

NOTES

CLASS STRUGGLE AND THE MAGISTERIUM: A NEW NOTE

Catholic social teaching from Leo XIII has always repudiated class struggle. It offered several reasons for this. Class struggle was rejected because (1) it sought the victory of one class over another instead of a new mode of co-operation; (2) it was nourished by resentment against the powerful instead of Christian love of neighbor; (3) it easily led to violence and new forms of domination; and (4) it was often associated with an ideology that made class struggle the dynamic principle of history moving society toward the overcoming of its contradictions.

This repudiation of class struggle was in keeping with the organic understanding of society upheld in Catholic social teaching from Leo XIII until the late sixties. Here society was seen as a social body, organically united, based on class levels and co-operation, in constant need of reform through the spiritual submission of all members to the norms of justice. It was the task of government to stand above the conflict of the classes, promote the common good, foster co-operation, and protect the poor from exploitation by the rich. While this teaching had strong reformist impulses, its main emphasis was on shared values and respect for authority. Political action for justice, including the struggle of workers, had to take place within this social context. Class struggle did not fit into this.

Vatican Council II still upheld this teaching, even though its vision of society was more democratic and pluralistic. It perceived society in co-operative terms, now expanded to the global scale. Ultimately the distance between the rich and the poor nations, scandalous in its proportions, was to be overcome by a new sense of humanity and an outburst of generosity that would make the rich nations, on ethical grounds, find ways of sharing wealth and power and allow the poor nations to escape from their misery.

NEW EMPHASIS AT MEDELLÍN

In 1968 the Latin American Bishops Conference at Medellín introduced a new note in Catholic social teaching, one that was soon to be accepted in Vatican teaching, by several national hierarchies, and eventually by Pope John Paul II. Medellín introduced a conflictual understanding of society. The section of the Medellín documents entitled "Peace" recognized that the Latin American societies were caught in the clutches of an economic system, world-wide in extension, that impover-

ished them.¹ The decisions affecting the economic well-being of Latin Americans were made by transnational corporations with head offices in the North, by men whose aim was to increase corporate profit and power. Even development projects sponsored by agencies of the North tended to increase the dependency of Latin America and often led to greater misery. A small class of Latin Americans, linked to the transnational corporations, greatly increased their standard of living. They often became the political actors protecting the existing order, despite the grave injustices. Medellín spoke of Latin America caught in the sway of "external" and "internal colonialism." In this context it would have been absurd to speak of societies in organic terms. Societies were conflictual realities.

Related to this new note is a second point made by Medellín: the need for institutional change. The call for greater virtue is wholly inadequate unless it is accompanied by an equal emphasis on structural changes.² What has to change in Latin America is both structure and consciousness. The organic perception of society encouraged the view, often defended by church people, that what was needed for the reform of society was the conversion to greater virtue on the part of all people, on all levels of society. Medellín went beyond this. What was needed was structural change and entry into a new consciousness. The call for greater love and generosity in societies as gravely unjust as the Latin American ones, unaccompanied by the demand for the reform of institutions, only disguised the sinful structures that inflicted suffering on the majority of people. Medellín called the double aim of structural change and new consciousness "liberation." The bishops here followed a perspective worked out previously by Christian grassroots communities in Latin America, often supported and aided by theologians.

Thirdly, Medellín recognized that the struggle for justice was an essential element of the faithful Christian life. While previous Catholic social teaching understood the dedication to social justice as based on the natural virtue of justice, a new ecclesiastic trend emerged at Medellín, again reflecting the Christian experience of grassroots communities, which saw the dedication to justice as a contemporary form of Christian discipleship. Faith, hope, and love, the theological virtues, summoned forth involvement in the struggle for justice.³

Fourthly, Medellín put new emphasis on the raising of consciousness

¹ Medellín Documents, "Peace," nos. 1-13, in *The Gospel of Justice and Peace*, ed. J. Gremillion (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis, 1976) 455-58.

² Ibid., "Justice," no. 3 (*Gospel* 446).

³ Ibid., "Justice," nos. 4 and 5 (*Gospel* 447).

among the masses of ordinary people.⁴ It was the task of the Church, according to Medellín, to make people aware of the obstacles that prevented them from exercising responsibility for their own lives. Part of the Christian message was that people were called by God to be the subject of their own history. In the past, Catholic social teaching, even while recognizing the harm done to people by unjust structures, addressed its demand for social reconstruction to the powerful, to the leaders, to the government. They were seen as the agents of reform in society. With its emphasis on the raising of consciousness, Medellín was understood as addressing the people, the victims, the poor and oppressed, as the agents of social transformation. Justice would come about only as the result of liberation struggle by the people themselves.

