

## 3.1. SOCIAL TEACHING OF THE CHURCH

### 3.1.1 Introduction and historical summary

The publication of *Rerum novarum* in 1891 marked the beginning of the development of a recognisable body of social teaching in the Catholic Church. It dealt with persons, systems and structures, the three co-ordinates of the modern promotion of justice and peace, now established as integral to the Church's mission. In the years which followed there have been numerous encyclicals and messages on social issues; various forms of Catholic action developed in different parts of the world; and social ethics taught in schools and seminaries. But we had to wait until Vatican II and the Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World to find the statement that brought a change in the overall Church attitude to its presence in the world, and a call for the setting up of the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, to help the Church respond to the challenges in the world<sup>50</sup>.

The Dogmatic Constitution on the Church indicated at the same time that, the laity enjoy a principal role in the universal fulfilment of the task of helping the world attain its destiny in justice, in love and in peace (LG #36). In the document on the mission of the laity, it was given to pastors to set forth clearly the principles concerning the purpose of creation and the use of the goods of the world, and to provide moral and spiritual support for the renewal of the temporal order in Christ (AA #7). The setting up of the Pontifical Council after the publication in 1968 of the encyclical *Populorum Progressio*, led in time to the setting up of many local commissions and the development within religious orders of a new consciousness of their mission.

The Synod of Bishops in 1971 is another landmark in the Church's understanding of her mission. In this synod, under the title *Justice in the World*, the bishops pronounced the now often quoted words *The work of justice is an integral part of the Church's mission of Evangelisation* (# 5). Pope John Paul II continues reflecting on this commitment with several encyclicals and numerous statements throughout his pastoral visits.

---

<sup>50</sup> Given the immensity of the hardships that still afflict a large part of humanity, and in order to foster everywhere the justice and love of Christ for the poor, the Council suggests that it would be most appropriate to create an organisation of the universal Church whose task it would be to arouse the Catholic community to promote the progress of regions of the world that are in need, and foster social justice among nations. GS #90

In *Centesimus Annus*, Pope John Paul II, summarises what went before: "During the last hundred years the Church has repeatedly expressed her thinking, while closely following the continuing development of the social question. She has certainly not done this in order to recover former privileges or to impose her own vision. Her sole purpose has been the care and responsibility for humankind, entrusted to her by Christ ... the only creature on earth which God willed for its own sake ... We are not dealing here with something abstract but with real, concrete historical men and women. We are dealing with each individual since each one is included in the mystery of Redemption, and through this mystery Christ has united himself with each one forever. It follows that .. this humankind is the primary route that the Church must travel in fulfilling her mission ... the way traced out by Christ himself, the way that leads invariably through the mystery of the Incarnation and Redemption.

"Today the Church's social teaching focuses especially on men and woman as they are involved in a complex network of relationships within modern societies. The human sciences and philosophy are helpful for interpreting the human person's central place within society and for providing a better understanding of what it means to be a social being. However, a person's true identity is only fully revealed through faith, and it is precisely from faith that the Church's social teaching begins. While drawing upon all the contributions made by the sciences and philosophy, her social teaching is aimed at helping humankind on the path of salvation" (*Centesimus Annus*, # 53-54).

The principles at the heart of the Church's teaching are:

- ◆ The life, dignity and rights of the human person. The measure of every policy is how it protects human life, enhances human dignity and respects human rights. This principle is the foundation of the Church's teaching on war, peace, and social life.
- ◆ The preferential option for the poor. In Catholic social teaching the poor and vulnerable have first claim on our consciences and policies. While the language is new - coming from Latin America - it has been embraced by the whole Church as the contemporary expression of Matthew 25: we will be judged on our response to the "least of these".
- ◆ Solidarity. This is a defining principle for shaping a new world. It is a moral expression of interdependence, a reminder that we are one family whatever our differences of race, nationality, and economic power. The people of far-off lands are not enemies or intruders, the poor are not burdens, they are the sisters and brothers, blessed with life and dignity, we are called to protect.

One of the greatest challenges we face in the post-Cold War world is to enhance and strengthen peace. Peacemaking requires building the structures of peace, not just proclaiming peaceful ideals. Real peace brings with it the possibility for development, and development in turn strengthens peace.

As the Church continues to develop its teaching, events in the world continue to call for a deeper reflection; a spirituality which gives greater strength and perseverance in the face of opposition. We need a spirituality that convinces the hearts of people that it is the gratuitous love of God

which in the end will be the solution to all the world's ills. Meanwhile as Christians we need to play our part in increasing the awareness of God's plan, in judging all that goes on in the world on the basis of that plan, and committing ourselves to the work of justice until He comes.

### 3.1.1.1 List of Social Encyclicals with JPIC themes highlighted

#### **1891 : Leo XIII: Rerum Novarum (On the Condition of Labour)**

- ◆ lays out rights and responsibilities of capital and labour;
- ◆ describes the proper role of government;
- ◆ protects workers' rights to organise into associations to seek just wages and working conditions.

#### **1931 : Pius XI: Quadragesimo Anno (On Reconstructing the Social Order)**

- ◆ decries the effect of greed and concentrated economic power on working people and society;
- ◆ calls for an equitable distribution of goods according to the demands of the common good and social justice;
- ◆ protects the right and extends the opportunity of ownership; affirms its social purpose and that it promotes harmony among classes.

#### **1961 : John XXIII: Mater et Magistra (Christianity and Social Progress)**

- ◆ deplores the widening gap between rich and poor nations, arms race and plight of farmers;
- ◆ affirms employee sharing in ownership, management, profits;
- ◆ advocates aid to less developed countries without thought of domination;
- ◆ makes Christian social doctrine an integral part of Christian life: calls Christians to work for a more just world.

