

CATHOLIC SOCIAL TEACHING AND THE COMMON GOOD

CHALLENGES ON GOVERNANCE AND THE GOOD OF INDIVIDUALS IN A POLITY

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“Though the Church’s first care must be for souls, how she can sanctify them and make them share in the gifts of heaven, she concerns herself with the exigencies of man’s daily life, with his livelihood and education, and his general welfare and prosperity” (Pope John XXIII, Mater et Magistra NR. 3)

A. Rerum Novarum as watershed in the development of Catholic Social Teaching

The nineteenth century which ushered in the beginnings of industrial technology in Europe and elsewhere was heralded by grave crisis as society emerged from an agricultural economy to an industrial but exploitative one. The eighteenth century and the beginnings of the nineteenth centuries had survived one depression after another, causing the poor in the then emerging industrial economies to suffer untold injustice, neglect, abuse and exploitation. The class society which emerged of the very rich and the mass poor made it clear that prophetic responsibility demanded of the Pope of Rome to speak.

Pope Leo XIII who sat on the Chair of Peter at the time in Rome spoke and with such clarity and courageous vision that the publication in May 1891 of the Encyclical letter “*Rerum Novarum*” made clear that Christianity owes the world the duty of not only developing coherent Social Doctrines but also backed by Social Action. If happiness is to be real hereafter, tears must be wiped away and empty stomachs fed here and now. Such is the integral nature of the Christian world view. This corresponds to the teachings of the master himself, Jesus Christ, who said as recorded in the Gospels: “*I came that they may have life, and have it more abundantly*” (John 10:10).

Rerum Novarum marked a watershed in the history of Catholic Social Thought, initiating a body of teachings for further reflection and research on social, cultural, economic, political, technological, ecological, ethical, and international development. The profile and position of the Church assumed a new moral and authoritative dimension with statements coming from the Magisterium on matters of good governance, the common good, the human person and his dignity and rights, subsidiarity and solidarity, war and peace, racism, women, human rights, democracy, poverty, injustice, under-development, labour, agriculture, media, genetic science, environment, economic justice, land distribution, refugees, slave trade, prostitution, the economy and money matters, capitalism, socialism, world trade and debt, international relations, the human family and political responsibility, to mention but a few. For a Church which until Rerum Novarum seemed to emphasize more on the dimensions of personal salvation, individual responsibility and life after death, Catholic Social Thought since 1891 broadened the avenue for integral evangelization.. The Common Good which implies issues of the solidarity and expectations of the people for good governance took a focal and prominent position in these teachings.

No wonder that Pope John XXIII, writing his famous Encyclical letter, *Mater et Magistra* describes the Church as Mother and Teacher of all nations and states thus:

“Though the Church’s first care must be for souls, how she can sanctify them and make them share in the gifts of heaven, she concerns herself with the exigencies of man’s daily life, with his livelihood and education, and his general welfare and prosperity”.

In 1931, on the 40th Anniversary of Rerum Novarum , Pius XI published *“Quadragesimo Anno”* (The Reconstruction of the Social Order) during a time of deep economic depression. The Pope came up with the now famous Principle of Subsidiarity, which emphasized self help as the best form of sustainable development, challenging centralistic solutions to problems where subsidiary action was necessary.

In 1961 and 1963, the elderly but very dynamic and charismatic Pope John XXIII (Blessed) published two encyclical letters, namely: *“Mater et Magistra”* (Christianity and Social Progress) and *“Pacem in Terris”* (Peace on Earth). The same Pope started the second Vatican Council in 1961 which was concluded by his successor, Pope Paul VI. This Ecumenical Council ended in December 1965 and came up with the now famous document on the role of the Church in the modern world namely: *“Gaudium et Spes”*. Pope Paul VI also published in 1967, the encyclical letter *“Populorum Progressio”* (The Development of People) and in 1968

“Humane Vitae” (on Human Life). In the same year, the Medellin conference took place and revitalized the Church of Latin America to the issues of Structural injustice, the poor and conscientization as a tool for empowerment. The document *“Octagesima Adveniens”* (a call to action) which is an *“Apostolic Letter”* was written to mark the 80th Anniversary of *Rerum Novarum*. There is a powerful statement in *Octagesima Adveniens* which says: *“All Christians are called to act. Stating principles is not enough. To point out injustice is not enough. Prophetic cries are not enough. Words lack weight unless we all become responsible, and act effectively”*.

