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# Presentation of the 'Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church'



VATICAN CITY  
2006

Montecassino Abbey

30 April 2006

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# PRESENTATION OF THE COMPENDIUM OF THE SOCIAL DOCTRINE OF THE CHURCH

RENATO RAFFAELE MARTINO

1. Already one and a half years have passed since the *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church* (from now on referred to only as the *Compendium*) was presented for the first time to the public on October 25, 2004. Since then, this document has been translated into many languages, which now represents a truly global phenomenon, and which should be emphasized, in that there is great interest in it. It has been translated into Spanish, French, English (versions for England, Ireland, the United States, India and some African countries), German, Portuguese, Russian, Korean, Chinese, Polish, Croatian, Serbian, and Albanian. The Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace has been called from various continents to attend meetings and assemblies for the presentation and study of the *Compendium*. Some of these gatherings were of a pastoral nature, others of a public nature with the presence of scholars, people involved in the economy or the society, politicians and representatives of institutions. Among the many – and all very important – meetings and opportunities for dialogue, I would like on this occasion to mention two of evident symbolic importance: the presentation of the *Compendium* in Cuba and Russia. Cuba was important for the presence in that country of a Communist regime and for the liveliness of a Catholic Church which is very involved in the sector concerning the laity. Russia was important in both Saint Petersburg and Moscow for the contacts made with the Orthodox Church, which were favored by the presentation of the *Compendium*. These are two very important themes, one being political ideology and the other Ecumenism, towards which the propagation of the *Compendium* may bring a great contribution, in that it helps to explain, understand one another and dialogue in the search for truth.

There is no doubt that the circulation of the *Compendium* had immediately, since its publication, become a global editorial event. It continues to be so, as new translations into various languages are published. The Internet sites in which it appears and those created specifically to publicize it are numerous. Pocket-sized versions are also being printed, and new didactic material is being produced for a translation of the *Compendium* in the form of a social catechesis fit for work groups in Christian commu-

nities. This is all very exciting and confirms to all those who worked on this project of the great importance of the idea launched by the Bishops of America during their Synod and acknowledged by Pope John Paul II, who entrusted the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace to write up this particular document. The project was enthusiastically started under the guidance of the late, Cardinal François-Xavier Nguyễn Văn Thuận, who was then President of the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, and was completed during my term as President. I must confess that among the numerous activities of the Pontifical Dicastery which I preside, the writing and publication of the *Compendium* were very much in my heart. This also now includes its propagation and the response to it in the particular churches and in the various social contexts in all the nations of the world. Having to estimate, at this point, the response to the *Compendium* in the year and a half since its publication, I would venture to say that it has been received more enthusiastically in countries outside Europe – in Asia, Africa and Latin America – than in Europe itself. I must also admit that so much more has to be done so that the *Compendium* may be systematically used as a reference point in a social and pastoral teaching appropriate to the times, and conform to the Teachings of the Church, trusting that the light of the Gospel is still the principle impulse for human development. While in a few cases the Social Doctrine of the Church was only given honorable mention, it is hoped that the *Compendium*, as a part of the entire body of Social Doctrine, will be viewed not simply as a ‘summary’, but rather as a new chapter in favor of life.

I believe that the distribution and response to the *Compendium* depend very much upon the perception one has of it. For this reason both the Secretary of the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace and I have, on many occasions, tried to explain the sense of this document, in order to avoid reductive interpretations. I am also very much in favor of the initiatives based on the study of the *Compendium*, done by experts, by research centers and by specialized publications, because they represent useful contributions to the theological and pastoral clarification of the *Compendium* itself. This can only bring about positive consequences to its use. At this point I would also like to recall the foundation of the Cardinal Van Thuận International Observatory on the Social Doctrine of the Church, organized precisely when the *Compendium* was published, and which directly handles its circulation and distribution. This is a useful initiative that I feel must be encouraged. In this context, I very much appreciated that this Pontifical Academy is dedicating its authoritative attention to the *Com-*

*pendium*. Surely your interest in the document will contribute to explaining the meaning of the *Compendium* within the mission of the Church in this historical moment. If the nature and objectives of this document are adequately understood, then it can be acknowledged even more so from a quantitative point of view than it has been in the past, and, more importantly, more useful from a qualitative point of view. For this reason, I would like to examine with you some aspects regarding precisely the nature of the *Compendium* and its meaning at the present time, giving particular attention to its relationship with culture, with knowledge and experience, and with the sciences of mankind.

2. The purpose of the *Compendium* would be certainly irrelevant if it were simply an Editorial compilation of the social Encyclicals of the Popes from *Rerum novarum* until the present. Many manuals on the Social Doctrine of the Church have been written in the last few decades, and all have carried out with various degrees of success their task of making it known. There was of course no need to write another one and, above all, there was no need that the Pope entrust a Pontifical Council to do so. It is therefore clear that the idea of the *Compendium* has an importance which is far greater than that of a manual. In order to make this clear, I would like to take three points into consideration.

