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The social and economic message of Benedict XVI's Caritas in Veritate in the perspective of the Roman Catholic social doctrine

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Part B

The social encyclical *Caritas in veritate*

Chapter VI – Benedict XVI’s theology and *Caritas in veritate*

1. Introduction

The previous part should have given to us some basic elements that regard the content and the context of the Roman Catholic social doctrine. The analysis we have made in the previous part, thus, represents the ground on which now we can start another kind of analysis.

From now on I will focus on Benedict XVI’s first social encyclical, *Caritas in Veritate*. This social encyclical, published in 2009, is the first after the publication of the *Compendium of the social doctrine of the Church*, and it is also the first social encyclical of the new Millennium. Moreover, this is the social encyclical that has as background one of the largest economic world’s crises, for which it might offer also some fruitful suggestions.²⁵⁹ These chronological facts alone make it an interesting document. *Caritas*, then, represents the most updated and hierarchically highest official document on social issues of the Roman Catholic Church.

My aim is to analyse the text as a contribution to a dialogue between religion and the socio-economic world. More specifically the analysis focuses on the message that a religious authority sends to the economic world. In doing this I will concentrate on those aspects of *Caritas* that closely refer to the socio-economic context. It is relevant to our purposes to investigate how this encyclical relates to previous social thought and whether there are new doctrinal elements introduced here. In the analysis of *Caritas* I will also consider some secular thinkers who have interest in the same topics, building thus a parallel view.

2. The theological framework of the encyclical letter *Caritas in veritate*

In introducing the analysis of *Caritas* we firstly may recapitulate what an encyclical is. An encyclical is a specific kind of document among the many that the pope of the Roman Catholic Church may use to address a wide spectrum of very different themes. ‘Encyclical letter’ etymologically means ‘circular’ letter.²⁶⁰ It comes from the Greek *ἐν κύκλῳ*, ‘circle’,²⁶¹ and refers to the fact that the letter goes, ‘circulates’, through the people to which is addressed: one might think of a letter from the pope that circulates among (and hence is read by) bishops and others. ‘Encyclical’ has

²⁵⁹ See J. M. BREEN, Love, truth and economy. A reflection on Benedict XVI’s *Caritas in veritate*, in *Harvard Journal of Law and Public Policy*, 33. 2010. 993.

²⁶⁰ See D. MELÉ, M. NAUGHTON, The encyclical-letter *Caritas in veritate*: ethical challenges for business, in *Journal of Business Ethics*, 100. 2011. 1.

²⁶¹ *Enciclopedia Cattolica*. Città del Vaticano: Ente per l’Enciclopedia Cattolica e per il Libro Cattolico 1951. Vol. VII.

become the designation for an official letter from the pope.²⁶² Such official documents have specific characteristics and particular historical traits. It could be helpful, then, to see what exactly is an encyclical letter in the context of the Roman Catholic Church:

A letter, ‘essentially pastoral in character’ (JOHN PAUL II, *Ut unum sint*. AAS 87, 1995. 921 - 982) written by the pope for the entire Church. Encyclicals have not been used for dogmatic definitions, but rather to give counsel or to shed light on points of doctrine that must be made more precise or that must be taught in view of specific circumstances.²⁶³

Thus, we are not going to find dogmas in the text of *Caritas*. There will be addressed mainly pastoral and social issues, with insights that are not purported to have an infallible character, but are offered with the authority that the pope might have in the eyes of believers and other readers. What is written in an encyclical such as a social encyclical, does not refer directly to the deposit of faith, namely to revelation. Hence, it leaves space for further developments as well as for corrections.²⁶⁴

The fact that such a document is written by the pope makes it nonetheless an important statement to be considered and not ignored by the members of the RCC:

Although Catholics are to give assent to the moral and doctrinal content of the papal encyclicals, three points must be kept in mind. First, encyclicals possess less authority than dogmatic pronouncements made by the extraordinary infallible magisterium (unless otherwise specifically provided). Second, they usually do not contain definitive, or infallible, teaching (unless otherwise clearly stated ...). Finally, the publication of an encyclical does not imply (unless otherwise provided) that the theological issues examined in the encyclical are now closed. An encyclical necessarily expresses a particular theological point of view, but it is usually not a definitive assessment.²⁶⁵

Social and economic reality changes. In order to be relevant, Roman Catholic social thought needs to share a certain dosage of flexibility with the shifts it encounters in the social and economic field.

We can argue that the choice of the form of an encyclical letter is due to the necessary evolutionary character of the social themes treated. Thus, *Caritas* addresses issues that due to their complexity are not supposed to be solved once and for all with this pronouncement. Nevertheless, the fact that an encyclical letter is an

²⁶² In fact: ‘In early times the word might be used of a letter sent out by any bishop, but in modern RC usage the term is restricted to such letters as are sent out worldwide by the Pope.’ F. L. CROSS, E. A. LIVINGSTONE, eds., *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1997.

²⁶³ *New Catholic Encyclopedia*, 2nd ed. Detroit: Thomson / Gale 2003. 205.

²⁶⁴ In this way the definition that: ‘The teaching contained in an encyclical has generally not been given as belonging formally to the deposit of revelation, but as Pius XII stated it pertains to Catholic doctrine: ‘In writing them, it is true, the popes do not exercise their teaching authority to the full. But such statements come under the day-to-day teaching of the Church. [...] an encyclical is generally considered to be an expression of the pope’s ordinary teaching authority; its contents are presumed to belong to the ordinary magisterium unless the opposite is clearly manifested. Because of this, the teaching of an encyclical is capable of being changed on specific points of detail (see PAUL VI, *Allocution*. AAS 56, 1964. 588)’ *New Catholic Encyclopedia*, 2nd ed. Detroit: Thomson / Gale 2003. 205.

²⁶⁵ *New Catholic Encyclopedia*, 2nd ed. Detroit: Thomson / Gale 2003. 205.

official document coming from the head of the RCC gives it a certain degree of owed respect for the believer who may reading it.

2.1. Caritas in veritate and Roman Catholic theology

Since the first introductory lines, *Caritas* appears to be strongly rooted in RC theological teaching. As it is a ‘social’ encyclical, the reader might expect a more political basis. If so, it would be a proper question to ask whether this Encyclical letter is founded on a more liberal or collectivist grounds, or whether it has more progressivist or conservative presuppositions. As it is a social encyclical with a focus on ethical, economical and environmental topics, such presuppositions may come easily. However, as I will show in the analysis of *Caritas* the main framework on which the Encyclical is built is Roman Catholic thought, theologically and ethically, and not a particular political philosophy.²⁶⁶

Moreover, *Caritas* is not a synthesis of various political philosophies, say of capitalism and socialism in the social doctrine. The declared scope of the Roman Catholic Church is in the intention that the RCC’s social and economic anthropology influence the socio-economic aspects of human life.

Roman Catholic social thought, here in the form of an encyclical letter, tries to establish a set of principles, like the co-operation between economics and ethics, that should be used as referential starting points for subsequent concrete policies. Then, it is also true that social thought comes to analyse, and sometimes to evaluate and interpret, specific aspects of different secular economic doctrines. If we consider the Roman Catholic Church as a voice in society among others, it might be of interest to see whether there is a concrete analysis in what it proposes, or whether there is at least some sort of convergence with the secular thought. Already it has been stated that the Roman Catholic Church as church does not have a particular competence regarding technical economic issues.²⁶⁷ Thus, it is not out of place²⁶⁸ to consider what exactly Benedict XVI, trained as a theologian and not as an economist, might say regarding for instance the contemporary economic and social crisis and whether that is helpful.

2.2. Caritas in veritate and Deus caritas est

Caritas in veritate, the encyclical about is not Benedict XVI’s first encyclical. *Caritas* comes after *Deus caritas est (Deus)*, the encyclical about Christian love, in 2006, and *Spe salvi*, the encyclical about Christian hope, in 2007. These three encyclicals show the intention of Benedict XVI to present his views on the three theological virtues, faith, hope and charity.²⁶⁹

²⁶⁶ See J. B. HEHIR, *Caritas in veritate* in broader context, in D. K. FINN, ed., *The Moral Dynamics of Economic Life: An Extension and Critique of Caritas in Veritate*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2012. 12 – 14.

²⁶⁷ See above I, 6. And below in this chapter 2.2.2.

²⁶⁸ See BREEN, Love, truth and economy, in *Har. J. of L. & P. Pol.*, 994.

²⁶⁹ See R. A. AMIRI, M. M. KEYS, Benedict XVI on liberal modernity’s need for ‘theological virtues’ of faith, hope, and love, in *Perspectives on Political Science*, 41. 1, 2012. 11 – 12.

Understanding what *caritas*, charity, means in *Deus caritas est* can give us helpful insights for understanding ‘charity’ in the theological perspective of Benedict XVI and in the text of *Caritas*.

After the premise that ‘love’ bears a semantic problem regarding the use and abuse of its meaning,²⁷⁰ in *Deus caritas est* the theme of love is firstly approached with the distinction between *eros* and *agape*.²⁷¹ These terms are treated with a brief philosophical overview, then with more specific biblical and exegetical references, and also with an eye to the contemporary social context. Drawing from this approach, Benedict XVI notices that *eros* regards the sphere of the human love and passion, and from this human ground is a love that ‘ascends’ towards the divine. It means that while *eros* maintains the reference to sexual love it also maintains the tie with the divine love.²⁷² Nevertheless, Benedict XVI notices how in today’s world there is the tendency to identify *eros* with practices that, in his opinion, do not regard true love, this same consideration appears also in *Caritas in veritate*.²⁷³ *Agape* is instead conceived as the ‘descending’ love that coming from God aims to pervade humanity.²⁷⁴ With the adherence to this love that comes from God the human being can better love in the sense of the Gospel, namely the human being can love the stranger, the unknown person, and even the enemy.²⁷⁵

Eros and *agape* are understood by Benedict XVI as the two faces of the divine love, the ‘ascending’ and ‘descending’ trajectories of love should meet to have a full realization of human love.²⁷⁶ And indeed one of Benedict XVI’s conclusions points out that we should speak about *eros* and *agape* using the category of the relation.²⁷⁷

The analysis and explanation of these two dimensions of love occupies the first part of *Deus caritas est*. In the second part of the encyclical Benedict XVI focuses on another aspect of love. It is here that love is treated as charity, and more specifically as the ‘service of charity’²⁷⁸ related to the material needs of people and interpreted as a duty of the Roman Catholic Church.

