


Catholic Social Thought and Work Justice

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Abstract

This article anticipates the 125th anniversary of the publication of Pope Leo XIII's encyclical, *Rerum novarum* (May 15, 1891) by briefly surveying modern Catholic social teaching (CST) and recent, related scholarship in four areas, focusing on the US context: CST on political economy; work and worker justice; labor unions, with attention to recent controversy over unionization of adjunct instructors at some Catholic colleges and universities; and gender and justice issues surrounding political economy's relationship with the paid and unpaid labor in the so-called "care economy."

Keywords

Catholic social teaching, labor unions, care economy, gender and caring labor, political economy, work justice

On the heels of 50-year celebrations of the closing of the Second Vatican Council, the year 2016 marks an auspicious quasiquicentennial: the 125th anniversary of Pope Leo XIII's groundbreaking encyclical, *Rerum novarum* (RN), issued on May 15, 1891. The Vatican's *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church* recounts that the impetus for RN was a pastoral insight: the gospel must be preached and lived in new ways within the changed circumstances brought about by the "unimaginable transformations" of industrialization and mechanization in the 19th century.

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At the center of the Church's pastoral concern was the ever urgent *worker question*, that is, the problem of the exploitation of workers brought about by the new industrial organization of labor, capitalistically oriented, and the problem . . . of ideological manipulation . . . of the just claims advanced by the world of labor.¹

Emphasizing *RN*'s "prophetic value," the *Compendium* concludes, "*RN* is above all a heartfelt defense of the inalienable dignity of workers, connected with the importance of the right to property, the principle of cooperation among the social classes, the rights of the weak and the poor, the obligations of workers and employers and the right to form associations."² These urgent concerns have remained at Catholic social teaching's (CST) heart to the present day. This note celebrates *RN*'s quasiquicentennial by briefly examining recent contributions pertaining to: CST and political economy; CST and work justice; CST and labor unions; and CST and the relationship between waged and household economies. Focusing on the US context, I will attend, as well, to selected statements by Pope Francis on the themes considered.

CST and Political Economy

As church leaders and commentators have regularly declared, CST seeks to promote a gospel- and tradition-inspired vision of persons and society. This vision, it is stressed, endorses no particular political-economic theory, ideology, or system. Some interpreters have portrayed CST as offering a "third way"³ between extreme capitalism and Marxist socialism; others, including Pope John Paul II, have denied this.⁴ Some recent works argue that lying behind what Zachary Calo calls CST's *via negativa* refusal to endorse any specific political-economic theory is, in fact, a specific political-economic theory. Mark Nixon and Lew Daly trace CST's communitarian anthropology and social vision to solidarist or corporatist political economics, which, through German institutionalist Jesuits Heinrich Pesch and Oswald Nell-Breuning, significantly shaped

1. *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church* (Vatican City: Liberia Editrice Vaticana, 2004) 267.

2. *Ibid.* 268.

3. Charles E. Curran, *Catholic Social Teaching, 1891–Present: A Historical, Theological, and Ethical Analysis* (Washington, DC: Georgetown, 2002) 198, cited in Zachary R. Calo, "'True Economic Liberalism' and the Development of American Catholic Social Thought, 1920–1940," *Journal of Catholic Social Thought* 5 (2008) 285–314, at 285. See also Donal Dorr, *Option for the Poor and for the Earth: Catholic Social Teaching* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2012) 73, 265, 375.

4. Pope John Paul II, *Sollicitudo rei socialis* (*SRS*) 41: "The Church's social doctrine is not a 'third way' between liberal capitalism and Marxist collectivism, nor even a possible alternative to other solutions . . . rather, it constitutes a category of its own. Nor is it an ideology, but rather the accurate formulation of the results of a careful reflection on the complex realities of human existence, in society and international order, in the light of faith and of the Church's tradition."

the prototypical social encyclicals of Leo XIII and Pius XI.⁵ Insofar as solidarity was regarded as a viable political-economic alternative among Europeans of their day, the claim that Leo and Pius did intend to direct Catholics toward social reconstruction along specifically corporatist lines gains force. But while these studies may uncover CST's solidarist/corporatist DNA, later popes have positioned the church's economic teaching as principled and prophetic, but not economically programmatic.

Yet CST has never baptized the economic status quo. CST's understanding of persons, communities, and the economy's purposes (to provide access to participation and a decent livelihood for all members)⁶ influences interpretations of basic components of economic logic, like efficiency,⁷ productivity,⁸ private property and ownership,⁹ and

5. Calo, "True Economic Liberalism" 286; Mark G. Nixon, "The Economic Foundations of Modern Catholic Social Teaching, Past and Prospect" (PhD dissertation, Fordham University, 2015) chap. 3. See Michael Wachter, "Labor Unions: A Corporatist Institution in a Competitive World," *University of Pennsylvania Law Review* 55 (2007) 581–634; "The Rise and Decline of Unions," *Regulation* 30 (2007) 23–29; Lew Daly, "The Church of Labor," *Democracy* (2011) 43–57, <http://www.democracyjournal.org/22/the-church-of-labor.php>. (This and all other URLs herein were accessed November 11, 2015.)
6. In comparison, writes economist William D. Nordhaus, "Modern economics judges the performance of an economy according to its achievement of three general goals. Does the economy produce efficiently and expand the available quantity and quality of appropriately priced goods and services? Are the resources equitably distributed among different people? And does the economy perform without either high unemployment or ruinous inflation?" "The Pope and the Market," review of *Laudato Si'*, *New York Review of Books*, October 8, 2015, <http://www.nybooks.com/articles/archives/2015/oct/08/pope-and-market>.
7. "The demand for greater efficiency is inevitable and legitimate, on condition, however, that it is not motivated only by the quest for profit, but respects work itself as a good to be promoted and shared." "John Paul II, Address to International Conference for Representatives of Trade Unions," December 2, 1996, https://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/speeches/1996/december/documents/hf_jp-ii_spe_19961202_giustizia-pace.html; cf. *Centesimus annus* [CA] 35, 43.
8. "The modern organization of work sometimes shows a dangerous tendency to consider the family a burden, a weight, a liability for the productivity of labor. But let us ask ourselves: what productivity? And for whom?" Pope Francis, General Audience, August 19, 2015, http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/audiences/2015/documents/papa-francesco_20150819_udienza-generale.html. "Views that claim to increase profitability, at the cost of restricting the labor market, thereby creating new exclusions, are not in conformity with an economy at the service of man and of the common good, with an inclusive and participatory democracy." Address to Participants in the Plenary of the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, October 2, 2014, http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2014/october/documents/papa-francesco_20141002_pont-consiglio-giustizia-e-pace.html.
9. E.g., Paul VI, *Populorum progressio* 22, 69; Francis, *Laudato si' (LS)* 93–95. "The universal destination of goods is not a figure of speech found in the Church's social teaching. It is a reality prior to private property. Property, especially when it affects natural resources, must always serve the needs of peoples." Francis, Address at the Second World Meeting of Popular Movements, July 9, 2015, <http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/>

