
In his preface to this edition of his book, Father de Torre explains its origin and history in a way which will be helpful for understanding the intent of the work, but also the reasons for the problems it creates. Originally compiled for a course at the Center for Research and Communication, the graduate school of economics in Manila under the auspices of the Opus Dei, it presupposes a preliminary strictly philosophical course in social ethics. The complementary course on the Church’s social doctrine, for which the volume under review serves as a textbook, is intended to show the correlation of Church teaching with the philosophical course in social ethics. This inter-relation of the two courses perhaps accounts, at least in part, for the organization and makeup of this book, which first came out in 1975.

Quite simply, the book, after introductory chapters on the nature of the Church’s social doctrine, the nature of man and society,

Abbreviations used in footnotes:

DR Divini Redemptoris
EN Evangelii Nuntiandi
GS Gaudium et Spes
LE Laborem Exercens
MM Mater et Magistra
OA Octogesima Adveniens
PP Populorum Progressio
PT Pacem in Terris
QA Quadragesimo Anno
RN Rerum Novarum
SRS Sollicitudo Rei Socialis
and the common good, is made up of chapters which treat the relation of the family, the state, work, education, private ownership, etc., to society. Father de Torre has conceived his own contribution in a very modest way — to compile selections from official church documents, and to order them under those headings. His own commentary is usually confined to a sentence or two of transition. The rationale behind this approach is given quite clearly in the first chapter:

We should not confuse the doctrine of the Church set forth in the documents of the teaching authority of the Church with the interpretations of it by Catholic authors, whether priests or laymen (p. 2).

He explains his objective even more explicitly in the introduction:

to let the authoritative voice of the Church be heard concerning the ever-valid Christian principles which should guide human activity in the social, economic, and political field, by putting together in a systematic order some of the most relevant texts, and reducing commentary to a minimum. The purpose is to let the authoritative texts speak for themselves, so that the reader can judge by himself both the importance of the issues and the weight of authority given to each of the doctrinal statements (p. vii).

WHAT CONSTITUTES INTERPRETATION?

Leaving aside for the moment whether authoritative texts do in fact “speak for themselves,” and likewise the fact that de Torre himself does, though relatively sparingly, offer personal commentary which is clearly interpretative and not merely transitional, one must observe that there are many other ways in which texts are interpreted, and not merely compiled. The most significant of these is the decisions as to which texts are to be selected and which omitted. Also significant as a method of interpretation is the selection of the topics under which the texts are ordered. A minor point which indicates that Father de Torre does not think of interpretation in this fashion is the fact that though the book under review is a second edition, in which, as he states, he has “trimmed and abridged” the texts contained in the first edition, the second edition still bears the imprimatur of the 1975 edition.
Not having access to the first edition, I cannot say whether such abridgments and excisions have indeed given a different interpretation to the doctrine of the Church, but it is surely a fact that some kinds of omissions would constitute a doctrinal interpretation of a different kind.

SELECTION OF TEXTS AS INTERPRETATION

To take one example from a source other than de Torre's book, an attack some months ago on the Philippine hierarchy for its support of land reform, appearing in a paid advertisement in a Manila newspaper, quoted (correctly) Leo XIII on the inequality of men, leading to the conclusion (also quoted with substantial correctness from Leo): "From this the [sic] inequality of persons comes the inequality of goods." Pius XI was similarly quoted as reaffirming the same principles: "It is not true that all have equal rights in civil society. It is not true that there exists no lawful social hierarchy."¹

Leo XIII, if one examines the context of the paragraph (RN, no. 14),² is not defending such a situation, nor speaking of what ought to be, but describing the factual results of many factors, including physical ability and health. What is made out in the advertisement to be an ideal proposed by Leo, is in reality simply presented by him as the de facto situation. As a matter of fact, though it is true that Leo was influenced at times by aristocratic notions of one's state in life, nonetheless one who honestly seeks to find the teaching of the pope will see that in the same encyclical, speaking of the status of individual persons before the state (obviously taking for granted their equality before God), Leo says explicitly:

2. The original Latin edition of Rerum Novarum did not have paragraph numbers (nor did other early encyclicals). For these early encyclicals (those of Leo XIII and Pius XI), I have used the numbers and the English translation of Five Great Encyclicals, ed. Gerald Treacy (New York: Paulist Press, 1957), as being the one in most common use in English. Fr. de Torre, unfortunately, does not supply references to paragraphs, except to the decrees of Vatican II, a practice which makes it very difficult to trace the presence or absence of a particular text through the sparse index. Nor does he indicate which translations have been used. For the documents of Vatican II, I have made use of the most available and useful edition, edited by Walter M. Abbott, S.J., The Documents of Vatican II (New York: America Press, 1966).
To the state the interests of all are equal whether high or low. The poor are members of the national community equally with the rich . . . (RN, no. 27; slightly different translation in de Torre, p. 45, but expressing the same sense.)

Similarly, the words of Pius XI (Divini Redemptoris, no. 33), manipulated for their own purposes by the detractors of the Philippine hierarchy, are in their original context directed against a Communist concept of class struggle of the proletariat totally to eliminate the rich and powerful. De Torre rightly does not quote the text from Pius XI, as not being relevant to the subject of private property. He does quote that from Leo XIII, but places it correctly in its proper context. But both of these actions — omission and contextualization — have in fact interpreted the papal text — correct interpretations on the part of de Torre, surely, but interpretations for all of that. The point, therefore, remains — selecting or excerpting a document is already an interpretation and to deny or ignore that fact is to leave Church teaching open to such distortions as those of the anti-land reform group cited above.

THE SOCIAL DOCTRINE OF THE CHURCH

A second source of confusion in this book is the indiscriminate use of the term "social doctrine of the Church." On the one hand Father de Torre says explicitly that "... the fountainhead of the social teaching of the Church is not ... a human philosophy or science, but divine faith (p. 1)." He also insists that it is the priest who is

to expound that doctrine in all its purity and fidelity, but in broad outline, so to speak, because when the moment comes to apply it to the concrete situation, it is up to the layman to make his own responsible decision in accordance with his own conscience enlightened by the [sic] Christian principles — here there is room for a pluralism that the priest must respect by not taking sides with any given option (p. 1; italics are those of de Torre).

This explanation seems to me to involve considerable theological confusion. On the one hand the compilation of texts in this book is presented as a body of teaching constituting "the social doctrine
of the Church," based on divine faith. On the other hand, it is obvious to anyone who has read the papal social encyclicals, either as excerpted here, or in their original form, that there are many elements in church social documents — interpretations of economic reality, suggestions, prescriptions — which are clearly derivative of individual philosophical and economic thinkers or which are contingent applications of fundamental Catholic doctrine, whose validity is confined to a particular period of time and a particular situation. Indeed, for Rerum Novarum and Quadragesimo Anno, the principal drafters of each of these encyclicals and the role each played, is well known to historians — Fr. Matteo Liberatore, S.J., and Cardinal Tommaso Zigliara, O.P., as well as Leo XIII’s private secretaries and confidants, Msgr. Alessandro Volpini and Msgr. Boccali, for the former document;³ the Jesuits, Fathers Oswald von Nell-Breuning, Albert Muller, Gustave Desbuquois and Achille Danset — under the supervision of the Jesuit General, Fr. Wlodimir Ledochowski, to whom Pius XI had entrusted the work — for the latter.⁴ The principal drafters of the major writings of Pius XII, John XXIII, Paul VI, are also generally known by experts, even though the degree of their collaboration with the later popes cannot presently be demonstrated in such detail from the actual drafts, as has been done for Rerum Novarum since the opening of the Vatican and other archives for that period.⁵


To be sure, the doctrinal authority of the papal documents does not derive from the theological, economic or sociological competence of those called to collaborate in the encyclicals, but from the papal teaching authority. But on the other hand, it is not to be thought that it was purely fortuitous that the popes depended on men who were experts in the fields being dealt with, which concerned social and economic problems. Hence it seems a mystification to say that every statement in the papal or conciliar documents is derived from "divine faith." In justice to de Torre, he does not of course say that in so many words, and in his preface and introduction he does try to distinguish between the perennial principles of Church doctrine and their application to concrete cases. But the ambiguity of his distinctions between the various elements comprised in "Church social doctrine" leaves the reader in some uncertainty.