#### **1963 : John XXIII: Pacem in Terris (Peace on Earth)**

- ◆ affirms the full range of human rights as the basis of peace;
- ◆ calls for disarmament;
- ◆ recognises that all nations have equal dignity and right to self-development;
- ◆ advocates reviewing allocation of resources and monitoring the policies of multinational corporations;
- ◆ works for public policies that facilitate the relocation of refugees;
- ◆ proposes a society based on subsidiarity;
- ◆ establishes a world-wide public authority to promote universal common good: the United Nations Organisation;
- ◆ integrates faith and action.

#### **1965 : Vatican Council: Gaudium et Spes (The Church in the Modern World)**

- ◆ laments growing world poverty and threat of nuclear war;
- ◆ bases political and economic decisions on human dignity;
- ◆ sees peace as an ordering of society built on justice;

- ◆ builds an international community based on subsidiarity;
- ◆ establishes organisations to foster and harmonise world trade;
- ◆ states responsibility of Christians to work for structures to make a more just and peaceful world.

**1967 : Paul VI: Populorum Progressio (On the Development of Peoples)**

- ◆ affirms rights of poor nations to full human development;
- ◆ decries economic structures promoting inequality;
- ◆ recognises that authentic development is not limited to economic growth;
- ◆ teaches that resources be shared through aid, technical assistance, fair trade relations, and advocates a World Fund to direct funds now spent on arms, to the poor;
- ◆ teaches that private property does not constitute an absolute right for anyone;
- ◆ sets out reciprocal obligations for multinationals: these firms should be initiators of social justice;
- ◆ advocates a welcome to young people and workers who emigrate from poor nations.

**1971 : Paul VI: Octogesima Adveniens (A Call to Action)**

Calls for:

- ◆ political action for economic justice;
- ◆ objective analysis of the situation of one's society, identifying action for justice;
- ◆ response to unjust situations by individual Christians and local churches;
- ◆ political action for change.

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

- ◆ supports adherence to the UN Declaration of Human Rights;
- ◆ advocates right to development to include both economic growth, and economic and political participation by the people;
- ◆ calls for restraint regarding the arms race and trade;
- ◆ recognises individual and social sin;
- ◆ requires Church policies and life style to model justice so as to be credible in preaching justice;
- ◆ names action for justice a constituent part of being a Christian.

**1975 : Paul VI : Evangelii Nuntiandi (Evangelisation in the Modern World)**

- ◆ proclaim the gospel as liberation from oppression, assist in that liberation, witness to it and ensure its completion;
- ◆ see social justice as integral to faith; translate social teaching into action;
- ◆ integrate personal and societal transformation.

**1979 : John Paul II: Redemptor Hominis (Redeemer of Mankind)**

- ◆ establish human rights as the fundamental principles for all programmes, systems and regimes;
- ◆ change investments for armaments into investments for food at the service of life;
- ◆ avoid exploitation of the earth;
- ◆ work together for transformation of economic structures.

**1981 : John Paul II: Laborem Exercens (On Human Work)**

- ◆ affirms the dignity of work based on dignity of the worker;
- ◆ links commitment to justice with the pursuit of peace;
- ◆ asks for the fostering of just wages, joint ownership and sharing in management and profits by labour;
- ◆ affirms right of all workers to form associations and to defend their vital interests;
- ◆ asks that immigrant workers be treated by the same standards as citizens;
- ◆ calls for workplace justice as responsibility of society, employer, worker.

**1987 : John Paul II; Sollicitudo Rei Socialis (The Social Concerns of the Church)**

- ◆ spread church teaching, especially the option for the poor;
- ◆ generate political will to create just mechanisms for the common good of humanity;
- ◆ devote the resources used for arms to the alleviation of human misery;
- ◆ recognise the injustice of the few having so much and the many having almost nothing;
- ◆ plan development with respect for nature;
- ◆ call for conversion to solidarity - in light of interdependence;
- ◆ recognise the structures which hinder the full development of peoples;
- ◆ reform world trade and financial systems;
- ◆ name structures of sin.

**1991 : John Paul II: Centesimus Annus (The 100th Year)**

- ◆ identify failures of both socialist and market economies;
- ◆ lighten or cancel debt of poor countries;
- ◆ disarm;
- ◆ simplify life styles and eliminate waste in rich nations;
- ◆ develop public policies for full employment, job security;
- ◆ establish institutions for arms control;
- ◆ call rich nations to sacrifice income and power.

**1994 : John Paul II: Tertio Millennio Adveniente (The Jubilee Year 2000)**

A Commitment to

- ◆ justice and peace;
- ◆ raise our voices on behalf of the poor of the world;

- ◆ reduce substantially or cancel outright the International Debt;
- ◆ reflect on the difficulties of dialogue between cultures; and on problems connected with women's rights.

**1995 : John Paul II: Evangelium Vitae (Gospel Life)**

A recognition of the sacred value of human life from its very beginning until its end.

Names as negative forces:

- ◆ the violence against life done to millions of human beings, especially children who are forced into poverty, malnutrition and hunger because of an unjust distribution of resources;
- ◆ wars and arms' trade;
- ◆ ecological destruction;
- ◆ the criminal spread of drugs;
- ◆ promotion of certain kinds of sexual activity, which besides being morally unacceptable, also involve grave risks to life;
- ◆ procured abortion which he calls a "structure of sin";
- ◆ infanticide of babies born with serious handicaps or illnesses;
- ◆ euthanasia which is becoming legalised;
- ◆ population control as a means of controlling the population growth of poorer nations;
- ◆ assisted suicide.