growth.¹⁰ It also yields criteria against which existing economic institutions, policies, and practices may be measured and ruled inadequate or illegitimate.¹¹ Further sharpening CST's critical lens is its recent emphasis on solidarity, joined with a preferential option for the poor and vulnerable¹² as antidotes to destructive social dynamics and "structures of sin."¹³ Seriously embraced, solidarity that opts for the poor is a deeply demanding practice that changes one's priorities, impels the taking of sides, and can lead to conflict and struggle.¹⁴ As to what this implies for political economies, the Canadian bishops in 1983 supplied this discomfiting response: "The needs of the poor have priority over the wants of the rich; the rights of workers are more important than

speeches/2015/july/documents/papa-francesco_20150709_bolivia-movimenti-popolari.html.

10. Cardinal Peter Turkson recalls Pope Benedict XVI, who "echoed the call of Saint John Paul II to 'change our way of life . . . [to] eliminate the structural causes of global economic dysfunction, and to correct models of growth that seem incapable of guaranteeing respect for the environment and for integral human development.'" See "Integral Ecology and the Horizon of Hope: Concern for the Poor and for Creation in the Ministry of Pope Francis," 2015 Trocaire Lecture, Manynooth, Ireland, March 9, 2015, <https://www.trocaire.org/sites/trocaire/files/pdfs/cardinal-turkson-lent-lecture-2015.pdf>. Cf. Andrew L. Yarrow, ed., *Measuring America: How Economic Growth Came to Define American Greatness in the Late-Twentieth Century* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts, 2010).
11. These criteria include intelligibility; agency and accountability; an incarnational attunement that resists abstract ideologies and connects economic processes to their embodied, material bases, contexts, and consequences; subsidiarity, which highlights local communities as sites of power and economic agency, and the need for collaboratively designed policies and regulations that keep global markets tethered to the common good; and solidarity, focused by a preferential option for the most vulnerable. See Christine Firer Hinze, *Glass Ceilings and Dirt Floors: Women, Work and the Global Economy* (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist, 2015) chap. 1.
12. Pope John Paul II, *SRS* 42, cf. *SRS* 15 and *Compendium* 182–84.
13. "Just as goodness tends to spread, the toleration of evil, which is injustice, tends to expand its baneful influence and quietly to undermine any political and social system . . . If every action has its consequences, an evil embedded in the structures of a society has a constant potential for disintegration and death. It is evil crystallized in unjust social structures, which cannot be the basis of hope for a better future." Francis, *Evangelii gaudium* (*EG*) 59. Cf. John Paul II, *SRS* 36–37.
14. The non-superficial solidarity to which CST points, therefore, entails difficult, ongoing conversion (intellectual, moral, and affective/religious) to understandings and practices that, in specific ways for North Americans, must "take as the point of departure the particular context and the experiences of those who have suffered the most damaging consequences resulting from current conceptions of what it means to be human: the victims of genocide, slavery, and wars of conquest." Rubén A. Gaztambide-Fernández, "Decolonization and the Pedagogy of Solidarity," *Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education, & Society* 1 (2012) 41–67. See also M. Shawn Copeland, *Enfleshing Freedom: Body, Race, Being* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 2009); Michael E. Lee, ed., *Ignacio Ellacuría: Essays on History, Liberation, and Soteriology* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2013).

the maximization of profits; the participation of marginalized groups has precedence over a system that excludes them.”¹⁵

US Catholics have trod different paths in interpreting and enacting CST’s vision of good work in a just economy. Living-wage and distributive-justice champion Msgr. John A. Ryan and his cohort developed the legislation-focused, reformist agenda that continues to mark the US bishops’ conference today.¹⁶ Dorothy Day and Peter Maurin leveled a more thoroughgoing, radical critique at the political-economic status quo, and their Catholic Worker movement pursues more personalist, non-institutional responses.¹⁷ Pro-market Catholics like Thomas Woods and Michael Novak seek to defend virtuous free-market capitalism against what they view as misconceptions that fuel reformers’ and radicals’ calls to circumscribe or dismantle it.¹⁸ But whether one’s political economics trend toward Ryan, Day, or Novak, subscribing to CST commits one to a radically inclusive, provisioning understanding of economy’s purpose.

This economic conviction, wed with a heartfelt desire for “a church that is poor, and for the poor,” helps explain the ferocity of Pope Francis’s responses when economy’s inclusive, people-serving purposes appear overshadowed or unseated by other aims like profit margins, material growth, or amassing property or wealth.