Ultimately the organization of the book as a mere compilation of excerpts nullifies such efforts at making the proper distinctions as to what is the nature and doctrinal weight of the various statements of popes and councils. It is precisely the work of the theologian (who is not necessarily a priest, pace de Torre) to help expound papal and conciliar teaching, and to help the non-theologian to interpret it according to the accepted principles of the teaching Church.

On the other hand, it is hard to reconcile de Torre's statement on the duty of the theologian to expound Church teaching "in all its purity and fidelity" with the injunction that this be only "in broad outline." This leaves the hapless layman (Why only the layman? Is the priest not also bound to apply Church social teaching, e.g., in determining the wages and conditions of work of his employees?) to make his own decision "on the spot" though "in accordance with his own conscience enlightened by the [sic] Christian principles." Have not the popes and the Second Vatican Council in fact spelled out some quite precise demands of the Christian conscience which can hardly be called "broad outlines"? Certainly Pope John Paul II, particularly (but not only) in his


6. See the discussion on the relation between the socioeconomic thought of the papal collaborators and the interpretation of papal teachings, with a warning as to the dangers involved in certain kinds of historical exegesis in Coleman, "Development," 175-87.
latest encyclical *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis* (which of course appeared subsequent to Father de Torre’s book) has shown no inhibitions about drawing very specific conclusions on a number of questions. Such, for example, are his statements on the moral intolerability of the enormous debt burden placed on many Third World countries (SRS, no. 18); the harm done by the efforts of the two blocs, “commonly known as the East and the West…” in the neocolonialist or imperialist efforts made by each to draw the other nations of the world around themselves or to assimilate them (SRS, no. 20-22); the arms race and the international arms trade (SRS, no. 24); and others. Even earlier, in *Laborem Exercens*, the pope had taken quite specific positions on the necessity of free labor unions as a “mouthpiece for social justice” (LE, no. 20). More specifically still, John Paul II has defended the right of workers to strike “in proper conditions and within just limits (LE, no. 20).” He goes on to specify those limits by excluding *only* strikes for political motives and cases where grave damage to the common good would result. This can scarcely be said to be giving only a “broad outline” whose concrete applications the layman is free to decide upon on the spot.

Nor has John Paul II been the first to make specific applications of general principles of Church teaching to social and economic questions. Leo XIII was not speaking only “in broad outline” when he declared that a wage contract could not claim to be just on the grounds that it was freely agreed to, inasmuch as the fact was that the worker had no other choice except to remain unemployed (RN, no. 34). Nor was he speaking merely in broad outlines when he condemned the “socialism” he knew in his day, anymore than Pius XI left his condemnations of Soviet Communism or Nazism on a general level in 1937. Both Paul VI, who was most concerned for the proper autonomy of the layman in political affairs, and John Paul II, have made very specific condemnations of so-called “free trade” between highly developed industrial nations and those dependent on an economy based on the export of raw materials; likewise of the practices common among transnational corporations, to the detriment of the developing nations (PP, nos. 54-61; OA, no. 44; LE, no. 17; etc.). Surely these popes did not

7. *Divini Redemptoris* and *Mit brennender Sorge*, in which he condemned Communism and Nazism as systems and in detail.
draw their precepts and condemnations simply from the fountainhead of divine faith, but by applying the inviolable principles of divine faith to specific contemporary economic realities, in which they were substantially aided not only by theologians but by social scientists as well. Father de Torre is surely correct in trying to allow for the legitimate pluralism in the Church which Vatican II refers to as regards specific political measures to be taken for the concrete resolution of situations of social injustice. Indeed somewhat strangely he does not include in his book the classic statement of Paul VI in *Octogesima Adveniens*:

In the face of such widely varying situations it is difficult for us to utter a unified message and to put forward a solution which has universal validity. Such is not our ambition nor is it our mission (OA, no. 4).

This, however, does not mean that each Christian is to decide on social and economic questions without reference to the social teaching of the Church. First of all, Paul VI had already denounced very specific international injustices in *Populorum Progressio* — unlimited free trade in which unfair terms of competition are imposed on the less developed countries, burdensome loan conditions imposed on the developing nations, a world economic system in which the industrialized nations exact high prices for manufactured goods, while keeping the prices of raw materials from the Third World low, etc. Secondly, Paul VI places the task of promoting a just world development on the whole Christian community, laymen, priests, and bishops, drawing even specific directives for action from the social teaching of the Church, as he continues:

It is up to the Christian communities to analyze with objectivity the situation which is proper to their own country, to shed on it the light of the Gospel’s unalterable words and to draw principles of reflection, norms of judgment and directives for action from the social teaching of the Church. This social teaching has been worked out in the course of history and notably, in this industrial era, since the historic date of the message of Pope Leo XIII on “the condition of the workers” [*Rerum Novarum*] . . . It is up to these Christian communities, with the help of the Holy Spirit, in communion with the bishops who hold responsibility and in dialogue with other Christian brethren and all men of goodwill, to discern the options and commitments which are called for in order to bring about the social, political and economic changes seen in many cases to be urgently
needed . . . (ibid).

This is quite different from Father de Torre’s prescription that priests should preach the social doctrine of the Church only “in broad outline” and leave the decisions on its application to the “layman on the spot.” Paul clearly recognizes the autonomy of temporal realities and institutions, in accordance with Vatican II. He likewise recognizes differences in the social, economic, and cultural situations of different countries and regions. He in no way, however, abandons the patrimony of Church social teaching, not only of fundamental principles of the faith, but the conclusions the Church has drawn from them in each era. And he entrusts its application not just to either priests or laymen but to the whole Christian community, in dialogue with other men of good will. There is indeed a tension among the different levels, but all such facile dichotomies as theory vs. practice, or priest as distinguished from layman are rejected.

WHAT IS SOCIAL DOCTRINE?

It has been noted that John XXIII to a certain extent, and Paul VI much more, abandoned the term “social doctrine of the Church” in favor of “social teaching of the Church” or “the teaching of the Church on social questions” and other similar expressions which avoid giving the impression sometimes implied in the phrase “social doctrine”: namely, that Church documents on the social question have put forward a totally unified, coherent, and unchangeable solution to social problems. Thus Catholic social doctrine would be a kind of “third way” between the rejected ideologies of liberal capitalism and Marxist collectivism, all of it possessing the weight of papal or conciliar teaching authority. Indeed it would present itself as an ideology. 8

John Paul II, on the other hand, has once again made use of the

8. The principal accuser in this case, if he deserves to be called that, has been M.-D. Chenu, O.P., in his book, La “doctrine sociale” de l’Église comme idéologie (Paris: Cerf, 1979), who sees “social doctrine” as actually representing liberal bourgeois ideology. Some useful appreciations of Chenu’s strong and weak points and of the concerns of John Paul II, as discussed below in note 9, may be found in Donal Dorr, Option for the Poor. A Hundred Years of Vatican Teaching (Maryknoll: Orbis, 1983) 141-45, 169-71, 213-17. Dorr presents the issues clearly and briefly.
earlier term "social doctrine" and has vigorously rejected the charge that the "social doctrine" of the Church constitutes an ideology. At the same time, he has also used expressions similar to those of Paul VI and John XXIII, such as "social thought of the Church," "doctrinal inheritance," "social teaching of the apostolic see," and others. In fact, in his latest encyclical he has used interchangeably the terms "social doctrine" and "social teaching," while at the same time indicating the need to see its twofold dimension, the one remaining constant, the other

ever new because it is subject to the necessary and opportune adaptations suggested by the changes in historical conditions and by the unceasing flow of the events which are the setting of the life of people and society (SRS, no. 3).