2.a) The first point pertains to the situation at the end of the '90's. The social question after the episodes which occurred in 1989 had been analyzed by *Centesimus annus*, as a 'precaution', in that a new era had just begun; one in which we find ourselves in today. In 1989 the Second World War was long over, as Pope John Paul II wrote in *Centesimus annus* (n. 28), and with it also the world that was once divided into blocs and totalitarian ideologies. A 'straightjacket' which had in some way harnessed the world for so many years had torn. *Centesimus annus*, as we know, gives a theological interpretation of these events: totalitarianism is born from the will to tear God from the heart of man, and development must be viewed from 'the attitude man takes to the greatest mystery: the mystery of God' (n. 24). The Encyclical then draws a series of suggestions from the events of 1989 with the aim of laying down the lines of hope for the future.

By the end of the '90's, the 'evaluation' stage had already begun. Once the world was freed of its straightjacket made of ideologies and policy of blocs, new threats surfaced, which pertained to the very identity of mankind. Having shed its straightjacket of ideologies, new forms of liberty and religious freedom emerged, however new forms of nihilism at its purest

state also emerged. Nihilism, which in the past had been expressed through destructive ideologies, was now expressed through purely technical ones.

In every field of today's social context, this marks the core of the relationship between the technological and ethical aspects. It becomes clear why bioethical issues came to light with such explosive force at such a time. Of course, scientific development supported these issues, from DNA mapping to computer science. If the world had remained within the previous system, however, the ethical issues would still be 'covered' by old-school ideological and political argumentations. This is evident in three fields that are in particular need of orientation: ecology, bioethics, and globalization.

What does converting technology into an absolute mean (nihilism)? It means making man a 'product'. Therefore, the 'anthropological issue' strongly emerges, in that it is necessary to confirm at the cultural level that man *is not a product*. Mankind will increasingly take sides between technology and ethics: these will become the new 'blocs'. There will be the division between those who retain that man is a product and those who do not. This will probably be the 'great division' of the future.

This is all of great social importance, and for this reason the anthropological issue is today the social question *par excellence*, and vice versa, the social issue is essentially an anthropological one. The nihilistic version of technology makes mankind a historical and cultural product (artificial), cutting off any connection with nature and tradition (and with Creation). Man is no longer a 'design', rather he is 'designed'. Man no longer has duties, rather solely rights leading to the absolutism of 'forbidding prohibition'. Terrorism, the formation of a technical concept of politics, laity being formed as a neutral agents free from objective values, democracy intended only as a procedure, the transformation of economy into business, the interpretation of cultures from a relativistic point of view, and making both law and human rights technical are all new negative absolutes: they all render technology absolute.

The idea of this *Compendium* develops from the context of these problems. Considering the events which took place at the turn of the century, it is necessary to realistically conclude that the concerns deriving from the above-mentioned matters have become consolidated. A few characteristics of terrorism emphasized by Pope John Paul II in his Messages for the World Day of Peace of 2002 and 2003 include: the massive lack of respect for the right to life, the progress of genetic engineering through projects of cloning, the new and manifold world disorders – even after the end of Blocs had left hope for peace – all give witness, or at least it seems so to me, that a histor-

ical moment had arrived. Given that this passage took place contemporarily with the turn of the new millennium and the Jubilee Year, the Church felt the need, expressed through *Tertio millennio adveniente*, to make an *examination of conscience* even as far as its own Social Doctrine was concerned (cf. n. 27) and, as indicated in the *Novo millennio ineunte*, to emit 'creativity in charity' (n. 50). The theology and spirituality of the Jubilee compelled the Church to take account of the anthropological crisis which emerged at the end of ideologies and the new totalitarianism of technology, and to draw from the patrimony of its own Social Doctrine in order to give hope to the humanity of the new millennium. The project of the *Compendium* and its publication must be placed within this framework.

2.b) The second consideration pertains to the development and study on the nature of the Social Doctrine of the Church that during the nineties had been completed, eliminating definitively those doubts and concerns which had characterized the previous decades, especially during the Seventies. After the fundamental theological and epistemological clarification of the *Sollicitudo rei socialis* (nn. 1, 3, 41) and the *Centesimus annus* (nn. 5, 11, 53, 54, 55, 57, 59), ideological criticisms towards the Social Doctrine of the Church were proved to be senseless. Yet I am amazed that even today, twenty years after the publication of *Sollicitudo rei socialis*, there are still people who continue to linger over those obsolete positions.

It seems to me that there are three main specifications that the Magisterium made on the nature of the Social Doctrine of the Church. The first is that 'the Church proclaims God's salvation' and therefore the Social Doctrine belongs to the very evangelising mission of the Church (cf. *Centesimus annus*, n. 55). The second is that the Church is an organic and uniform 'doctrinal corpus' which becomes enriched by its contact with history, changing and yet remaining always the same, in that it is born from the light with which the Gospel illuminates the ever new situations that mankind must face (cf. *Sollicitudo rei socialis*, nn. 1 and 3). The third is that the Church, as far as her disciplinary formalities are concerned, *has something to say* in the field of moral theology (cf. *Sollicitudo rei socialis*, n. 41). In this manner, the Social Doctrine was included within the very heart of the Christian message and the mission of the Church. It was conceived as a whole organic body, structured so that it may become more profound in time. It was also considered moral theology, that is, springing from Faith, with a tendency towards common sense both at personal and community levels. It was founded on the Magisterium which is also of theological and moral competence and connected, as we will see, to the other fields of knowledge.