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15. Canadian Bishops, “Ethical Reflections on the Economic Crisis” (1983), in *Do Justice! The Social Teaching of the Canadian Catholic Bishops* (Toronto: Jesuit Center for Social Faith & Justice, 1987) 399–410, at 400. Recent CST studies highlighting solidarity and the option for the poor include John Sniegocki, *Catholic Social Teaching and Economic Globalization: The Quest for Alternatives* (Milwaukee, WI: Marquette, 2009); Meghan Clark, *The Vision of Catholic Social Thought: The Virtue of Solidarity and the Praxis of Human Rights* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 2014); Christina Astorga, *Catholic Moral Theology and Social Ethics: A New Method* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2014). See also Daniel K. Finn, *Christian Economic Ethics: History and Implications* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 2013).
 16. On Day and Ryan’s legacies, see Marie Mazzenga, “One Hundred Years of Catholics and Organized Labor, 1870s–1970s,” *Journal of Catholic Social Thought* 9 (2012) 23–42. Cf. Stephen M. Koeth, “The Mental Grandchildren of Monsignor John A. Ryan: George G. Higgins, John F. Cronin, S.S., and the Role of the National Catholic Welfare Conference in Post-War American Politics,” *US Catholic Historian* 33 (2015) 99–135; Craig R. Prentiss, *Debating God’s Economy: Social Justice in America on the Eve of Vatican II* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University, 2008).
 17. See, e.g., Dorothy Day’s essays on “Work,” published between September, 1946 and March, 1947, <http://www.catholicworker.org/dorothyday/themes/work.html>. Cf. John Nichols, “Pope Francis Elevates Dorothy Day’s Call for Economic Justice,” *The Nation*, Sept. 24, 2015, <http://www.thenation.com/article/pope-francis-elevates-dorothy-days-economic-justice-demand>.
 18. See, e.g., Thomas Woods, *The Church and the Market: A Catholic Defense of the Free Economy*, rev. ed. (Lanham, MD: Lexington/Rowan & Littlefield, 2015); Michael Novak and Paul Adams, *Social Justice Is Not What You Think It Is* (New York: Encounter, 2015). Matthew Shadle discusses Catholic neoconservative, radical, and reformist views in “Twenty Years of Interpreting *Centesimus annus* on Economy,” *Journal of Catholic Social Thought* 9 (2012) 171–91.

Today we also have to say, “Thou shalt not” to an economy of exclusion and inequality. Such an economy kills . . . The first task is to put the economy at the service of peoples. Human beings and nature must not be at the service of money. Let us say NO to an economy of exclusion and inequality, where money rules, rather than serves. That economy kills. That economy excludes. That economy destroys Mother Earth.¹⁹

When does an economy kill? When it betrays or ignores its fundamental purpose: to provide access to a sustainable livelihood for its members. An economy that systematically denies participation or access to sustenance is like a knife that doesn’t cut. Like the dull knife, it needs to be repaired or replaced.²⁰ A well-functioning political economy thus must address poverty’s structural causes by including and enabling the poor, “to be poor no longer.”²¹ This implies major economic changes of course, an emphasis that has been further heightened by Francis’s 2015 encyclical *Laudato si’*.²²

CST and Work

For the Catholic social tradition, human labor is an activity that is personal, necessary, social, and spiritual. However ordinary or toilsome, work is always an expression of

19. Francis, *EG* 53; Francis, Address at the Second World Meeting of Popular Movements, July 9, 2015, http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2015/july/documents/papa-francesco_20150709_bolivia-movimenti-popolari.html.
20. “Solidarity is a spontaneous reaction by those who recognize that the social function of property and the universal destination of goods are realities which come before private property. The private ownership of goods is justified by the need to protect and increase them, so that they can better serve the common good; for this reason, solidarity must be lived as the decision to restore to the poor what belongs to them. These convictions and habits of solidarity, when they are put into practice, open the way to other structural transformations and make them possible.” Francis, *EG* 189.
21. “It is not enough to offer someone a sandwich unless it is accompanied by the possibility of learning how to stand on one’s own two feet. Charity that leaves the poor person as he is, is not sufficient. True mercy, the mercy God gives to us and teaches us, demands justice, it demands that the poor find the way to be poor no longer.” Address, Jesuit Refugee Service, September 10, 2013, http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/francesco/speeches/2013/september/documents/papa-francesco_20130910_centro-astalli_en.html. Cf. Francis, *EG* 188. Building a world of “lasting peace and justice” requires creating “new ways of participation that . . . animate local, national and international government structures with that torrent of moral energy that arises from the incorporation of the excluded in the building of a common destiny.” Address to Participants in the World Meeting of Popular Movements, October 28, 2014, <http://www.zenit.org/en/articles/pope-s-address-to-popular-movements>.
22. See *LS* 5, 6. For Francis, the first pope from the global south, “the environmental crisis is really a crisis in laissez-faire capitalism. And . . . the answer is a profound change at all levels—political, economic, social, communal, familial and personal.” “This is not Marxist . . . but it is revolutionary—and deeply disturbing to those with a vested interest in the status quo.” Paul Valley, “The Pope’s Ecological Vow,” *New York Times*, op-ed, June 28, 2015, http://www.nytimes.com/2015/06/29/opinion/the-popes-ecological-vow.html?_r=0.

human subjectivity and dignity, a way of expressing and cultivating one's God-given talents and abilities. As necessary, work is a God-given capacity by which people attain dignified material sustenance for self and for one's dependents. Through work, people participate in and contribute to the common good of society, within the larger commons of their physical and biotic environments. Work is never a mere commodity, and the person working always supersedes in moral importance and value the work performed or its products.²³

In considering policies surrounding work, popes from Leo to Francis take their cue from CST's focus on inclusive, provisioning purposes of economy, and on the primacy of persons over their labor, and labor over capital. These convictions underlie what Lew Daly and Michael Wachter see as CST's corporatist conviction that wages and the well-being of workers and families cannot be left solely to the workings of competitive market forces.²⁴

CST and Worker Justice

Writing in the 1930s, Msgr. John A. Ryan summarized CST's vision of full justice for wage workers as comprising: *sufficiency* for the material needs of the present by means of a living wage;²⁵ *security* against sickness, accident, and calamity through wages and benefits; and *status* for workers in relations of "industrial democracy" that would afford employees a share in profits, management, and ownership. The God-given dignity of each person is the basis for the universal right to work, and to employment and working conditions that yield a family living wage, defined as an "ample minimum"

23. Echoing John XXIII's insistence that "Humanity is the subject of work" (*Mater et magistra* 8), Pope John Paul II decries "economistic and materialistic" perversions of work that invert the priority person over work, and labor over capital (*Laborem Exercens* [LE] 9, 10), or that reduce work to a commodity (LE 10.) Whenever people are subordinated to material values, "This reversal of order, whatever the program or name under which it occurs, should rightly be called 'capitalism.'" (LE 11).