3.1.1.2 Themes: social teaching of the church<sup>51</sup>

**CHRISTIAN ANTHROPOLOGY**

**a) Dignity of man, image of God**

- ◆ Divinis Redemptoris, 30 and 32-33
- ◆ Mater et Magistra, 219-220
- ◆ Pacem in Terris, 31; 28-34 and above all 44
- ◆ Gaudium et Spes, 31
- ◆ Ecclesiam Suam, 19
- ◆ Christian Freedom and Liberation, 20, 34
- ◆ Laborem Exercens, 4-9
- ◆ Orientations, n° 31
- ◆ Catechism, 355-379; 1700-1709

---

<sup>51</sup> *Franciscan Vision for Justice, Peace, Integrity of Creation.* JPIC Office, OFM Curia, Rome, 1997

**b) Man, the way of the Church's mission**

- ♦ Gaudium et Spes, 1 and 3
- ♦ Evangelii Nuntiandi, 29,31,33,35,36,38
- ♦ Redemptor Hominis, 13-14

**c) Human yearning for freedom**

- ♦ Instruction on Christian Freedom and Liberation, 1 and 38

**d) Man and woman as solidary persons**

- ♦ Mater et Magistra, 218-219; 59-67
- ♦ Pacem in Terris, 31
- ♦ Gaudium et Spes, 24-25
- ♦ Christian Freedom and Liberation 73

**e) Fundamental equality of all people**

- ♦ Gaudium et Spes, 24 and 29

**f) Primacy of persons over structures**

- ♦ Instruction on Christian Freedom and Liberation, 73,75
- ♦ Gaudium et Spes, 31
- ♦ Redemptor hominis,14
- ♦ Reconciliatio et Penitentia, 16

**g) Structures of sin**

- ♦ GS 13,25
- ♦ Instruction on Christian Freedom and Liberation, 75
- ♦ Sollicitudo Rei Socialis, 36-37
- ♦ Centesimus Annus, 38
- ♦ Catechism, 1878-1889

**HUMAN RIGHTS**

**a) Violation of human rights**

- ♦ Gaudium et Spes, 27
- ♦ Octogesima Adveniens, 23; cfr. RH,17
- ♦ Sollicitudo Rei Socialis, 15,26,33

**b) Panorama of fundamental rights**

- ♦ Pacem in Terris, 143-144, 11-34; 75-79
- ♦ GS, 27, 79,29, 60, 52, 75,71, 67, 68, 65, 69, 59
- ♦ Octogesima Adveniens, 23

- ◆ Puebla, 3890-3893
- ◆ Redemptor Hominis, 17
- ◆ Sollicitudo Rei Socialis, 26, 33-34

**c) Human rights, a Gospel exigency**

- ◆ Puebla: Opening Discourse
- ◆ Instruction on Christian Freedom and Liberation, 65

**THE COMMON GOOD**

- ◆ Mater et Magistra, 65, 71, 78-81;
- ◆ Pacem in Terris, 53-66, 136
- ◆ Gaudium et Spes, 26, 74
- ◆ Populorum Progressio, 54
- ◆ Octogesima Adveniens, 46
- ◆ Redemptor Hominis, 17
- ◆ Sollicitudo Rei Socialis, 26, 33-34
- ◆ Centesimus Annus, 9, 37-38, 47
- ◆ Catechism, 1897-1912

**SOLIDARITY AND SUBSIDIARITY**

**a) Definition, correlation and foundation**

- ◆ Gaudium et Spes, 32, 80
- ◆ Instruction on Christian Freedom and Liberation, 73
- ◆ Orientations, 38
- ◆ Catechism, 1883-1884, 1939-1942, 2437-2440

**b) Solidarity**

- ◆ Pio XII, Christmas Radiomessage 1952, 26-27
- ◆ Pacem in Terris, 98
- ◆ Sollicitudo Rei Socialis, 38-40
- ◆ Centesimus Annus, 10c, 33, 41d, 51

**c) Subsidiarity**

- ◆ Quadragesimo Anno, 79-80
- ◆ Mater et Magistra, 51-52, 54-55, 57-58
- ◆ Pacem in Terris, 140-141
- ◆ Laborem Exercens, 17

**d) Social participation**

- ◆ Mater et Magistra, 91-92
- ◆ Gaudium et Spes, 31, 55, 59, 63, 68

- ◆ Octogesima Adveniens, 22,24, 46-47
- ◆ Instruction on Christian Freedom and Liberation, 86, 95
- ◆ Orientations, 40
- ◆ Sollicitudo Rei Socialis, 45
- ◆ Centesimus Annus, 33
- ◆ Catechism 1913-1917

### **THE UNIVERSAL DESTINY OF GOODS**

- ◆ Gaudium et Spes, 69-71
- ◆ Populorum Progressio, 22-23
- ◆ Libertas Christiana, 90
- ◆ Centesimus Annus, 30-32