Justice, charity and the Roman Catholic Church

A basic distinction with ‘charity’ as treated in *Caritas in veritate* is that in *Deus caritas est* we see how the theme of charity is analysed in respect mainly to the material activities and the duties of the Roman Catholic Church. Indeed, it has been underlined how the theme of the Roman Catholic Church, and more specifically the

²⁷⁰ See BENEDICT XVI, *Deus caritas est*. Città del Vaticano: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2006. 2.

²⁷¹ See M. FARCI, *Ecclesia de caritate*. La chiesa ‘comunità d’amore’ nell’enciclica *Deus caritas est*, in *Rassegna di Teologia*, 1. 2013. 130.

²⁷² See MCDONAGH, *The unity of love*, in *Logos*, 23; F. GEORGE, *La Chiesa, l’amore di Dio che si fa visibile: una riflessione teologica sull’Enciclica*, in PONTIFICIO CONSIGLIO ‘COR UNUM’, *Deus caritas est. Atti del congresso mondiale sulla carità*. Città del Vaticano: Tipografia Vaticana, 2006. 101.

²⁷³ See the following 2.3.

²⁷⁴ See BENEDICT XVI, *Deus caritas est*, 5 – 6.

²⁷⁵ See BENEDICT XVI, *Deus caritas est*, 18; see FARCI, *Ecclesia de caritate*, in *Rass. di Teo.*, 129.

²⁷⁶ See L. A. ANAYA, *Giustizia e carità: i loro rapporti e i frutti morali per la vita del mondo*, in R. TREMBLAY, ed., *Deus caritas est. Per una teologia morale radicata in Cristo*. Città del Vaticano: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2007. 32.

²⁷⁷ See BENEDICT XVI, *Deus caritas est*, 5, 7; see FARCI, *Ecclesia de caritate*, in *Rass. di Teo.*, 130.

²⁷⁸ BENEDICT XVI, *Deus caritas est*, 19.

relationship love-RCC is in *Deus* very frequent and relevant.²⁷⁹ Instead, the text of *Caritas in veritate* prospects a wider understanding of the role of charity, for instance regarding other types of communities than the Roman Catholic Church, and for individuals in their own life. Notwithstanding this distinction some elements that come from *Deus* are relevant for our understanding of ‘charity’ in the thought of Benedict XVI.

In defining what charity means for the life of the RCC, Benedict XVI looks at the history of the first Christian communities as told in the Acts of the Apostles, according to which: ‘all who believed were together and had all things in common; and they sold their possessions and goods and distributed them to all, as any had need (Acts, 2: 44 – 45)’.²⁸⁰ Benedict XVI also acknowledges that

As the Church grew, this radical form of material communion could not in fact be preserved. But its essential core remained: within the community of believers there can never be room for a poverty that denies anyone what is needed for a dignified²⁸¹

Following this perspective, Benedict XVI proposes a sort of historical account of the charitable activity of the Roman Catholic Church, where he tries to confirm what said above. Namely that even if the radical status of the first community around the apostles has not lasted, nevertheless the Roman Catholic Church has witnessed with its charitable initiatives its presence in the world.²⁸²

Benedict XVI points out that one main aspect that regards the life of the RCC is the charitable love, the ‘*caritas-agape*’,²⁸³ that characterizes both the commitment to the charitable service towards who is ‘within’ the RCC, and also, in an universal way, for who is ‘beyond’ the RCC.²⁸⁴ In this sense, Benedict XVI considers love as the main trait of the RCC interpreted as a community of people that consequently can be considered a ‘community of love’.²⁸⁵

Benedict XVI acknowledges that there is some truth in the common objection moved to the Roman Catholic Church, especially from Marxist environments, for which the charitable activity is in itself a way for maintaining unjust structures in society as far as charity is a way for the rich to fulfil their moral obligation, while instead people should work for building a just society in which there would be no need for charity.²⁸⁶ Benedict XVI points out that since the formation of the modern state, and the Industrial Revolution changed the social structures, the pursue of a just society is a task of the state; it is a typical political duty. Moreover, the Roman Catholic ‘Church’s leadership was slow to realize that the issue of the just structuring of society needed to be approached in a new way’.²⁸⁷

²⁷⁹ See FARCI, *Ecclesia de caritate*, in *Rass. di Teo.*, 128.

²⁸⁰ BENEDICT XVI, *Deus caritas est*, 20.

²⁸¹ BENEDICT XVI, *Deus caritas est*, 20.

²⁸² See BENEDICT XVI, *Deus caritas est*, 22 – 25.

²⁸³ BENEDICT XVI, *Deus caritas est*, 25.

²⁸⁴ See BENEDICT XVI, *Deus caritas est*, 25.

²⁸⁵ See R. W. GARNETT, *Church, state and the practice of love*, in *Villanova Law Revue*, 52. 2007. 281, 291.

²⁸⁶ See BENEDICT XVI, *Deus caritas est*, 26.

²⁸⁷ BENEDICT XVI, *Deus caritas est*, 27.

Then, Benedict XVI's criticism towards Marxism is oriented to show how that objection that Marxism claims for the charitable activity in favour of the poor is itself dangerous because can make the human inhuman:

What we have here, though, is really an inhuman philosophy. People of the present are sacrificed to the *moloch* of the future - a future whose effective realization is at best doubtful. One does not make the world more human by refusing to act humanely here and now. We contribute to a better world only by personally doing good now, with full commitment and wherever we have the opportunity, independently of partisan strategies and programmes. The Christian's programme - the programme of the Good Samaritan, the programme of Jesus - is 'a heart which sees'. This heart sees where love is needed and acts accordingly. Obviously when charitable activity is carried out by the Church as a communitarian initiative, the spontaneity of individuals must be combined with planning, foresight and cooperation with other similar institutions.²⁸⁸

We can say that Benedict XVI even if recognizing some exactness in Marxist analysis of modern society,²⁸⁹ he decisively rejects what he sees as the Marxist objection about the useless character of charitable activity.

Then, Benedict XVI insists on the consideration that pursuing justice in society is a peculiar objective of the political sphere. It does not seem that he wants to exclude the RCC from the pursuing of justice in society, but he wants to re-affirm the responsibility of politics in building a just social order.

Moreover, it seems that the general tenor of *Deus* is to remind to the reader that the 'distinction between what belongs to Caesar and what belongs to God (see *Mt* 22:21), in other words, the distinction between Church and State',²⁹⁰ is in the opinion of Benedict XVI a distinction 'fundamental to Christianity'.²⁹¹ This separation not only regards the guarantee of a certain degree of religious freedom within the state, but also regards the freedom about the distinctiveness in the method and organization in which, for instance, is pursued social justice by a religious organization, in this case the RCC.²⁹²

That the Roman Catholic Church and the state are two separate entities is something of easy agreement. It might be also not impossible to agree on the fact that notwithstanding this separation '[t]he two spheres are [...] yet always interrelated'.²⁹³ But if, from one side Benedict XVI is very clear in pointing out that the Roman Catholic Church 'must not take the political battle to bring about the most just society possible',²⁹⁴ and that the RCC 'cannot and must not replace the State'.²⁹⁵ And from another side, Benedict XVI affirms that 'the promotion of justice through efforts to bring about openness of mind and will to the demands of the common good

²⁸⁸ BENEDICT XVI, *Deus caritas est*, 31.

²⁸⁹ See, for instance, BENEDICT XVI, *Spe salvi*. Città del Vaticano: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2007. 20.

²⁹⁰ BENEDICT XVI, *Deus caritas est*, 28.

²⁹¹ BENEDICT XVI, *Deus caritas est*, 28.

²⁹² See GARNETT, Church, state and the practice of love, in *Vill. L. Rev.*, 52. 288 – 290, 292 – 293, 301.

²⁹³ BENEDICT XVI, *Deus caritas est*, 28.

²⁹⁴ BENEDICT XVI, *Deus caritas est*, 28.

²⁹⁵ BENEDICT XVI, *Deus caritas est*, 28.

is something which concerns the Church deeply'.²⁹⁶ It remains a legitimate doubt about the effectiveness of this approach if the political involvement would remain excluded. These considerations may be perhaps clearer if we share the standpoint of who sees in the approach of Benedict XVI the attempt of making the Roman Catholic Church a smaller, more Gospel-inspired, autonomous and de-secularized institution,²⁹⁷ also for what regards its charitable activity. This perspective might be more in line with a radical separation that does not exclude co-operation between the Roman Catholic Church and the state.