24. Daly, "Church of Labor" 47. "The remuneration of work is not something that can be left to the laws of the marketplace; nor should it be a decision left to the will of the more powerful. It must be determined . . . with justice and equity; which means that workers must be paid a wage which allows them to live a truly human life and to fulfill their family obligations in a worthy manner." John Paul II, LE 8; cf. LE 9–11. Pope Benedict XVI goes further, arguing that just, vital businesses and markets are never solely subject to competitive market forces (or, "the logic of exchange"), but also depend on the logics of solidarity and gratuity. See *Caritas in veritate* 34, 36. Cf. "The Logic of Gift and the Meaning of Business: An Experiential, Scholarly and Pedagogical Examination of Business in Light of *Caritas in veritate*," seminar sponsored by Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, Vatican City, February 24–26, 2011, <http://www.stthomas.edu/cathstudies/cst/research/conferences/vatican>.

25. See Donald Stabile, *The Living Wage: Lessons from the History of Economic Thought* (Northampton, MA: Edward Elgar, 2008); and review by Oren M. Levin Waldman, *Industrial & Labor Relations Review* 63 (2010) 552–53.

that enables a “decent livelihood” for workers and their families, as much as is needed to be able “to live in a manner worthy of a human being.”²⁶ These categories remain probative today.²⁷ Pope Francis speaks often and urgently about the importance of employment for human dignity. Assuring people’s “general temporal welfare and prosperity,” he urges, requires

education, access to health care, and above all employment, for it is through free, creative, participatory and mutually supportive labor that human beings express and enhance the dignity of their lives. A just wage enables them to have adequate access to all the other goods which are destined for our common use.²⁸

Work Conditions

Work justice for CST comprises not just decently paying employment, but decent and dignified working conditions and treatment. Contributing an organizational psychology perspective to this aspect of CST is Maria Teresa Gaston’s recent study of perceptions of justice on the job among Latino line workers in Nebraska meat-packing plants. Gaston examined workers’ perceptions of procedural justice, interpersonal and informational justice, and the honoring of “psychological contracts” in their daily labors. She shows that in the workplace, both “fairness of procedures and interpersonal

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26. John A. Ryan, *Distributive Justice* (New York: Macmillan, 1916) 361. The amount required for a living wage varies according to particular times, places, and circumstances, Ryan insisted it can and must be roughly determined. Today, economists like Amy Glasmeier continue this effort; see MIT’s Living Wage Calculator at <http://livingwage.mit.edu>.
 27. See *Compendium* 301, 302. Cf. Leo XIII, *RN* 11; Pius XI, *Quadragesimo anno* 65–76, 186, 198–202; Pius XII, *Sertum laetitiae* 36, 37; John XXIII, *Pacem in terris* 262–63; Second Vatican Council, *Gaudium et spes* 67, 68; John Paul II, *LE* 18–20; *CA* 7, 15. Gerald J. Beyer, “Workers” Rights and Socially Responsible Investment in the Catholic Tradition: A Case Study,” *Journal of Catholic Social Thought* 1 (2013) 117–53.
 28. Francis, *EG* no. 190. “Work is fundamental to the dignity of a person. Work, to use an image, ‘anoints’ us with dignity, fills us with dignity, makes us similar to God, who has worked and still works, who always acts.” Pope Francis, St. Joseph the Worker, World Labor Day, May 1, 2013, http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/francesco/audiences/2013/documents/papa-francesco_20130501_udienza-generale_en.html. “There is no worse material poverty . . . than the poverty which prevents people from earning their bread and deprives them of the dignity of work.” Pope Francis, May 25, 2013, Address to the Centesimus Annus Pro Pontifice Foundation, http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/francesco/speeches/2013/may/documents/papa-francesco_20130525_centesimus-annus-pro-pontifice_en.html. “The fundamental right to employment . . . cannot be considered a variable dependent on financial and monetary markets. It is a fundamental good in regard to dignity, to the formation of a family, to the realization of the common good and of peace.” Pope Francis, Address to Participants in the Plenary of the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, October 2, 2014.

treatment” can acquire “symbolic value that communicates worth to members of a group.” Also influencing positive group identification, engagement and cooperation are workers’ perceptions of implicit, “psychological contracts” with employers or supervisors, and whether a contract’s expectations are being met. Against traditional social-scientific assumptions that workers are oriented “primarily toward gain and against loss (informed self-interest),” and consonant with CST, Gaston’s findings indicate “that people cooperate in groups primarily out of identity concerns and the experience of being valued and valuable.”²⁹

Francis has expressed his concern for vulnerable workers especially passionately in two talks to world gatherings of popular movements:

Every worker, be he or not in the formal system of salaried work, has the right to fitting remuneration, to social security and to retirement coverage . . . Let us say together from our heart: no family without a dwelling, no rural workers without land, no worker without rights, no person without the dignity that work gives.³⁰

Vulnerable Workers and Families: Sufficiency, Security, and Status under Threat

Economic conditions marked by poverty, precarious employment, and work injustice inflict suffering on vulnerable family members. Francis especially underscores economic sufferings wreaked on children: “Every child who is marginalized, abandoned, who lives on the street begging . . . is a cry that rises up to God and denounces the system that we adults have set in place.” Further, “even in so-called wealthy countries many children live in dramatic situations that scar them deeply because of crises in the family, educational gaps and at times inhuman living conditions.” Parents’ economic insecurity and poor work conditions that exacerbate fatigue and “time poverty” also hurt families, especially children: “Too often the effects of a life worn down by precarious and underpaid work, unsustainable hours, and bad transport rebound on the children.”³¹

29. Maria Teresa Gaston, “Meatpacking Workers’ Perceptions of Working Conditions, Psychological Contracts and Organizational Justice,” *Journal of Catholic Social Thought* 9 (2012) 91–115, at 99, 100. Cf. Oliver Williams, C.S.C., “Is it Possible to Have a Business Based on Solidarity and Mutual Trust? The Challenge of Catholic Social Teaching to Capitalism and the Promise of Southwest Airlines” *ibid.* 59–69.

