the ambiguity about the meaning of constitutive seems to reside in differing conceptions of what kind of justice is being referred to.... The natural, human virtue of justice as explained in classical philosophical treatises ... can only be conceived as an integral but nonessential part of the preaching of the gospel. But (the) biblical sense of God's liberating action which demands a necessary human response ... must be defined as of the essence of the gospel itself. The latter sense seems to reflect better the mentality of more recent Christian social doctrine. A decided shift took place in magisterial teaching regarding justice from John XXIII's *Mater et Magistra* onward: the previous conception of an organicity through reason was placed alongside a more biblical-imaginative perspective on justice. It is within this new context that *Justice in the World* must be understood."

Donal Dorr. *Option for the Poor* (1983) 187-88. "The one word in the passage around which most of the controversy has focused is the word 'constitutive.' By saying that action for justice is a constitutive dimension or element of the preaching of the Gospel the Synod was ensuring that such activity could never be dismissed as being merely incidental to the work of the Church; it would have to be given a central place. Ever since the document was issued, this passage, and this word, have been cited on

innumerable occasions to show that the Church officially rejects the view that action to bring about a more just society takes second place to more 'spiritual' or 'religious' matters. In fact the statement has become a kind of manifesto for those who are working for political liberation against oppressive regimes or structures and who want to invoke the Church's support for such activity."

Francis Schussler Fiorenza. *Foundational Theology: Jesus and the Church*. New York: Crossroad, 1984, pp. 207-08. This document is crucial, for it proclaimed that the Church's "mission to transform the world is not secondary, improper, or derivative; it is constitutive of gospel proclamation. The document goes beyond previous affirmations, beyond viewing justice and liberation as only prerequisites or consequences of the Church's mission. Church documents, especially papal statements, have since quoted this text, but they have not used the expression 'constitutive' independently of the quoted text. The International Theological Commission ... suggests that 'constitutive' does not mean 'essential' but 'integral.' However, the formulations of Justice in the World are carefully nuanced. The document states that transformation of the world is, in some way, constitutive of the proclamation of the gospel. It does not make it the sole or exclusive element of that proclamation; but if the transformation toward justice is missing, then a distortion of the gospel occurs."

James E. Hug. "Measuring the Shock Waves: The Economic Pastoral." *New Catholic World* 229 (September-October 1986) 213. "The Pastoral's impact on U.S. culture will depend in part on its influence in the Church. Since the 1971 Synod document *Justice in the World*, the Catholic hierarchy has been explicitly conscious that the credibility of its teaching depends upon the integrity of its own practice. If Catholics and Catholic institutions do not embody what they call for, no one will pay attention."

Gregory Baum. In Walter Block and Irving Hexham, eds., *Religion, Economics and Social Thought*, Vancouver, BC: The Fraser Institute, 1986, pp. 49-50. "*Justice in the World*... gave expression to a remarkable doctrinal development. The document recognized the reality of 'social sin' (a. 2-5). ... And because *Justice in the World* accepts this wider notion of sin it is obliged also to expand its understanding of Christian redemption. If Jesus is the one sent by God to save us from sin, then this includes the personal and the social dimension of sin. What follows from this is that salvation too has a social dimension. *Justice in the World* explicitly affirms that the redemption which Jesus Christ has brought includes the liberation of people from the oppressive conditions of their lives (a. 6). This is a new position in Catholic teaching."

Manuel Velasquez. "Questions of Special Urgency": *The Church in the Modern World Two Decades After Vatican II*. Judith A. Dwyer, S.S.J., ed. Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 1986, p. 191-92. This was "by far the most influential of the church's modern statements on structural injustice." It was "shot through and through with the liberationist view that injustice is fundamentally a structural issue.... Structural injustices, the bishops write, cannot be eradicated by a simple conversion of individuals," and since "social structures influence the way in which individuals



perceive and deal with the world, they must be changed."