### **PRIVATE PROPERTY**

- ◆ RN 3, 12- 16
- ◆ QA,44-52
- ◆ MM, 104-121
- ◆ GS, 69-71
- ◆ PP, 19, 22-24
- ◆ LE, 14
- ◆ SRS, 28,42

### **PUBLIC PROPERTY**

- ◆ RN, 23-35
- ◆ QA, 105-110
- ◆ MM, 51-67
- ◆ GS, 70-71
- ◆ PP, 23-24, 33-34
- ◆ LE, 14
- ◆ SRS, 15

### **WORK AND SALARY**

#### **a) Reflection on human work**

- ◆ RN,32
- ◆ MM, 82-103
- ◆ GS, 67
- ◆ LE, 1,3,4-10,18-19,22-27
- ◆ SRS, 18

#### **b) Family salary or personal salary?**

- ◆ RN, 32-33

- ◆ QA, 71
- ◆ LE, 19

**c) Does the system of salary reduce people to the category of trade?**

- ◆ QA, 64-68
- ◆ MM, 75-77
- ◆ LE, 19

**d) The practical problem: the amount**

- ◆ RN,32
- ◆ QA, 70-75
- ◆ MM, 68.71

**STRIKES**

- ◆ RN, 29
- ◆ QA, 94
- ◆ GS, 68
- ◆ OA, 14
- ◆ LE, 20

**TRADE UNIONS**

- ◆ RN, 34-40
- ◆ QA, 34-38, 81-97
- ◆ MM, 97- 103
- ◆ GS, 68
- ◆ PP, 38-39 and OA, 14
- ◆ LE, 20
- ◆ SRS, 15

**POLITICS AND POLITICIANS**

- ◆ GS, 73,76
- ◆ OA, 3-4, 48-51;
- ◆ SRS, 47-48

**CIVIL AND POLITICAL COMMUNITY**

**a) Characterising**

- ◆ GS, 74a

**b) Authority**

- ◆ PT, 46-52
- ◆ GS, 74b-e

### **c) The Common Good**

## **POLITICAL POWER**

### **a) The State: a Political Organisation**

- ♦ MM, 20-21,44,52-53,104,201-202
- ♦ PT, 68-69, 72, 75-79,130-131
- ♦ GS, 73-75
- ♦ OA, 46

### **b) Political régimes**

- ♦ PT, 52; 68; 73
- ♦ GS, 73; 74; 75
- ♦ RH, 17
- ♦ SRS, 41

## **THE CHRISTIAN'S SOCIO-POLITICAL COMMITMENT**

### **a) Before PP (Duties of proprietors and workers)**

- ♦ RN, 14-16
- ♦ QA, 50-51; 63-64; 78; 141-142
- ♦ MM, 51; 82-84; 91; 122
- ♦ GS, 65-70

## **b) After PP**

Concerning underdevelopment and development:

- ◆ PP, 14; 19-21; 43-51; 56-59
- ◆ OA, 24-25; 37; 46-51
- ◆ RS, 27-39

Concerning action in society:

- ◆ PT, 146-152
- ◆ GS, 36; 75-76
- ◆ OA, 3-4; 48-51
- ◆ SRS, 47-48

The political pluralism of Christians:

- ◆ OA, 50-51

## **c) Animating principles of a Humanistic politics**

Truth, Justice, Love, Freedom:

- ◆ PT, 35
- ◆ GS, 26c, 27-28
- ◆ OA, 23, 45.

Equality and Participation:

- ◆ PT 73
- ◆ GS, 75
- ◆ OA, 24-25, 47

Liberation:

- ◆ John Paul II's Discourse at the Inauguration of CELAM, III, 5 and 6; III
- ◆ Synod of Bishops, Justice in the world 50-51

## **d) Ideologies and Utopias:**

- ◆ OA, 25-37

## **THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY**

### **a) Fundamentals:**

- ◆ GS, 84

### **b) International relationships**

- ◆ PT, 86-108; 120-125; GS, 85-90; PP, 78; CA, 21; 27; SRS, 14, 16, 43; 45

## **SOCIAL VIOLENCE**

### **a) Typology of social violence**

Structural violence

Revolutionary violence:

- ♦ PT, 161-162
- ♦ PP, 30-31
- ♦ LE, 11-13

Warlike violence

- ♦ PT, 109-116
- ♦ GS, 77-82
- ♦ PP, 53; 78
- ♦ SRS 10; 20; 23-24; 39

### **b) Active non-violence**

- ♦ GS, 79
- ♦ Instruction on Christian Freedom and Liberation, 77-79
- ♦ Catechism, 2306

## **PEACE**

### **a) The reality of war**

- ♦ PT, 109-117
- ♦ GS, 79-80;82
- ♦ CA, 14b; 17 a,b; 19a
- ♦ Catechism 2307-2317

### **b) The scandal of armaments and disarming**

- ♦ PT, 109-112
- ♦ GS, 81
- ♦ PP, 53
- ♦ SRS, 23-24
- ♦ CA, 28c

### **c) The ethic of peace**

Peace before all else:

- ♦ PT

The work of everyone for peace:

- ♦ GS, 78-82
- ♦ Catechism, 2302-2305

Development, a new name for peace:

- ♦ PP, 76

Peace, the fruit of justice and solidarity:

- ♦ GS, 78
- ♦ SRS, 26; 39
- ♦ CA, 5c; 23c; 28c; 29a

## **CHRISTIAN FAITH AND CULTURE**

- ♦ GS, 53-62
- ♦ PP, 12ss;40;41;42;
- ♦ CA, 32ss;38-41;50-52

## **SOCIAL COMMUNICATIONS MEDIA**

### **a) Christian attitude in face of SCM:**

- ♦ OA, 20

Values to pursue:

- ♦ Communion and Progress (CP), 14-17

Risks to avoid:

- ♦ CP, 58; 80
- ♦ SRS, 22

### **b) A concrete problem:**

Information:

- ♦ CP, 33-47; 75-76

Propaganda:

- ♦ CP,23; 30; 59-62

Public opinion:

- ♦ CP, 26-32; 114-125

## **ECOLOGY**

- ♦ MM, 196-199
- ♦ OA, 21
- ♦ RH 8 and 15
- ♦ LE 4; SRS, 26; 29; 34
- ♦ CA, 37-38
- ♦ John Paull II's Message for the World Day of Peace (1-1-1990):  
Peace with God the Creator, peace with the whole of Creation
- ♦ Catechism, 299-301; 307; 339-341; 344; 2415-2418

### 3.1.1.3 Peace and the “Just War” theory:

The Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World (GS) uses some of its strongest language in support of the avoidance of war, as well as on the immorality of the arms’ race that deprives the poor of their just share in the nation’s assets, and gives immense power to those who wield authority in these countries (GS 79-82). It points out moreover that there needs to be an effective international authority to protect innocent people from the ravages of war.