30. Pope Francis, Address to Participants in the World Meeting of Popular Movements, October 28, 2014.

31. Pope Francis, General Audience, April 8, 2015, http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/audiences/2015/documents/papa-francesco_20150408_udienza-generale.html. See also Claire Wolfteich, “Time Poverty, Women’s Labor, and Catholic Social Teaching: A Practical Theological Exploration,” *Journal of Moral Theology* 2 (2013) 40–59. Cf. Leo XIII, *RN* 42. Lamenting economic systems-driven losses of “free spaces,” and “work-free Sundays,” Pope Francis asks working parents, “Tell me, do you play with your children? . . . Do you waste time with your kids? We are losing this knowledge, this wisdom of how

Surveying economic conditions in the United States in 2012, Robert de Fina and Barbara Wall declare, "The typical worker is in trouble. A lot of trouble."³² Sufficiency, security, and status for workers and families are being threatened or undermined by several factors. A first is rising inequality, with increasing concentration of economic gains going to top income earners. Economist William Nordhaus adduces studies pointing to multiple forces, including "the labor-saving nature of technological change, rising imports from low- and middle-income countries, and the distortions of the financial system," as driving growing economic inequality.³³ Bruce Western and Jake Rosenfeld show that hourly wage inequality in the US increased by over 40% between 1973 and 2007, while union density and influence was precipitously declining. They argue that union decline during that period "accounted for between one-third and one-fifth of the growth in wage inequality."³⁴ Further compounding inequality and weakening labor's clout, de Fina and Wall suggest, are strategies by which the business and financial sectors have "actively sought to change the rules of the game in their favor using both bureaucratic and political power."³⁵

Adding to workers' troubles are pressures on families who must contribute longer hours of paid labor per household in order to make ends meet. Increased effort expended by individual family members in the paid labor force impedes families' ability to perform their unpaid but crucial "socially reproductive" functions. Moreover, most families operate "in an environment devoid of institutional support for these non-market functions." Simultaneously, working families must contend with forces "transforming the labor market from a complex institution to a spot market where labor is treated as any other commodity."³⁶

Historian Erin Hatton's study of temporary work illuminates this shift in the US labor markets. In the late 1950s, large temporary work agencies with names like "Kelly Girl" marketed their employees as women working for "extra" family income. But by the early 1970s, "these industries began to argue that all employees, not just secretaries, should be replaced by temps." Industry leaders began selling not just temporary

to play with our kids." Pope Francis, Meeting with the World of Labor and Industry, July 5, 2014, http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2014/july/documents/papa-francesco_20140705_molise-mondo-del-lavoro.html.

32. Robert de Fina and Barbara Wall, "Worker Justice: Editors' Introduction," *Journal of Catholic Social Thought* 9 (2012) 1–5.
33. Nordhaus, "The Pope and the Market."
34. Bruce Western and Jake Rosenfeld, "Unions, Norms, and the Rise in US Wage Inequality," *American Sociological Review* 76 (2011) 513, 514. Cf. Rudy Fichtenbaum, "Do Unions Affect Labor's Share of Income? Evidence Using Panel Data," *American Journal of Economics and Sociology* 70 (2011) 784–810.
35. De Fina and Wall, "Introduction" 2–4.
36. Julia A. Heath, David H. Ciscel, and David C. Sharp, "The Work of Families: The Provision of Market and Household Labor and the Role of Public Policy," *Review of Social Economy* 56 (1998) 501–21, at 502–3. Cf. Allyson Frederickson (Seattle: Alliance for a Just Society, October 2015), "Pay Up: Long Hours and Low Pay Leave Workers at a Loss," <http://allianceforajustsociety.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/Pay-Up-revised-11.pdf>.

workers, but “a bigger product: a lean and mean approach to business that considered workers to be burdensome costs that should be minimized.”³⁷ “By peddling products like the ‘Semi-Permanent Employee,’ and the ‘Never-Never Girl’³⁸ temp industry leaders promoted a model in which permanent employees were a ‘costly burden,’ a ‘head-ache’ that needed relief . . . Only the product of the labor had any value. The workers themselves were expendable.” In this way, Hatton argues, the temp industry helped “to forge a new cultural consensus about work and workers. Its model of expendable labor became so entrenched, in fact, that it became ‘common sense,’ leaching into nearly every sector of the economy and allowing the newly renamed ‘staffing industry’ to become sought-after experts on employment and work force development.”³⁹

Decline of US Labor Unionism

Further contributing to US workers’ vulnerability has been a decades-long decline in union membership and strength. Even at its peak, union density in the US never matched European levels, and steady declines in private and public sector membership since 1950 have been well documented.⁴⁰ Legal scholar Michael Wachter contends that a fundamental cause for this was a shift in the predominating political-economic paradigm, whereby a more communal, corporatist-leaning model that held sway during the New Deal and postwar years was superseded by a paradigm that valorized individuals in free-market competition. “Once the political economy is chosen, the role and centrality of unions is determined. Unions are central to a corporatist regime,” which focuses on “group rights of workers, and regulates competition to assure those rights, and peripheral [one might say, nonsensical—group rights literally make no

37. See Erin Hatton, “The Rise of the Permanent Temp Economy,” *New York Times*, January 26, 2013, <http://opinionator.blogs.nytimes.com/2013/01/26/the-rise-of-the-permanent-temp-economy>. Cf. Erin Hatton, *The Temp Economy: From Kelly Girls to Permatemps in Postwar America* (Philadelphia: Temple University, 2011).

38. “In 1971 Kelly Services ran a series of ads . . . promoting the so-called ([and sultry-looking] ‘Never-Never Girl,’ who: ‘Never takes a vacation or holiday. Never asks for a raise. Never costs you a dime for slack time . . . Never has a cold, slipped disc or loose tooth. (Not on your time anyway!) Never costs you for unemployment taxes and Social Security payments . . . Never costs you for fringe benefits. (They add up to 30% of every payroll dollar.) Never fails to please. (If your Kelly Girl employee doesn’t work out, you don’t pay.)” Hatton, “Rise of the Permanent Temp Economy.”