One may legitimately say that there is a difference of emphasis between the present pope and his predecessors, but clearly not a rejection by John Paul II of the position of his immediate predecessors. What it seems clear all three popes are asserting is twofold: (1) that there are certain, indeed, quite a number of, doctrinal assertions contained in the papal and conciliar documents on social and economic questions which are part of the patrimony of doctrine of the Church, drawn from the teaching of the Gospels, and not capable of being changed. Such, to name a few of the most

9. There has been a considerable debate on the matter and related questions. For an informed, but somewhat tendentious summary in English, see Peter Hebbelthwaite, "The Popes and Politics: Shifting Patterns in Catholic Social Doctrine," in Curran and McCormick, Readings, 5:264-84. The article is, however, dated by the subsequent statements of John Paul II, especially in Sollicitudo Rei Socialis in which the pope himself has explicitly rejected the idea that Church social doctrine is a third way between any alternatives — "Rather, it constitutes a category of its own..." (SRS, no. 41).

10. For what one may consider an early semi-official view of the question with particular reference to the present pope, see the pamphlet issued by the Pontifical Commission "Iustitia et Pax," as part of a series under the general title The Social Teaching of John Paul II (Vatican City, 1979), no. 1, pp. 21-42: Roger Heckel, S.J., "The Use of the Terms Social Doctrine or Social Teaching of the Church." A later and more extensive presentation of the usage of John Paul II is in Jan Schotte, C.I.C.M., "Especificidad de la doctrina social de la Iglesia, fundamentos y elementos esenciales," in Desafíos a la Doctrina Social de la Iglesia en América Latina, published by the Consejo Episcopal Latinoamericano (CELAM) (Bogotá, 1985) 107-47. At the time Fr. (now Archbishop) Schotte was vice-president of the Pontifical Commission "Iustitia et Pax." For further clarification in the light of Sollicitudo Rei Socialis see the unsigned article, "La dottrina sociale della Chiesa oggi," Civiltà Cattolica, 139, 1 (1988) 521-34. A good discussion of the period prior to John Paul II is found in the CELAM volume, Desafíos, by Ricardo Antoncich, S.J., "Evolución del magisterio social de la Iglesia," 63-103.
obvious, are the inviolable dignity of every human person, the primacy of the common good, the priority of the person and of the family to the state, the solidarity of the human race, the existence of certain rights inherent in every human person which no earthly power can abridge. (2) There are other principles flowing from the former, which, though responding to a particular historical situation, are clearly and authoritatively taught by the Church in her role as the authentic interpreter of the moral law for every age. Such, for example, would be the clear teaching of John Paul II in *Laborem Exercens* that workers have the right to form and join a labor union of their own, inasmuch as it is today a necessary means for the attainment of justice; that the right to strike may not be denied except under very special and carefully limited circumstances in which the common good would be seriously harmed; and other similar declarations of the moral law in a particular situation and time. These were not positions held, e.g., by Leo XIII, whose historical context was very different from ours, even though they may justly be seen by the historian and the theologian as contemporary demands flowing at least in part from principles enunciated by Leo without his recognizing the consequences they might logically imply, indeed perhaps in some cases so implied even in the time that he wrote them.11

**CONFUSION ON CHURCH SOCIAL DOCTRINE**

The principal — and most serious, to my mind — defect of de Torre’s book, is the failure of his methodology to distinguish clearly between the various levels of Church teaching: those principles which are unchangeable parts of her doctrinal patrimony based on the Gospels; those elements which are concrete applications on the specific level, which may be valid and morally obligatory at the time of their enunciation, but in changed historical situations may lose their validity, or even become contradictory to the permanent theological principles on which they were originally based; and finally those elements which are suggestions or proposals of a particular pope, which are not presented as being doctrinal truths but as specific suggestions offered as means of imple-

11. See a similar but more detailed exposition in Antoncich, “Evolución,” cited in note 10 above.
menting the fundamental principles of Church social doctrine.

A concrete example of this last category would be the advocacy by Pius XI in *Quadragesimo Anno* of a corporative organization of society. Pius proposed that society be reorganized in voluntary groupings according to industries or professions, usually referred to in English as vocational groups or industry councils, or even guilds (and undoubtedly the medieval guilds, in spite of what should have been their obvious rooting in a society totally alien to modern industrial conditions, had provided inspiration for certain corporatists). Under this plan society would be organized vertically, that is to say, capitalists, management, and workers in each industry were to be joined together in such vocational groups, which would resolve certain problems of their industry or profession without having to have recourse to the state, in accordance with the principle of subsidiarity (OA, nos. 81-90). This recommendation was repeated in *Divini Redemptoris* (DR, no. 32), and in a somewhat different form recommended by Pius XII at times, especially in the years immediately after World War II. Indeed, some of the proposals of Pius XII so deemphasized the divergent interests of employers and workers that if implemented, they would have so reduced the powers of labor unions as to leave the workers defenseless in protecting their rights. Finally the whole notion of corporatism was dropped under John XXIII, who, like his successors, abstained from giving any such concrete model for the organization of society. Somewhat ambiguously, Pius XI distinguished his plan from the corporative model of the Fascist state introduced into Italy by Mussolini, which far from being voluntary, as was the Pope’s, was a means of enforcing the totalitarian control of the state over all aspects of life (QA, nos. 91-96).


13. The passage on the Fascist form of corporative state was inserted in the draft being prepared by Fr. Oswald von Nell-Breuning as a result of a note in Italian, written in the pope’s own hand. Its ambiguity may be seen from the fact that Nell-Breuning says he considered it at the time to be a piece of “diplomatic irony” directed against Mussolini, and he was confirmed in this opinion by Mussolini’s anger at the passage. On the
The principles behind Pius XI’s proposal of the corporatist model were the elimination of the class struggle by means of joint action of capitalists and workers, and the principle of subsidiarity, by which the state left “intermediate bodies” free to resolve problems without unnecessary recourse to an all-powerful state. Both principles, of course, are key ones in the social teaching of the Church. But in fact, the “ideological” interpretation, generally given to all papal documents at the time, led many Catholics concerned to implement papal social doctrine to futile efforts at achieving such an apriori and ahistorical reorganization of society.  

What was worse, papal promotion of such a specific (and at the same time vague) model of society as corporatism gave an opportunity to such dictatorial regimes as that of Salazar in Portugal and Franco in Spain to cover their violations of human rights with the pretended mantle of papal social doctrine, claiming that they were exemplifications of the model proposed in Quadragesimo Anno. In retrospect, scholars have come to agree that the whole proposal, in spite of the good intentions of Pius XI and the continuing validity of the principle of subsidiarity, was a great mistake.  

other hand the Pope complained that Mussolini had reacted so fiercely to the “benevolent nod” that he had given in his direction, which Nell-Breuning also took to be diplomatic language. Contrariwise, a modern commentator sees the passage as “a sop to Mussolini” in view of the strong attack Pius was going to launch against him a few weeks later in the encyclical Non abbiamo bisogno for his interference with the Church (Nell-Breuning, “Drafting,” in Curran and McCormick, Readings, 62-63; Coleman, “Development,” ibid., 179).

14. For example, one of the principal American promoters of papal social teaching during that time, Fr. John Cronin, S.S., takes a frank retrospective view of the mistake made by the American Catholic social actionists in their attempts to identify specific forms of socioeconomic reorganization in United States society to meet papal ideas on corporatism. He concludes that both Monsignor John Ryan and himself and their associates were naïve in their undifferentiated approach to the encyclical. One may reflect that the “ideological” interpretation of Catholic social doctrine came as much from below in this case as from above. Cronin notes that both Nell-Breuning and Gundlach found fault with the American Catholic literalist approach. See John F. Cronin, S.S., “Forty Years After: Reflections and Reminiscences,” in Curran and McCormick, Readings, 69-76.