It is probably the case that the view of Benedict XVI is more complex than what it may seem. The just state he has in mind is not the institution that aims to fulfil all the needs of its citizens, and that claims for it all the activities to promote justice in society. He rather prospects a state that, on the basis of the subsidiarity principle, leaves enough space for other institutions to operate with their charitable activities.²⁹⁸ This is because Benedict XVI is convinced that the state is not able to bring to the people the personal love and care that other forms of institutions or communities can realize. Benedict XVI is in the end convinced that '[l]ove – *caritas* – will always prove necessary, even in the most just society. There is no ordering of the State so just that it can eliminate the need for a service of love'.²⁹⁹ Benedict XVI sees charity as the unavoidable complement to justice, also because, as he points out in *Deus*, people need both 'material help' and 'care for their souls'.³⁰⁰ As we are going to see more precisely in the next section, there is a tight relation between justice and charity in the social theology of Benedict XVI.³⁰¹

Regarding the contemporary situation Benedict XVI underlines two aspects of the globalization process in relation to social justice and charity. First, he notices how through today's mean of communication is possible to know about the condition of material and spiritual poverty of other people. Then, he points out how today also distances are less relevant, thus allowing help and assistance in various forms also outside the national borders. It is in this context that the Roman Catholic Church, without losing its religious specificity, should work and operate in synergy both with the state and with other religious or non-religious associations and institutions.³⁰²

For the one who wants to operate close or within the Roman Catholic Church at the service of the poor, Benedict XVI proposes a sort of psychological analysis together with a spiritual advice. In the idea of Benedict XVI, Christ gives to the person acting at the service of the poor the awareness that what is doing is being done as a grace from God, and not as a manifestation of one's superiority towards another. In this direction are faced also all the limits that one may encounter in the charitable activity, and all the difficulties that can lead one to think that nothing will be enough for the needs of this or that poor, so that nothing can be concretely and

²⁹⁶ BENEDICT XVI, *Deus caritas est*, 28.

²⁹⁷ See GARNETT, Church, state and the practice of love, in *Vill. L. Rev.*, 52.297, 302.

²⁹⁸ See ANAYA, Giustizia e carità, in R. TREMBLAY, ed., *Deus caritas est*, 30, 35.

²⁹⁹ BENEDICT XVI, *Deus caritas est*, 28; see AMIRI, KEYS, Benedict XVI on liberal modernity's need for 'theological virtues', in *Persp. on Pol. Sc.*, 41.13.

³⁰⁰ BENEDICT XVI, *Deus caritas est*, 28; see GEORGE, La Chiesa, l'amore di Dio che si fa visibile, in PONTIFICIO CONSIGLIO 'COR UNUM', *Deus caritas est*, 103.

³⁰¹ See AMIRI, KEYS, Benedict XVI on liberal modernity's need for 'theological virtues', in *Persp. on Pol. Sc.*, 41. 15.

³⁰² See BENEDICT XVI, *Deus caritas est*, 29 – 30.

permanently done. In this perspective is faced also that idea that it is not only on the basis of our activity that we implement the Roman Catholic practice of charity, but together with the action must come love:

‘If I give away all I have, and if I deliver my body to be burned, but do not have love, I gain nothing’ (*1 Cor*: 13, 3). This hymn must be the *Magna Carta* of all ecclesial service; it sums up all the reflections on love which I have offered throughout this Encyclical Letter. Practical activity will always be insufficient, unless it visibly expresses a love for man, a love nourished by an encounter with Christ. My deep personal sharing in the needs and sufferings of others becomes a sharing of my very self with them: if my gift is not to prove a source of humiliation, I must give to others not only something that is my own, but my very self; I must be personally present in my gift.³⁰³

It is also in regard of considerations like these above quoted that Benedict XVI’s *Deus caritas est* has been defined as the answer ‘to a defined deficit [of love] in today’s market-driven culture.’³⁰⁴ We may summarize the point of Benedict XVI saying that charity goes with the person, and that no impersonal force or institution may be able to fill a gap of human love. The person, including both the lay believer and the person of good will, together with faith and hope bears within also the spiritual dimension. This is a love that becomes unavoidably ‘performative’, namely that from the inside of the individual aims to pervade the social reality.³⁰⁵

Benedict XVI sees all these reflections in the context of what he thinks is their natural source, namely the prayer. Prayer intended as the believer’s question towards a God that seems inactive in front of the world’s suffering and injustices.³⁰⁶ From Job to Saint Augustine³⁰⁷ the question about the presence of injustice seems to be without a concrete reasonable answer. For Benedict XVI is exactly in this particular possibility of asking that we have faith in a God that does not ignore us ‘even when his silence remains incomprehensible’,³⁰⁸ and from this awareness and this hope, the believer can witness God’s love through the charitable activity.

2.3. Two main themes of Caritas in veritate: charity and truth

We start now with the clarification of the main words in the title of the encyclical *Caritas in veritate*, namely: *caritas* and *veritate*, or in translation, *charity* and *truth*. As keywords of the title they might provide an instant general description of *Caritas in veritate*.

Benedict XVI states that charity is the main element in the Roman Catholic Church’s social teaching. Love, here a synonym of charity, is the source of social teaching, from which the desire for a more just society arises. There is no Roman

³⁰³ BENEDICT XVI, *Deus caritas est*, 34.

³⁰⁴ P. McDONAGH, The unity of love: reflections on the first encyclical of pope Benedict XVI, in *Logos: a Journal of Catholic Thought and Culture*, 10. 1, 2007. 20.

³⁰⁵ See AMIRI, KEYS, Benedict XVI on liberal modernity’s need for ‘theological virtues’, in *Persp. on Pol. Sc.*, 41. 15; ANAYA, Giustizia e carità, in R. TREMBLAY, ed., *Deus caritas est*, 34.

³⁰⁶ See BENEDICT XVI, *Deus caritas est*, 38.

³⁰⁷ See BENEDICT XVI, *Deus caritas est*, 38.

³⁰⁸ BENEDICT XVI, *Deus caritas est*, 38.

Catholic social thought if at its beginning there is not love. This force is the primal mover of the RCC's social teaching. Upon this view, love is also the end that the social doctrine pursues through the common good:

Charity is at the heart of the Church's social doctrine. Every responsibility and every commitment spelt out by that doctrine is derived from charity which, according to the teaching of Jesus, is the synthesis of the entire Law (see *Mt* 22, 36 - 40). [...] it is the principle not only of micro-relationships (with friends, with family members or within small groups) but also of macro-relationships (social, economic and political ones).³⁰⁹

According to this interpretation, the supreme law of the Gospel is the law of charity, the law of love to be given and received. This should happen also in the relationships among institutions and social agents at the political and economic level, and not only among individual private persons. The text seems to prospect a certain complementarity between the two, as these two levels have their meaningful source always in charity.

In a subsequent part, Benedict XVI is more precise in defining what charity means. While referring to its etymology he relates love among human beings to the love God first has given to the world, such an approach appears in line with the content of *Deus caritas est*.³¹⁰ It should be noticed here how Benedict XVI's theology interprets God as the source of love. This love is then reflected among people, and people are considered as instruments in building 'networks of charity'. In such view the social doctrine of the RCC is seen as a theoretical manifestation of that love.

Thus, love and respect among humans is the continuation of the primary love of God. According to Benedict XVI's words, without God's love in the first place, we could not experience love among us. Therefore each time we ignore or forget that initial love comes from God we fail to realize charity among us:

Charity is love received and given. It is 'grace' (*cháris*). Its source is the wellspring of the Father's love for the Son, in the Holy Spirit. [...] As the objects of God's love, men and women become subjects of charity, they are called to make themselves instruments of grace, so as to pour forth God's charity and to weave networks of charity. This dynamic of charity received and given is what gives rise to the Church's social teaching, which is *caritas in veritate in re sociali*: the proclamation of the truth of Christ's love in society. This doctrine is a service to charity, but its locus is truth. [...] It is at the same time the truth of faith and of reason, both in the distinction and also in the convergence of those two cognitive fields.³¹¹

Benedict XVI says that in modern times there is a process of emptying that affects the word charity and its synonyms, including love. In his view, love's content and meaning is filled up with things that have nothing to do with love's deep significance.³¹² It is in this concern about the meaning of the word love that lays, in

³⁰⁹ *Caritas*, 2.

³¹⁰ See BENEDICT XVI, *Deus caritas est*, 16 – 18; and above 2.2.

³¹¹ *Caritas*, 5.

³¹² See *Caritas*, 3.

his theology, the exigency to tie charity with truth.³¹³ Charity is the force that bonds together all that is social, but only if this charity is ‘in truth’, of the true kind. That is why it would be not enough, in the theology of this pope, to say *caritas in re sociali*, but he needs to point to *caritas in veritate in re sociali*. If we interpret love at a social level, which means once again that we are not speaking about love in a sentimental or romantic way, it means that we are speaking about love as the main and principal force that leads human beings to pursue fairness in society. In this perspective love becomes a social fact that should pervade all actions that involve social consequences. As God made humans, in his socio-theological view, love is relevant also at the socio-economic level.

In fact, Benedict XVI develops his social thought starting from the assumption that when charity is alone its meaning and purposes can be lost and its practical content reduced. Instead, with truth, charity fully agrees with what is stated in the RC social thought. Thus, charity represents both human and divine love, and truth represents the place of this love, that is the Christian religion.³¹⁴

So, why is truth fundamental to charity? Why is it so unavoidable? According to *Caritas*, to love without truth, to love without God, is something impossible, and to understand charity in truth is something essential for building a good society. *Caritas*, is the love given and received, and *veritate* indicates the presence of God in guiding human efforts. Here it is the demand of closely bonding our acts of love with their proper supposed meaning. ‘Charity in truth’ is identified as the core principle from which grows the entire theology of Roman Catholic social teaching.