39. Ibid.

40. In addition to Western and Rosenfeld, and Wachter, see Ken Matheny, “The Disappearance of Unions, Pope John Paul II and Pope Benedict XVI,” *Southern California Interdisciplinary Law Journal* 23 (2014) 1–35; Joseph A. McCartin, *Collision Course: Ronald Reagan, the Air Traffic Controllers, and the Strike That Changed America* (New York: Oxford University, 2011). The decline in percentage of unionized US workers continued in 2014. See Melanie Trottman, “Membership Rate Falls for US Unions in 2014,” *Wall Street Journal*, January 23, 2015, <http://www.wsj.com/articles/membership-rate-falls-for-u-s-unions-in-2014-1422028558>.

sense] in a liberal, pluralist regime,” which focuses on the individual and regards maximal free competition as the key to economic flourishing.⁴¹

Labor law experts Marion Crain and Ken Matheny also lament the evisceration of “labor unionism and the labor law regime created by the National Labor Relations Act of 1935.” Today,

courts, employers, and the public no longer embrace the National Labor Relations Act’s collectivist premise that law must protect workers’ rights to join together to advocate for better wages and working conditions. This lack of support for the fundamental values underlying the law has contributed to a labor law jurisprudence that is fundamentally hostile to group rights.

They attribute at least part of US unions’ specious decline in density and influence “to a work law regime that is fundamentally hostile to group action. The law effectively hamstring[s] efforts by progressive unions to adapt to new employment regimes, new ways of structuring work, and the shifting demographics of the labor force.”⁴²

Other reasons advanced for union decline include workers’ negative perceptions of unions; narrowing of unions’ identities from broader, solidary movements to economic self-interest groups; anti-democratic and corrupt union leadership; and shifting class loyalties as white ethnics ascended into the managerial, middle classes. Veteran union organizers Bill Fletcher and Fernando Gapasin argue that current leadership has largely misanalyzed the situation of labor, erroneously concluding that

there is a wing of US capital with strategic interest in partnering with labor . . . that the US labor movement and the trade unions are essentially one and the same, that pragmatism needs to be the guiding principle of the union movement . . . that the demands and needs of the working class can largely be reduced to the bargaining and institutional demands of the trade unions.

Most egregiously, these authors charge, “big labor” replaced a democratic movement with bureaucracy (“business unionism”) and treated members as the passive objects rather than the agents of social change. Reversing union decline requires building a new, grassroots-energized, pluralistic, coalition-friendly labor movement: “social justice unionism.”⁴³

41. Wachter, “Labor Unions: Corporatist Institution” 581, 583–84.

42. Marion Crain and Ken Matheny, “Beyond Unions, Notwithstanding Labor Law,” Washington University School of Law, Legal Studies Research Paper Series, Paper no. 15-01-03, January 2015; *UC Irvine Law Review* 4 (2014) 561–607, at 561–62, 606. Cf. Marion G. Crain and Ken Matheny, “Unionism, Law, and the Collective Struggle for Economic Justice,” in *Working and Living in the Shadow of Economic Fragility*, ed. Marion Crain and Michael Sherraden (New York: Oxford University, 2014).

43. Bill Fletcher, Jr. and Fernando Gapasin, *Solidarity Divided: The Crisis in Organized Labor and a New Path to Social Justice* (Berkeley: University of California, 2008) 166. Cf. Joe Holland, “The Crisis of Family and Unions in Late Modern Global Capitalism,” *Journal*

US Catholics and Labor Unions

The “Education” section of the November 19, 1951 issue of *Time* magazine features an article entitled “School for Organizers,” spotlighting Father Philip Carey, S.J., who in “eleven years as director of Manhattan’s Xavier Labor School, has become a familiar figure to thousands of working men & women.” Carey’s students are “electricians, scrubwomen, plumbers, bus drivers, pipe fitters, and wire lathers. The lesson Father Carey teaches them: how to build strong and effective unions.” By 1951, Xavier had graduated 6,000 alumni, as one of “more than 100 Catholic labor schools” turning out trained union organizers and leaders. These schools offered workers a praxis-oriented education in democratic activism:

The school’s formal course lasts two years, and students of every faith are welcome. Tuition (which is often waived): \$5. There are night classes in public speaking and parliamentary procedure, labor ethics and law, in economics and trade union methods. Xavier’s volunteer faculty (three lawyers, ten union officers, two businessmen and the two priests) translates its subjects into down-to-earth problems. Students study contracts, sample constitutions, hold mock conventions and negotiation meetings. Sometimes, actual union problems come before their “grievance clinics,” with representatives of management on hand to talk things over with the union.

Xavier alumni organized utility workers, telephone workers, brewery workers, and bus drivers, and played an active role in “ridding local after local of Communists and racketeers.” Yet Fr. Carey stresses, “It is not enough merely to teach men to protect themselves.” “The object of the school . . . is not only to train men for intelligent leadership. It is to promote God’s law on the dignity and brotherhood of man.”

Time’s report recalls a period between the 1930s and 1960s when the Catholic Church, bolstered by CST, sponsored and ran schools that trained workers for participation and leadership in labor unions. More recently, some US Catholic schools have appeared to be on the other side of union struggles, for example in current court battles between certain Catholic colleges and universities and the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) concerning the rights of adjunct and part-time instructors under the National Labor Relations Act (NLRA) to unionize and engage in collective bargaining at these schools.⁴⁴

How can this be? Since Leo XIII, CST has consistently supported workers’ rights to form associations, join unions, and bargain collectively. Notwithstanding, the

of Catholic Social Thought 9 (2012) 43–58, at 49. Holland summarizes six ways that late-modern globalized capitalism has undermined the older, industrial trade union model. *Ibid.* 54–55.

44. Resistance to adjunct organizing by Catholic universities has not been universal as, e.g., LeMoyne College, Georgetown University attests. See Gerald Beyer, “Labor Unions, Adjuncts, and the Mission and Identity of Catholic Universities,” *Horizons* 42 (2015) 1–37, at n. 127.

schools in question argue that NLRB oversight is an illegitimate state entanglement into their religious missions and academic matters.⁴⁵

Legal scholar Susan Stabile and social ethicist Gerald Beyer offer extensive analyses of this complicated debate.⁴⁶ Stabile acknowledges the frequently acrimonious controversy that has arisen over recent efforts of part-time and adjunct instructors to unionize at some US Catholic colleges and universities. After carefully distinguishing the specific features of the case, she identifies the central, vexed question to be “whether NLRB oversight over the collective bargaining process would add any additional intrusion that Catholic colleges and universities do not already voluntarily subject themselves to by virtue of accreditation requirements.”⁴⁷ In the case of adjuncts organizing at non-seminary Catholic colleges and universities, Stabile finds several reasons to think that the answer is no.

