

Fatima End Time Apostles and Catholic Social Teaching

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FATIMA AND SOCIAL DOCTRINE OF THE CHURCH

Many Catholics, including those with a cultural formation and knowledge of the theology and spirituality of the Church look upon Her Social Doctrine as a mere assistance activity to help the poor and the disabled. They often forget that the principal role of the Church is the practice of CHARITY. There is no authentic spirituality without charity. God himself is charity, according to the [First Epistle of St. John: 4:8](#).

Charity is the basis for Divine Liturgy. The Eucharistic Sacrifice is pure charity. The Holy Communion is absolute charity. Divine Office, the official prayer of the Church is charity in its maximum expression. Thus, charity is the core of authentic spirituality! Spirituality without charity is an empty devotional practice that is unacceptable to God! It is a mere exercise of egocentric individualism.

Charity in the heart projects outward to all members of human societies, inspiring justice and fair distribution of goods according to the needs of our brothers and sisters.

Because charity comes by grace from the Holy Trinity, human ideologies with atheistic backgrounds and totalitarian control mechanisms cannot forge a New World steeped in justice and charity. These ideologies engendered oppressive structures that were the cause of great suffering and lack of authentic democracy and personal freedom for millions of people throughout the world.

On the other hand, an ideology, expressed in its version of savage ambition for profits and luxuries, cannot serve as

model either. It would be like replacing one monster's head (aesthetic materialism) with another (hedonistic materialism), but still the same dragon. Materialism is not only dialectic, it can also be pragmatic, that of consumerism. Pope John Paul II saw through this false dichotomy and therefore understood that the solution to the social question would not arise out of political competition between the two dominant systems. The savage ambition of a hedonistic system cannot serve to rebuild the world since it is characterized by its own spiritual and moral crisis, substituting God's primacy with greed, goods consumption and unjust distribution of riches. Such a system, though differing in name from communism or collectivism, results over time in pragmatic atheism, a different head on the same monster of Materialism – something else is needed.

GREAT LESSONS OF THE ENCYCLICAL LETTER "[CENTESIMUS ANNUS](#)"

On May 22, 2010, the Holy Father Benedict XVI pronounced a speech to the "Centesimus Annus Pro Pontifice Foundation" stating:

"Today, more than ever, the human family can grow as a free society of free peoples so long as globalization is guided by solidarity and the common good and by social justice, all of which find a precious wellspring in the message of Christ and of the Church. The common good is the goal that gives meaning to progress and development, which otherwise would be limited only to the production of material goods. These goods are necessary, but without the orientation to the common good, consumerism, waste, poverty and inequality come to prevail, which are negative factors for progress and development."

Today's moment in history presents the terrible financial crisis of the more developed countries, specifically more profound in the United States of America and Europe, due to the wrong decisions made to embrace the war in Iraq and not to

limit the greed and avarice of the financial, stock, and mortgage markets that threatens whole nations with bankruptcy. The irresponsible speculation of so many should have been restricted by upright politicians; **politics must have primacy over finance**, and by a system of ethics that must be the guiding force for all social action – political, economic, and cultural. Instead, we are increasingly burdened by unsustainable debt and moral malaise.

After all, this is what happens when humanity turns to the old ways of the Babel Tower, pretending to have access to heaven without God; that is, pretending to obtain happiness and glory while eradicating God from public life. But this is not possible. When human beings pretend to act as if God does not exist, they tend to get what they ask for and in the long run are abandoned to their own designs, which inevitably lead to humiliation and despair. Perhaps America and Europe will learn their mutual lessons from history, from the two great wars of the twentieth century, from the Cold War, and from the looming collapse of the Western economies?

Pope Benedict XVI wisely stated:

“The fundamental priority for the development of the entire family of peoples, however, is to strive to recognize the true scale of goods and values. The notion of integral human development presupposes such things as subsidiarity and solidarity, and interdependence between State, society and the market. In a global society made up of many different peoples and religions, the common good and integral development must be achieved with everyone’s contribution. Religions have a crucial role to play in this, especially when they teach fraternity and peace. THE EXCLUSION OF RELIGION FROM PUBLIC LIFE –AND AT THE OTHER EXTREME, RELIGIOUS FUNDAMENTALISM – HINDERS AND ENCOUNTER BETWEEN PERSONS AND THEIR COLLABORATION FOR THE PROGRESS OF HUMANITY. PUBLIC LIFE IS SAPPED OF ITS MOTIVATION AND POLITICS BECOMES DOMINEERING AND AGGRESSIVE”.

These dynamic insights coming from Papal Social teaching are echoed in the Message of Fatima, which provides three main teachings that move us in the same direction as the papal teachings of the encyclical letter:

- God is first! He must be at the center of human life. All things orbit around His laws and commandments. This is the primacy of God!
- The fate of nations, the fate of the world, has been entrusted to the Immaculate Heart of Mary. We must pray to her Immaculate Heart to obtain world peace. This is God's will.
- The collapse of the Soviet Union, the openness of Eastern Europe to the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the reunification of Germany and the fall of the Berlin Wall, signs of **the beginning of the triumph of the Immaculate Heart of Mary** promised at Fatima, are a great grace from Heaven that must be completed by the European efforts to build new societies based on the "civilization of love" principles, thereby bringing about the "globalization of solidarity" in a world wounded by greed and exploitation and in need of healing grace rooted in justice and charity as the papal social doctrine teaches.