15. Paul Droulers, S.J., in his study of corporatism in theory and practice in the period after Quadragesimo Anno, maintains that not only did Pius XI condemn Musso- liní’s Fascist corporatism as a whole, but that none of the “Catholic” versions from Salazar in Portugal to Franco in Spain to Petain In Vichy France, despite their claims, were really implementations of the ideas of Pius XI. (“L’idée de ‘Corporation’ chez les catholiques sociaux pendant l’Entre-deux-Guerres,” in Cattolicismo sociale nei secoli XIX e XX, Saggi di storia e sociologia [Roma: Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, 1982] 385-404). But precisely that ambiguity which allowed such dictators to give an appear-
the consequence of a failure to distinguish the various levels of doctrinal teaching in an ecclesial document dealing with the social question. Precisely because the Church teaches in a historically changing world, when popes lay down highly specific prescriptions, however valid and essential to Catholic social doctrine may be the principles behind them, one cannot apriori exclude that these could be impractical or mistaken even at the time they are enunciated, being based on incorrect or inadequate perceptions of the concrete historical, social, and economic realities.

Finally, even the perennial doctrinal teaching of the Church undergoes development as — in the words of Vatican II (a ground-breaking passage inexplicably nowhere included in this compilation, as far as I have been able to determine) — she carries out her “duty of scrutinizing the signs of the times and of interpreting them in the light of the Gospel... (Gaudium et Spes, no. 4).” It is then to be expected, and indeed may be obligatory in certain circumstances, that the Church put aside earlier doctrinal formulations, and rethink and restate them in the light of the changing signs of the times and of the Church’s deeper penetration, under the light of the Holy Spirit, into the fuller implications of the Gospel. An example which comes readily to mind is the long toleration by the Church of slavery, not reprobated by St. Paul himself, and given at least tacit and often open approval through centuries till its complete, but very late, condemnation by Leo XIII.16 Yet nothing could be more clear to the Christian of today than that slavery is a fundamental and blatant violation of our God-given human dignity.

PRIVATE PROPERTY

An example of more contemporary import is the vast change that has taken place between Leo XIII and John Paul II in the Church’s exposition of her teaching on private property. In the

16. Leo XIII condemned slavery in the encyclical In Plurimis in 1888, but as Camp not unfairly remarks: “Had the papacy made this antislavery proclamation a century earlier, it would have been an act of outstanding vision and courage. But in 1888, Leo XIII was merely condemning a practice which had been in disrepute in the Western world for years...” Papal Ideology, 31.
light of statements made by allegedly practicing Catholics in our own country in recent times it should be clear that this whole concept is in some need of clarification. All the popes have indeed defended the right of private property against any type of totalitarian socialist or communist denial of that right. The ultimate reason behind their affirmation of the right of private property has been its connection with the dignity of man and with the common good, since God is the author of the goods of this earth and has destined them for the achievement of those purposes. One cannot conceive theologically how those basic principles could ever come to be abandoned by the Church. When, however, one looks at the different papal statements more closely, one will see major changes of emphasis and an increasing clarification of just how private property is to be instrumentalized to safeguard the dignity of the human person as well as the common good of the whole of society.

Leo XIII makes his defense of man’s right to private property against “the socialists” at considerable length, in language whose sense is that this is a demand of the natural law.

Private ownership is according to nature’s law. . . . When man thus spends the industry of his mind and the strength of his body in procuring the fruits of nature, by that act he makes his own that portion of nature’s field which he cultivates — that portion on which he leaves, as it were, the impress of his own personality; and it cannot but be just that he should possess that portion as his own, and should have a right to keep it without molestation (RN, no. 7).

In that same paragraph, however, Leo also asserts that this affirmation is not negated by the other principle of the natural law “that God has given the earth to the use and enjoyment of the universal human race.” Though the principle that because of the dignity of the human person he has the right to possess what he has worked on is affirmed, the reconciliation of the two principles is not quite clear. Many scholars here see Leo unwittingly departing from the strict Thomistic tradition that the primary principle of the natural law is the universal destination by God of the goods of the earth. Private property as such is a secondary principle — i.e., in the present imperfect world, it is a necessary means to the attainment of the primary end of the natural law, and thus condi-
tionally may be considered part of the natural law, always however, in subordination to the main principle.\textsuperscript{17}

Whatever may be the reconciliation of Leo's assertions, Pius XI went out of his way to clarify Leo's ambiguous position, defending him against those who "falsely and unjustly accuse the Supreme Pontiff and the Church as upholding both then and now, the wealthier classes against the proletariat." He asserts that

neither Leo XIII, nor those theologians who have taught under the guidance and direction of the Church, have ever denied or called in question the twofold aspect of ownership, which is individual or social accordingly as it regards individuals or concerns the common good. Their unanimous contention has always been that the right to own private property has been given to man by nature, or rather by the Creator Himself, not only in order that individuals may be able to provide for their own needs and those of their families, but also that by means of it, the goods which the Creator has destined to the human race may truly serve this purpose . . . (QA, no. 45).

In his further discussion of the role of the state, Pius implicitly, but clearly, makes the natural right to private property subordinate to limitations imposed by the common good.

To define in detail these duties [of the common good] when the need occurs and when the natural law does not do so is the function of the government. Provided that the natural and divine law be observed, the public authority, in view of the common good, may specify more accurately what is licit and what is illicit for property owners in the use of their possessions . . . (QA, no. 49).

The further development of the process through succeeding popes and Vatican II has been conveniently summed up by a modern commentator as follows:

\textsuperscript{17} It would seem that Leo's assertion with its failure to make the necessary distinctions concerning the natural law principle that the goods of the earth are primarily destined for the benefit of all, derives from Fr. Luigi Taparelli d'Azeglio, S.J., who had introduced it into nineteenth-century scholastic theory from John Locke. Whether directly, as a former pupil of Taparelli, or indirectly, through Fr. Matteo Liberatore, S.J., whose major collaboration in the writing of the encyclical has been noted, Leo thus departed from, or at least left ambiguous, the scholastic tradition. See Camp, \textit{Papal Ideology}, 45-55; also Ricardo Antonicchia and José Miguel Munárriz, \textit{La doctrina social de la Iglesia} (Lima: Ediciones Paulinas, 1987) 146-47.
In *Mater et Magistra*, in 1961, John XXIII again affirms the right to private property to be a part of the natural law; however he now subordinates this right to the common good [nos. 113-115].

A major shift occurs in *Pacem in Terris*, in 1963, when John XXIII defines the right to private property as a suitable means for safeguarding the dignity of the person. From being a principle of natural law, it is now seen as a means to an end [nos. 21-22].

This shift is decisively completed in Vatican II, in *Gaudium et Spes* (1965). Here the universal purpose of created goods becomes the primary normative principle rather than the right to private property. Private property is again defended as a means of safeguarding the dignity of the individual. It goes on to say, however, that the common good may require the expropriation of private property if it is being misused, but that suitable compensation must be paid [no. 75].

In *Populorum Progressio*, in 1967, Paul VI confirms that the normative principle is the universal purpose of created goods, and again affirms the right to expropriate property which is misused, though now, perhaps significantly, there is no mention of any obligation to pay compensation [nos. 22-24].

Finally, last year [1981], John Paul II’s magnificent *Laborem Exercens* again reaffirms as the normative principle the universal purpose of created goods. He declares that the “right (to private ownership of the means of production as an untouchable dogma of economic life) has to undergo a constructive revision both in theory and practice . . . they cannot be possessed for possession’s sake . . . one cannot exclude the socialization, in suitable conditions, of certain means of production . . . “[no. 14].

Since that time, John Paul II has on more than one occasion spoken of the “social mortgage” on all property, a phrase he has more fully and authoritatively expounded in *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis*:

Private property is in fact under a “social mortgage,” which means that it has an intrinsically social function based upon and justified precisely by the principle of the universal destination of goods [SRS, no. 42].