First, even though “the NLRB can order collective bargaining over wages, hours, and other terms and conditions of employment,” and even though a broad reading of “the term ‘conditions of employment’ theoretically could encompass academic policy,” it is doubtful that imposing NLRB collective bargaining requirements in the case of adjuncts is likely to create entanglement with the religious mission of the school.⁴⁸ Stabile acknowledges that

investigating unfair labor practices could require the Board to make a factual determination whether the complained of practice, for example, the discharge of a faculty member, was motivated by an illegal purpose, rather than a protected purpose. But courts and agencies engage in such factual determinations of motive all of the time and doing so does not require adjudicating questions of religious doctrine.⁴⁹

Both Stabile and Beyer respond to Kathleen Brady, who objects to NLRB jurisdiction over Catholic colleges and universities based on the claim that CST’s support for unions envisages a different, less adversarial form of union, and imposing NLRB rule would force Catholic schools into a mold of union relations that their religious tradition finds objectionable. Requiring these institutions to comply with “the NLRA regime of collective bargaining,” Brady argues, would force Catholic schools “to channel their employment relations into patterns of behavior that are deeply at odds

45. See Kathleen Brady, “Religious Organizations and Mandatory Collective Bargaining under Federal and State Labor Laws: Freedom from and Freedom for,” *Villanova Law Review* 49 (2004) 77–168; “Religious Group Autonomy: Further Reflections about What is at Stake,” *Journal of Law and Religion* 22 (2007) 153.

46. Beyer, “Labor Unions”; Susan J. Stabile, “Blame It on Catholic Bishop: The Question of NLRB Jurisdiction Over Religious Colleges and Universities,” *Pepperdine Law Review* 39 (2013) 1317–46.

47. Stabile, “Blame It on Catholic Bishop” 1334.

48. *Ibid.* NLRB jurisdiction disputes have generally involved adjunct faculty, for whom Stabile judges religious entanglements less likely, and whose vulnerable status makes their right to unionize more important to uphold. *Ibid.* 1335.

49. *Ibid.* 1336.

with the Church's basic vision for social life," insofar as "the Church rejects an essentially adversarial understanding of labor-management relations and a model for labor peace that is built upon the balance of power rather than a spirit of unity."⁵⁰

"Theoretically," Stabile acknowledges, "this all sounds wonderful" but

the problem is that Catholic colleges and universities have not modeled the vision Brady offers. The employee groups seeking unionization have done so because Catholic colleges and universities have not offered a cooperative model of collective bargaining, and appear to treat their employees no more lovingly than secular institutions of higher learning do.⁵¹

Brady's claims that NLRB involvement would preclude cooperative relations between labor and management in Catholic institutions are also belied by documented experiences of Catholic hospitals with collective bargaining.⁵²

Stabile recommends a prudential, case-by-case approach whereby the NLRB would "determine whether to exercise jurisdiction over Catholic colleges and universities based on an analysis of factors counseling in favor of or against its doing so," parsing the relevant competing interests. In general, she maintains, NLRB jurisdiction appears more warranted for bargaining units composed of adjunct or part-time, non-student faculty, working at non-seminary Catholic colleges or universities that already subject themselves to regulation by outside accreditation agencies.⁵³ Perhaps to underscore the potential for Catholic schools to experiment with alternative forms of collective bargaining, Stabile adds,

The fact that a religious college or university is voluntarily engaging in collective bargaining with a faculty unit should counsel against the NLRB exercising jurisdiction. Where a religious university is endeavoring to implement a vision of employer-employee relations consistent with its religious principles, the NLRB should not attempt to supplant those principles by application of federal law.⁵⁴

"The point," Stabile concludes,

50. Ibid. 1340, citing Brady, "Religious Organizations" 153.

51. Ibid. Beyer critiques Brady's claims about CST's collaborative vision for labor unions in light the realism about sin, conflict, and struggle evinced in Pope John Paul II's treatment of worker rights and labor unions. Beyer, "Labor Unions" 22-26.

52. Ibid. 1341; see also 1342-43.

53. Ibid. 1344.

54. On alternative forms of worker associations see Fletcher and Gapasin, *Solidarity Divided* chap. 19; Janet Fine, *Worker Centers: Organizing Communities at the Edge of the Dream* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University, 2006); Staughton Lynd, *Solidarity Unionism: Rebuilding the Labor Movement from Below* (Chicago: Charles H. Kerr, 1992); Dorothy Sue Cobble, *The Other Women's Movement: Workplace Justice and Social Rights in Modern America* (Princeton: Princeton University, 2004); Cobble, "Gender Equality and Labor Movements: Toward a Global Perspective," Rutgers University, February 20, 2012, <http://smlr.rutgers.edu/about-smlr/selected-articles-dorothy-sue-cobble>.

is to find a reasonable way to respect the freedom of a religious institution to carry out its religious mission without interference by the government and without exempting such institutions from laws that do no violence to that religious mission. Catholic colleges and universities should not have the freedom to treat employees in a way that would not be tolerated of a secular college and university unless application of the labor laws of the United States would cause a serious infringement of their religious freedom.⁵⁵

Beyer complements Stabile's legally reasoned conclusions with forceful arguments appealing to CST, the mission of Catholic universities, and evidence that adjunct instructors constitute a marginalized group whose mistreatment—whether nor not intentional—threatens to implicate Catholic schools in the sin of public scandal.⁵⁶ Union-busting, Beyer contends, is much riskier than accepting NLRB's jurisdiction, for it “jeopardizes the faith and conscience formation of students and undermines the evangelizing mission of Catholic universities.”⁵⁷ And his detailed reporting on adjuncts' economic exploitation and social marginalization within academe adds weight to his claim that this is a group for whom Catholicism's commitment to solidarity is directly pertinent.⁵⁸

Women, Household Work, and the Care Economy

Embodied needs, vulnerabilities, and dependencies are constant aspects of the human condition.⁵⁹ Daily, these needs and dependencies are most immediately and indispensably addressed through labor performed in households and families. The wage economy, in turn, both depends upon this household labor, and, optimally, provides workers with means to support the familial households where it is performed.