DIFFICULTIES IN BRINGING ABOUT SOCIAL TRANSFORMATION OVERSHADOWED BY GOSPEL AND FATIMA MESSAGE WHICH FORESHADOWS A REUNION OF EUROPE IN THE FAITH

According to Pope Benedict XVI

"Modern culture, particularly in Europe, runs the risk of amnesia, of forgetting and thus abandoning the extraordinary heritage aroused and inspired by Christian faith, which is the essential framework of the culture of Europe... Today too these roots are alive and fruitful in East and West, and can inspire a new humanism...to respond to the numerous and

sometimes crucial challenges that our Christian communities and societies have to face: first among them, that of secularism, which not only impels us to ignore God and His designs, but ends up by denying the very dignity of human beings, in view of a society regulated only by selfish interests”

To secularism we must oppose the witnessing of believers of the Gospel of Jesus Christ to all, proclaiming that God is first, speaking about the rights of God as Creator and Redeemer to humanity. This is the great call of the Message of Fatima, capable of providing a religious experience that can transform the human heart as it transformed the hearts of Blessed Jacinta and Francisco and Venerable Sister Lucia.

Pope Benedict XVI concluded:

“Let us again let Europe breathe with both lungs, restore a soul not only to believers, but to all peoples of the continent, promote trust and hope, rooting them in the millennial experience of the Christian faith. THE COHERENT, GENEROUS AND COURAGEOUS WITNESS OF BELIEVERS MUST NOT NOW BE LACKING, so that together we may look to our shared future, a future in which the freedom and dignity of all men and women are recognized as a fundamental value, in which openness to the Transcendent, the experience of faith, is recognized as an essential element of the human being.”

WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE FIRST?

First, we must grow spiritually close to Christ under the Queenship of Mary who leads us to her Son in the Eucharist. Then practically speaking, we should focus on the formation of leaders that will guide our communities and societies to construct the Kingdom of God on earth, a new civilization of love so much needed to attain peace and happiness.

THE NEED TO HAVE AUTHENTIC CHRISTIAN POLITICIANS

When the Holy Father, Benedict XVI received participants to the twenty-fourth plenary assembly of the Pontifical Council for the Laity on May 21, 2010, he invited them to reflect on the theme: "Witnesses to Christ in the political community".

He told them that, although the "technical formation of politicians" is not part of the Church's mission, she reserves the right to "pass moral judgment in those matters which regard public order when the fundamental rights of the person or the salvation of souls require it".

Christ's disciples in our days must accomplish the great threefold mission to defeat "the spread of a confused relativism and of a utilitarian and hedonistic individualism (that) weakens democracy and favors the dominance of strong powers":

1. "It is up to the lay faithful to show –in their personal and family life, in social cultural and political life– that the faith enables them to read reality in a new and profound way, and to transform it", said the Pope.
2. "It is also the duty of the laity to participate actively in the political life, in a manner coherent with the teaching of the Church, bringing their well-founded reasoning and great ideals into the democratic debate, and into the search for a broad consensus among everyone who cares about the defense of life and freedom, the protection of truth and the good of the family, solidarity with the needy and the vital search for the common good".
3. The Holy Father went on: "There is the need for authentically Christian politicians but, even more so, for lay faithful who bear witness to Christ and the Gospel in the civil and political community. This need must be reflected in the educational prospectus of the ecclesial community and requires new forms of presence

and support from pastors, Christian membership of associations, ecclesial movements and new communities can be a good school for such disciples and witnesses, supported by the charismatic, community, educational and missionary resources of those groups”.

During his May 13, 2010 visitation to the Shrine of Fatima, Pope Benedict XVI insisted that all communities must live the Message of Fatima since all communities are called by this message to repent and do penance, to convert to Jesus Christ and abandon the evil spirit and his worldly deeds as was promised in our baptism.

The World Apostolate of Fatima, an International Public Association of the Faithful, has as its charisma the formation of lay people in the New Evangelization using as instrument the authentic Message of Fatima. This is the educational prospectus of our association, to carry on this mission enriching the ecclesial community with a new vision for our families in the present times of confusion and uncertainty. As Pope Benedict XVI said at Fatima:

“DO NOT BE AFRAID TO TALK OF GOD!” The great challenge of our times is “the separation and the opposition between secularism and the culture of faith”

Pope Benedict stressed that this is “something anomalous and must be transcended. The present moment is for the two to come together, and in this way to discover its true identity.”

This is ” is Europe’s mission and mankind’s need in our history.”

During this Year of Mercy, inspired by divine grace and the ongoing conversion of Russia as foretold by Our Lady, we must renew our spiritual and apostolic zeal, accepting the Gospel of Christ in its entirety and witnessing with passion the experience of charity, the religious experience of God’s mystery, that light shed from the Immaculate Heart of Mary at

Fatima, which was God himself, transforming the hearts of the three little shepherds of Fatima.

The experience of God's love to humanity is transforming the hearts of the African continent with the ever new, everlasting power of Jesus Christ Risen from the dead! Suffering, anguish and death are all overcome by the power of the Risen One! This is the great existential lesson of the Fatima Message for all.