Following *Caritas*’s reasoning, when through the Christian faith in Jesus we apply his charitable love to our living-in-the-world, we are applying the highest truth and most reliable source of love towards the realization of God’s will. Benedict XVI sees ‘charity in truth’ as the highest unavoidable moral compass. In this way, he makes of *caritas in veritate* a principle, in the etymological sense of *principia*, because it is at the beginning of any action that is supposed to be rooted in the social thought of the Roman Catholic Church. In the specific context of today’s world in which the social doctrine is inscribed, Benedict XVI identifies the moral results that we should see when social thought is truly realized, when charity in truth is put into practice. The result has the shape of two moral criteria, justice and the common good:

‘*Caritas in veritate*’ is the principle around which the Church’s social doctrine turns, a principle that takes on practical form in the criteria that govern moral action. I would like to consider two of these in particular, of special relevance to the commitment to development in an increasingly globalized society: *justice and the common good*.³¹⁵

Therefore, justice and the common good, which we are going to examine more in detail, are two practical consequences of the actions taken at the social level when the inspiring principle is ‘charity in truth’. It means that for Benedict XVI to define the content of a moral action according to social thought would mean to read it within the meaning of charity in truth.

³¹³ See BREEN, Love, truth and economy, in *Har. J. of L. & P. Pol.*, 1004 – 1005.

³¹⁴ See MELÉ, NAUGHTON, The encyclical-letter *Caritas in veritate*, in *J. of Bus. Ethics*, 3.

³¹⁵ *Caritas*, 6.

All the efforts to explain what ‘charity in truth’ means, find, then, practical application in the moral order. In the end, charity in truth should represent the criteria for the social action of individuals or institutions.

2.3.1. *Justice*

According to Benedict XVI, charity is love given for free, ‘charity is love received and given’, as seen above. It represents a way of giving characterized as a gift from the spirit; gratuity is its economic translation. This means that charity, love, is considered the source of giving for free, gratuity.

Starting from this simple advice, Benedict XVI observes the conditions for such charity to flourish in society, and he states that in any social environment the first condition for the existence of charity is justice. In a society in which justice is lacking, giving for free becomes almost impossible. What exactly does this mean?

First of all, as a premise, we have to take into account that in Benedict XVI’s theological perspective, charity and justice are interwoven and, much more, they cannot be divided. More precisely, justice represents what is due, by the fact of being human, to all human beings. And charity represents what can be freely and gratuitously given in addition to that. Thus, when something ‘due’, ‘owed’ is given, we are acting closer to the criteria of justice.³¹⁶ When we give something more than what is due, we are acting closer to the criteria of charity. In this sense, Benedict XVI points out that if someone is lacking elementary and essential things in life, starting from sufficient nourishment and peaceful living, it is impossible to offer him something more, or something different. That is where we see that charity and justice interrelated.

It is at this point that Benedict XVI claims that the relationships among humans are not exclusively made on the basis of rights and duties.³¹⁷ Once the duties of justice would have been accomplished, then there is the space for gratuity to build social relations.

When the criteria of justice have been fulfilled, there is a surplus of charitable free-giving which overwhelms the dutiful giving. While exceeding justice, charity represents its final objective. The end of justice is *caritas*, but justice is the ground for charity. We may also say, in other words, that in Benedict XVI’s vision justice is the unavoidable presupposition for loving, it is its pre-constitutive part, but then charity is the end for which justice is practised:

First of all, justice. *Ubi societas, ibi ius*: every society draws up its own system of justice. *Charity goes beyond justice*, because to love is to give, to offer what is ‘mine’ to the other; but it never lacks justice, which prompts us to give the other what is ‘his’, what is due to him by reason of his being or his acting. I cannot ‘give’ what is mine to the other, without first giving him what pertains to him in justice. If we love others with charity, then first of all we are just towards them. Not only is justice not extraneous to charity, not only is it not an alternative or parallel path to charity: justice is inseparable from charity (see *Populorum*, 22; *Gaudium*, 69), and intrinsic to it.³¹⁸

³¹⁶ See BREEN, Love, truth and economy, in *Har. J. of L. & P. Pol.*, 1007 – 1008.

³¹⁷ *Caritas*, 6.

³¹⁸ *Caritas*, 6.

The relationship between justice and charity in Benedict XVI's eyes is a tight one. And this tightness might give us also the elements for understanding the foundations of a theory of social justice as proposed in *Caritas*.

Justice is seen as interwoven to charity. Indeed, in his view justice contains in its essence 'what is due' to a human being, therefore it is a way for loving the human being. Justice is the necessary premise for loving, for an act with charitable intentions in any sense. Only after justice is put into practice, Benedict XVI suggests, can we start to implement charity.

It is possible to see a circularity in Benedict XVI's discourse because the source that pushes human beings to realize a just society is the love they share for each other. Benedict XVI brings forth the argument that justice is intrinsic to the social order, in the sense that any social group develops a system of justice. This reflects also the general idea of justice, as something 'owed', that has been developed in the Western countries.³¹⁹

Nevertheless, more closely to the perspective of Benedict XVI, justice and charity have to work together, they cannot be divided. He sees the act of love towards the other as never lacking justice, because when charity is in action it already presupposes an amount of justice that has been previously fulfilled.

This unifying view allows Benedict XVI to distinguish between what belongs to 'us' and what does not. Charity and justice, in his view, cannot be separated, they are interwoven, but they have different tasks. From one side, charity surpasses justice, because love is always more than what is due. But on the other side, justice is the basic presupposition for speaking of any sort of charitable love, because there cannot be any love where it lacks what is due for justice. We can say that they fulfil each other.

Benedict XVI sees that justice and charity are inseparable because in striving for the realization of a just society there is already *in nuce* the seed of love. He also stresses that justice is the essential element for a society to grow. Justice it is not only the main characteristic of that form of human aggregation that we call society, but it's the terrain in which charity then can exist.

2.3.2. *The common good and the city of God*

What does it mean to speak about the common good in relation to the charity in truth principle? Benedict XVI aims to show how the common good represents our main goal when we apply charity in truth to our social life. Indeed, he distinguishes an individual's good from the person's environment. This latter sort of good, which is common and shared, results from its use and preservation by all social subjects, both individuals and institutions. The realization of the common good calls for care for our closest neighbours and, at the same time, for implementing all sorts of institutions necessary for better pursuing this objective. Benedict XVI identifies this never-ending work of private citizens alongside institutions in the context of the city or *pólis*. Thus, according to this view, Christians and all the people of good will are called to assume a perspective in which the city is the preferred, even if not the unique, local starting point from which to build a path of charity that leads to the common good.³²⁰

³¹⁹ See BREEN, Love, truth and economy, in *Har. J. of L. & P. Pol.*, 1007.

³²⁰ A. J. G. SISON, J. FONTRODONA, The common good of business: addressing a challenge posed by

The path towards the common good goes through the community level to which the city belongs, with the solidarity that the community needs to exist. Therefore, as we have seen before,³²¹ working for the common good is put on two main levels, one is mainly institutional, and the other more private and relatively personal:

To desire the *common good* and strive towards it *is a requirement of justice and charity*. To take a stand for the common good is on the one hand to be solicitous for, and on the other hand to avail oneself of, that complex of institutions that give structure to the life of society, juridically, civilly, politically and culturally, making it the *pólis*, or ‘city’. [...] The more we strive to secure a common good corresponding to the real needs of our neighbours, the more effectively we love them. Every Christian is called to practise this charity, in a manner corresponding to his vocation and according to the degree of influence he wields in the *pólis*. This is the institutional path - we might also call it the political path - of charity, no less excellent and effective than the kind of charity which encounters the neighbour directly, outside the institutional mediation of the *pólis*.³²²

Being part of a community, Benedict XVI tells us, means to be part of a polis. The social dimension of a polis corresponds to the ideal place in which the Christian can be effective in contributing to the common good at the institutional level. As another element in approaching Benedict XVI’s social theory, it is interesting to notice here the direct reference to the institutional dimension of the ‘city’. The city is understood upon the definition of the Greek polis, and seen as the ideal place for creating the local common good.

In this view the earthly polis, the human city, is on its way to be transformed into the *city of God*. Not by coincidence is proposed Saint Augustine’s theology and his *City of God*. Benedict XVI’s theology has a deep source in the Augustinian tradition.³²³ His doctoral dissertation was titled *The People and the House of God in Augustine’s Doctrine of the Church*. It is true that any human city has a specific form and history. The city of God may signify the end we pursue in what today we could call the global city, given by the material shape that the fraternal character of human beings should take.

Thus, without a doubt we build human cities, but when we act towards the common good supported by charity in truth, even our local actions as ‘citizens’ are a valuable and substantial contribution to what will be the city of God. This city, of course calls for a transcendental concept of the urban agglomeration we may have in mind. And this implies an attitude directed towards a sort of divine citizenship. In this same view, it may also represent the consequence of letting our perception of citizenship be extended to a global scale. To be interdependent makes us citizens of the world, global citizens indeed. It would mean to envision a worldly city in which there are no barriers:

‘*Caritas in Veritate*’, in *Journal of Business Ethics*, 100. 2011. 103 – 105.

³²¹ See above IV, 3.

³²² *Caritas*, 7.

³²³ See also AMIRI, KEYS, Benedict XVI on liberal modernity’s need for ‘theological virtues’, in *Persp. on Pol. Sc.*, 41. 12.

Man's earthly activity, when inspired and sustained by charity, contributes to the building of the universal *city of God*, which is the goal of the history of the human family. In an increasingly globalized society, the common good and the effort to obtain it cannot fail to assume the dimensions of the whole human family, that is to say, the community of peoples and nations (see *Pacem*, AAS 55, 268 - 270), in such a way as to shape the *earthly city* in unity and peace, rendering it to some degree an anticipation and a prefiguration of the undivided *city of God*.³²⁴

It seems that a concrete material expression of such a widely shared sense of common belonging and participation can be found in the socio-economic global perspective that we are experiencing today. Thanks primarily to technological developments, we are part of a world citizenship and we are aware of it. It happens that by using means of communication and exchanging goods and services we might become more aware of our being humans in the fraternal sense proposed, for instance, in the social teaching of the *Compendium*.³²⁵ This might also represent one of the highest opportunities concerning the modern process of globalization.