Recent scholarship situates household labor within a broader “care economy,” a term denoting the networks of relationships and activities that arise to address human needs precisely as embodied, (inter)dependent, and vulnerable beings. Care work may be paid or unpaid, but it carries a quality of intimacy and one-on-one contact that make it difficult to completely commodify, and resistant to economies of scale. Caring labor includes direct physical care, emotional support, and services to help others meet physical needs; maintaining physical living surroundings; and fostering relationships and social connections with and for others. Studies worldwide confirm three striking facts: the care economy's (paid or unpaid) primary agents are women; markets and

55. Stabile, “Catholic Bishop” 1346–47.

56. Beyer, “Labor Unions” 1, 32–34.

57. Ibid. 1; cf. 2–3, 37–38.

58. Ibid. 9–15.

59. See Sandra Sullivan Dunbar, “Gratuity, Embodiment, and Reciprocity: Christian Love and Justice in Light of Human Dependency,” *Journal of Religious Ethics* 4 (2013) 254–79; “Christian Love, Material Needs, and Dependent Care: A Feminist Critique of the Debate on Agape and ‘Special Relations’,” *Journal of the Society of Christian Ethics* 29 (2009) 39–59.

civil society depend upon a functioning care economy; and markets and civil society tend to under-acknowledge and undervalue, and therefore exploit, caring labor.⁶⁰

Since *RN*, CST has emphasized the right of household heads to earn family-supporting wages. Pre-Vatican II CST assumes this wage is due a male breadwinner, sufficient to support a full-time homemaker (the primary, unpaid care worker) and children. As women's labor-force participation worldwide rose dramatically in the later 20th century, CST supported women's participation in all areas of economy and society, while insisting that participation ought not undercut their family—especially maternal—responsibilities. During the same period, economic and social support (or lack thereof) for the unpaid work of families and households, and of paying jobs reflecting that work (e.g., care for small children or the frail elderly, housecleaning, young child education) has gained increasing scholarly and popular attention.⁶¹

Recent popes, in particular Pope John Paul II, have grounded women's special role in home and society in a distinctive, feminine nature.⁶² Critics worry that a papal gender theory that defines "feminine genius" as a "special capacity for the other" fosters over-identification of women with the domestic sphere, implicitly reinforcing men's disproportionate presence and power in the public economy. Moreover, by tightly intertwining femininity and care work, rather than highlighting this work as part of the domestic vocation of every person, the papal approach risks complicity in the very problems—the disvaluing of women's contributions, and the socio-economic exploitation of the work of the home—it seeks to ameliorate.

As legal scholar Joan Williams argues, however, citizens (and believers) don't have to come to final agreement on gender issues to agree that the household/care economy is essential to, and must be adequately served by, the money/waged economy, and to press for policies that incorporate that recognition. And wherever Catholics stand on gender debates, CST's broader sensibilities suggest that the primary ground for

60. Evelyn Nakano Glenn, *Forced to Care: Coercion and Caregiving in America* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University, 2010) 5–7; Nancy Folbre, "Measuring Care: Gender, Empowerment, and the Care Economy," *Journal of Human Development* 7 (2006) 184–99, at 189–90.

61. These concerns are global in scope: See annotated bibliography (undated, ca. 2012) prepared by the International Development Research Centre (IRD): "Women's Economic Empowerment and the Care Economy," <http://www.idrc.ca/EN/Documents/Care-Economy.pdf>. See also, Rania Antonopoulos, "The Unpaid Care Work–Paid Work Connection," Working Paper 86, Policy Integration and Statistics Department, International Labor Office, Geneva, May, 2009. Anne-Marie Slaughter brings care-economy scholarship to a wider US audience in *Unfinished Business: Women, Men, Work, Family* (New York: Random House, 2015). Cf. Hinz, *Glass Ceilings* preface, introduction.

62. See esp. Pope John Paul II, *Mulieris dignitatem*. US Catholic scholars advancing recent papal gender theory include Helen Alvare, Sister Prudence Allen, and Sister Sara Butler. See, e.g. Amanda Shaw, "The Right to Be a Lady," *First Things*, October 9, 2008, <http://www.firstthings.com/web-exclusives/2008/10/right-to-be-a-lady>; and essays for the 20th anniversary of Pope John Paul II's *Mulieris dignitatem* in *Ave Maria School of Law Review* 8 (2009).

society's support of family- and care-work is, simply, the dignity and value of persons and families, and of the work of care they perform. The most promising agenda for work–family justice, many argue, is not to promote the protection of a feminized domestic sphere, but to fight for cultural, social, and economic equity between those who do care work (in or out of the home) and those who do other sorts of work.⁶³

Conclusion

CST on work in a changing economy contributes some unifying principles for envisioning and gathering hybrid consensus around policies and practices that better serve the dignified survival and well-being of all families by promoting political economies and economic cultures that

- pursue single-mindedly economy's inclusive, provisioning purposes (Can everyone participate and contribute? Does everyone have access to enough?);
- value and respect the interdependence of the waged market and household care economies, and ensure that waged economy supports and serves family/household well-being;
- prioritize access to economic participation and well-being for those who are most vulnerable and in greatest need, locally and globally; and
- situate economic activities with an "integral ecology" that sustainably stewards human and natural communities and resources for present and future generations.

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63. Joan C. Williams, *Unbending Gender* (New York: Oxford University, 2000); Joan C. Williams and Heather Boushey, *The Three Faces of Work–Family Conflict* (UC Hastings College of the Law/Center for American Progress, 2010); Jody Heymann, "Inequalities at Work and at Home: Social Class and Gender Divides," in *Unfinished Work: Building Equality and Democracy in an Era of Working Families*, ed. Jody Heymann and Christopher Beem (New York: New Press, 2005); Jody Heymann, *Forgotten Families: Ending the Growing Crisis Confronting Children and Working Parents in the Global Economy* (Oxford: Oxford University, 2006); Slaughter, *Unfinished Business*; Christine Firer Hinze, "Women, Families, and the Legacy of *Laborem Exercens*: An Unfinished Agenda," *Journal of Catholic Social Thought* 6 (2009) 63–92.