The synod of Bishops (the third since Vatican II) took place in 1971 under the broad theme: *“Justice in the World”*. In paragraph 6 of this significant meeting, we read the following: *“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”*.

In 1975, *“Evangelii Nuntiandi”* (Evangelization in the Modern World) published by Pope Paul VI to document the result of the 1974 Synod of Bishops emphasizes very clearly that the Church is to be involved in Social life, *“salvation is liberation from everything that oppresses man”* (Para. 9.) The meeting of the Latin American Bishops in Puebla, Mexico with Pope John Paul II in attendance led the way to the Puebla Conference Document which has relevance to Social Thought and Action in Latin America today. Blessed Pope John Paul II (1978 – 2005) teaches that Catholic Social Doctrine helps humanity in constant search to deduce: Principles for guidance, Criteria for judgement and Directives for action. He published more than any other Pontiff, several encyclicals devoted to the Social Question, especially on the topic of Solidarity and the Common Good, some of which include:

- 1979 *“Redemptor Hominis”* (The Redeemer of man)
- 1980 *“Dives in Misericordia”* (Rich in Mercy)
- 1981 *“Laborem Exercens”* (On Human Work)
- 1987 *“Sollicitudo Rei Socialis”* (The Social Concerns of the Church)
- 1988 *“Christifideles Laici”* (lay people in the Church and the World)
- 1991 *“Redemptor Hominis”* (The Mission of the Redeemer)
- 1991 *“Centesimus Annus”* (The One Hundredth Anniversary)
- 1993 *“Veritatis Splendor”* (The Splendor of Truth)
- 1994 *“Tertio Millennio Adveniente”* (The coming of the Third Millenium)
- 1995 *“Evangelium Vitae”* (The Gospel of Life)
- 1995 *“Ecclesia in Africa”* (The Church in Africa)
- 1997 *“Ut Unum Sint”* (That they may be one)

B. SOCIAL THOUGHT IMPLIES SOCIAL ACTION

It is the task of the bishops of the Church to preach and teach the Gospel; to point people in the direction of Christ. Religion is always personal, but never just a private affair. Discipleship involves seeking God in this world, as well as preparing to meet Him in the next. The Gospel imperative to love our neighbour entails not only that we should help those in need, but also address the causes of destitution and poverty. The deepening of the spiritual life must go hand in hand with practical concern for our neighbour, and thus with social action.

The Church in each country, under the pastoral guidance of the local bishops, has a continuing duty to apply the values of the Gospel to the problems of the society, and so help all members of the Church, lay, religious and ordained, to play an active part in striving to build a just and compassionate social order. Popes have taken the lead in expounding Catholic Social Teaching. As we explain, many of the key documents are papal documents, called encyclical letters. As social conditions have developed over the last century, so the application of these ideas has developed too.

Can managers treat employees the way they like? Is the law of the jungle the right one for human beings? Is there really “*no such thing as society*”? Does the secret of success in life have to be “*each for himself and the devil takes the upperhand*”?

Such questions worry almost everybody. The whole world sometimes seems to be getting less and less user-friendly. Even politicians cannot offer us much comfort. Talking about the moral rules at the basis of society has never been more *difficult*, nor more necessary. We accept that in many cases there will often be much scope for debate about the best way to achieve these.

But it is not impossible. There exists a set of ideas that tries to answer questions like these. They are based on firm Christian principles. But they are just as likely to appeal to people with no belief. They come from the Roman Catholic Church, which is why we call them Catholic Social Teaching. But they are not about imposing Catholicism on other people. Indeed, these very principles forbid such an approach.