Nevertheless, the same processes have also risks related to the spreading of de-humanizing cultures, as social thought would call them. De-humanizing would mean to go against the definition of a human being as given in social teaching. There is the risk of globalizing de-humanization. The reasoning goes like this: when we agree that shared wealth is a desired objective, so that we may consider it an ultimate end, we should also be aware that such an end is not merely reached by technological progress alone. To be achieved, it needs the co-operation of every single human being in a potential position of doing it.

Implicitly, Benedict XVI points out that defining the improvement in the people's condition exclusively on the basis of technical data can compromise the effects and the contribution of the people. In this direction points also the work of Martha Nussbaum, for whom not uniquely the technical data referring to growth production should be taken into account for evaluating the general progress of a community.³²⁶ In regards of the new approaches that are nowadays coming out³²⁷ it is worthy to notice the contribution of three key figures of contemporary economics, Joseph Stiglitz, Amartya Sen and Jean-Paul Fitoussi, for which there is the need to re-think our usual technical parameter of evaluation:

In an increasingly performance-oriented society, metrics matter. What we measure affects what we do. [...] In the quest to increase GDP, we may end up with a society in which citizens are worse off. [...] A developing country that sells a polluting mining concession with low royalties and inadequate environmental regulation may see GDP increase but well-being decrease.³²⁸

³²⁴ *Caritas* 7.

³²⁵ See *Compendium*, 390, and above IV, 5.

³²⁶ See on this M. C. NUSSBAUM, *Creating capabilities. The human development approach*. London: Belknap Press, Harvard University Press, 2011.

³²⁷ See also P. H. DEMBINSKI, The incompleteness of the economy and business: a forceful reminder, in *Journal of Business Ethics*, 100. 2011. 32 – 33.

³²⁸ J. E. STIGLITZ, A. K. SEN, J-P. FITOUSSI, *Mismeasuring our lives. Why GDP doesn't add up*. New York: The New Press, 2010. xvii, xxii.

The Roman Catholic Church, in this context, does not propose a specific set of measures or an economic and social technical solution ready to apply. It intends to fulfil its duty by preserving for humanity core principles coming from the interpretation of Jesus' revelation.³²⁹ The message of the social doctrine, and here specifically of *Caritas*, can be considered a message to the individual heart and souls, and not a message that lists specific policy measures. The message of social teaching aims to reach first of all people's consciences. One of the actual messages of *Caritas* regards a re-evaluation of our technical standards in measuring socio-economic progresses:

Love in truth - *caritas in veritate* - is a great challenge for the Church in a world that is becoming progressively and pervasively globalized. The risk for our time is that the *de facto* interdependence of people and nations is not matched by ethical interaction of consciences and minds that would give rise to truly human development. Only in *charity, illumined by the light of reason and faith*, is it possible to pursue development goals that possess a more humane and humanizing value. The sharing of goods and resources, from which authentic development proceeds, is not guaranteed by merely technical progress and relationships of utility, but by the potential of love that overcomes evil with good (see *Rom* 12, 21), opening up the path towards reciprocity of consciences and liberties.³³⁰

Benedict XVI points out that one of the main ends of RC social doctrine, namely the co-division of wealth and resources, is something that needs more than technological advancements. To reach such an end, people should rely upon the fraternal love to which all the human beings can contribute. His position holds that we cannot have the guarantee that our progress will automatically lead to a better world if our intention is not exactly this. From here comes the warning of the social doctrine, not to leave the decisions about our future uniquely to strictly technical economic indicators. In this sense the message can be interpreted also as a call for the humanization of development.

To love the other in this interdependent world would mean then to promote institutions able to do that; it would mean to have the intention of directing technological advancement on the path that leads to the common good. This can be translated in the guarantee of certain rights, duties and freedoms for everyone, as clarified by Amartya Sen.³³¹

From the analysis of the meaning of the words charity and truth, their relationships, and their explication through the realization of the common good, we should have a concrete framework in which it should be possible the reflection on the social theorization presented in *Caritas*.

³²⁹ Benedict XVI refers to the previous social teaching when he states that: 'The Church does not have technical solutions to offer (see *Gaudium*, 36; *Octogesima*, 4; *Centesimus*, 43) and does not claim 'to interfere in any way in the politics of States' (*Populorum*, 13) She does, however, have a mission of truth to accomplish, in every time and circumstance, for a society that is attuned to man, to his dignity, to his vocation.' *Caritas*, 9.

³³⁰ *Caritas*, 9.

³³¹ See A. K. SEN, *Development as freedom*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999. 152 – 159.

2.4. *Liberation and love.*

Before moving on in our analysis in the main text of *Caritas*, I take the occasion to look at the position of Benedict XVI towards the theology of liberation. The discourse about justice, love and the common good that we have seen above is related to our concern here.

In a discourse about justice, love and the common good, then, it is not improper to consider liberation theology. ‘Liberation theology’ is the name given to a movement that sought to address poverty and injustice, most clearly present since the 1960s in Latin America. Most liberation theologians were Roman Catholic. Their discourse about justice is about social justice, which addresses the ‘option for the poor’, that is the central theme in the theology of liberation.³³² Here, we are interested in understanding if and how the perspectives of *Caritas* are dealing with this legitimate instance.

It has been pointed out how some theologians of liberation have, in the end, identified *justice* and *love*.³³³ The teaching of Benedict XVI calls for understanding that there is a distinction and an interrelation between justice and charity. In this sense, *Caritas* presents a different view from the liberation theologians.³³⁴ The two, justice and charity, are not the same thing, but still they need each other. As we have already seen, justice alone is not enough for building the worldly fraternal human society as outlined by the Roman Catholic social teaching and *Caritas*. For doing this, love is needed. But love can only come when justice is fulfilled.

Thus we also see here the central role of charity in the social teaching of Benedict XVI. If we look to how Benedict XVI intends the relationship between *charity* and *justice* we can see that he presupposes justice before charity. Nevertheless he sees that the ultimate end of justice is charity. In this sense justice is intrinsic to charity.³³⁵ Here we can find a difference between Benedict XVI’s approach to justice and charity and that of a representative line of the liberation theology. This being said, we may consider more concrete issues that have caused tensions among the Roman Catholic hierarchy since the appearance of the liberation theology.

The tensions between the leadership of the Roman Catholic Church and representatives of the theology of liberation is mainly based on ‘certain forms’ of liberation theology, mainly because they were considered to adhere too much to Marxism.³³⁶ According to Vatican officials these theologies needed to avoid those Marxist elements.³³⁷ The most relevant official documents of the RCC are the *Instruction on certain aspects of the liberation theology*, also known as *Libertatis nuntius*, of 1984, and the following *Instruction on Christian freedom and liberation*,

³³² See G. GUTIÉRREZ, Looking forward, in G. GUTIÉRREZ, *A theology of liberation*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2000. xx – xxi.

³³³ John Breen about Gustavo Gutiérrez, see BREEN, Love, truth and economy, in *Har. J. of L. & P. Pol.*, 1006.

³³⁴ See BREEN, Love, truth and economy, in *Har. J. of L. & P. Pol.*, 1006.

³³⁵ See BREEN, Love, truth and economy, in *Har. J. of L. & P. Pol.*, 1008.

³³⁶ D. TURNER, Marxism, liberation theology and the way of negation, in C. ROWLAND, ed., *The Cambridge companion to liberation theology*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999. 199 – 200.

³³⁷ P. HEBBLETHWAITE, Liberation theology and the Roman Catholic Church, in ROWLAND, *The Cambridge companion to liberation theology*, 195.

known as *Libertatis conscientia*, of 1986. Both came from the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, which at that time had cardinal Joseph Ratzinger as its Prefect. The latter document especially, instead on focussing on what needs correction in liberation theologies, speaks openly about what is accepted.³³⁸ Regarding this second document Dorr points out how even if certain teachings of the liberation theology were finally accepted, these documents did not show any enthusiasm for such a theology. Dorr also underlines how the Vatican continued systematically to appoint ‘Church leaders who were quite unsympathetic to such an approach’.³³⁹

In *Libertatis nuntius* only ‘certain aspects’ of liberation theology were rejected, thus one should be careful in identifying this with a total rejection of the ideas of liberation theology and its aims as such. It has been pointed out how that was a ‘warning’ and not a ‘condemnation’.³⁴⁰ The vocabulary of the theology of liberation, including the ‘option for the poor’, has entered the social teaching of the Roman Catholic Church since the Latin American Episcopal Conferences in Medellin, Colombia, in 1968, and in Puebla, Mexico, in 1979.³⁴¹ *Medellin* and *Puebla* are, in one way or another, representative of an atmosphere of dialogue. Also subsequent reflections emphasize the plurality of the theological discourse as alive and present.³⁴²

We go now closer to see where Benedict XVI stands regarding the option for the poor. When Ratzinger was still Prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, in 1985, a book about liberation theology was published with his foreword. Here it is clearly stated that the controversy with some *theologians* of liberation, does not mean a contrast with the most inner intention of liberation *theology* as such. And it is also emphasized that the main problematic issue with liberation theology regards the possible ‘degenerations’ that the too firm adherence with Marxism might bring.³⁴³

More recently, then, Dorr has pointed out how Benedict XVI accepted the terminology of a ‘preferential option for the poor’, though Dorr also notices that Benedict XVI when accepting this terminology does not accept its source, namely liberation theology.³⁴⁴ Dorr argues that Benedict XVI does not link the option for the poor with a ‘clear choice to be on the side of those who resist oppression and who are willing not only to struggle for justice but to do so by engaging in sharp contestation with those who oppress them. There is no trace that Benedict himself experiences such contestation and struggle as intrinsic to his own spirituality’.³⁴⁵ Indeed, the

³³⁸ See D. DORR, *Option for the poor and for the earth. Catholic social teaching*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2012. 289.