With these fundamental explanations the Social Doctrine of the Church was definitively removed from the circle of political ideology, as well as from that of the Catholic Diaspora. It resulted in a human and social knowledge based on the Gospel, capable of animating the multiple stages of human history without ever being identified with them, a source of understanding of human problems and their solution which involve taking on other abilities and responsibilities. It is an organized and compliant instrument of orientation for the future. It is coherent and respects the diversity of the various levels and is an instrument of proposal, while at the same time, of dialogue with all.

The *Compendium* was developed with this journey in mind and seeks to bring together in a comprehensive way an historical synthesis of Catholic Social Doctrine, primarily in Chapter II, 'The Church's Mission and Social Doctrine', and above all in Article II, entitled 'The Nature of the Church's Social Doctrine'. I would also say that the *Compendium* connects the relevant acquisitions of the Magisterium of Pope John Paul II with the previous history of the Social Doctrine, with a few profound intuitions of Pope John XXIII and, above all, with *Gaudium et spes* of the Second Vatican Council. The *Compendium*, therefore, is not only an assembly and recollection of the contents of *Centesimus annus* and *Sollicitudo rei socialis*, but it also puts them together in an organized and contextual framework. It can therefore be considered the result of the 'maturity' achieved by the Social Doctrine of the Church regarding its own understanding, in coherence with its past. The Nineties were, from this point of view, very useful and promising. Once the cautious attitudes and harsh criticisms of the past had subsided, there was new enthusiasm for the Social Doctrine of the Church, guided by the teachings of Pope John Paul II, and it was accepted with conviction. The *Compendium* was written with this spirit in mind and serves as a continuation of this spirit into the new Millennium.

2.c) We then naturally reach my third point, that is perhaps more comprehensible to you who are listening to me and to the very goals of the Pontifical Academy of Social Sciences. The *Compendium* was developed as a response to a cultural and anthropological crisis of transition from ideology to technology, and is based on theoretical explanations on the nature of the Church's Social Doctrine. Because of these two aspects, it aims at becoming a tool for fostering dialogue among different schools of learning regarding mankind, and especially social sciences. This expression includes not only quantitative sciences, but also philosophical and theological sciences as well.



I wish to recall that paragraph n. 59 of the Encyclical Letter *Centesimus annus* states that: ‘the Church’s social teaching has an important interdisciplinary dimension. In order to better incarnate the one truth about man in different and constantly changing social, economic and political contexts, this teaching enters into dialogue with the various disciplines concerned with man. It assimilates what these disciplines have to contribute, and helps them to open themselves to a broader horizon, aimed at serving the individual person who is acknowledged and loved in the fullness of his or her vocation’. The *Compendium* echoes this statement: ‘The Church’s Social Doctrine avails itself of contributions from all branches of knowledge, whatever their source, and has an important interdisciplinary dimension’ (n. 76).

This is an issue of great importance in terms of the relationship between the Gospel and culture. In fact, the Gospel must penetrate the various fields of knowledge by means of its interdisciplinary aspect, if the risk of it being linked to fundamentalism and secularisation is to be avoided. This aspect has not been studied in depth by experts. On this matter, I wish to mention a recent document prepared by His Excellency Msgr. Giampaolo Crepaldi and Mr. Stefano Fontana (‘La dimensione interdisciplinare della Dottrina sociale della Chiesa’ [*The Interdisciplinary Dimension of the Social Doctrine of the Church*], Cantagalli, Siena 2006). This essay is somehow a pioneer undertaking. Please allow me to make some remarks on this important issue, which I believe is so dear to each and every member of the Pontifical Academy of Social Sciences.

One of the most prominent features of today’s culture, especially in academic and advanced research, is specialization, which risks dangerous divisions among the disciplines that should have some degree of common ground in their fields of study. The tendency on behalf of each discipline to find the smallest area of competence, and the lack of true dialogue among scholars of various areas of culture and research, create confusion. There is the risk of missing the global picture from which specific disciplines can draw meaning and orientation, going beyond the aims of their study and research for a deeper understanding of phenomena. Fragmenting knowledge is a serious problem with other important anthropological implications, as Pope John Paul II recalled in *Fides et ratio*: ‘The segmentation of knowledge, with its splintered approach to truth and consequent fragmentation of meaning, keeps people today from coming to an interior unity’. (n. 85). The *Magisterium* of the Church reminds us that ‘the human being can come to a unified and organic vision of knowledge. This is one of the tasks which Christian thought will have to take up through the next millennium

of the Christian era'. (*ibidem*). The idea of preparing a *Compendium* of the Social Doctrine of the Church stemmed from having taken this invitation into serious consideration, and it is strongly hoped that the *Compendium* be welcomed and bear fruits of unified collaboration among the experts at the service of mankind. The Social Doctrine of the Church structurally tends towards interdisciplinary dialogue, in that, being 'a category of its own' it is originally interdisciplinary in itself, even before being put in relation to other disciplines. In fact, it is born out of faith and includes theology and philosophy among its primary fundamental elements. At the same time, human and social sciences are among its secondary elements. It therefore bears an analogical truth that is unified yet combined according to the different levels. The Social Doctrine of the Church is therefore capable of offering a referenced framework toward the various disciplines, fostering collaboration amongst them, with a deep respect for their specific fields. From this point of view, it has a practical wisdom.