Two major changes have arisen since Vatican II: (i) the great development of weapons of mass destruction, together with their availability through international arms suppliers; (ii) the change in the manner of warfare that puts non-combatants as the major targets of strategy. Paul VI in his historic visit to the United Nations called for an end to all warfare. Recent papal teaching is directed at the avoidance of war at all cost, and moralists question the principle of the “just war” theory. Rather what is called for is the reconciliation of the warring parties, not by force of arms but by trusted mediators.<sup>52</sup>

### 3.1.1.4 Social Teaching of Bishops and Major Superiors’ Conferences

Bishops’ Conferences world-wide, in their pastoral letters,  
are condemning injustices, war and violence, and  
are speaking out courageously on behalf of justice and peace  
in the name of the Gospel:

Bishops from eleven Western Industrial countries (Western Europe, Canada and U.S.A.) have formulated over the last thirty years a socio-economic justice programme aimed at realising a society which shows solidarity and responsibility, and where all can participate in a proportional way. Big social problems like unemployment, poverty and migration make high demands upon the community of the faithful and the bishops ask for an adapted and strong/powerful answer in the light of the biblical message. The bishops use a variety of expressions in order to influence public opinion and to give direction to solutions desired by them. This results in pastoral letters and advice, reports, interviews, sermons, press releases and protest manifestations.

The Special Assembly for Africa of the Synod of Bishops which met in Rome in 1994 was forthright in its condemnation of injustice within Africa. The Synod Fathers spoke about tribalism, nepotism, thirst for power, religious intolerance, and the existence of “chambers of torture”. They called for the creation of Justice and Peace commissions within Africa. They called on African governments to move away from military spending and to put more emphasis on education, health, and the well-being of their people.

---

<sup>52</sup> For an account of the development of the Church’s teaching on the “Just War”, see The Catechism of the Catholic Church, Vat. 1994, #2307 - #2317.

The Synod Fathers also criticised foreign interests for their manipulation and support of corrupt African leaders, the blatant sale of arms for profit and the almost impossible conditions placed on the people through loans. They called on the IMF and World Bank “to alleviate the crushing debts” of African nations, and requested episcopal conferences throughout the world and all people of good-will to develop “supportive public opinion” of this and other issues (cf. Message of the Synod, # 41-42).

The African Synod drew attention to the plight of women who are being deprived of their rights and respect in some African countries and “sometimes even in the Church”.

African Episcopal Conferences must champion women’s rights in society and also ensure that women are included “in the appropriate levels in decision-making in the Church”.<sup>53</sup>

### **The Bishops’ Conference of the USA**

The Bishops’ Conference of the USA in, *Sowing Weapons of War: A Pastoral Reflection on the Arms Trade and Land Mines*, states:

"We renew our call for our nation and the international community to undertake more serious efforts to control and radically reduce the trade in arms. The arms’ trade is an integral part of the culture of violence we deplored a year ago. Just as we seek to stop the proliferation of arms around the world, curbing the arms’ trade is now an essential part of the peacemaking vocation we outlined in the Challenge of Peace more than a decade ago."

### **Message of the Bishops of the Great Lakes Region of Africa**

“We, Bishops of Burundi, Rwanda, Zaire, Uganda and Tanzania, have met in Nairobi 18<sup>th</sup>-21<sup>st</sup> December 1996, under the Chairmanship of Cardinal Roger Etchegaray, President of the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace.

“During the meeting we have shared information and worries concerning the numerous hardships which befall the populations in our countries...

“The dramatic situation of hundreds of thousands of refugees and displaced persons and the consequences of war on the life of our churches have been the focus of our attention. In this context of acute crisis we have sought to identify some pastoral priorities which are of relevant for our churches:

- ◆ The Gospel as facing up to the ethnocentric ideology.
- ◆ The Church’s mission of reconciliation.
- ◆ The Church as the voice of those enduring hardships.
- ◆ The solidarity between the churches.

---

<sup>53</sup> *JPEC Charter*, Society of African Missions, 1995.

“The diversity of its ethnic groups constitutes the richness of a country. However, ethnicity becomes the worst menace when political or private interests transform it into an ideology and instrument of conquest and power.

“This ideology, by means of internal and external alliances, along with the sordid arms’ trade, engenders conflicts and feeds a spiral of discrimination, exclusion and violence that leads to massacres and even genocide.

“The disastrous effects of such an ideology are quite evident; in a subtle way it penetrates individuals as well as cultures and institutions. Even members of our churches are infected by this contamination...

“...Among the refugees there was a Catholic priest: Fr. Jean-Claude Buhendwa, 26 years old, ordained last year. The rebels told the priest he could go. But Fr. Buhendwa sensed what was happening; without a moment’s hesitation, he returned to the group, lifted his hand to bless and give absolution to the terrorised group of men, women and children and took his place with them. Machine gun fire burst across the camp...

“A new century without refugees... May the dynamism of the Great Jubilee Year 2000 inspire in our churches new energies for a renewed evangelisation so that the wall of hatred and division erected between our various ethnic groups be forever destroyed. May Christ be forever our Peace

....<sup>54</sup>

### **The Canadian Religious Conference**

“We, the members of the Canadian Religious Conference, gathered in prayer and discussion, have recognised our need for forgiveness. We realise that the environmental question is a question mostly of justice and an appeal for a new spirituality. We hear the urgent call for personal and communal conversion to justice, peace and stewardship. We challenge ourselves and one another to a new covenant with all of creation so that God’s dream for the earth may be accomplished.