³³⁹ DORR, *Option for the poor and for the earth*, 290.

³⁴⁰ HEBBLETHWAITE, Liberation theology and the Roman Catholic Church, in *The Cambridge companion to liberation theology*, 190.

³⁴¹ See DORR, *Option for the poor and for the earth*, 181; G. GUTIÉRREZ, The task and content of liberation theology, in ROWLAND, *The Cambridge companion to liberation theology*, 26 – 27; GUTIÉRREZ, Looking forward, in GUTIÉRREZ, *A theology of liberation*, xxvi – xxvii.

³⁴² See, for instance, CONSEJO EPISCOPAL LATINOAMERICANO, *El futuro de la reflexión teológica en América Latina*. Santafé de Bogotá D. C., 1996.

³⁴³ See J. RATZINGER, Presentazione, in SACRA CONGREGAZIONE PER LA DOTTRINA DELLA FEDE, *Teologia della liberazione*. Roma: Edizioni Logos, 1985. 5 – 7.

³⁴⁴ See DORR, *Option for the poor and for the earth*, 388.

³⁴⁵ DORR, *Option for the poor and for the earth*, 387 – 388. See also C. RUDDY, No restorationist.

social teaching of Benedict XVI can be seen as focussing more on the call for the responsible role of who is 'not poor':

While the poor of the world continue knocking on the doors of the rich, the world of affluence runs the risk of no longer hearing those knocks, on account of a conscience that can no longer distinguish what is human.³⁴⁶

In this regard we can say that Benedict XVI is not ignoring the condition of the poor of the world. At the same time, there is a major difference in approach to the condition of the poor in the world, there is a difference in approaching the same problem.

The option for the poor is the main concern of the theology of liberation. Liberation theology calls for a responsible awareness of the poor of the world and encourage people to strive to reach social justice.³⁴⁷ Benedict XVI insists more on responsible action of those we may call the 'rich of the world'. These people, living in the 'affluent society', are supposed to answer the questions of the poor. Among those living in these affluent societies the attention of Benedict XVI seems more directed towards the lay people than towards the clergy.³⁴⁸ What also characterizes these people living in rich countries, in Benedict XVI's perspective, is the risk of not discerning anymore what is human, and thus not hearing a human call at all.

We can conclude this brief account on *Caritas* and liberation theology saying that the social teaching of Benedict XVI does not seem to share the *option* for the poor as usually intended in the context of liberation theology. We agree with Dorr's analysis in pointing that for Benedict XVI 'it is more a matter of having a *concern* for the poor, linked to a deep and well-grounded commitment to justice in the world.'³⁴⁹ Notwithstanding this distinction we may argue that there are signs that the Vatican today is somehow more sympathetic towards the liberation theology. On 1st July 2012 Benedict XVI appointed Gerhard Ludwig Müller as Prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith. It is true that this German priest is seen as a conservative one by the most liberal wings of the Roman Catholic Church,³⁵⁰ but this choice for the Congregation caused also concern among the most conservative parts of the Roman Catholic Church. Not only is Müller a pupil of Gustavo Gutiérrez, but he also wrote a book with him in 2004, *An der Seite der Armen. Theologie der Befreiung (On the side of the poor. Theology of liberation)*.³⁵¹ Moreover, in 2008, at the Pontifical Catholic University of Peru, Lima, Müller gave a speech where he stated that 'the theology of Gustavo Gutiérrez, independently of how you look at it, is orthodox because it is orthopractic and it teaches us the correct

Ratzinger's theological journey, in *Commonweal*, 132. 11. 2005. 18.

³⁴⁶ *Caritas*, 75.

³⁴⁷ See GUTIÉRREZ, Looking forward, in GUTIÉRREZ, *A theology of liberation*, xxi; DORR, *Option for the poor and for the earth*, 388.

³⁴⁸ See DORR, *Option for the poor and for the earth*, 445 – 446.

³⁴⁹ DORR, *Option for the poor and for the earth*, 389.

³⁵⁰ See A. BELTRAMO, A liberation theologian in the Holy Office?, in *Vatican Insider*, October 2001. Available online at <http://vaticaninsider.lastampa.it/en/the-vatican/detail/articolo/america-latina-latin-america-papa-el-papa-pope-congregazione-per-la-dottrina-della-fede-congre>

³⁵¹ G. GUTIÉRREZ, G. L. MÜLLER, *An der Seite der Armen. Theologie der Befreiung*. Sankt Ulrich Verlag, Augsburg 2004.

way of acting in a Christian fashion since it comes from true faith.³⁵² How to consider this appointment? We agree with Charles Taylor that ‘it is one thing to offer doctrinal and theoretical solutions and evaluations as a cardinal, another to decide matters as a pope’.³⁵³ Thus, ‘pope’ Benedict XVI assumes a different and broader perspective on the complexity of the Roman Catholic Church’s life, than ‘cardinal’ Joseph Ratzinger. This being said, one might argue that an explicit openness to liberation theology might call for an appointment in a relevant role of, for instance, a South American bishop. Moreover, in the social thought of Benedict XVI the emphasis on the person’s individual contribution to the common good and on person’s transcendence, we notice an approach to social justice influenced by the tradition of personalism³⁵⁴ that can be considered as his attempt to propose an alternative approach to some collectivist and materialist temptations. Nonetheless, given the appointment of Müller we may foresee for the future the opportunity for a prolific, and somehow unexpected, dialogue between the Roman Catholic hierarchy and liberation theologians.

3. *Populorum progressio and the legacy of Vatican II*

This section specifically treats the influence exerted by Paul VI’s social encyclical *Populorum progressio* (*Populorum*) on Benedict XVI’s *Caritas*, and thereby provides a partial answer to questions regarding connections between *Caritas* and previous social teaching. Moreover, *Caritas* (2009) is thought to celebrate the fortieth year since the publishing of *Populorum* (1976). The publication of *Caritas* had been delayed also due to the grave economic conditions that since 2007 affected the world economy, and especially the Western countries.³⁵⁵

In *Caritas* the approach to certain topics appears to have been influenced by Paul VI’s encyclical. Confirmation of this can be found having a look to *Caritas*’ titles, where the term ‘development’ is largely present. *Populorum*’s subtitle says that it is an *encyclical letter on the development of people*.³⁵⁶ Benedict XVI expressly calls *Populorum* an inspiration for his work. Here, the theological inspiration behind *Populorum* will be traced, clarifying why that text must be considered even forty years after its publication.

Benedict XVI declares without hesitation that when we read *Populorum* we are reading the *Rerum novarum* of contemporary times. This huge relevance given to *Populorum* is due to the accurate understanding of society and of its problems that Paul VI made at that time.³⁵⁷ Moreover, when we consider where

³⁵² BELTRAMO, *A liberation theologian in the Holy Office?*, in *Vatican Insider*.

³⁵³ C. TAYLOR, Benedict XVI, in *Public Culture*, 18, 1. Duke University Press, 2006. 10.

³⁵⁴ See above IV, 2. and below in this chapter.

³⁵⁵ See BREEN, Love, truth and economy, in *Har. J. of L. & P. Pol.*, 991; SISON, FONTRONDA, The common good of business, in *J. Bus. Ethics*, 100.

³⁵⁶ More exactly, the chapters are: II, Human development in our time. III, Fraternity, economic development and civil society. IV, The development of peoples, rights and duties, the environment. VI, The development of people and technology. Thus, only chapter one, The message of *Populorum progressio*, and chapter five, The cooperation of human family, do not have the word development in their title.

³⁵⁷ See *Caritas*, 8.

Caritas takes inspiration from *Populorum* we are already into some core arguments of *Caritas*.

One could say that *Populorum* tried to translate the Gospel's message with coherence for then surfacing problems of its time, seeing the global and post-modern viewpoint as new means for interpreting the contemporary world. After 40 years since Paul VI's encyclical, Benedict XVI finds it important to study *Populorum* as the most urgent issues addressed in that encyclical are still there waiting to be fully solved.³⁵⁸ As examples, we can notice the striking inequalities between different parts of the world and the hunger in the non-developed countries as core themes both in *Populorum* and *Caritas*. The problem of hunger indeed is central also in stimulating the thought of contemporary economists such as Amartya Sen, who describes our globalized world as one facing global inequalities.³⁵⁹

Twenty years after *Populorum*, half of the way to *Caritas*, John Paul II published *Sollicitudine rei socialis*, a commemoration and a theological tribute to the Letter about people's development, which was both a commemoration and an actualization that the pope from Poland considered necessary. Aware of all this, Benedict XVI puts himself on the same line as his two predecessors in continuing and actualising the work.