C. ARCHBISHOP VALERIAN OKEKE ON THE COMMON GOOD

Archbishop Valerian Maduka Okeke, Metropolitan and Archbishop of Onitsha in South Eastern Nigeria, a leading voice with credible pedigree in Nigeria, has like no other pastor, taken up headlong, the project of expounding the Social Teaching of the Church on the COMMON GOOD in his Pastoral Letter of year 2007. He titles the document YOU AND THE COMMON GOOD and justifies the urgency of his choice of topic with the words of the Catholic Bishops Conference of Nigeria: *“Our nation continues to drift from one avoidable crisis to another. The specter of economic stagnation, political disintegration and social unrest stares us in the face. Warnings from many angles, seem to be falling on deaf ears. Those who have volunteered to rule us are still to to prove to the nation that they have vision, will and moral credentials to do what needs to be done. The people are paying the high price of poverty, misery, disease, anxiety and despair. In the name of God, let the nation finds its way quickly back to the sure course of meaningful democratic government”* (cf. CBCN, *Save the Family and save the Nation*, 1994, p.1)

Archbishop Val, as he is fondly called, stats clearly at the beginning of his pastoral Letter that there is justification to examine this very important principle of Catholic Social Doctrine and to expound on the theme of the Common Good since it helps us *“examine our attitude towards the society itself, towards those things that society owns together, and reflect on our God given responsibility towards these, and towards the betterment of all. The above informs our choice of topic and the urgency of this pastoral letter”* (cf. Pastoral Letter: You and the Common Good, 2007, p. 5). The Pastoral letter titled *“You and the Common Good”* deals in great detail with the various ramifications of the concept and breaks them down in simple language for lay readers and experts. It considers the foundation of the Common Good, our attitude to the Common Good and how to promote the Common Good. In my humble estimation as someone who, for the last thirty years has been fully engaged in studies, research and teaching around the discipline of Catholic Social Doctrine, this pastoral Letter of Archbishop Val Okeke is one of the most brilliant, highly researched, comprehensive, intelligible, down to earth, understandable, precise, deep and analytical exposition I have read so far on the subject. And it comes from a man who knows the subject and is the moral leader of thought and example, a teacher and pastor, a scientist and expert with years pf both practical and research experience. The simplicity of language and contextual application of the topic to the daily lives of Nigerians at all levels in both the public, private and civil society levels makes the document a pleasurable reading.

D. What is the Common Good?

Although a very general term, the word Good according to St Thomas Aquinas refers to “that which everybody desires”. There are different types of Good, material and spiritual, but in each case, what is Good is a quality which presupposes the existence of Being. The philosophical position in scholastics is that, whatever is, is Good and therefore desirable, praiseworthy, durable, attractive, peaceful. Evil is a negation of Good and is the opposite of Good. Therefore, Evil is a defect in Being, thus, a None-Being. One can recognize the Good at its various levels: spiritual good, material good, intellectual good, corporal good, habitual good, occasional good, intrinsic and non-intrinsic good, earthly and celestial good, moral good which is characterized into perfective good, delectable or pleasurable good and useful or physical good and finally the Common Good which is distinguished from the individual good.

A clear definition of the Common Good is found in the Documents of the Second Vatican Council which says that it is “*the sum total of social conditions which allow people, either as groups or as individuals, to reach their fulfillment more fully and more easily*” (*Gaudium et Spes*, No 26). Simply put, the Common Good refers to all those values and concerns which belong to the entire community and not just to a specific group or individual and contains values which benefit the generality of all, not just a few. The teaching on the implies rights and obligations on the part of individuals and groups. It contains three essential elements which in the worlds of Archbishop Valerian Okeke summarizes it, namely: Respect for the Person and his dignity, Social well being and development of human communities, and Peace among men founded on truth, justice, charity and freedom.

E. THE FOUNDATIONS AND APPLICATIONS OF THE COMMON GOOD PRINCIPLE

A summary of the basic Principles of Catholic Social Doctrine on the Common Good at the universal and particular levels as found in the documents of Vatican Council II (*Gaudium et Spes*) and in the aforementioned pastoral letters of the Bishops Conference of Nigeria as well as in the cited documents include the following teachings:

1. Dignity of the Human Person

The foundation of this teaching is the dignity of the human person. In virtue of our shared humanity, we must surely respect and honour one another. Each individual has a value that can never be lost and must never be ignored. Moreover, each of us is made in the image and likeness of God. Society must therefore first of all respect and protect human life itself – at all its stages from conception to its natural end. This is the

bedrock of our civilization, and it is why abortion virtually on demand is one of the greatest scandals of our time.