Therefore, we commit ourselves:

- ◆ To an ongoing effort at continuing personal and communal conversion, education and consciousness-raising around issues of environmental concerns; around just relationships and support of aboriginal peoples, around appreciation and respect for diversity of cultures; around problems of poverty created by our patterns of over consumption. We recommend the inclusion of ecological concerns in our formation programmes and inner criteria for discernment. We need to deepen our personal understanding of ecological concerns by looking in a new way at our Judeo-Christian traditions.
- ◆ To a plan of action, personal and communal, that urges us to: i) network and participate in existing groups and programmes concerned with environmental issues; ii) to stand in solidarity with marginalised peoples - women, native peoples, immigrants, the poor - by joining in ef-

---

<sup>54</sup> AMECEA Documentation Service, No. 465, February 15th 1997.

forts like the Aboriginal Rights Coalition and various healing initiatives; iii) to prioritise both human and financial investments to reflect environmental concerns; iv) to slow the rhythm of our lives in action and consumption and to search for balance that reflects a new understanding of the connection between poverty and the environment; v) to try to actualise the Sabbath in our lives; vi) to renew liturgies with the inclusion of rituals that reflect the interrelatedness of all creation.”

### 3.1.1.5 The social dimension of holiness and sin

In endeavouring to understand the presence of injustice and unjust structures and systems in our world, the Christian point of view points to the reality of sin and sinfulness as the root cause. Our faith teaches us the way of justice, while other interests, what we call idols, lead us away from justice and the integrity of creation. Sin and sinfulness produce death in the sinner and in those whose lives the sinner affects. Today, in societies everywhere, we witness many forms of death. As was explained in Section I, creation itself is dying little by little through pollution and the abuse or neglect of irreplaceable resources: human beings die before their time from hunger, disease, and violence of every kind. These are the great and obvious deaths. There is also the everyday death of living in poor conditions, having little education, no home, no name, no friends, the death of being excluded from society and the death of receiving what is a human right as a privilege or favour because it has suited someone in power to grant the favour.

Union with God, in mind, and heart, body and spirit, is what we call holiness (LG #41). Holiness is found where the people of God act under God's Spirit and follow Christ, poor, humble and cross-bearing. Because of God's relationship with the “chosen people”, that people became holy. The law was given to Moses, not for himself, but for the people, so that together they would keep it. The people together pledged their obedience. The people offered sacrifices together and when the time came to be set free God took this people from captivity to freedom and brought them through the desert to the promised land. The people helped one another to know the law of God and they taught it to their children and to their children's children.

But the opposite was also true, where sinful ways prevailed, people taught these sinful ways to one another and where they could profit by them, they maintained these sinful ways, even though they were oppressive to the poor. They taught these sinful ways to their children and to their children's children.

The fathers at Vatican II recognised that all are called to holiness (LG #41), not just the select few. They also recognised what they called the evils of social sin. Those who profit from them continue to maintain sinful ways and sinful structures in society. They draw others, into them, sometimes, without their knowing. The process continues because society has found ways to pass on oppressive ways from one generation to the next, through propaganda, advertising and manipulation. Even our education systems in our Catholic Institutes are guilty sometimes of teaching the oppressive ways of individualism and competition, or of omitting to teach the ways of justice.

In the face of this constant and creeping death, the words of Jesus ring out as good news, “I came that you might have life, life in abundance” (Jn 10:10). Where signs of death prevail, the Christian message is to replace them with signs of life.

## 3.1.2 SOCIAL ANALYSIS

### 3.1.2.1 Introduction

Striving for the transformation of the world is neither a task for naive dreamers nor for hot-headed enthusiasts. Transforming the world implies that we know something of the world and what needs transformation. Any involvement in action for justice must recognise the systemic injustice that is responsible for much of the world's hunger, homelessness, violence and environmental destruction. A significant part of any programme of formation for justice, peace and integrity of creation should be concerned with systems or structures of injustice and how and why they function. What is needed is a METHOD or process to examine social systems, and the symptoms of their malfunctioning that lead to injustice. There are a number of useful manuals of social/structural analysis; some are listed in the bibliography at the back of this booklet, but perhaps the most comprehensive is Holland and Henriot's *Social Analysis: Linking Faith and Justice*.

It is necessary that JPIC promoters/animators examine justice problems very carefully before they take action to solve these problems. This careful preparation is necessary if they are to understand the problems they are dealing with. A method of examining or analysing justice problems is required because there is a danger that such problems may be made worse if justice workers are not fully aware of the root causes of these problems.

Social analysis is a popular and effective tool that enables us to examine the structures of society: political, economic, cultural, social, religious - and to uncover the root causes of social injustice. It helps us move from what Donal Dorr calls face-to-face compassion to asking how and why: How did these people get to be poor? Why is unemployment increasing? Social analysis identifies those who hold power, those who make decisions, those who do and do not benefit from these decisions in society. It enables us to see the interconnections and influences which operate in any social system. This method has been further developed by Christian groups who use Christian theological reflection as well as social analysis to develop a plan of action for the promotion of justice, peace and the integrity of creation.

Social Analysis is a call to “open our eyes, ears and mouth”. Mark presents three miracles that are symbolic of Jesus’ inviting us to open our ears, our eyes and our mouth in our search to understand the What and How of Mission. He reproaches his disciples saying: "Do you not yet perceive or understand? Are your hearts hardened? Having eyes you do not see, and having ears you do not hear? And do you not remember? ... " (Mk 8:18)

- ◆ healing of the deaf, Mk 7:31-37.

- ◆ healing of the blind, Mk 8:22-26; 10:46-52.
- ◆ healing of the dumb, Mk 9:17-27.