I hope that the *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church* will acquire value even within the activities of the Pontifical Academy, as an element for dialogue and orientation among the different branches of knowledge, among you who are its active members.

3. Having now reached the end of my speech, I cannot but mention one of the most important passages of Pope Benedict XVI's recent Encyclical Letter *Deus caritas est*.

A key concept of this document is certainly that of 'purification'. The Holy Father applies it both to both reason by works of faith, and to justice by works of love. He writes that: 'Faith by its specific nature is an encounter with the living God – an encounter opening up new horizons extending beyond the sphere of reason. But it is also a purifying force for reason itself. From God's standpoint, faith liberates reason from its blind spots and therefore helps it to be ever more fully itself. Faith enables reason to do its work more effectively and to see its proper object more clearly'. (n. 28). This quote echoes the whole Encyclical Letter *Fides et ratio* by Pope John Paul II, which I already mentioned, especially in a well-summarized phrase: 'Revelation introduces into our history a universal and ultimate truth which stirs the human mind to ceaseless effort' (n. 14). This indeed entails that reason must also be open to faith. Faith purifies reason especially from this point of view: faith helps reason not to consider itself as self-sufficient. This is also true for the 'practical' reason; that is, one that does not aim at a 'knowledge for knowledge', as an end in itself, but rather

at a 'knowledge to be put into practice'. It is the reason which guides human actions. Yet even reason, the Pope teaches us, 'must undergo constant purification, since it can never be completely free from the danger of a certain ethical blindness caused by the dazzling effect of power and special interests' (n. 28). Passion sometimes allows us to see that which must be done better, however often it blinds us just the same.

Even politics, representing the sphere of practical reason aimed at directing human activities towards the good of man, tends to risk considering itself to be self-sufficient. It believes that it is capable, alone and through its own means, of completely creating justice; in other words, a totally human world. Social Teaching has constantly affirmed that political utopia coincides with political ideology. So, every time there is a tendency of portraying politics in a messianic role, the result being Hell on Earth. The positive aspect of politics is that it pursues *the legitimate order of society*. Its negative aspect is when it tends to do so alone, thus creating a paradise on Earth that can only end up being a form of totalitarianism. This happens when charity does not purify justice.

Faith purifies reason and charity purifies justice primarily by helping them not to fold up into themselves. Politics often runs the risk of entrusting justice merely to institutional or economic mechanisms. Sometimes justice is converted into 'equity', the result of a contract, thus losing its ability to *perceive*, through the eyes of faith and charity, true and personal human needs. Even in order to *give to each his own* – which is notably the main principle of justice – it is necessary to know what 'his own' exactly means. To achieve this awareness, statistics and planning are not enough. Finally, justice is a *virtue* of mankind before being a *social order*. There will not be *fair social order* without righteous men and women. Faith and charity are therefore very important in order to have men and women *capable of justice*. They should be, first of all, capable of accepting justice in their souls, and therefore, capable of promoting, keeping and also defending it. Without these prerequisites, it is doubtful that authentic justice will be realized.

I believe that, as stated by Pope Benedict XVI, the Social Doctrine of the Church places itself at the very point where faith purifies reason and charity purifies justice. It is my hope that the *Compendium*, as the Encyclical *Deus caritas est* quotes in paragraph 27, will be useful for this purpose. Thank you!

# PRESENTATION OF THE COMPENDIUM

EDMOND MALINVAUD

I am glad to praise here today the *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, after the presentation given by His Eminence Cardinal Martino. My main point is to say that this Compendium is a most valuable instrument for the work of our Academy, because it provides a complete, well organized and well argued account of the Social Doctrine of the Church, as it was at the date of its publication, and Cardinal Martino just explained to us what the new encyclical *Deus Caritas Est* is adding to it. This session at Montecassino Abbey should serve mainly to reflect on how we Academicians ought to make the best use of this instrument.

In the *Motu Proprio* establishing our Academy, John Paul II reminded us that during the century following *Rerum novarum* that encyclical has granted the Church ‘citizenship status’, that the subsequent progress of the Social Doctrine resulted from a close collaboration with Catholic social movements and with experts in social sciences, and that finally our new Academy would have the task of offering the Church elements which she could use in the study and development of her social teachings.

Now clearly we Academicians could not usefully perform this task, oriented toward the development of the Doctrine, without referring to its current state. This compendium is therefore an invaluable instrument. From now on, when we speculate about possible developments of the doctrine, we have to refer to this basic document and to the references it gives to the founding writings of the Magisterium.

The question before us, on this Sunday, is clearly not to speculate about what could be future developments of the doctrine, but rather on how we could best use the Compendium. In this spirit I shall simply stress one rule: we should use this document in context. Using it in context means two things. In the first place, when we quote a sentence of the document, we should be wary of possibly misrepresenting the text in which the sentence appears in the Compendium itself. In the second place, we should focus on the present and future contexts of the societies to which the doctrine is and will be meant to apply. I shall take two examples to illustrate my point.

The first one concerns paragraph 272 of the Compendium, more precisely a few words within that paragraph. I leave it up to you to reflect on whether my selection is representative: a few words in a book that has 583 numbered paragraphs, a few words the wording of which was probably not

perfectly fortunate. You may indeed think that no human work can be absolutely perfect and that, however good it may be, the wording of the Compendium is the result of human work.