Our human dignity also consists in our being made free for and free from God; FREE, that is, to do His Will by choosing to live and act within the framework of His law. Society should therefore respect human freedom by enabling men and women to assume responsibility for their own lives, and encouraging them to co-operate with each other to pursue the Common Good. This means that the functions of government, though important, must always be subsidiary; that is, government should help men women to be free to realize their own destiny.

2. The duty and role of the Church to promote Social Order

The Church has the right and the duty to advocate a Social Order in which the dignity of all is fostered, and to protest when it is in any way threatened. Thus, the Church opposes totalitarianism because, it oppresses people and deprives them of their freedom. While recognizing the importance of wealth creation, the Church denounces any abuses of economic power such as those which deprive employees of what is needed for a decent standard of living.

The Church also rejects the view that human happiness consists only in material well-being, and that achieving this alone is the goal of any government. If a government pays too much attention to material welfare at the expense of other values, it may advocate policies which reduce people to a passive state of dependency on welfare. Equally, if a government gives too little priority to tackling poverty, ill-health, poor housing and other social ills, the human dignity of those who suffer these afflictions is denied. In every society, respect for human dignity requires that, so far as possible, basic human needs are met. The systematic denial of compassion by individuals or public authorities can never be a morally justified political option.

The Church does not present a political programme, still less a party political one. In the words of the late Cardinal Basil Hume of England, *“The Church’s Social Teaching places the political within the larger context of humanity’s relationship with God. Social and political action are important, but realizing our full human dignity as children of God, made in his image and likeness, also requires each of us to undertake an inner spiritual journey. The future of humanity does not depend on political reform, social revolution or scientific advance. Something else is needed. It starts with a true conversion of mind and heart ((to the creator of all, God himself)”*.

3. Economics is at the service of Man:

Man is the author, the center and the end of all social and economic life. Economic development must remain under man's direction. GS n. 63.

4. Economic Growth is bounded by morality:

The economy is at the service of man, not man at the service of the economy. (GS n. 64). The network of relations involving production, distribution, consumption, needs to be made as personal as possible because, they are links of service between the brotherhood of men. Therefore, all economics must be within the bounds of the moral order.

5. The Control of the Economy is not a monopoly but stakeholder model:

“Economic progress should not be concentrated at the hands of a few individuals or groups possessing too much economic power, nor of the political community alone, nor of a few strong nations ... all nations should participate in decision making” (n. 65).

Order and justice demand that power should not be over-concentrated. The aim of a business arrangement should not be to dominate but to allow both sides to profit. The principles of subsidiarity and solidarity are herein called for.

6. Balanced relationship between the State and Private sectors:

The voluntary initiative of individuals and of free groups should be integrated with state enterprises. (n. 66). Private initiative and enterprises should be encouraged. Co-operatives likewise. The state should promulgate laws that enhances but controls excesses.

7. Automation and Mechanization implies Humanization:

“Nor should development be left to the almost mechanical evolving of economic activity, nor to the decision of public authority. Automation? Yes: Computers? Yes. But man must be in control.

8. The Status and Value of Work – The Personalization of Labour:

“Hence we must renounce as false, doctrines which stand in the way of all reform on the pretext of a false notion of freedom as well as those which subordinate the basic rights of individuals and groups to the collective organisation of production”. In other words, human work is the chief element in economic life. No work, no economics. Work is the activity of man, a value of metaphysical significance and working is the existential expression of man's creative ingenuity. All else in the world of work is only an instrument of work. Man is the subject, not the object of work. On this lies his dignity and personality. Work cannot be sold or bought. Labour and capital must complement, not contradict each other, for labour precedes capital.