Four new points, then, were made at Medellín: the conflictual view of society, the double need of structural change and personal conversion, the social struggle as a form of Christian discipleship, and the oppressed as agents of social transformation. Yet Medellín made these points in a tentative way. It did not endorse the new perspective with full consistency. It was therefore important to see how subsequent episcopal conferences and especially the Vatican would react to this. Since 1968 the new approach has been fully endorsed by the Catholic magisterium. In the following pages I shall refer to this development in the briefest manner.

RECEPTION OF MAGISTERIUM

The conflictual understanding of modern society was endorsed in the declaration *Justitia in mundo* made by the 1971 Synod of Bishops held in Rome. How does modern society appear to the Synod? "We recognize the serious injustices that are building around the world of men 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 fraternal world."⁵ At the same time, the Synod sees "the arising of a new awareness which shakes people out of any fatalistic resignation and which spurs them on to liberate themselves and be responsible for their own destiny."⁶ It is with these struggling people that the Synod declares itself in solidarity. Why? Because it believes that the Church's mission is the preaching of Christ's redemption, and this includes liberation "from every oppressive situation."⁷

The conflictual view of modern society was later strongly affirmed by the Latin American Bishops Conference at Puebla (1979), when it called

⁴ Ibid., "Justice," nos. 17 and 20 (*Gospel* 452-53).

⁵ *Justitia in mundo*, no. 3 (*Gospel* 514).

⁶ Ibid., no. 4 (*Gospel* 514).

⁷ Ibid., no. 6 (*Gospel* 514).

the whole of the Church to "the preferential option for the poor."⁸ This option had two dimensions, one perspectival, the other activist. The option for the poor implied looking at society from the viewpoint of the oppressed and, secondly, giving public witness of solidarity with them. Society is here seen not as a well-functioning social body in need of a few reforms (the organic view), but rather as a set of dominant structures that hurt a wide sector of the population and therefore demand reconstruction. What is needed is new awareness accompanied by the struggle for structural change.

The conflictual view of modern society, as we shall see further on, was fully endorsed by Pope John Paul II in his *Laborem exercens* (1981).

The second point, the demand for structural change and conversion of consciousness, was not new in ecclesiastical teaching. During the Great Depression, Pius XI had already called for this double task: "Two things are necessary for the reconstruction of the social order: the reform of institutions and the conversion of morals."⁹ After Medellin, ecclesiastical documents returned to this double demand, very often using the term "liberation." Occasionally ecclesiastical voices warned us of a one-sided interpretation of "liberation," one that focused only on the structural aspect and omitted attention to the conversion of mind and heart. But if liberation from oppression was understood as a double task, it was fully endorsed by Catholic social teaching.¹⁰

Once this point has been admitted, it is no longer possible to preach the conversion to greater love and generosity as the answer to the injustices of the present day. "We cannot take refuge in the position that, as Christians, our duty is simply to worship God and give alms to the poor. To do this alone in our present situation would be to incur the wrath of Christ."¹¹ Preaching of greater selflessness, unaccompanied by the demand for institutional change, obscures the sinful situation in which we live and hence exercises an ideological function. Moralizing always helps the *status quo*. Moral demands must be joined to demands for just institutions.

The third point, the supernatural origin of the Christian's commitment to justice, has also been confirmed by the magisterium. This was done in *Justitia in mundo*, the important document already mentioned. The

⁸ Puebla, Final Document, no. 1134, in *Puebla and Beyond*, ed. J. Eagleson and P. Scharper (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis, 1979) 264.

⁹ *Quadragesimo anno*, no. 77, in *Great Encyclicals*, ed. W. J. Gibbons (New York: Paulist, 1963) 147.

¹⁰ Puebla, Final Document, nos. 189, 281, 475, 480, 482, 1026 (*Puebla and Beyond* 147, 161, 189, 190, 252).

¹¹ Canadian Bishops, *From Words to Action* (1976) no. 10; see G. Baum and D. Cameron, *Ethics and Economics: Canada's Catholic Bishops on the Economic Crisis* (Toronto: Lorimer, 1984) 168.

redemption which Jesus Christ has brought, we are told, includes the liberation of people from every oppression.¹² Action on behalf of social justice is a constitutive part of Christian witness and Christian proclamation.