So, what are those words? Or perhaps before revealing the answer, what was the context in which my attention was brought to those words? It was my participation in the University Professors' Symposium on *Ora et labora*: the Work in Europe, organized by the Vicarage of Rome in early July 2005. At the center of the four paragraphs announcing the main focus of the symposium to professors who had not to be all Christians, I stared at the following words 'work is for man and not man for work', presented as encapsulating the Catholic Doctrine about work, and I thought: how can one write that 'man is not for work'? Do not we remember what the Bible said about the destiny of man after the original fall? Is not working the main contribution of most of us to the common good? How will the phrase be read in the context of the present individualistic and hedonist culture?

However, the phrase appears, even in italic letters, in paragraph 272 of the Compendium. But it should be read and interpreted in the context of that paragraph, which contains also in italics the following better sentence: 'Human work has its final goal in the human person'. It should also be read together with the subsequent paragraph in which the following quotation of the encyclical *Centesimus annus* is given: 'Today more than ever, work is work with others and work for others. It is a matter of doing something for someone else'.

My second example, meant to illustrate the importance of the current and forthcoming social context will concern the subsidiarity principle. This principle is the object of four paragraphs covering three pages of the Compendium. As a too brief reminder of the contents of these paragraphs, I am now selecting one sentence from each. In paragraph 185 we read: 'It is impossible to promote the dignity of the person without showing concern...for...the creative subjectivity of the citizens'. In paragraph 186 the encyclical *Quadragesimo anno* (1931) is recalled as explaining that 'all societies of a superior order must adopt attitudes of help...with respect to lower-order societies'. Paragraph 187 declares 'The principle of subsidiarity protects people from abuses by higher-level social authority...because every person, family and intermediate group has something original to offer to the community'. Paragraph 188 states 'Various circumstances may make it advisable that the State step in to supply certain functions' and the encyclical *Centesimus annus* (1991) is quoted.

These few sentences, the complete text of the three pages of the Compendium and references given to more detailed statements of the social doc-

trine clearly deal with fundamental issues about the political organization of societies. The principle they state is recognized as a particularly relevant contribution from the Catholic Church in this domain. But the principle obviously leaves room for interpretations. It does not exempt us from carefully looking at the worth of some interpretations in the light of what can reasonably be said about the present and forthcoming environment in the world, and at the many lower levels in the political organization broadly understood.

To be frank, I am seriously concerned by what I think are abuses in some references to the subsidiarity principle for interpretations of the Magisterium writings. Hostility is then expressed in principle against the State and against efforts made at the international level to cope with some of the major challenges facing the human family. I cannot understand this hostility.

Think about global warming and about what I believe is still now the US official policy on international actions intended to cope with this problem. Also read the message of John Paul II for the 1999 World Day of Peace, or his Apostolic Exhortation *Ecclesia in America* written in the same year. Read paragraphs 466 to 471 of the Compendium. Also notice that the balance of evidence during the last seven years has reinforced scientific concerns about global warming. Clearly now a correct reading of the subsidiarity principle requires actions at the highest world level, because of global warming and a number of other considerations which also concern the whole human family.

Similarly at the national level hostility in principle against the State is not justified, not to speak for lack of time of the European level which also would deserve attention. In this respect carefully read the full section 48 of *Centesimus annus* and the full section 28 of *Deus caritas est*. Of course, the subsidiarity principle justifies that national policies could differ from one country to another. But let me take an example from France, even though you may think that the example is provocative. At the beginning of the twentieth century, at a time of mutual hostility between the French legislator and the Catholic Church, was adopted the law of 'separation of the State from the Churches'. I am not here today arguing that the law in question was recommended then by a correct interpretation of the subsidiarity principle. I am simply noting that, during the past century, mutual hostility progressively faded and the French Catholic Church tended to find that the still ruling law in question had some value, particularly with the recent immigration of Moslem people into France and with the prospect of Turkey possibly joining the European Union.

# RIAPRIRE IL FUTURO PER LE GIOVANI GENERAZIONI: IL COMPENDIO DELLA DOTTRINA SOCIALE DELLA CHIESA

OMBRETTA FUMAGALLI CARULLI

## PREMESSA

Nella lettera che apre il *Compendio della dottrina sociale della Chiesa*, edito dal “Pontificio Consiglio per la Giustizia e la Pace”, il Cardinale Segretario di Stato, Angelo Sodano, ricorda che la Chiesa non ha mai rinunciato a dire la “parola che le spetta” sulle questioni della vita sociale. L’“Indice dei riferimenti” del volume che oggi viene presentato, in una sede tanto ricca di cultura e di storia come la Abbazia di Montecassino, ne è significativa dimostrazione.

Colpisce la ricchezza straordinaria delle fonti e la loro età storica.

Il magistero sociale non è frutto solo del sec. XIX, anche se, nel 1891, con *Rerum novarum*, si avvia la stagione delle grandi Encicliche sociali. Esso è connaturato alla civiltà cristiana sin dal suo inizio e lungo tutto il suo svolgersi. I suoi testi fondativi sono pertanto attinti a fonti antiche e moderne, che vanno dalla Sacra Scrittura ai documenti più recenti.<sup>1</sup>

L’aggiunta ad essi di riferimenti tratti dal Diritto Internazionale conferma la scelta della Chiesa odierna di intrattenere un dialogo con il mondo e con i rappresentanti delle Nazioni, improntato alla collaborazione nella comune difesa della dignità della persona. È insomma la Chiesa “esperta in umanità” (come la definì Paolo VI nel Discorso di chiusura del Concilio Ecumenico Vaticano II) a porsi a servizio della persona e del bene comune.

