

# SOCIETY OF APOSTOLIC EXECUTIVES MINISTRY

## AUGUST 18 BREAKFAST MEETING

### AGENDA

#### I. Opening Prayer: Prayer for Charity in Truth

- Father, your truth is made known in your Word.
- Guide us to seek the truth of the human person.
- Teach us the way to love because you are Love.
- Jesus, you embody Love and Truth.
- Help us to recognize your face in the poor.
- Enable us to live out our vocation to bring love and justice to your people.
- Holy Spirit, you inspire us to transform our world.
- Empower us to seek the common good for all persons.
- Give us a spirit of solidarity and make us one human family.
- We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

#### II. Pope Benedict XVI's encyclical *Caritas in Veritate* (*Charity in Truth*) was signed on June 29, 2009 and released at a news conference on July 7, 2009. This encyclical, or teaching document, is the latest in a series of publications and social encyclicals (written by our popes) over the last 120 years that are part of the Church's modern body of social teaching:

- A. *Rerum Novarum* (*On the Condition of Labor*) 1891, Pope Leo XIII.
- B. *Quadragesimo Anno* (*On the Reconstruction of the Social Order*) 1931, Pope Pius XI.
- C. *Mater et Magistra* (*Christianity and Social Progress*) 1961, Pope John XXIII.
- D. *Pacem in Terris* (*Peace on Earth*) 1963, Pope John XXIII.
- E. *Gaudium et Spes* (*Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World*) 1965, Second Vatican Council.
- F. *Populorum Progressio* (*On the Development of Peoples*) 1967, Pope Paul VI.
- G. *Laborem Exercens* (*On Human Work*) 1981, Pope John Paul II.
- H. *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis* (*On Social Concern*) 1987, Pope John Paul II.
- I. *Centesimus Annus* (*The Hundredth Year*) 1991, Pope John Paul II.
- J. *Evangelium Vitae* (*The Gospel of Life*) 1995, Pope John Paul II.
- K. *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church* 2004, Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace.
- L. *Deus Caritas Est* (*God is Love*) 2005, Pope Benedict XVI.
- M. *Caritas in Veritate* (*Charity in Truth*) 2009, Pope Benedict XVI.

III. Review and Discussion of *Caritas in Veritate*. While Pope Benedict says “(t)he Church does not have technical solutions to offer . . .,” he provides in *Caritas in Veritate* a timely challenge to us and the world to bridge the gap between the “haves and “have-nots, and to seek authentic human fulfillment over individualism, materialism, and short-term profits. Sections 22, 25, 32, 35-42, 45-46, 48-51, 58, 62-63, 65, 69, 71, and 73 provide guidance and reflection for Apostolic Executives looking to accept the Pope’s challenge.

- A. “The world’s wealth is growing in absolute terms, but inequalities are on the increase. In rich countries, new sectors of society are succumbing to poverty and new forms of poverty are emerging.” Section 22.
- B. “The global market has stimulated . . . a search for areas in which to outsource production at low cost with a view to reducing the prices of many goods, increasing purchasing power and thus accelerating the rate of development in terms of greater availability of consumer goods for the domestic market. Consequently, the market has prompted new forms of competition between States as they seek to attract foreign businesses to set up production centres, by means of a variety of instruments, including favourable fiscal regimes and deregulation of the labour market . . . ; with consequent grave danger for the rights of workers, (and) for fundamental human rights . . . . (W)orkers’ associations that can defend (workers’) rights must therefore be honored today even more than in the past, as a prompt and far-sighted response to the urgent need for new forms of cooperation at the international level, as well as the local level.” Section 25.
- C. “The dignity of the individual and the demands of justice require, particularly today, that economic choices do not cause disparities in wealth to increase in an excessive and morally unacceptable manner, and that we continue to *prioritize the goal of access to steady employment* for everyone. Through the systemic increase in social inequality, . . . not only does social cohesion suffer, thereby placing democracy at risk, but so too does the economy, through the progressive erosion of ‘social capital’: the network of relationships of trust, dependability, and respect for rules, all of which are indispensable for any form of civil coexistence.” Section 32.
- D. “The Church’s social doctrine holds authentically human social relationships of friendship, solidarity and reciprocity can also be conducted within economic activity, and not only outside it or ‘after’ it. The economic sphere is neither ethically neutral, nor inherently inhuman and opposed to society. It is part and parcel of human activity and precisely because it is human, it must be structured and governed in an ethical manner. The great challenge

before us, . . . is to demonstrate, in thinking and behaviour, not only that traditional principles of social ethics like transparency, honesty and responsibility cannot be ignored or attenuated, but also that in *commercial relationships the principle of gratuitousness* and the logic of gift as an expression of fraternity can and must *find their place within normal economic activity.*” Section 36.