The strongest support for this new point of view is found in Pope John Paul II's first encyclical, *Redemptor hominis*. He laid a Christological foundation for the Church's social ministry. The encyclical argued that Jesus Christ had identified himself in some sense with all human beings in their historical groupings.¹³ What follows from this is that the Church in its defense of human rights and its demand for social justice is not simply involved in a humanitarian, purely this-worldly activity, but is, properly speaking, serving Christ present in people and hence exercising its essential, supernatural mission. The mission of the Church to proclaim the gospel and serve God's approaching reign remains incomplete and unfinished if it does not express itself in public witness to social justice and human rights.¹⁴

Pope John Paul's Christological foundation of the Church's social ministry was a new development in the ecclesiastical magisterium. It certainly moved beyond Vatican II and the Medellín Conference. According to the new teaching, the Church's proper and essential mission has a clearly defined sociopolitical thrust. Because John Paul does not want priests to assume leadership positions in political organizations, the secular press and the public media have often created the impression that he does not want priests and bishops to speak out on social justice and human rights. The contrary is true. Unless the Christian message be accompanied by the demand for justice, it lacks its own proper integrity. In this task the Church's contribution is not a scientific but an ethical one. In the name of the values and the vision revealed in the gospel, the Church must speak out on the rights and dignity of workers and the poor in general and "condemn those situations in which that dignity and those rights are violated."¹⁵ More than that, the Church must help "guide the social changes so as to ensure authentic progress by man and society."¹⁶

The Christological base for the Church's social involvement is startling. Many churchmen, brought up on the more traditional teaching, are still uncomfortable with it. They fear that the Christological basis thrusts the Church inevitably into political debates and demands that it take sides in certain social conflicts.

¹² *Justitia in mundo*, nos. 5 and 6 (*Gospel* 514).

¹³ *Redemptor hominis*, no. 8 (*Origins* 8 [1979] 631).

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, no. 17 (*Origins* 637).

¹⁵ *Laborem exercens*, no. 1 (G. Baum, *The Priority of Labor* [New York: Paulist, 1982] 96).

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

THE POOR AS HISTORICAL AGENTS

What of the fourth point tentatively made at Medellín? Have subsequent ecclesiastical documents accepted the position that the people, especially the poor and oppressed, are to be the historical agents of social change? In his first encyclical, *Redemptor hominis*, John Paul offered a radical analysis of the conditions of oppression and misery in the world and called for bold changes in the economic and political order, in a manner critical of communism and capitalism at the same time. Yet this exhortation seemed to be addressed to the men who held power and were capable of making decisions on the highest level. It was up to the power elite to modify the inherited order.

On his trip through Brazil, John Paul moved beyond this position.¹⁷ In his address at Vigidal, after recognizing the structures of oppression and expressing his solidarity with the poor, he still appealed to the powerful in the country to introduce institutional change. "Do all you can, especially you who have decision-making power, you on whom the situation of the world depends, do everything to make the life of every person in your country more human, more worthy of human persons."¹⁸ After longer acquaintance with the Brazilian situation, the Pope shifted the emphasis. In his address at Favela dos Alagados, near Salvador de Bahia, he told the masses that they themselves were the agents of social change, that they should be actively involved in shaping their future. And all who love justice must be in solidarity with them in this struggle. "God grant that there may be many of us to offer you unselfish co-operation in order that you may free yourselves from everything that enslaves you, with full respect for what you are and for your right to be the prime author of your human advancement." The Pope continued: "You must struggle for life, do everything to improve the condition of poverty, disease, unhealthy housing, that is contrary in many ways to your dignity as human persons."¹⁹ The prime mover of radical social change must be the victims themselves. And the Church must be in solidarity with them.

This position was developed in a formal manner in John Paul's encyclical *Laborem exercens*. In this document the Pope argued that the dynamic element of modern society was the labor movement. Workers were the principal agents of the struggle for justice. Justice in modern society was defined by the encyclical as "the priority of labor over capital." Those who did not belong to the working class but loved justice should be in solidarity with their struggle. The Church itself, John Paul insisted,

¹⁷ Here I follow Donal Dorr, *Option for the Poor* (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis, 1983) 223-32.