Colpiscono i contenuti del Compendio. Essi spaziano su tutte le tematiche della giustizia sociale, ordinate in modo insieme sistematico e ragionato.

Che cosa è il bene comune? Che cosa deve fare la comunità politica per realizzarlo? Che cosa è la giustizia sociale? Che cosa è l’umanesimo integrale e solidale? Il progresso dei popoli e la pace sono solo utopie? La globaliz-

<sup>1</sup> Sacra Scrittura (Antico e Nuovo Testamento), Concili Ecumenici, Documenti Pontifici (Lettere encicliche, Discorsi, Allocuzioni, Messaggi, Esortazioni apostoliche), Documenti ecclesiali (come il Catechismo della Chiesa Cattolica), Documenti delle Congregazioni e dei Pontifici Consigli della Curia Romana (Direttori, Dichiarazioni, Istruzioni), Documenti della Santa Sede (Carta dei diritti della Famiglia e Codice di diritto canonico), testi di Scrittori ecclesiastici.



zazione economica richiede globalizzazione della solidarietà? La vita è la nuova frontiera della questione sociale? Il collasso ecologico è inarrestabile?

Ognuno di questi interrogativi si carica di speciali significati, di fronte al tema oggetto della Sessione di quest'anno della Pontificia Accademia delle Scienze Sociali: *Gioventù che scompare? Solidarietà con i bambini ed i ragazzi in un'epoca turbolenta*. Il rapporto intergenerazionale, sul quale stiamo riflettendo da tempo (nel 2004 abbiamo focalizzato il tema principalmente dal punto di vista dell'impatto su anziani e malati), rivela infatti speciali criticità nel riferimento alle giovani generazioni.

Non è necessario svolgere particolari ricerche, tanto è sotto gli occhi di tutti, per constatare che la società odierna è tutta e solo costruita sulle necessità degli adulti. Il Compendio fornisce più di una prospettiva nel definire metodi e contenuti in grado di riaprire il futuro ai giovani d'oggi. Vediamo alcune di tali prospettive.

## 1. LA "CARITAS" E LA TUTELA GIURIDICA

La prima prospettiva è la *caritas*. È prospettiva da sempre indicata dalla Chiesa. Oggi trova nuova linfa nella Enciclica di Benedetto XVI, *Deus caritas est*: "In un mondo – è scritto – in cui al nome di Dio viene a volte collegata la vendetta o perfino il dovere dell'odio e della violenza, questo è un messaggio di grande attualità e di significato molto concreto. Per questo nella mia prima Enciclica desidero parlare dell'amore, del quale Dio ci ricolma e che da noi deve essere comunicato agli altri".

In termini non dissimili l'Introduzione del Compendio afferma: "L'amore ha davanti a sé un vasto lavoro"; ad esso "la Chiesa vuole contribuire anche con la sua dottrina sociale, che riguarda tutto l'uomo e si rivolge a tutto l'uomo".

In quel "tutto l'uomo" vanno inseriti i giovani. Essi rischiano di vedere i loro diritti, affermati nelle carte internazionali,<sup>2</sup> gravemente compromessi o addirittura negati nella concretezza dei rapporti sociali. Opportunamente Giovanni Paolo II, nel tracciare le urgenze del terzo millennio di storia cristiana (Lettera Apostolica *Novo Millennio Ineunte*), ha stigmatizzato il "vilipendio dei diritti umani fondamentali di tante persone, specialmente dei bambini".

<sup>2</sup> La Convenzione sui diritti del fanciullo, entrata in vigore nel 1990, è stata ratificata anche dalla Santa Sede.



È significativo un dato storico: le opere educative, fiorite sulle ginocchia della Chiesa proprio in nome della *caritas*, hanno collaborato a fare emergere i diritti dei bambini come diritti autonomi all'interno della cultura politico-istituzionale. Basti pensare a titolo di esempio alla rivoluzione educativa di don Bosco e dei Salesiani: il clima di rispetto per l'infanzia rende finalmente l'educazione un servizio alla persona. Ma l'evoluzione giuridica è stata lenta nella società: solo nella seconda parte del secolo XX viene attribuito al minore uno *status* di soggetto da promuovere nello sviluppo della personalità verso la maturità.

*Caritas* e *ius* insomma, centrali per il pensiero cristiano, trovano difficoltà ad essere tradotte in norme della città dell'uomo. Sotto questo profilo assume particolare importanza oggi la presenza della delegazione della Santa Sede all'interno delle organizzazioni internazionali, direttamente o indirettamente competenti in materia di infanzia, in esse portando i frutti maturi del magistero sociale pontificio.

## 2. L'ACCOGLIENZA DELLA VITA E LA SOLIDARIETÀ PER I GIOVANI

La seconda prospettiva è quella dell'accoglienza della vita. Può apparire osservazione ovvia. Ma non lo è. Prima ancora di porre la domanda "gioventù che scompare?" o di interrogarsi sui diritti dei giovani, la società deve consentire che i bambini nascano. Il Compendio ne parla diffusamente.