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DEVELOPMENT IN CHURCH TEACHING

This is only one example of how the Church, "scrutinizing the
signs of the times and interpreting them in the light of the Gospel," has
developed her social teaching. Other major shifts are clearly
discernible in a methodology which emphasizes the historical
rather than the systematic presentation of the social teaching of
the Church. These would include, for instance, the move from the
concept of a class-stratified society, characterized by natural in-
equality of men (RN, no. 14), to a demand for equality, not only
in the sight of God (which is part of the perennial doctrine of the
Church) but in the greatest measure possible, in all aspects of
human society (PP, nos. 6, 14, 17, etc). A related shift has been
from a definition of "surplus wealth" measured by social status
(Leo XIII, RN, no. 19) to one that is based on the needs of others,
individuals or nations (GS, no. 69, making its own an earlier state-
ment of John XXIII, with regard to individuals; PP, nos. 43-44,
with regard to nations).

Not to prolong the list, we may cite the evolving attitude of the
popes toward labor unions. All popes have defended the natural
right of association. But for Leo XIII these associations were pre-
erably to be mixed associations of employers and workers, and
ordinarily composed only of Catholics, though he did allow for
differences according to the circumstances in different countries
(RN, nos. 36-38, 40-43). Pius X showed himself distinctively un-
comfortable with true labor unions, and only permitted non-
confessional ones as a lesser evil.19 It would only be with John
XXIII (MM, nos. 97-100), Paul VI (PP, nos. 38-39) and especially
John Paul II (LE, no. 20), that there is a clear endorsement of
whatever kind of labor union the worker chooses to join, and a
clear endorsement of the right to strike, except for political
motives or in extreme cases in which there would be serious
damage to the common good.

Leo XIII had in mind the medieval guilds (in a highly roman-
ticized form), and even commended an updated form of them for
his own day (RN, no. 36), much to the detriment of the Catholic

labor movement. John Paul II says unambiguously that labor unions as they exist today are related to the guilds of the past only in the sense that both try to unite people on the basis of their work. But modern unions emerged from the Industrial Revolution, "from the struggle of the workers... to protect their just rights vis-a-vis the entrepreneurs and the owners of the means of production...", and they are a necessary part of modern industrial life, "a mouthpiece for the struggle for social justice" (LE, no. 20).

Such examples could be multiplied, and the question must be raised as to how the student of Church social teaching is to evaluate or synthesize the statements of popes and those of Vatican II, unless the historical development of the Church's social teaching is admitted, not only in theory, but in one's practical approach to the documents. The popes themselves, even while insisting on their continuity with their predecessors, and citing them frequently, do not hesitate to assert that there is need for clarification as well as for updating of their predecessors. Generally all review what their predecessors have written before applying the permanent principles of Church social doctrine to the situation of their own day. John Paul II has recently put it succinctly in his encyclical Sollicitudo Rei Socialis, written to commemorate the twentieth anniversary of Populorum Progressio, in which he delin-

20. Camp, Papal Ideology, 111-13. Nonetheless, it should be noted that Leo XIII rejected the extreme medievalism of many corporatists who had been precursors of the Catholic social movement, like René de la Tour du Pin in France and Baron Karl von Vogelsang in Austria. But the guild ideal continued to be propagated in many places by influential Catholic social thinkers like Hilaire Belloc in the English-speaking world, among others. See, e.g., Hilaire Belloc, The Restoration of Property (New York: Sheed & Ward, 1936) 133-40.

21. Thus Quadragesimo Anno begins with a review of the teaching of Rerum Novarum, details what has been accomplished in implementing its program, and then proceeds to new aspects of the problem treated in Rerum Novarum and to further factors which have changed the situation envisaged by Leo. Mater et Magistra devotes its first part to a résumé of the teaching of Rerum Novarum, Quadragesimo Anno, and the important radio message of Pius XII of Pentecost 1941; then develops further the teaching of Leo and his successors; and finally raises new aspects of the social question. Pacem in Terris in dealing with human dignity and rights, is basically a development of the questions raised by Pius XII in various addresses and documents, as its footnotes clearly show. Populorum Progressio, without neglecting earlier popes completely, takes Gaudium et Spes as its basis of departure and applies its principles to the contemporary international situation. Finally, Sollicitudo Rei Socialis devotes its first four sections to a commentary on the doctrine of Populorum Progressio and how it has been and should be implemented, before going on to a theological reading of the contemporary world and particular guidelines for future action.
eates both the continuity and the change in Catholic teaching, and in Catholic social teaching in particular. He says:

... continuity and renewal are a proof of the perennial value of the teaching of the church. This twofold dimension is typical of her teaching in the social sphere. On the one hand it is constant, for it remains identical in its fundamental inspiration, in its "principles of reflection," in its "criteria of judgment," in its basic "directives for action," and above all in its vital link with the Gospel of the Lord. On the other hand, it is ever new because it is subject to the necessary and opportune adaptations, suggested by the changes in historical conditions and by the unceasing flow of the events which are the setting of the life of people and society (SRS, no. 3. The quoted phrases are taken from OA, no. 4).

In the light of these changes, often quite radical changes if looked at merely from the point of their divergence from previous positions and not from that of their continuity in basic principles, it seems hard to justify such a compilation as the book under review. Though in fairness to de Torre, for the most part he orders the excerpts within each subtopic of a section or chapter in chronological order, there is little indication given that not all excerpts are of equal value for understanding the teaching of the Church today, and as it is enunciated for today's world. Moreover, the division into subsections sometimes implies by juxtaposition that recent teaching is being restrictively explained by earlier (and in fact superseded) documents. Nowhere is there any indication that the teaching of later magisterial documents has superseded that of an earlier time. Nor is there any indication that terms such as "socialism" mean very different things for Leo XIII than for Paul VI or John Paul II, because in fact the realities designated by such a term have changed. Indeed the entire theological principle of

22. For Leo XIII, in fact, "Socialism" was scarcely understood, and his presentation of it represents not even just Marxism, but an amalgam of anarchism of various types, as well as elements taken from diverse utopian socialisms. There is no doubt that the system of "socialism" he condemned was in contradiction with Christian belief, but he did not make clear what the reality of the many actually existing socialisms was and which of them actually proposed the elements incompatible with Christianity he condemned. Though Pius XI recognized a difference between Marxist-Leninist ideology and "mitigated socialisms," he condemned the latter as well without inquiring into what the actual connection with an incompatible ideology was in particular cases. Paul VI's careful delineation of the lines between ideology, historical movements, and the social analysis connected with them, is no less firm in his condemnation of atheistic Marxism
understanding a document in its historical context is ignored. A particularly notable instance of this is the extensive quotation of Leo XIII on relations between Church and state, much of which is not only unintelligible to modern man, but was written against the background of a world which no longer exists, a position already adumbrated by Pius XII, and definitively made clear in the decree on religious liberty of Vatican II. To quote magisterial documents outside the context in which they were written seems to deny the historical nature of the Church itself as the living Body of Christ and the pilgrim People of God.

DIVERSE DOCTRINAL WEIGHT OF CHURCH SOCIAL TEACHING

A further problem confronting the reader of this book is how to understand the relative theological weight to be given to a particular excerpt from a church document. De Torre does not completely ignore this problem, but the answer given in his introduction is far from satisfactory. He says:

In assessing the doctrinal authority of the documents if [sic] should be borne in mind that, for example, an encyclical letter or a General Council addressed to the whole world carries more weight than an encyclical addressed to only one country or a papal address intended for only a particular group. Nevertheless, what is important is to detect the harmony of all Church teaching throughout all doctrinal pronouncements, and the way

and the class struggle than Leo XIII or Pius XI, but his treatment makes it clear that it is just as impossible today to say that a Christian cannot be a socialist as to say without qualification that he may be such.