Social Analysis invites us to LISTEN, to SEE, to HEAR the cries of the world in which we are living.

### 3.1.2.2 The method

The method of social analysis is not difficult to use. It involves the basic SEE, JUDGE, ACT method of the Young Christian Workers and Young Christian Students, later taken up by Latin American theologians in their work with Basic Christian Communities and reflected in much of Liberation Theology.

There are four main steps in social analysis.<sup>55</sup>

(Before embarking on the actual process of social analysis, it would help to have a discussion on values.)

#### **1<sup>st</sup> Step: Starting point: the members of the group list the problems for analysis or examination.**

- ◆ See if there is a connection or link between the injustices.
- ◆ Decide which are the most serious and list them.
- ◆ See if there is one common name that will describe all these injustices.
- ◆ Decide on one specific problem which the group will examine by this method. It is important to remember that it is almost impossible to analyse two problems at the same time.

#### **2<sup>nd</sup> Step: Structural Analysis**

- ◆ Describe the problem in detail.
- ◆ When did the problem begin?
- ◆ Why did it begin?
- ◆ When did we become aware that it was a serious problem?
- ◆ What brought it to our attention?

#### *Structures in general:*

- ◆ Begin with a discussion on the structures or organisations in society.
- ◆ Examine the problem in question in relation to the structures of society: economic, political, class, cultural and religious.

---

<sup>55</sup> Much of the contents of the following four steps have been taken from, *Working for Justice and Peace*, by Tony Byrne CSSp, (Mission Press, Zambia) 1988, p 57-63

*Economic Structures:*

- ♦ Who is the cause of the problem?
- ♦ Are there multinationals or local companies that would like this problem to continue, or would even like it to get worse because they are gaining money from the problem?
- ♦ Are there individuals or groups in this society helping to maintain or support this problem because they are gaining financially from it?

*Political Structures:*

- ♦ Who gains power as a result of this problem?
- ♦ Are there any politicians or political parties who use this problem to gain or maintain power?
- ♦ Who are the people with authority or power who allowed this problem to happen?
- ♦ Are there any local community leaders who want this problem to continue so that they will have power?

*Class Structures:*

- ♦ Does this problem help to create, maintain and support social division in society?
- ♦ Are there certain people gaining social importance or status because of this problem? Who are they?
- ♦ Are there certain individuals or groups of people losing social importance or status because of this problem? Who are they?

*Cultural Structures:*

- ♦ Do our culture and traditions help to create, maintain and support this problem?
- ♦ What cultural values and traditions help to make this problem more serious?
- ♦ Examine the problem in relation to attitudes or mind structures.

*Religious Structures:*

- ♦ What are the religious structures or Church organisations that might be involved in this problem?
- ♦ How do these religious structures or Church organisations help to create, assist or maintain this problem?
- ♦ Do some religious or Church organisations gain from this problem?
- ♦ Do they use it to maintain importance or increase their membership?

## **Mind-structures or attitudes.**

Injustice is often caused by unjust structures in society. Yet, even if these structures are changed, the problem of injustice still remains because of people's attitudes or mentalities. These attitudes, sometimes called mind-structures, are difficult to change. To change mind-structures or attitudes that create unjust situations, there is a need for conversion. This conversion demands that people should have minds and hearts that "hunger and thirst after justice".

- ◆ What attitudes do we have that help to create, maintain and support this problem?
- ◆ Can we recognise or name some attitudes that we have as individuals or as a community that help to make this problem a serious one?

*At the end of Step Two, it would help to take a few moments to answer the following:*

- ◆ As a result of these considerations and discussions, are we getting a better understanding of the causes of the problem?
- ◆ What are the most important insights or new ideas that have surfaced or come to light as a result of this analysis?

### **3<sup>rd</sup> Step: Christian reflection on the problem in the light of the Scriptures and the teachings of the Church.**

*To find out if the Bible and the teaching of the Church can help to throw new light on the problem:*

- ◆ What does the bible say about the problem?
- ◆ Can we identify some statements of the Church made by a Pope, a Council or a group of Bishops, that can be applied to this problem?

### **4<sup>th</sup> Step: Plan action, thinking globally, acting locally:**

*Plan of action:*

- ◆ What is the solution to this problem?
  - ◆ What can we, as a group or as individuals, do about this problem?
  - ◆ What resources do we have to help us with our plan of action?
  - ◆ Can we get more resources to help us?
  - ◆ Is there a part of the problem that we can tackle now?
  - ◆ What is the first step we should take?
- 
- ⑥ Responsibilities are shared among the members.
  - ⑥ A time-limit is set for each stage of the plan, and for the implementation of the whole plan.
  - ⑥ Financial and other resources are reflected on, and carefully worked out.

## **EVALUATE:**

- ◆ What did we set out to do?
- ◆ How far did we get?
- ◆ What helped us to make progress?
- ◆ What hindered progress?
- ◆ What do we need to do now? Change objectives? Change methods? Renew our resources?

## **N.B.**

- ⑥ Evaluations need to be done at the various stages of the implementation of the Plan;
- ⑥ Celebrations (including liturgical celebrations) need to be integrated into the whole process of a social analysis.

### **3.1.2.3 Another way of approaching this method is to:**

## **SEE**

What do we see around us? Why are things the way they are?

## **JUDGE**

In judging a situation what bias do we bring? What lens do we see through? What might our unconscious sense of the issue be? What wisdom and experience of life do we bring to the issue for analysis? Whose wisdom do we relate to - that of the rich or that of the poor? Have we really made an option for the poor in assessing the situation? Do we listen more to the elite for our sense of reality than to the experience of the poor? Where is the wisdom of the Gospel? Working for justice requires a spirituality deeply rooted in the scriptures, otherwise our work will be overwhelming and impossible. Called to be evangelizers as well as social transformers we pray, reflect and search for God's plan to bring about the reign of God. We judge the situation in the light of God's plan.