¹⁸ Ibid. 228.

¹⁹ Ibid. 229-30.

must be in solidarity with the workers' struggle for justice.²⁰ The Pope formulated this basic principle as "the solidarity of workers and with workers."²¹ In the same paragraph, alluding to the conditions of the Third World, the Pope called for "the solidarity of and with the poor."²² Again, the agents of social reconstruction were the victims of society, united in a joint struggle for justice, supported by all citizens committed to justice. I wish to call this principle "preferential or partial solidarity." Universal solidarity remains the goal. Universal solidarity stays alive in the human heart as a constant hope. But in a situation of grave injustice, solidarity begins with the disadvantaged and oppressed in the hope of creating historical conditions that permit universal solidarity. In a sinful world, then, solidarity is preferential or partial, starting with the least of the brothers and sisters.²³

We conclude from this brief examination of ecclesiastical texts that the four points tentatively made at Medellín were subsequently accepted by the Church's magisterium. The reader will have noticed that I have only looked at ecclesiastical documents; I have not examined whether and to what extent the ecclesiastical authorities have acted in accordance with the more recent teaching.

The question that poses itself at this point is whether John Paul's theory of partial solidarity is just another name for class struggle. Some Catholics have argued this. The Canadian bishops, who have followed *Laborem exercens* very closely, have been accused by several Catholic members of Parliament of propagating a Marxist approach in their *Ethical Reflections on the Economic Crisis*. The following two sentences composed by the Canadian bishops provoked a great deal of comment and opposition: "The needs of the poor have priority over the wants of the rich; the rights of workers are more important than the maximization of profits; the participation of marginalized groups has precedence over a system which excludes them." And, "As long as technology and capital are not harnessed by society to serve basic human needs, they are likely to become an enemy rather than an ally in the developments of people."²⁴ Some Canadian commentators, including Catholic critics, have decried this conflictual perception of Canadian society, where the rich and powerful appear on one side and the poor and powerless on the other.

²⁰ For a detailed analysis of the social theory of *Laborem exercens*, see Baum, *The Priority of Labor* (n. 15 above).

²¹ *Laborem exercens*, no. 8 (*The Priority of Labor* 110).

²² *Ibid.* (*Priority* 110).

²³ Cf. D. Mieth, "Solidarity and the Right to Work," in *Unemployment and the Right to Work*, ed. J. Pohier and D. Mieth (Concilium 160; New York: Seabury, 1982) 58-65.

²⁴ Canadian Bishops, *Ethical Reflections on the Economic Crisis*, nos. 1 and 3; see Baum and Cameron, *Ethics and Economics* 6, 10.

They have also taken exception to the suggestion that under certain conditions the decision-making elite deserves to be called the "enemy" of the majority of the people. This, the critics said, was a call to class struggle derived from Marxist theory, which has always been condemned by the Church.

Is John Paul's "solidarity of the workers and *with* the workers" and Puebla's "preferential option for the poor" a Catholic formulation of class struggle? If not, how does the theory of partial solidarity differ from theories of class struggle? In his excellent study of the Church's social teaching, Donal Dorr recognizes that "the word 'solidarity' seems to play, in the thinking of John Paul, a role analogous to 'class struggle' in Marxist writings." Then he asks the question, "How different is the Pope's position from Marxism?"²⁵ He deals with this question in the final chapter of his book. In my own commentary on *Laborem exercens*, I concluded that the Pope proposed "an imaginative rethinking of class conflict."²⁶ In this article I wish to argue, admittedly very briefly, that even after the evolution of the Church's social teaching and the theory of partial solidarity, the traditional Catholic objections to class struggle (summed up in four points at the beginning of this article) still hold. Class struggle was rejected, I proposed, because (1) it sought the victory of one class over another instead of a new mode of co-operation; (2) it was nourished by resentment against the powerful instead of Christian love of neighbor; (3) it easily led to violence and new forms of domination; and (4) it was often associated with an ideology that made class struggle the dynamic principle of history moving society toward the overcoming of its contradictions.

PARTIAL SOLIDARITY VERSUS CLASS STRUGGLE

I wish to show that the theory of partial solidarity is different from theories of class struggle. Despite the doctrinal development that has taken place, the magisterium continues to repudiate class-conflict theories for the same reason it did in the past. Assumed in this article is that Marxist theories of class struggle are appropriately described by the four characteristics raised against them in ecclesiastical literature. In itself this point would require detailed examination. What I shall do is simply show that the Catholic theory of partial solidarity does not share the four characteristics of which class-conflict theories have been accused.