23. Pius XII, of course, did not arrive at the point of beginning the discussion of religious liberty in such terms as the Council did. Nonetheless, he already showed awareness of the historical character of the problem of church-state relations especially in his Address to the Tenth International Congress of Historical Sciences in 1955.

24. It is notable that the decree makes reference to the writings of Leo XIII in only three places (notes 6, 16, and 52). Their content is also significant — they affirm that religious freedom is founded in the dignity of the human person, that governments must create conditions in which people will be able to fulfill their religious rights and duties, and that the Church has a right to freedom to carry out her mission. On these points of doctrine there is no disagreement between the Council and the teaching of Leo XIII, but rather the Council has disentangled his permanent doctrinal affirmations from the long-past historical framework within which he taught. See Dorr, Option, 279, n. 3; 282, n. 49; Aubert, Christian Centuries, 5:43-44. It is notable that the Decree on Religious Liberty is the only conciliar document which explicitly says: "... this sacred Synod intends to develop [italics mine] the doctrine of recent Popes on the inviolable rights of the human person and on the constitutional order of society." (Dignitatis Humanae, no. 1; see also note 4 on p. 677 of the Abbott edition.)
this perennial teaching is applied to the various settings and situations without ever getting obsolete: eternal youth never grows old (p. viii).

Despite the somewhat poetic final clause, most theologians will find a problem, or several problems, with that statement. One is the criteria used for judging the theological weight of documents; another is the question of whether Church teaching does not in fact sometimes grow obsolete.

As to the first, it is not sufficient to weigh encyclicals against apostolic letters or public addresses (in fact, de Torre generally does not do so himself). An example of a specific teaching very closely bound to the fundamental principles of Church doctrine concerning the priority of the human person to the state, though stated in a less formal context than an encyclical, would be the clear teaching of John Paul II, in his address to the Filipino people, given at Malacañang during his visit of 1981:

Even in exceptional situations that may at times arise, one can never justify any violation of the fundamental dignity of the human person or of the basic rights that safeguard this dignity . . . Any apparent conflict between the exigencies of security and of the citizens' basic rights must be resolved according to the fundamental principle — upheld always by the Church — that social organization exists only for the service of man and for the protection of his dignity, and that it cannot claim to serve the common good when human rights are not safeguarded . . .

This statement of the pope by no means leaves any decision to anyone holding authority in the state or to anyone else in society, lay or clerical, to decide "on the spot" or otherwise whether human rights may be violated in a particular case in order to safeguard national security. Nor is it the doctrine of Pope John Paul II alone; it is clear in John XXIII's Pacem in Terris, and implicit in the doctrine of the inviolable dignity of every human being, taught, as Pope John Paul says, by all the popes. It could not be otherwise, since it is based on the Gospel, even if not all popes may have seen the applications as clearly as does John Paul II in our time and place. Its appearance in an occasional address delivered to the people of one country, does not make it any less binding fundamental

Catholic doctrine than if it had been enunciated in a universal encyclical at that time.

OBsolescence of Church Social Teaching

As to the second question, we have already indicated some examples of papal social teaching which have in the course of time grown obsolete. Witness Leo XIII on guilds or on labor unions, or on some persons belonging to a superior status in life than do others. There are indeed doctrinal principles, as we have indicated above, which run through Church teaching without ever growing old, though they are newly applied in different historical contexts. But how is one to distinguish these from other statements of very different category? No Catholic theologian would wish to deny that there is a harmony in Church social teaching. But just as the identification of the degree of authority of various elements within that harmony is not made immediately evident by classifying the excerpts compiled into conciliar pronouncements, universal papal encyclicals, particular papal encyclicals, and other papal documents, neither do all papal documents, whether of a superior or inferior category, necessarily retain their authority indefinitely.

In spite of being merely an apostolic letter rather than an encyclical, for example, there are numerous elements in Octogesima Adveniens which, even though not put in the form of an encyclical, were meant as significant clarifications or updatings of matters treated in earlier formal encyclicals. One need only think of the carefully nuanced distinctions made by Paul VI in his discussion of Marxism which replaced the broad and unnuanced condemnations in the encyclicals of Pius XI. And what is one to do if an encyclical, or even more, a solemn decree of an ecumenical council, makes a declaration contrary to the affirmation of an earlier encyclical? In fact there are such cases, and it is the task of the theologian to explain the reason for the changes in the Church’s teaching, not to deny them, nor to evade them by omission. I should like to point this out by a particularly egregious interpretative selectivity employed in this volume when dealing with the topic of religious liberty, in which, perhaps unintentionally, due to the methodology employed, the Church’s teaching is positively distorted and indeed, falsified by selective omission.
RELGIOUS LIBERTY

If one consults the index to Church documents at the end of the book, he will be surprised to find only one reference to what is generally acknowledged as one of the most important decrees of Vatican II, Dignitatis Humanae, the Decree on Religious Liberty. In fact that reference is not even a reference to the decree itself, but to the preparatory schema, which in itself has no doctrinal authority. Moreover, the citation in question consists merely of words of praise for those nations which help parents exercise their right to educate their children according to their consciences (p. 200). Though this point is itself worthy of consideration, the author totally ignores the main point of the Decree on Religious Liberty, which was to ensure to every human person the right to worship God according to his or her conscience. Surely this is a part, and indeed a major part, of the Church’s teaching on society. But when in turn one looks to the topical index on religious liberty, all references except two deal with the failure of states to recognize the liberties of Catholics, principally with regard to this same right to educate their children. Surely this is a grievous misrepresentation of the broad scope of the authoritative teaching of the Church on religious liberty as one of the basic rights of every human being, as every pope from John XXIII to John Paul II has repeatedly emphasized.

De Torre expresses his personal theological position on this subject quite explicitly, unlike what he has done on other theological topics. In the introduction to the book he asserts that his readers will find in this book a guide to avoid the pitfall of both a secularism that attempts to do without God and eternal truths in world affairs and ends up with an artificial (and unacceptable) “separation of Church and State,” and a clericalism that confuses the transcendent goal of the Church with the earthly goals of the State (p. viii).

Certainly the Fathers at Vatican II did not consider themselves

to be accepting, much less propounding, a secularism which attempts to do without God when in their decree on religious liberty they rejected a regime of union of Church and State which fails to ensure "that the right of all citizens and religious bodies to religious freedom should be recognized and made effective in practice." (GS, no. 6). Nor was it secularism which led them to renounce the regime of special privilege for the Church connected with such a union of Church and State, but also accompanied by its infringements on the basic human right of every human person, whether Catholic or not, to worship God according to his or her own conscience. De Torre in his chapter on the nature of man and society quotes at length from encyclicals of Leo XIII as *Immortale Dei, Humanum genus, Diuturnum illud*, and *Libertas praestantissimum*, in which Leo speaks of the duty of society (not always clearly distinguished from the state) to worship God publicly. Most clear on the subject is the quotation from *Libertas praestantissimum*, where he says:

This kind of liberty, if considered in relation to the State, clearly implies that there is no reason why the State should offer any homage to God, or should desire any public recognition of Him; that no one form of worship is to be preferred to another, but that all stand on an equal footing, no account being taken of the religion of the people, even if they profess the Catholic faith . . . (quoted in de Torre, p. 32).

The Fathers at Vatican II were not unaware of this teaching of Leo XIII, but saw that it was written against a historical background of the nineteenth-century Church's struggle against the secularistic ideology of the Liberalism springing from the anti-Christian elements of the French Revolution. Leo had not learned to conceive of a separation of church and state which was based not on hatred or scorn for religion, but on the respect for the conscience of every human person, in which the incompetence of the state to determine the religious conscience was recognized. This is not the place to discuss the extremely complex question of separation of church and state and its precise nature, on which — up to a certain point — it is possible for theologians to have dif-
ferent opinions. Nor can we explain in detail here how the assertions of Leo were historically conditioned by the circumstances of his time, and the limited framework within which he conceived the problem. But to include such quotations from Leo XIII and to ignore all that has been authoritatively taught by the popes since John XXIII and the Second Vatican Council, is surely not only an interpretation but a positive misleading of the reader of this book as to the full teaching of the Church as it has been authoritatively developed in the twentieth century.