9. Management and Labour – The Call to Solidarity:

“All citizens should remember that they have the right and the duty to contribute according to their ability to the genuine progress of their own community and this must be recognised by the civil authority”. (n. 68).

This calls for joint management by proprietors and a suitable share should be aimed at. Collective decisions taking care of workers interest is necessary. Trade unions are very necessary and the right to strike for basic rights should not be closed out as a legitimate means of sharing economic wealth.

10. Universal destination of all goods:

“Earthly goods are destined for all (GS n.69). Everybody has a right to a share of the earth’s goods sufficient for himself/herself and his/her family. Man can only expect to **“use”** goods which he/she owns. There is a universal ownership of all goods on this earth and no one should appropriate to himself alone property meant for all when the rest have nothing. There is a Christian duty to share and give to those in need. Customs should not be regarded as unchallengeable if they endanger the **“common good”** teaching and deprive the community of much needed material and spiritual assistance. On the other hand, customs should not be rashly discarded if they can still be so adapted as to be useful. **“Created goods should flow fairly to all, regulated by justice and accompanied by charity”**. Social security services can play an important part in bringing about the redistribution of wealth. The right to property remains. The Council stresses the need for further development of support for the family (just wages, special packages to large families, the poor, the disabled, etc), and also for services assisting education and culture. But people who are lazy should not be encouraged at the expense of others. Job and employment opportunities should be created for all and mediocrity should be avoided. To each his due.

11. Investment and Monetary Policy serve employment (n. 70):

Investment in its turn should be directed to provide employment and ensure sufficient income for the people of today and the future. Those responsible for investment and the planning of the economy must keep these objectives in mind and work for the common good”. The location of outlay should cater for the poor and the neglected. Monetary policies should not be at the expenses of the weak and the poor. The IMF, World Bank, the multinationals, etc, are particularly called to re-examine their policies in the light of the above.

12. Economic and Social Activity Towards the Kingdom of Christ:

“Christians engaged actively in modern economic and social progress and in the struggle for justice and charity must be convinced that they

have much to contribute to the prosperity of mankind and to world peace” (n. 72). This is a call to individuals to practice what they believe, to teach it to others, to await in prayer and patience the long tedious journey towards the realization of the promise and the dawn of the kingdom of God.

F. DUTIES AND OBLIGATIONS OF GOVERNMENT: THE COMMON GOOD:

It is within the context of what is presented above that we are brought to consider just what the government must do, what its obligation as government are and how they should be carried out.

1. The primary duty of government is the common good.

All governmental acts, all legal approvals and restrictions must be related to that good. What is the common good? It is not necessarily the good of the majority, or the minority, or of individuals – but the good of the whole, of society itself. That which serves the common good. Nor can the common good derogate from the true good of the individual, though some things that the individual might consider a good for to raise chickens. The common good in the midst of a suburban residential neighborhood might not correspond to the common good. The common good speaks of the environment necessary for the fulfillment of citizens living in common, or in society.

Vatican II explains thus: *“Individuals, families and the various groups which make up the civil community are aware of their ability to achieve a truly human life by their own unaided efforts; they see the need for a wider community where each one will make a specific contribution to an even broader implementation of the common good. For this reason, they set up various forms of political communities. The political community, then exist for the common good. This is full justification and meaning and the source of its specific and basic right to exist. The common good embraces the sum total of those conditions of social life which enable individuals, families and organizations to achieve complete and efficacious fulfillment”*. (Guadium et Spes, no. 74).

This is a paraphrase of what Pope John XXIII had written in *Mater et Magistra*:

“This (common good) embraces the sum total of those conditions of social living, whereby men are enabled more fully and more readily to achieve their own perfection”. (no.65).

It should be noted that the common good far transcends mere economic conditions. There are schemes that might, in fact, alleviate suffering, rescue some from abject poverty – but which might not serve the

common good, indeed might subvert it by enslaving the citizens to a materialistic, property less and classless society. Comfort and pleasure are not determinative. On the other hand, a true pursuit of the common good may be recognized by certain results.