1) Solidarity does not aim at the victory of one class over another. In the first place, solidarity is not defined in terms of the material self-interest of an economic class. Solidarity is an ethical achievement. People stand together in the struggle for justice, impelled by several motives,

²⁵ Dorr, *Option for the Poor* 266.

²⁶ Baum, *The Priority of Labor* 29.

including ethical ones. As victims of society, they seek to escape their bondage: this is the element of collective self-interest. But they are also guided by alternative values and the vision of a just society: these are the ethical elements. For many religious people, especially Christians, this solidarity is strengthened by faith in God's promises. This struggle for justice, moreover, is joined by people from other social strata who share the same alternative values and vision.

The solidarity movement, I repeat, is an ethical achievement. It is not generated by historical necessity through the collective self-interest of an economic class, but produced through the dedication and generosity of people with high ideals who desire to escape their oppression. The solidarity movement, as described in ecclesiastical texts, is made up of various sectors of the population. The Canadian bishops, in particular, emphasize that the solidarity movement is made up of various groups, unionized workers, nonunionized workers, the unemployed, the native peoples, people living in depressed regions, recent immigrants, and so forth, so that each group must modify its aim somewhat in order to build and protect solidarity. Each group must sacrifice certain elements of its immediate self-interest in order to create a movement of solidarity that can reach out to the majority of the population and thus exercise influence on society. Here again solidarity appears as an ethical achievement.

Partial solidarity, we note, does not aim at the destruction of another class. What it aims at is a more participatory society. The struggle for social justice is therefore not opposed to negotiations, nor to new proposals of those in power to share their wealth and allow workers to participate in decision-making. The history of the labor movement reveals the readiness of workers to consent to new forms of co-operation, even though the same history also shows that these compromises were often used by those in power to derive the greater benefit. While there may be different views among those struggling for justice as to what concessions should be regarded as adequate, partial solidarity aims at a new mode of co-operation. Nonco-operation is more characteristic of the powerful who refuse to let go of their power.

2) Partial solidarity is nourished not by resentment and vengeance but by the yearning for justice and liberation. It does not regard the rich and powerful as the enemies of the poor; enemy, rather, are the institutions that oppress and damage the people. Solidarity desires the transformation of these institutions. Following traditional teaching, Catholics hate the sin but try to love the sinner. They desire the conversion of the sinner to a new consciousness and material restitution.

How is this preferential solidarity related to Christian charity, which reaches out to the whole of the human family? Liberation theology has shown that in situations of grave injustice and oppression, charity trans-

forms itself into a yearning for justice that would remove the burden from the poor. The preferential option for the poor, or partial solidarity, has a built-in impatience: it produces a longing for the liberation of the oppressed so that it becomes possible to embrace all members of society, working together for the common good, with the same good will. Universal solidarity remains the final goal.

Liberation theology, which has explored and defended the new orientation of the magisterium, has been well aware that the great temptation of the oppressed is to envy the oppressor, desire to replace him, and thus become oppressor after him. Against this temptation, the Catholic theory of partial solidarity articulates that the aim of the struggle for justice is the qualitative transformation of society. What is required is structural change accompanied by conversion of mind and heart. Liberation theology has been aware that oppressive structures damage not only the humanity of the oppressed; they also damage, though in a different way, the humanity of the powerful who defend the unjust institutions. Cutting themselves off from justice and mercy and justifying this in their own minds by a false sense of life's meaning, they caricature themselves, draw their own distorted self-portrait. Partial solidarity, therefore, strives not only for the liberation of the oppressed; it also promises to liberate the power elite from the self-imposed distortions of their humanity. Again, the partial solidarity is nourished by universal charity.

3) What is the relation of the solidarity movement to violence? Usually this movement becomes the object of persecution, sometimes even violent persecution. Those who yearn for justice and hope in the kingdom are often regarded as enemies and sometimes gunned down by the protectors of the existing order. The contemporary Church has its crown of martyrs. Archbishop Oscar Romero was assassinated because he was in solidarity with the poor.

The solidarity movement does not aim at introducing structural change in a violent manner. People trust that if their movement is supported by the great majority of the population, those who hold power will be forced to resign or negotiate. In societies with a democratic tradition this poses no difficulty.