## **ACT**

Being more aware of what is going on in the world around us and judging the situation from the perspective of the Gospel it is necessary to act. Collaboration with others in the community - NGO's, other religious denominations, local groups - and where possible, net-working internationally, is extremely important and likely to be far more effective.

### 3.1.2.4 A Practical Approach:

Active engagement with poor and marginalised people, involvement in on-going social analysis and constant reflection on our attitudes and actions will help to develop the critical consciousness necessary to contribute to the transformation of the world.

I  
am a black woman  
tall as a cypress  
strong  
beyond all definition still  
defying place  
and time  
and circumstance  
assailed  
impervious  
indestructible  
Look  
on me and be  
renewed.

*Mari Evans*<sup>56</sup>

"They snatched me off the street. I put up a fight against the security police, but they hit me on the head. My mother's and father's faces haunted me. One method used by Iraqi jails epitomise their barbarity. And that is rape.....No matter how much I'd heard about it, nothing prepared me for the actual experience. It lives on inside me. I still bleed a lot. It was done not by just one man, but by a group of them. They stifled my screams and protests. I had to give in. And it was a side show; lots of people came to watch".

*Kurdish woman*<sup>57</sup>

As mentioned in Section I, for many women violence is a terrible fact of daily life - violence in war, political violence, sexual violence and domestic violence. Violence was the issue at the Beijing Conference on Women that cut across cultural and geographic boundaries. Ayesha Khanam of the Bangladesh Women's Council stated, Violence against women is an issue that begs global action.. Among the issues of violence raised at the Beijing were: the genital mutilation of girls, "dowry deaths" in India where thousands of young brides are killed each year because their

---

<sup>56</sup> "I Am A Black Woman" in Margaret Busby, ed., *Daughters of Africa*, (New York: Pantheon Books, 1992), p.300

<sup>57</sup> quoted in Amnesty International, *Human Rights are Women's Rights*, 1995, p.85

families pay insufficient dowries, physical abuse in the home - in the US about one third of all women murdered die at the hands of a husband or boyfriend, and the use of rape and enforced prostitution as weapons of war. How to stop this violence is a challenge for us all - women, men, lay, religious, Christians and people of other faiths.

Below is an outline of a structural analysis approach to Women and Violence:

Setting the Scene: A parish group is discussing a recently published national survey on domestic violence. The survey indicates one in five women has suffered violence from a male partner. 59% of the respondents knew of other women who had been victims of violence; 13% reported mental cruelty - they had been locked in their rooms, stopped from meeting their friends, verbally abused and deprived of money; 10% had suffered severe physical violence - kicked, pushed down stairs, beaten, stabbed and the victims of attempted strangulation. Others had been sexually abused, threatened with knives and guns. The editorial in the local paper concludes:

So while the Government can provide better laws for the protection of women it cannot devise a programme which would reduce domestic violence until it knows what is causing this violence. It should set itself this target, and in the meantime do everything it can to support both refuge and rape crisis centres.

Can we respond to this? What can we do? Who is suffering violence in this parish, unknown to us? These and a dozen more questions quickly surface. How might such a group respond using a method of social analysis? It is important to note that the analysis of such an issue would require at least two sessions of two hours.

### **1<sup>st</sup> Step: Clarifying the Issue**

Search out and share information on domestic violence. Purchase a copy of the survey, perhaps invite a speaker. Outline the history of domestic violence in the country. What political, economic, cultural, social and religious developments in society have contributed to violence against women? Look for the connections and interconnections. What values are at stake here?

### **2<sup>nd</sup> Step: Analysis of Structures**

- ◆ Are there economic structures which lead to violence against women e.g. dowry system; lack of legal and property rights; women as chattels; men as breadwinners; unemployment? Are there forces in society which benefit from the economic dependence of women?
- ◆ In the political structures who has power? Are there political parties or groups which give tacit support to the use of physical violence against women? Who benefits from having women "kept in their place" ? What, if any, ministerial roles do women have in government? Are there groups which view the rise of feminism as a threat? Do women have any rights?
- ◆ Is there cultural support for violence against women e.g. a tradition of machismo? What form does social interaction take - women together, men together? Alcohol as an important male ritual? Chastity expected of women, not of men? How much education do men receive? How

much education do women receive? How does the media present women - sexual objects, wanton, fickle, brainless?

- ◆ Do the social structures encourage violence e.g. employers own their workers and discipline accordingly; poor housing; inadequate health care and social support? Who makes the decisions?
- ◆ What roles do women have in the religious structures? Are there teachings, traditions and practices which assign women a particular role? How are women depicted in mythology? In the Bible? In the Church?
- ◆ Are there connections between the economic, political, social, cultural and religious structures which contribute to violence against women?

### **3<sup>rd</sup> Step: Reflection and Prayer**

Use a passage of Scripture such as the Samaritan Woman (Jn 4:1-42). What does this passage and what does Scripture say about this issue? How does Jesus respond? Are there teachings of the Church, statements by the Pope, bishops and religious leaders which help clarify the issue?

### **4<sup>th</sup> Step: Planning Action**

What is the solution? Concretely, what do we want to see changed? What resources do we have in the group to help us respond to the problem of domestic violence? What part of the problem can we tackle now? How do we communicate with the wider parish? What first step will we take? Who are responsible for the various aspects of the plan? By when do we implement the various steps?

### **Evaluation**

It is enormously important to put in place a process for reviewing and evaluating the action plan and the actual action taken.