- E. “The Church’s social doctrine has always maintained that *justice must be applied to every phase of economic activity*, because this is always concerned with man and his needs. Locating resources, financing, production, consumption and all other phases in the economic cycle inevitably have moral implications. . . . Space also needs to be created within the market for economic activity carried out by subjects who freely choose to act according to principles other than those of pure profit, without sacrificing the production of economic value in the process.” Section 37.
- F. “What is needed . . . is a market that permits the free operation, in conditions of equal opportunity, of enterprises in pursuit of different institutional ends. Alongside profit-oriented private enterprise and the various types of public enterprises, there must be room for commercial entities based on mutualist principles and pursuing social ends to take root and express themselves. It is from their reciprocal encounter in the marketplace that one may expect hybrid forms of commercial behaviour to emerge, and hence an attentiveness to *ways of civilizing the economy*. Charity in truth, in this case, requires that shape and structure be given to those types of economic initiative which, without rejecting profit, aim at a higher goal than the mere logic of the exchange of equivalents, of profit as an end in itself.” Section 38.
- G. “(T)here is . . . a growing conviction that business management cannot concern itself only with the interests of the proprietors, but must also assume responsibility for all the other stakeholders who contribute to the life of the business: the workers, the clients, the suppliers of various elements of production, the community of reference.” Section 40.
- H. “It is in response to the needs and dignity of the worker as well as the needs of society, that there exist various types of business enterprises, over and above the simple distinction between ‘private’ and ‘public’. Section 41.
- I. “The economy needs ethics in order to function correctly – not any ethics whatsoever, but an ethics which is people centred.” Section 45.
- J. “Today the subject of development is . . . closely related to the duties arising from *our relationship to the natural environment*. The environment is God’s

gift to everyone, and in our use of it we have a responsibility towards the poor, towards future generations and towards humanity as a whole. . . . *Nature expresses a design of love and truth.* It is prior to us and it has been given to us by God as the setting for our life. Nature speaks to us of the Creator (cf. Rom 1:20) and his love for humanity. *The way humanity treats the environment influences the way it treats itself, and vice versa.* In order to protect nature, it is not enough to intervene with economic incentives or deterrents . . . . These are important steps, but the decisive issue is the overall moral tenor of society. If there is a lack of respect for the right to life and to a natural death, if human conception, gestation and birth are made artificial, if human embryos are sacrificed to research, the conscience of society ends up losing the concept of human ecology and, along with it, that of environmental society. It is contradictory to insist that future generations respect natural environment when our educational systems and laws do not help them to respect themselves.” Sections 48-52.

- K. *The principle of subsidiarity must remain closely linked to the principle of solidarity and vice versa,* since the former without the latter gives way to social privatism, while the latter without the former gives way to paternalist social assistance that is demeaning to those in need. Section 58.

IV. Excellent overviews of *Caritas in Veritate* are available at the following web sites:

- A. [www.radiovaticana.org](http://www.radiovaticana.org) Click on English, then About Us, and finally Vatican Documents for the July 7, 2009 article “Charity in Truth, a Synthesis. This five page document is a very readable review of the encyclical’s introduction, six chapters, and conclusion.
- B. [www.usccb.org](http://www.usccb.org) Click on Departments and then on Justice, Peace and Human Development for John Carr’s five page summary entitled *Caritas in Veritate: An Initial Outline*. John Carr, the Executive Director of the Department of Justice, Peace and Human Development, in his outline **describes “(t)he core of the encyclical is the essential connection between the duty to live out an expansive and demanding definition of charity and to anchor this love in the truth about the human person and the ethical requirements of economic life.”** His outline is an excellent overview.
- C. The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops Department of Justice, Peace and Human Development’s web site has numerous materials for understanding and responding to the call of *Caritas in Veritate*.

V. Announcements

VI. Closing Prayer