“So the divine order and harmony in the world must be the principal unifying force for the action of all Christians and of all men of good will in their work for the common good”. (Pius XII, Christmas message, 1957), where the common good reigns, poverty and suffering will be alleviated as much as possible. The converse, however, may not be true that is, absence of poverty and sufferings do not necessarily mean a reign of the common good. It is the common good that dictates the duties and obligations of government that will now be discussed.

2. Guardianship of Rights:

It is obvious that government must protect the rights of its citizens if it is to fulfill its obligation to the common good. No society where those rights are violated with impunity – either by the government itself or by citizens with the approval of the government can be said to be properly operating within the common good. The exercise of rights is necessarily for the fulfillment of human beings, the achievement of their purpose.

“To safeguard the inviolable sphere of the rights of the human person and to facilitate the fulfillment of his duties should be the essential office of every public authority. Does not this flow from that genuine concept of the common good which the state is called upon to promote?” (Pope Pius XII to Italian workers, June 1, 1941, on the fiftieth anniversary of Rerum Novarum).

3. The Right to Life:

Life the creation and gift of God cannot be taken from innocent persons by anyone. It is inviolable, and not subject to the good of another. Therefore, it is a right that the government must only recognize, but protect, no matter what its condition.

“God, the Lord of life, has entrusted to men the noble mission of safeguarding life, and men must carry it out in a manner worthy of themselves. Life must be protected with the utmost care from the moment of conception; abortion and infanticide are abominable crimes”. (Vatican II Documents, Gaudium et Spes, no. 51). Thus, laws allowing abortion, euthanasia, or any so-called legal homicide are not within the power of government and are to be considered invalid. Further, the government has the obligation to act positively to prevent such evils.

“Rights must be religiously respected wherever they are found; and it is the duty of the public authority to prevent and punish injury, and to protect each one in the possession of his own” (Rerum Novarum, no. 29).

4. The Right to Learn about and Practice Religion:

The highest good for humans and one necessary for their happiness is to know God’s will and follow it. That statement in fact could be considered a definition of religion itself. It follows from it that a government must recognize the right to do just that practice religion. Indeed, it is governmental duty to foster the practice of religion.

5. Private Property is a fundamental Right:

It is fashionable to speak of human rights and property rights, and to give a priority to the former. The truth is that property is a human right, and a most basic one. Property is conducive to the family’s security. Owners are less subject to misfortune – inflation, loss of income. The right of privacy is more safe for the owner of property; even the right to a certain eccentricity, or individuality of personality, is served by property. It allows men and women to be more the masters of their own fate. From property, man leaves an estate for his children. Pope Leo XIII considered property the goal of work and therefore essential to a decent state of living for workers.

“It is surely undeniable that when a man engages in remunerative labour, the very reason and motive of his work is to obtain property and to hold it as his own private possession” (Rerum Novarum, no. 4).

So true a right is the ownership of property that it is not allowed under Catholic Teaching to weaken the right of property as to destroy it. (Pius XI, Quadragesimo Anno, no. 48). Exorbitant and crushing taxation on property that would become actually a form of confiscation obviously falls under this prohibition. Discrimination, making property ownership difficult or impossible for many would likewise be immoral. All recent Popes have upheld the right to property, even to productive property – that is, manufacturing and profit-making property, as Pope Pius XI insisted. (See Quadragesimo Anno, no. 44 et Passim). Public monopoly or (Socialism) would put ownership of either all property or at least productive property in the hands of the state, or would demand that all profit beyond that needed to keep production going, go into the hands of workers.

Private monopoly is the acquiring of unlimited vast holdings by an individual or combination of individuals making competition in various fields of enterprise difficult or impossible.

6, Promotion of civil society, security and welfare:

Vatican II carried forward this obvious truth about society:

“Individuals, families, and the various groups which make up the civil community are aware of their inability to achieve a truly human life by their own unaided efforts; they see the need for a wider community where each one will make a specific contribution to an even broader implementation of the common good. For this reason, they set up various forms of political communities. The political community then, exists for the common good; this is its full justification and meaning and the source of its specific and basic right to exist. The common good embraces the sum total of all those conditions of social life which enable individuals, families and organizations to achieve complete and efficacious fulfillment” (Gaudium et Spes, no. 74).