The perspective of 'eternal life'

Following the text of *Caritas*, I will now give a brief account of what Benedict XVI considers the most relevant points of *Populorum*, points which he wants to maintain as relevant through his encyclical. Initially, he recognizes how *Populorum* finds, referring to development, its source of meaning in Jesus Christ:

He [Paul VI] taught that life in Christ is the first and principal factor of development (see *Populorum*, 16) and he entrusted us with the task of travelling the path of development with all our heart and all our intelligence (see *Populorum*, 82), that is to say with the ardour of charity and the wisdom of truth. It is the primordial truth of God's love, grace bestowed upon us, that opens our lives to gift and makes it possible to hope for a 'development of the whole man and of all men' (*Populorum*, 42), to hope for progress 'from less human conditions to those which are more human' (*Populorum*, 20) [...].³⁶⁰

Assuming this as a primary presupposition, Benedict XVI places his first social encyclical in the same tradition as Paul VI's Letter. Benedict XVI follows the teaching of his predecessor when rooting development in God. What comes even closer to *Populorum*'s content, in terms of a direct theological influence, is a vision of life which developed during the Second Vatican Council.

Vatican II, as paraphrased in *Caritas*, went through an evaluation of the meaning of the RC Christian faith that during those council's years had been deepened and better analysed according to the theology of the RCC and according to the needs and the global evolutions as seen at that time. The acknowledgement of the

³⁵⁸ See *Caritas*, 21.

³⁵⁹ See A. K. SEN, *Globalizzazione: valore ed etica*, intervention at the conference on globalization organized by the Fondazione Falcone, in memory of Giovanni Falcone, May 23, 2001, in A., K. SEN, *Globalizzazione e libertà*. Milano: Mondadori, 2002. 11; A. K. SEN, A world of extremes: ten thesis on globalization. *Los Angeles Times*. July 17, 2001.

³⁶⁰ *Caritas*, 8.

Vatican II and of *Populorum* as sources of inspiration has newly inscribed the perspective of the social life of the human being in the theological horizon of the eternal life:

Without the perspective of eternal life, human progress in this world is denied breathing-space. Enclosed within history, it runs the risk of being reduced to the mere accumulation of wealth [...]. In the course of history, it was often maintained that the creation of institutions was sufficient to guarantee the fulfilment of humanity's right to development. Unfortunately, too much confidence was placed in those institutions, as if they were able to deliver the desired objective automatically. In reality, institutions by themselves are not enough, because integral human development is primarily a vocation, and therefore it involves a free assumption of responsibility in solidarity on the part of everyone. Moreover, such development requires a transcendent vision of the person, it needs God: without him, development is either denied, or entrusted exclusively to man, who falls into the trap of thinking he can bring about his own salvation, and ends up promoting a dehumanized form of development.³⁶¹

This quote summarizes many points that are at the basis of *Caritas'* intellectual background. The second part, especially, appears to be interesting for our analysis. According to what we have read, it becomes something essential to root human growth and development on a transcendental pre-supposition. The reflection on the social context implies a perspective regarding our life that goes beyond the material boundaries.

In Benedict XVI's discourse, to live with the perspective of 'eternal life' would mean to live not for instant gratification. Our aim, following this reasoning, should be that of building something in the present with the inner perspective that it is ultimately done for a life that will come afterwards. Without this perspective, Benedict XVI advises us, people risk to end up relying uniquely on the material and the immediately tangible world. Depending for sense and meaning only on the material aspects of life could slowly bury any transcendental inspiration that may arise. Benedict XVI assumes that each human being has within himself this desire for something beyond materiality and for comprehending his own life from a not-exclusively-material standpoint.

The contribution of religions to development

It is in the same atmosphere of *Populorum* and Vatican II that came the explicit consideration of the Roman Catholic Church in regards of other religions. Other forms of spirituality and religiosity can give good insights about each human being's transcendence's will.

This attitude was inserted in an official declaration of Vatican II, *Nostra aetate*, and in the dogmatic constitution *Lumen gentium*,³⁶² regarding the universality of the religious message:

³⁶¹ *Caritas*, 11.

³⁶² See SECOND VATICAN COUNCIL, *Lumen gentium*. 13 – 16. AAS 57. 1965; B. GIANOTTI, *I padri della Chiesa al concilio Vaticano II. La teologia patristica nella Lumen gentium*. Bologna: EDB, 2010. 396.

[...] other religions found everywhere try to counter the restlessness of the human heart, each in its own manner, by proposing ‘ways’, comprising teachings, rules of life, and sacred rites. The Catholic Church rejects nothing that is true and holy in these religions. She regards with sincere reverence those ways of conduct and of life, those precepts and teachings which, though differing in many aspects from the ones she holds and sets forth, nonetheless often reflect a ray of that Truth which enlightens all men. [...] The Church, therefore, exhorts her sons, that through dialogue and collaboration with the followers of other religions, carried out with prudence and love and in witness to the Christian faith and life, they recognize, preserve and promote the good things, spiritual and moral, as well as the socio-cultural values found among these men.³⁶³

With a philosophical outlook this position can be defined as ‘open inclusivism’, which means that an institution, in this case the Roman Catholic Church, does not aim to change the content of its own statements, but can accept external positions, coming also from different religious contexts, that coincide with relevant elements of its own doctrine.³⁶⁴ Within the theological discourse, a forerunner of some results of Vatican II was Karl Rahner with his theory of the ‘anonymous Christian’.³⁶⁵ This theory represents the ‘inclusivism’ we are talking about in the theological context of the RCC.³⁶⁶ It has been noted that if it is true that the theology of Karl Rahner has been somehow ‘censored’ before the Council, afterwards the atmosphere and the results of Vatican II represent ‘Rahner’s rehabilitation’.³⁶⁷ Undoubtedly, there has been a theological influence of Rahner’s theology from the period before the Council, especially regarding ecumenism and interreligious dialogue, on the texts of the Second Vatican Council.³⁶⁸

It is relevant to notice that Benedict XVI confirms the view officially established since Vatican II concerning the evaluation of other religious movements and institutions as positive sources for contributing to the well-being of peoples.³⁶⁹

From the theological basis of the Vatican II one understands more completely that *Caritas* recognizes transcendental awareness in each form of spirituality. In an epoch of intense globalization and religious tension such as today, it is important to know this recognition of other traditions.

³⁶³ SECOND VATICAN COUNCIL, *Nostra aetate*. 2, AAS 58, 1965.

³⁶⁴ See P. J. GRIFFITHS, *Problems of religious diversity*. Oxford: Blackwell, 2001. 60.

³⁶⁵ See K. RAHNER, *Das Christentum und die nichtchristlichen Religionen*, in *Schriften zur Theologie*, V. Einsiedeln: Benzinger, 1962. 136 – 158; and K. RAHNER, *Die anonymen Christen*, in *Schriften zur Theologie*, IV. Einsiedeln: Benzinger, 1965. 545 – 554.

³⁶⁶ See K. KILBY, *Karl Rahner. Theology and philosophy*. London: Routledge, 2004. 1, 116; T. O’MEARA, *God in the world: a guide to Karl Rahner’s theology*. Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2007. 1, 87 – 89; K. RAHNER, *Erinnerungen, im Gespräch mit Meinold Krauss*. Freiburg: Verlag Herder, 1984; A. MARRANZINI, Editoriale, in A. RÖPER, *I cristiani anonimi*. Brescia: Queriniana, 1967. 37 – 43.

³⁶⁷ See R. LENNAN, *The ecclesiology of Karl Rahner*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. 1995. 8, 266.

³⁶⁸ See E. I. CASSIDY, *Ecumenism and interreligious dialogue*. Unitatis redintegratio, Nostra aetate. New York: Paulist Press, 2005. 4.

³⁶⁹ On this particular characteristic of Vatican II see also M. RUOKANEN, *The Catholic doctrine of non-Christian religions. According to the Second Vatican Council*. Leiden: Brill, 1992.

Persons and institutions

In the second major quote in this chapter there is the statement that ‘institutions by themselves are not enough’. Here Benedict XVI points out one opinion he already clearly expressed in the previous encyclical *Spe salvi*, where he stated that ‘the right state of human affairs, the moral well-being of the world can never be guaranteed simply through structures alone, however good they are. Such structures are not only important, but necessary; yet they cannot and must not marginalize human freedom’.³⁷⁰ Regarding the role of institutions, we can say that according to Benedict XVI these are necessary, but do not entirely and absolutely fulfil what pertains to the duties and freedom of the human person.

Benedict XVI thinks that without any transcendental consideration of the human life, people can erroneously believe that the institutional level in society has solutions for every problem. Benedict XVI considers the human institutions, which are obviously useful, as tools for people’s free will. This means that institutions are not seen as the main end of human activity but just as means. In this he closely follows the teaching of Paul VI.³⁷¹ Benedict XVI stresses a risk regarding institutions, which they can take God’s place and would be addressed to solve problems just due to their being in existence. Obviously, the possibility to build fair worldly institutions implies the participation of all political actors, including those in developing countries. To be able to do this there is the need for responsible freedom also in those countries that do not share yet the well-being of the majority of the Western societies. In this sense, Amartya Sen proposes his view for the improvement of freedom. In its practical meaning, the improvement of democratic and political freedom is at one time the presupposition, and then the end, of any developmental process.³⁷² Thus, in Sen’s view, development coincides with freedom.

Benedict XVI emphasizes again the responsibility of each individual human person towards other human persons, both for those acting in institutions and those not. The practical consequence of this standpoint is that the institutional level is limited to that of an instrument for better achieving the common good. The reasoning is, in other words, that once the individual human being is aware of the proper responsibility for the well-being of other people, then institutions might work properly. To reach this particular awareness, to be conscious of one’s specific responsibilities towards others it is necessary, according to Benedict XVI, to put God in the horizon of our moral choices.

Development as ‘vocation’

Still referring to the main text of *Caritas*, we may now consider other arguments in Paul IV’s encyclical and consider why Benedict XVI sees these as relevant in our times. We consider now the meaning of ‘progress’, and its synonym ‘development’, and the consequences of this for the social doctrine.