DISTORTING OMISSIONS

Apart from such an egregious example of how the teaching of the Church can be distorted by omitting key authoritative statements, there are other omissions in this book which de Torre freely acknowledges: the two major documents of John Paul II, both of which appeared in 1981, the encyclical *Laborem Exercens* and the apostolic exhortation *Familiaris Consortio*. Referring to these major documents in the preface to the second edition, the author simply says:

It is clear that *Laborem Exercens* is in perfect continuity with chapters VII, VIII, and IX of this book, and ought to be read along with these. Fortunately there is no shortage of editions of this Encyclical and to them the reader is referred (p. vi).

A similar statement is made in the same place as to *Familiaris consortio* being in "perfect continuity" with chapter IV.28

Here the ambiguity of the author's position on the nature of

27. The Council did not explicitly reject a regime in which "... in view of peculiar circumstances obtaining among certain peoples, special legal recognition is given in the constitutional order of society to one religious body. . . ." (no. 6), but it went on to lay down stringent conditions of equality before the law even in such cases. Moreover, the "peculiar circumstances" mentioned by the Council would equally apply, for example, to the establishment of Anglicanism in England, or of the Orthodox Church in Greece or other countries in which there existed such circumstances. Most theologians today, however, I think, would hold that it is extremely difficult, if not impossible, to maintain such a "peculiar regime" without violating some basic elements constituting religious liberty expounded elsewhere in the decree, and by subsequent popes.

28. On p. 144, Fr. de Torre refers the reader to the encyclical *Laborem Exercens* in the appendix (which he apparently intended to add, but which in fact does not exist), indicating that there was a realization of the advance in doctrine of the new encyclical, or at least of its new approach to the social question.
the social doctrine of the Church appears most clearly. Without a doubt, there is continuity between these two magisterial documents of John Paul II and the teaching of his predecessors. But, above all in *Laborem Exercens*, there is a considerable advance over earlier teaching. All the popes from Leo XIII onward, for example, have insisted on the right of association, for workers as well as for all human persons. In that sense there is a continuity running through their teaching. But Leo XIII strongly expressed his preference for associations composed of employers and workers together and for associations specifically Catholic in nature. John Paul II, on the other hand, insists precisely on labor unions, with no mention of confessional affiliation, as necessary instruments for the workers to carry on the struggle for their rights against injustices perpetrated by their employers. To term this a "perfect continuity" seems clearly an abuse of the phrase which makes it meaningless. One could say the same of the assertions of John Paul with regard to the right to strike, abhorred by Leo XIII, and never stated as clearly to be a licit instrument for justice by any of his successors as it is in the encyclical *Laborem Exercens*. 29

On another point, it is clear that Leo XIII and his successors made the dignity of the worker as a human person a basic principle of their teaching (e.g., RN, no. 20). While retaining that basic principle, John Paul II has moved a major step further in proclaiming that the dignity of work itself comes precisely from the fact that it is done by a human person (LE, no. 6). There is continuity indeed, but there is also major development — a deeper understanding on the part of the Church of the implications of the truths that have been at the basis of her social teaching, and a more precise application of them to the conditions and circumstances of greatly changed times and situations. To imply that there is no significant difference between the teaching of *Rerum Novarum* or even *Mater et Magistra* on the one hand and *Laborem Exercens* on the other, or that there is no advance between *Casti Connubii* and *Familiaris Consortio* is to make the continuing ef-

29. In addition, *Laborem Exercens* is different in its methodology in more than one respect, and hence the more in need of being integrated with previous teaching in a textbook like this. It is noteworthy that so many of the commentators on the encyclical emphasize this point, without denying its continuity with the past teaching. See, for example, the articles by Richard McCormick, S.J., Gregory Baum, Bartolomeo Sorge, S.J., and J. Bryan Hehir in Curran and McCormick, *Readings*, 5:219-62.
forts of the Church to discern the signs of the times in the light of the Gospel, as expressed in the magisterial documents of the successive popes, a somewhat otiose task. And if it is sufficient to take up the numerous contemporary editions of the encyclicals of John Paul II, in order to prolong the teaching recorded in this book, one could justly question the utility of the book, since all the major social encyclicals as well as the decrees of Vatican II are also easily available. One could reasonably assert that it would be better to read the encyclicals and conciliar decrees in their entirety, instead of in excerpts rearranged according to a systematization which is not that of the magisterium.

WHAT ARE THE SOURCES OF CHURCH SOCIAL TEACHING?

In addition to these two omissions pointed out by de Torre himself, one must add other papal teaching of considerable importance for understanding the teaching of the Church on society. Ironically, John Paul II’s first encyclical, Redemptor Hominis, which surely deserves a prominent place in the social teaching of this pope, is cited with regard to Church social teaching by the Apostolic Nuncio in his presentation to the book, but never made use of by de Torre. Surely its teaching on “Redeemed Man and his Situation in the Modern World” (the English title to the third part of the encyclical) is fundamental to the subsequent social teaching of the Pope.\(^\text{30}\) Likewise unmentioned is Paul VI’s Evangelii Nuntiandi, despite its importance for such key questions as the role of the Church in the temporal order, the relationship between human development and liberation on the one hand and evangelization on the other, and the clarifications offered on the disputed passage in Populorum Progressio on the liceity of violence in response to extreme cases of tyranny and injustice, all important points which deserve consideration in a compilation of Church social teaching.\(^\text{31}\) Indeed, they are, by de Torre’s own criteria, being encyc-

\(^{30}\) This includes paragraphs 13 to 17. Its exploration of the implications of human dignity in the contemporary world lays the foundations for much of Laborem Exercens as well as for other papal social teachings. Even such a document of John Paul as his apostolic exhortation, Reconciliatio et Paenitentia, of 1984 contains clarification on the much-disputed questions of social sin and sinful structures (no. 16, cited again in SRS, no. 65).

\(^{31}\) EN, nos. 25-39 especially; no. 37 on violence, with reference to PP, no. 30.
licals, of far more importance than the many addresses of popes he cites, often mere speeches to limited groups of pilgrims to Rome rather than a formal exercise of the magisterium. Again, though the Instruction on Christian Freedom and Liberation issued by the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith in 1986 apparently appeared too late for inclusion in the book, since Fr. de Torre’s preface is dated 1985, the earlier, more negative Instruction on Certain Aspects of the “Theology of Liberation” of 1984, in spite of criticisms made of it by some more radical liberation theologians, should certainly be included among the teaching of the magisterium, having been published with the approval of the Pope, as he emphasized in his address to the Brazilian bishops cited in note 32 below. Here he shows that as well as criticizing negative aspects of liberation theology, it played an integral part in the Church’s own definition of it. In addition, if one is to include addresses of Pius XII from a period long since superseded, and even of Pius IX, the clarifications given by John Paul II in the major addresses he has made in his trips to various countries, in which he applied the social doctrine of the Church to concrete situations, equally deserve a place.

One can think, for example, of the Pope’s statement addressed to the bishops of Brazil that a theology of liberation, properly understood with the Church, is not only orthodox but necessary.32 Or again, the Manila statement on human rights and national security cited above. Many of these points are important topics, of burning contemporary interest, and it is necessary to be aware of them so as to see that there is indeed a progressive development of the Church’s social doctrine.

Finally, of course, though de Torre cannot be faulted for not having known of the recent important encyclical Sollicitudo Rei Socialis, which appeared after the publication of his book, the failure to include encyclicals and less solemn teaching of John Paul II from earlier periods, becomes manifest here where the Pope takes up those points again and repeats them in more systematic and authoritative form.