Il dramma dell'aborto o le sfide della ingegneria genetica sono drammatici scenari, sui quali è sempre più difficile il dialogo tra Chiesa e mondo, i presupposti culturali spesso essendo antitetici.

Il "dono della vita" è stato valore tra i più sottolineati dal lungo magistero di Giovanni Paolo II. Con particolare forza nel 1994, durante il quale ha avuto luogo la Conferenza del Cairo su "Popolazione e sviluppo" – che il Pontefice temeva potesse diventare l'anno "contro la famiglia" – egli ha pronunciato parole, insieme indignate ed accorate, nello sfidare il Nord del mondo ed i suoi "onnipotenti possessori di capitali", ponendo in guardia contro le campagne di controllo delle nascite contrabbandate come necessarie per lo sviluppo dei Paesi poveri. Eloquentemente rimane tuttora la denuncia di "palesi iniquità": tali sono – egli disse il 19 marzo dello stesso 1994 – "le soluzioni che cercano di imporre alle nazioni povere gli onnipotenti possessori del capitale: essi propongono come mezzo principale la distruzione del diritto alla vita".

L'accoglienza alla vita non può essere solo alla vita nascente, ma vale per qualunque momento della vita, tanto più se presenti particolari criti-

cità, come appunto avviene nella età evolutiva. Essa diventa allora solidarietà per i giovani. Si traduce nel valore sociale della infanzia: uno dei cardini del magistero della Chiesa, che tuttavia fatica ad essere riconosciuto dalle legislazioni nazionali.

Dalla “Lettera del Papa ai bambini nell’anno della famiglia” (13 dicembre 1994) alla Lettera Apostolica rivolta ai giovani il 31 marzo 1985, in occasione dell’anno internazionale della gioventù, ai discorsi delle “Giornate mondiali della gioventù”, che dal 1987 ogni due anni vedono folle di ragazzi e ragazze raccogliersi intorno al Papa con mobilitazione crescente, il dialogo del Papa con i giovani è costante. La risposta positiva di essi rivela una singolare ricerca di leadership spirituale, straordinariamente importante in questa nostra età caratterizzata dalla caduta delle evidenze etiche.

### 3. L’EDUCAZIONE

La terza prospettiva è quella educativa. Il messaggio è rivolto a tutte le agenzie educative, dalla famiglia allo Stato.

Quanto alla funzione educativa della famiglia, culla della vita e dell’amore, il pensiero della Chiesa è chiaro: la famiglia, patto intergenerazionale ed agenzia sociale, è bene da garantire all’umanità.<sup>3</sup>

Ne deriva non solo l’importanza della famiglia e del suo ruolo educativo per la società, ma anche la priorità di essa rispetto allo Stato. È ricchissima ed assai nota la produzione magisteriale sui limiti che, per la dottrina sociale della Chiesa, ha la stessa comunità politica, che deve rispettare la sovranità della famiglia. Non mi dilungherò pertanto su questo aspetto.

Piuttosto mi preme segnalare le pagine più sofferte della Chiesa nel Novecento di fronte ai tentativi e tentazioni dello Stato di asservire le coscienze dei giovani alle logiche del totalitarismo.

Rileggere le parole, riportate nel Compendio, con le quali Pio XI stigmatizzò sia le sopraffazioni fasciste (Enciclica *Non abbiamo bisogno*, 29 giugno 1931), sia quelle naziste, in particolare condannando le misure coercitive adottate dal Reich nel 1936 nei confronti dei giovani obbligati ad iscriversi alla “gioventù hitleriana” (Enciclica *Mit brennender Sorge* (1937), significa

<sup>3</sup> Una sintesi efficace si ha in *Centesimus Annus*, con la affermazione che la famiglia è “la prima e fondamentale struttura a favore della ‘ecologia umana’”, così che in seno ad essa “l’uomo riceve le prime e determinate nozioni intorno alla verità ed al bene, apprende che cosa vuol dire amare ed essere amati e, quindi, che cosa vuol dire in concreto essere persona” (n. 39).

non dimenticare. Ciò è importante anche in vista degli agguati che la miseria degli uomini è sempre pronta a tendere, nel presente come nel futuro.<sup>4</sup>

#### 4. BAMBINO E GLOBALIZZAZIONE

La quarta prospettiva riguarda la famiglia umana. Anche in funzione di essa urge la risposta alla domanda antichissima, rivolta da Caino a Dio, quando gli viene chiesto conto di Abele: “Sono forse io il custode di mio fratello?”.

È l'aspetto centrale della questione sociale del terzo millennio.

Sullo scenario globale la fragilità del minore deve fare i conti con crescenti difficoltà nei Paesi ricchi come nei Paesi poveri, anche se per ragioni diverse: sacche di povertà materiale e spirituale; sfruttamenti di lavoro (specie di bambini immigrati); giovani che svolgono ruolo di manovalanza della grande criminalità organizzata internazionale; spirale della prostituzione e pornografia favorite da nuove tecnologie, che abbattano ogni confine territoriale.