G. CONCLUSION - APPLICATION OF PRINCIPLES OF THE COMMON GOOD ON NIGERIA

Since the people are the original bearers of government authority, crucial duties are due to the citizens. This is where the Church and citizens of Nigeria must act and swiftly so

1. All Citizens are Entitled to Contribute Actively to the Common Good of the State. A government is not possible without the civil society, the private sectors and the citizenry. These must play a proper role of self determination. I here call to mind the right to vote and the honorary collaboration in self-government, but also the right of criticism and control. Community services is another area that is relevant, citizens could identify with the state and society in voluntary societies.

“We must be ready”, says Professor Oswald von Nell-Breuning, to donate a large part of our work without remuneration simply because we consider it meaningful and relevant, if not even commanded”.

2. All Citizens Have a Legal Claim to Equity Before the Law (GG 3, 1). In the Basic Constitutional Law of Nigeria, it says: *“Nor one may be disadvantaged or preferred because of sex, descent, race, language, homeland and origin, faith or religious and political views”.*

As the second Vatican Council teaches, three different forms of apartheid can be distinguished, namely, discrimination against a person because of his or her *“race or colour, condition of life, or religion”* (No. 5 Decl. On relation to non-Christian Religions). Every form of apartheid violates the right and dignity of man. The Christian will therefore not limit himself or

herself to protesting against a particular kind of apartheid, e.g. racial apartheid, as if religious apartheid were less evil. The Christian rejects all apartheid. He or she is also convinced that the overcoming of (the forms of) apartheid is an essential presupposition of peace within the state and among states.

3. *The Right to Resistance:*

Even if, as it says in the Epistle of Romans, governmental authority “*is instituted by God*” (Rom. 13:1), it still bears the inadequacy of all earthly things. With more or less reasons, one will have one thing or the other to criticize in all laws and in all governmental measures. But more frightening is the fact that states and governments, as experience teaches, can exhibit not only this or that deficiency, but can also degenerate in a criminal way. Here it is usually not a question today, as it was antiquity, of an individual tyrant, but of movements or parties that spread terror at home and abroad. The “*Instruction on Christian Freedom and Liberation*” of April 5, 1986, branded with sharp words the “*violence exercised by the powerful against the poor, arbitrary action by the Police, and any form of violence established as a system of government*”.

As the original bearer of governmental authority, the people are entitled to the right of resistance with respect to the state. The above-mentioned instruction rejects, however, the “*systematic recourse to violence*” as a “*destructive illusion*” since it not infrequently “*opens the way to new forms of servitude*”. The “*myth of revolution*” surrenders to the illusion that “*the abolition of an evil situation is in itself sufficient to create a more humane society,*” whereas in reality this myth fosters “*the setting up of totalitarian regimes*”. The thesis that sees “*in the class struggle the structural dynamism of social life*” is also rejected as erroneous. An armed struggle can only be justified in “*an extreme case*”, when it is “*a last resort to put an end to an obvious and prolonged tyranny which is gravely damaging the fundamental rights of individuals and the common good*”. Nevertheless, a “*very rigorous analysis of the situation*” is necessary whereby one must consider that “*passive resistance*” is a way *more conformable to moral principles and having no less prospects for success*”.

4. *Love of One's Fatherland (Patriotism):*

In Nigeria, love of one's fatherland has fallen into disrepute because of our past history. In recent decades, it was almost tabooed to speak of the fatherland. Criticizing of one's fatherland took the place of love of one's fatherland. At the most, one still spoke of preservation of the countryside and protection of monuments, if the fatherland was not simply rejected as a “*system of the ruling – classes*”. The famous statement on NTA by Andrew was “*man, I am checking out*”. Nigerians check out these days in containers.