A solidarity movement that becomes a ground swell will be able to use democratic institutions to gain political power and reconstruct economic institutions. Even in countries lacking democratic institutions, nonviolent ground swells have sometimes led to significant institutional change. What about countries in which an unjust order is upheld by violent means? This is the difficult St. Joan of Arc question. Even in the face of institutionalized violence, contemporary Church teaching counsels a nonviolent struggle, though the magisterium has never committed itself

to a pacifist position. In their pastoral letter *The Challenge of Peace* of May 1983, the American bishops recall both the just-war and the just-revolution theories of the Catholic tradition.²⁷ For U.S. Catholics, this theory has a certain importance, since their country was created by the violent overthrow of a colonial regime.

Of greater importance is that the solidarity movement does not aim at domination. What inspires the more recent Catholic social teaching is the vision of a participatory society. People are called to become the subjects of their own history. This vision excludes not only totalitarian forms of government; it also excludes authoritarian political parties. It excludes, for instance, the style of the communist party, which sees itself as a vanguard party, guided by scientific principles, centralized in its decision-making, intent on imposing its analysis upon the workers without paying attention to the workers' own aspirations.

The preferential option for the poor, moreover, has revealed itself as a transcendent ethical principle; for it is operative before, during, and after radical social change. As new historical conditions allow the emergence of new power groups, society will again suffer from contradictions and oppress sectors of its own population. The preferential option for the poor makes Christians loyal supporters of justice struggles as well as critics within the limits of solidarity.

4) The theory of partial solidarity in no way corresponds to a deterministic understanding of history. *Laborem exercens* calls the workers' struggle for justice the dynamic element of contemporary society. There is no mention here of universal history. Partial solidarity is not linked to a particular philosophy of the historical process. Secondly, as mentioned above, the driving force of the struggle is not necessity, not generated by purely economic forces, nor therefore predictable by scientific analysis. The struggle for justice is freely chosen, an ethical achievement, yet a fragile project that could turn sour at any point and lead to harmful results. It is a movement that remains in need of ongoing guidance through ethical reflection and commitment. Finally, the theory of solidarity is not linked to the expectation of a future classless society, in which man's domination by man will be wholly overcome and people move from the realm of necessity into the realm of freedom. According to Catholic teaching, sin and brokenness define the character of earthly existence. While a society more just, more participatory, and less cruel than the present one is an altogether realistic goal, even this improved society, delivered from some of its gravely unjust features, will remain

²⁷ National Conference of Catholic Bishops, *The Challenge of Peace*, in *Origins* 13 (1983) 10.

subject to sin, generate new structures of injustice, and be in need of an ongoing critique by the preferential option for the poor.

We conclude from these brief remarks that while the theory of partial solidarity has a certain resemblance to Marxist ideas of class struggle, it is significantly different. Without any contradiction, therefore, the magisterium continues to reject theories of class struggle. Liberation theology, which is a theological elaboration of the preferential option for the poor, has never forgotten the gospel call to love of neighbor and hence, despite certain terminological similarities, has always stood apart from Marxist theories of class struggle. This is true especially of the writings of Gustavo Gutiérrez, who more than any other theologian has been concerned with the doctrinal basis of liberation, namely, God's gracious presence in history as the power of the poor. One gets the impression that many Catholics, including Catholics in high places, disagree with the theory of partial solidarity presented by the magisterium, but are unwilling to say this publicly; instead they choose to attack Catholic theologians who defend, clarify, and explore contemporary Church teaching.

As a final remark, allow me to repeat an observation made elsewhere²⁸ that the more recent Catholic social teaching has been produced by an extended dialogue of the older Catholic social teaching with the religious experience of the oppressed struggling for justice, with the prophetic tradition of the Scriptures, and with Marxist social theory. The final result, in my opinion, is an original Catholic contribution to social theory, one that has much to offer a troubled world at this time. At this moment, when Western Marxism is in a state of crisis, when many Marxists begin to recognize the one-sided emphasis on the economic factor and the neglect of cultural and spiritual factors in their intellectual traditions, when socialist thinkers in all parts of the world begin to appreciate community values and pay attention to the ethical factors involved in the creation of solidarity, friendship, and fidelity, all issues neglected in their traditions, the emerging Catholic social theory has a very important contribution to make.

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²⁸ Baum and Cameron, *Ethics and Economics* 51.