Dal Messaggio per la Giornata mondiale della Pace del 1996 traggo le indicazioni di gravissimi problemi rimasti insoluti, nonostante siano garantiti nei documenti della comunità internazionale: “il traffico dei bambini, il lavoro minorile, il fenomeno dei ‘bambini di strada’, l'impiego dei bambini nei conflitti armati, il matrimonio delle bambine, l'utilizzo dei bambini per il commercio di materiale pornografico, anche tramite i più moderni e sofisticati strumenti della comunicazione sociale”.

Sono drammaticamente eloquenti due recenti rapporti UNICEF, successivi alla Sessione speciale ONU sull'Infanzia del maggio 2002. Il rapporto 2003<sup>5</sup> fornisce dati drammatici quanto a mortalità infantile, perdita o mancanza di genitori, carenza di istruzione, nascite non registrate, uccisioni o ferimenti in operazioni belliche, tratta di bambini e soprattutto di bambine. Il rapporto 2004<sup>6</sup> tratta dell'emergenza istruzione, con particolare riguardo alle bambine: l'83% delle bambine che non va a scuola vive nell'Africa subsahariana, Asia meridionale ed Asia orientale.

A questi dati vanno aggiunti quelli relativi alle negazioni dei diritti della vita prenatale. Sono negazioni spesso ammantate da esigenze di ricerca

<sup>4</sup> Non va dimenticato, a fronte di incredibili ricorrenti episodi di antisemitismo, che lo stesso Pontefice Pio XI non esitò ad affermare: “siamo spiritualmente semiti”. E lo fece nel Discorso ai giornalisti belgi della radio proprio in quel settembre 1938, che registrava la vergogna delle leggi razziali.

<sup>5</sup> Il titolo è significativo: “La condizione dell'infanzia nel mondo – la partecipazione dei bambini”.

<sup>6</sup> Esso è intitolato “Bambine. Istruzione, Sviluppo”.

della comunità scientifica mondiale: commercio di embrioni congelati, sperimentazioni su cellule staminali. L'UNICEF non ne parla. È silenzio assordante, oltre che preoccupante, rotto ormai solo dalle voci delle Chiese. Eppure tutti dovrebbero comprendere che non investire nella tutela della vita prenatale, non investire nell'infanzia, non dedicare attenzione ai più piccoli significa non avere futuro.

Il discorso sul *Welfare* globale implica in modo prioritario lo sviluppo "sostenibile" (economico, sociale, ambientale) e l'integrazione multi-etnica e multiculturale, di cui tanto oggi si discute. Soprattutto implica la soluzione, complessa e lunga nei tempi, dei molti interrogativi connessi ai doverosi aiuti e cooperazione con i Paesi poveri e con quelli in via di sviluppo.

Quanto questo sia importante in riferimento alla condizione giovanile è osservazione comune all'interno delle organizzazioni internazionali, come nei testi delle varie Scienze sociali. Non è in gioco solo un dovere etico, ma anche un investimento nell'interesse dell'intera famiglia umana: da *Populorum progressio* in poi il magistero della Chiesa lo ha ribadito ripetutamente.

## 5. UN AUSPICIO FINALE

La copertina del volume riproduce la *Allegoria del buon governo*, il celebre affresco di Ambrogio Lorenzetti per il palazzo pubblico di Siena (secolo XIV). "Scegliete la giustizia voi che governate la terra": il versetto di apertura del Libro della Sapienza (posto come ammonimento al consiglio comunale che si riuniva nella sala di quella che allora era una libera repubblica), vale per qualunque stanza politica nella quale si decidano i destini umani e per qualunque argomento. Vale anche per la condizione giovanile, particolarmente bisognosa oggi di attenzione e tutela effettiva.

A fronte di fenomeni negativi, ogni giorno si hanno notizie confortanti di giovani impegnati nella loro famiglia o nella società a vivere in positivo proprio quei diritti che le Carte internazionali loro garantiscono. La loro presenza e le loro iniziative meritano ai giovani l'appellativo di "sentinelle del mattino", loro assegnato dal compianto pontefice Giovanni Paolo II.

Il magistero della Chiesa ha molti spunti da offrire alla comunità politica, alla società, alla persona. Ne abbiamo visto alcuni filoni.

Mi sia consentito formulare un auspicio: che il regnante Pontefice, proprio in nome di quella *caritas* posta a tema della prima Enciclica, dedichi una nuova Enciclica sociale specificamente ai giovani. Essa potrebbe essere stimolo ed aiuto per chi regge, ai diversi livelli, la città dell'uomo. Insieme potrebbe fornire alle giovani generazioni una rinnovata speranza.

I believe we must commit ourselves to reconnecting these two parts of morality and to making it clear that they must be inseparably united.

Only if human life from conception until death is respected is the ethic of peace possible and credible; only then may non-violence be expressed in every direction, only then can we truly accept creation and only then can we achieve true justice.

I think that this is the great task we have before us: on the one hand, not to make Christianity seem merely morality, but rather a gift in which we are given the love that sustains us and provides us with the strength we need to be able to 'lose our own life'. On the other hand, in this context of freely given love, we need to move forward towards ways of putting it into practice, whose foundation is always offered to us by the Decalogue, which we must interpret today with Christ and with the Church in a progressive and new way.

(Pope Benedict XVI, *Discourse to Conclude the Meeting with the Bishops of Switzerland*, Vatican City, Thursday, 9 November 2006)