The starting point for reflection upon development, within *Populorum* is in Paul VI’s interpretation of development as ‘vocation’:

³⁷⁰ BENEDICT XVI, *Spe salvi*, 24.

³⁷¹ ‘Paul VI had a keen sense of the importance of economic structures and institutions, but he had an equally clear sense of their nature as instruments of human freedom.’ *Caritas*, 17.

³⁷² See SEN, *Development as freedom*. The closeness of *Caritas*’ approach to that of Sen is also pointed in M. TOSO, *La speranza dei popoli. Lo sviluppo nella carità e nella verità*. Roma: LAS, 2009. 29.

In *Populorum progressio*, Paul VI taught that progress, in its origin and essence, is first and foremost a *vocation*: ‘in the design of God, every man is called upon to develop and fulfil himself, for every life is a vocation.’ (*Populorum*, 15) This is what gives legitimacy to the Church’s involvement in the whole question of development.³⁷³

One point Paul VI makes in identifying development with vocation is to state that each person participates in development, because each one is called by his personal and specific vocation to do something. And this ‘something’ regards the sense of development. This consideration regards the individual person in the common daily activities as well as the attitude of companies in the interaction with other institutions.³⁷⁴

But why, then, is it relevant for us to notice this identification of development and vocation? Saying that development is a vocation, and hence that human progress belongs naturally to human beings, as an aspiration coming from their inner awareness, means that human beings are called from the inside to develop.

The vocation is a calling, an invitation,³⁷⁵ and we intend so in this theological context. As it is easy to foresee, the Roman Catholic Church sees this calling as a transcendental one. We could say that Roman Catholic social thought recognizes here an element of God’s plan in putting human beings on their way to fulfilment. That we strive for development, in this way, is something that God accepts and helps us to accomplish. Moreover, the view proposed considers that people need to develop; we may say they need to realize themselves. The Roman Catholic Church considers this fact as a natural human property, therefore in line with God’s will. Social teaching definitely identifies this inner drive for progress and development as something that God wants us to follow for reaching the good in our social life. It is also for this reason that Benedict XVI believes *Populorum* to be a timelessly valid teaching of social doctrine:

To regard *development as a vocation* is to recognize, on the one hand, that it derives from a transcendent call, and on the other hand that it is incapable, on its own, of supplying its ultimate meaning. Not without reason the word ‘vocation’ is also found in another passage of the Encyclical [*Populorum*], where we read: ‘There is no true humanism but that which is open to the Absolute, and is conscious of a vocation which gives human life its true meaning.’ (*Populorum*, 42) This vision of development is at the heart of *Populorum progressio* [...]. It is also the principal reason why that Encyclical is still timely in our day.³⁷⁶

Therefore, development, according to the definition given in *Caritas* and, as introduced in the magisterium by Paul VI, means to recognize a transcendental call. Social teaching intends this vocation to be open to the ‘Absolute’. As we have read above also in other passages, we should not consider this world’s materialism as the

³⁷³ *Caritas*, 16.

³⁷⁴ *Caritas*, 11; See K. E. GOODPASTER, Goods that are truly good and services that truly serve: reflections on ‘*Caritas in Veritate*’, in *J. Bus. Ethics*, 100. 2011. 14; BREEN, Love, truth and economy, in *Har. J. of L. & P. Pol.*, 1010, 1022.

³⁷⁵ *Vocātus*, -ūs: appel, invitation. A. ERNOUT, A. MEILLET, *Dictionnaire étymologique de la langue latine*. Paris: Éditions Klincksieck, 1985. 754.

³⁷⁶ *Caritas*, 16.

ultimate criterion for evaluating choices and consequences of actions. That is why the Roman Catholic Church's social teaching, through *Populorum*, speaks of a development that must be 'integral' and 'human', defining it *integral human development*, as we can read in the some passages in the *Compendium* too.³⁷⁷ This means to include in the concept of development and progress a definition of what is 'human' that, in this case, is mainly given by the religious tradition of the Roman Catholic Church. Here, the Gospel, applied to a social extent, enlightens us about the true meaning of being human, which is, to be open to the absolute and to individuate within us a transcendental call towards supreme love.

Benedict XVI includes this perspective in his social theology, and in *Caritas* which according to its subtitle is an encyclical *on integral human development in charity in truth*. It is true that a difference between Paul VI and Benedict XVI is that the first had more concern than the second in understanding 'development' and 'progress' as major issues on the institutional and international levels rather than on the individual level. This is due to the historical context of *Populorum*, that had to consider the instances of the liberation theologies of Latin America, thus emphasizing the social and political aspects of development against structural social injustices. Moreover, those were the years in which the rise and implementation of international agencies of trade and finance, such as GATT (*General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade*, 1947) and the IMF (*International Monetary Fund*, 1945), was confirming that development, progress and justice were not issues to be faced exclusively with policies in the individual states, thus enlarging the view on such matters.³⁷⁸

Integral human development

Another point that appears to be relevant for seeing the significance of Benedict XVI's intellectual assumptions regards what he considers the truth about human progress. For being considered 'true', progress must be 'integral'. Integral, in the context of social teaching, means that once we remain open to guidance by God's will we cannot forget our brothers. When Paul VI says that true development must be integral he is expressing a concept which is very similar in content with what we have seen in the *Compendium*, when dealing with fraternity and solidarity among human beings.³⁷⁹ It regards the 'integration' of others into a developmental line. Namely, according to this view, we cannot proceed on the road of progress if we leave apart someone from this path. According to RC social teaching, this comes to be a definitive criterion of evaluation for our modern times. In this context we should include in the evaluation of the practical results of developmental policies also a judgement based on, we may say, human inclusion and exclusion.

In addition to this, the question to ask ourselves might be: are we truly experiencing progress when the material wealth is the main criteria of evaluation? From this follows another question: are we truly experiencing progress when our material successes only benefits a part of the world's population? To really proceed on a path of human growth, we should strive for having shared all the material profits, as well as immaterial advantages, with the largest possible worldly

³⁷⁷ See, above all, *Compendium* 4, 175.

³⁷⁸ See D. DORR, *Option for the poor and for the earth. Catholic social teaching*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2012. 160.

³⁷⁹ See above IV, 5.

population. Such a progress, here, does not coincide in full with the growth of economic indicators such as GDP (*gross domestic product*). The will to rethink some methods of analysis for what regards development and progress is something that regards also the world of the economists. Amartya Sen, Joseph Stiglitz and Jean-Paul Fitoussi share the purpose to look at the traditional methods of analysis with an innovative intention.³⁸⁰

We can conclude that if development reaches humanity as a whole and progress is shared, we have realized a transcendental end that social teaching speaks about. As *Caritas* reminds us, Roman Catholic social teaching wants not only the highest possible degree of development for the individual, but wants that same progress for all humans:

The truth of development consists in its completeness: if it does not involve the whole man and every man, it is not true development. This is the central message of *Populorum progressio*, valid for today and for all time. Integral human development on the natural plane, as a response to a vocation from God the Creator (see *Populorum*, 16), demands self-fulfilment in a 'transcendent humanism which gives [to man] his greatest possible perfection: this is the highest goal of personal development' (*Populorum*, 16).³⁸¹

Benedict XVI states here how the 'true' development not only requires the individual's *material* well-being but the whole person must be involved. Since in his theology the human person is both a material and spiritual being, this would mean that development necessarily has to leave space for non-material needs to be fulfilled and these immaterial instances need to be recognized. This last presupposition determines that *Caritas* considers as decisive factors in identifying human progress both the individual person's transcendental aspects and the spreading of material and spiritual advantages for all human beings. This conception of the human being is indeed present also in the previous encyclical of Benedict XVI, *Spe salvi*, for which 'man [...] is not merely the product of economic conditions, and it is not possible to redeem him purely from the outside by creating a favourable economic environment'.³⁸²

A transcendental humanism, in his view, is the way to pursue. In this sense the integral human development of *Caritas* inherits the personalist perspective of Mounier and Maritain that was already present in the social doctrine.³⁸³ The person should be considered in his/her specific integrity, and the development needs to be intended a development of people/persons.

In concluding this section on Paul VI and the concept of development, we may underline some elements which become relevant for having a clear outlook of the role of development in both Benedict XVI's encyclical and Roman Catholic Church's social thought of today.

³⁸⁰ See, for instance, J. E. STIGLITZ, A. K. SEN, J-P. FITOUSSI, *Mismeasuring our lives. Why GDP doesn't add up*. New York: The New Press, 2010.

³⁸¹ *Caritas*, 18.

³⁸² BENEDICT XVI, *Spe salvi*, 21.

³⁸³ See S. ZAMAGNI, Dalla 'Caritas in Veritate' la chiave interpretativa della crisi, in A. FERRO, P. SASSI, eds., *Cultura d'impresa e costruzione del bene comune. L'enciclica Caritas in veritate per un mondo migliore*. Città del Vaticano: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2010. 61.

Firstly, development is defined as a 'vocation'. It is a call to develop, to progress and to advance on being truly human. This call comes, in social teaching, from an inner tension that human beings have within them, put there by God. From this consideration comes a double-sided conclusion. Namely, the character of vocation is what gives to development its transcendental trait. But also, in this sense, the 'call to development' is considered by social thought as 'natural' in human beings.

Second, there is then a basic structure on which the concept of development is built in the Roman Catholic Church. Development, to be true and to be accepted as such by social teaching, must be integral and human. This means that not only should all aspects regarding the individual human person be taken into account when development is the object of study. Moreover, also we have to consider that any progress to be positively evaluated must regard all human beings and not only a restricted part. This is possible, says the encyclical, only when our development is open to the absolute, namely open to the word of God, to listen and to put it into practice.