These omissions, however inculpable they may be, point to the

32. “... Purified from elements that could adulterate it, with grave consequences for the Faith, that theology of liberation [contained in the two instructions of the Congregation of the Doctrine of the Faith] is not only orthodox but necessary.” L’Osservatore Romano (English edition), 1 April 1986, p. 7.
basic defect in the theological methodology employed for the purpose signified in the subtitle of the book: "The Church Speaks on Society." At times the scope of the social doctrine of the Church seems limited to socioeconomic questions, a legitimate set of parameters if one so desires, and perhaps the way that the term is most commonly used. On the other hand, however, given the systematic headings under which the documents of the magisterium are classified here, the focus is much wider in many places, dealing, for example, with the role of the state in society, with the family, with marriage, with national sovereignty, and more fundamentally, with the nature of man and of society.

It is legitimate, then, to ask whether the organizing principle of the book is indeed the social doctrine of the Church, or rather a particular approach to it. This philosophical or theological approach then includes some documents or excerpts from documents, while eliminating others on principles not necessarily related to the theological value of the document or excerpt. It would be more conducive to the achievement of fidelity to the magisterium to explicate the framework of interpretation rather than to claim not to be offering a mere theologian's interpretation but the plain words of the magisterium itself. However good the intention may be, this simply leaves the reader with neither the full authentic text, nor with sound principles of theological interpretation.

One final example of a different kind will help to make clear the problems de Torre's methodology has created for himself and his readers. If one is to take the position that it is sufficient to present the words of the popes and to let them speak for themselves without commentary from the theologian, then it is incumbent to present all the significant teachings of all the popes in the modern period who spoke on the subject matter under discussion. One pope who receives only two brief quotations, but who did speak forcefully on topics included in the scope of the title and subtitle of this book was St. Pius X. He had things to say, for example, on the topic of the equality and inequality of men which, though presented as a commentary on Leo's words on this subject, are far more extreme than Leo, and move in quite a different direction than the teaching of any of his successors. In his motu proprio of 1903, Fin dalla prima, addressed to Italian Christian Democrats, Pius said:
It is in accordance with the pattern established by God that human society should have rulers and subjects, employers and employees, rich and poor, wise and ignorant, nobles and common people...\textsuperscript{33}

As one commentator on this passage has remarked, comparing the two popes,

Even Leo, conservative as he was, had not implied that poverty and ignorance were inherent in Christian society nor had he implied that the relationship of employer to employees was similar to that of a prince to his subject! None of Leo's concern for a "certain equality" was evident here.\textsuperscript{34}

Again, in his encyclical \textit{Vehementer} of 1906, speaking of the Church, Pius X's accents are quite different from those of Vatican II:

The Church is by its very nature an unequal society: it comprises two categories of persons, the pastors and the flocks. The hierarchy alone moves and controls... The duty of the multitude is to suffer itself to be governed (\textit{gubernari se pati}) and to carry out in a submissive spirit the orders of those in control.\textsuperscript{35}

These two documents, of course, are of quite different doctrinal value than Leo XIII's \textit{Rerum Novarum}, both being directed to particular situations in particular countries, though \textit{Vehementer} is in fact an encyclical. But Pius X is clearly not here in continuity either with his predecessor nor with his successors in his attitude toward equality.

His statements are an eloquent testimony to the fact that mere compilation of magisterial statements does not insure orthodoxy; quite the contrary. Besides the necessity of seeing Church teaching within its historical context, there is a need also to admit that there is no absolutely straight line of progress in the development of Church social teaching. The teaching Church is not a static institution, but the pilgrim Church, the People of God, "discerning the signs of the times in the light of the Gospel."

\textsuperscript{33} Quoted in Dorr, \textit{Option}, 52, from \textit{Acta Sanctae Sedis} 36 (1903-1904) 341.
\textsuperscript{34} Camp, \textit{Papal Ideology}, 33-34.
\textsuperscript{35} Quoted in Aubert, \textit{Christian Centuries}, 143.
HOW TO TEACH CHURCH SOCIAL DOCTRINE

The critique of de Torre’s book has been lengthy and perhaps will seem harsh in some places. It is not my purpose to question the author’s intentions or sincerity, but to evaluate the book as an effective instrument for communicating the social teaching of the Church. Coming from a graduate school of economics of high academic quality, and of professedly Catholic inspiration, as is the Center for Research and Communication, such a book is likely to have a considerable impact on other Catholic schools concerned that its students be not only technically prepared as economists and businessmen, but that they have a solid grounding in Church teaching on matters which make up the substance of their daily working lives.

I would also willingly acknowledge that a textbook does not necessarily represent what is actually taught in class. Every competent teacher is concerned not merely to repeat the words of the textbook, however pedagogically sound it may be, but to explain their context and to indicate or stimulate discussion on the application of principles to the concrete situations students will deal with. It may well be that de Torre in his teaching has obviated some of the criticisms I have raised here by updating and contextualizing in class the excerpts from Church social teaching presented in this book.

That being said, I believe that the methodology used in the book is not only not clarificatory of the Church’s teaching on society, but that it is most likely to distort it in the ways mentioned in this article. It is, moreover, certainly incomplete and therefore deficient as a guide to a Catholic approach to life in contemporary society. Finally I have the fundamental criticism of there being a contradiction between the absolutizing of all Church statements on society on the one hand, and on the other, a professed (but not consistently applied) abstraction from the concrete application of that teaching on the grounds that this is the area of responsibility of “the layman on the spot.” The role of the theologian entrusted with expounding the teaching of the Church on society or on any other matter cannot be fulfilled in this fashion.

The somewhat exaggerated dichotomy between secularism and clericalism set up by de Torre in his introduction, is not the only course of action for the theologian, and in fact, as I believe to
have shown here, the dichotomy has not been observed in practice. As it stands, it seems to this reviewer that this type of presentation is likely to lead the student or reader either to endless confusion in an effort to be faithful to Church teaching, or to a rejection of what will appear as a teaching based on evidently outdated ideas. The latter conclusion is likely to lead to a complete unconcern for putting that teaching into practice in everyday life. Thus an effort at what may be called hyperorthodoxy can have as its unintended result heterodoxy, both on the theoretical and the practical level.

Having made such criticisms concerning the methodology employed in the text, it is incumbent on the critic to offer suggestions as to what he considers a proper methodology. To do so adequately would require an article of far greater dimensions than this. Nonetheless, I believe that one can at least indicate certain elements which such a methodology would contain. Chief among these I would judge to be the following: (1) direct contact with the documents themselves, read in their entirety, at least the principal ones; (2) a knowledge of the historical context, both in Church and society, in which each of these documents was written; (3) a treatment of the documents of the Church genetically, indicating the dependence of later documents on earlier ones as well as the advances made in ecclesial understanding of the principles involved and their implications, both on the theoretical and on the practical level; (4) application in a practical way to Philippine conditions, though one must recognize here the limitations of the theologian in dealing with concrete economic solutions to problems of a technical nature.

This last step is the sphere of what de Torre calls in his preface "the huge area of free and responsible action where no monopolistic action is permissible, whether from the State or from the Church . . . (p. viii)", though I am not sure that we understand these words in the same way. Particularly ambiguous is his further statement, "... where only technical proficiency and professional competence have the last word." Not only popes, theologians, and historians have been wont to exaggerate their own technical proficiency and professional competence, but also many economists, sociologists, and government technocrats. Modest recognition of human fallibility on matters of a contingent and dynamic nature becomes all who are concerned with ultimate applications of basic
principles to concrete situations. It is my belief and experience as a teacher that nothing is more useful for a realistic and faithful understanding of Church social teaching than a thorough knowledge of the historical context in which the Church has applied herself to bringing light and efficacy to the achievement of a just society based on man’s God-given nature and the common good. This, I take it, is a major condition for what Gaudium et Spes intended to be the attitude of the ecclesial community in “scrutinizing the signs of the times and interpreting them in the light of the Gospel.”