If I am not mistaken, the Treves bishop, Franz Rudolf Bornewasser, wrote the last pastoral letter on love of one's fatherland on March 15, 1947. There he said: *"It is not open to man whether he wishes to love his fatherland or not. Love of one's fatherland is not a weighing of advantage, but a religious obligation. Neither is love of one's fatherland mere feeling, but a virtue of the will, a free, conscious self-surrender to the land of one's Fathers. Love of one's fatherland means rejoicing at the flowering of one's fatherland, suffering at its suffering, and always praying for its well-being. But love of one's fatherland also means deep pain at the blemishes that soil the image we bear of it in our hearts. Love of one's fatherland further means faithfulness. Whoever breaks faith is a traitor. True faithfulness proves itself when suffering and need come upon one's fatherland. Would it not be sad if, in times of need, one was to begin to calculate whether one could not live better if one were to separate oneself from one's fatherland? To abandon one's fatherland for purely egotistical reasons in flight before the required sacrifice contradicts the spirit of Christianity, which values faithfulness and willingness to sacrifice more highly than material goods"*.

It seems to me that the time has come to reflect again on the Christian message about the relation of man to his people, to his fatherland, to his state. According to the Christian understanding, love for one's fatherland is grounded in reverent dedication to those to whom we owe our origin: God, our parents, and the land of our fathers, the land where our cradle stood and to which we were bound by destiny through a common homeland, a common descent, a common history, a common culture, and a common language. *"Before man is thrown into the world, he is laid in the cradle of the home,"* says the French philosopher, Gaston Bachelard (1884 – 1962).

Homelessness is a loss of identity. If "fatherland" disappears from linguistic usage, other important things in life are also lost. The Christian does not have a broken relation to his or her fatherland. The Second Vatican Council summons Christians to *"a generous and loyal devotion to their country"* (no. 65). It exhorts the faithful, in loyalty to their country, to serve the common good. (Degree in the laity 14). The people of God of the Old Testament loved their homeland and the city of Jerusalem. In Psalm 137, it says: *"By the waters of Babylon, there we sat down and wept, when we remembered Zion..... If I forget you, O Jerusalem. Let my right hand wither!"* (Ps 137:1-5). Jesus loved his people also. As he saw before him the disaster that would come upon the city of Jerusalem, *"he wept over it"* (Lk. 19:4). Christian love of one's fatherland is not a mere feeling, nor an unctuous patriotism, nor a sentimental nationalism, and even less a chauvinism. It is embedded in the love for all men and all peoples. For the limitation of being human to

one's own race, one's own people, one's own nation, or one's own class leads to brutality.

Love of one's fatherland is, as the Second Vatican Council says, "*without any narrowing of mind,*" open to "*the whole human family, which is tied together by the manifold bonds linking races, peoples and nations*" (GS no. 75).

5. Willingness to Sacrifice:

Without the citizens' willingness to sacrifice, the common good cannot be realized. The tight social intertwinement and the development of social and political relations since the beginning of the industrial age have greatly increased the financial needs of the state. The amount of taxes and duties, their anonymity, the complicated process of balancing costs, and not least the spread of that attitude which is usually called "*minimum morality*" (Grenzmoral) have weakened the consciousness of being morally obligated to pay taxes and social security contributions. The Second Vatican Council calls tax evasion "*fraud*" (GS no. 36). If the citizens consider the tax laws to be in need of improvement, the solution does not lie in tax evasion, but in tax reform to be striven for in a democratic way.

6. Obligation to form Civil Society Associations:

Gladly we notice in Nigeria the rising number of registrations at the Corporate Affairs Commission of civil society, economic and public associations for the common good. Numerous interest groups have been formed, i.e. organised associations that conjoin the parallel economic interests of their members and seek to exercise influence and pressure on public opinion, the political parties, the chambers of parliament, the government, and the administration of public affairs and justice as well as on opposed interest groups in order to obtain their interests. The formation of organised associations does correspond to our understanding of society and state. And it is also to be recognized that, in a certain respect, interest groups are the expression of the need for protection over against the ever expanding power of the state. Nevertheless, Catholic Social Teaching places the common good of the state above the special interests of associations. It appeals to the sense of responsibility of the associations and their functionaries to recognize the primacy of the common good in their programs and praxis in spite of the fully justified advocacy of their own interests.

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