

Octogesima adveniens essay



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OCTOGESIMA ADVENIENS I. The Historical Context/Background of the Encyclical Octogesima adveniens was not written in a historical vacuum or in discontinuity from Catholic social teachings of the previous decade. Rather the letter continued themes found in *Gaudium et spes* and *Mater et magistra* and responded to the historical context in which it was written. To mark the eightieth anniversary of *Rerum novarum*, Paul VI did not write an encyclical letter, but rather an apostolic letter to Maurice Cardinal Roy, who was president of the Pontifical Commission *Justitia et Pax*.

In fact, the last encyclical letter of his pontificate, *humane vitae*, was written three years prior to this letter and ten years before his death. The move away from the encyclical as a literary form already suggests Paul VI's awareness of the importance of human experience or a historically conscious methodology. A look at the structure of *Octogesima adveniens* confirms this awareness. After a seven-paragraph introduction, *Octogesima adveniens* turns to a reading of the signs of the times, which highlight the challenges faced by particular groups of people (e. g. workers and women), world-wide issues (e. . media influence and environment) and aspirations (e. g. participation and equality). The remainder of the letter provides some ecclesial reflections on these signs of the times and an exhortation to action. Thus, two-thirds of the letter details the historical context for any ecclesial reflection or action. Paul VI himself had experienced firsthand the diverse situations in which Christians found themselves, especially in his journeys to Israel (1964), to the United States of America (1965), to India (1966), to Turkey and Portugal (1967), to Medellin, Colombia (1968), and to Uganda (1969).

These encounters with the people of God, their poverty, and their misery profoundly moved Paul VI, as his Wednesday audience reflections attest. In addition, the years since *Populorum progressio* and *Humane vitae* had been years of student unrest, violence, war, and genocide; and their pain was not lost on Paul VI. (10) His concern over the Paris student uprisings came out in two letters to the *Semaine Sociale* in France and in Italy. (11) He lamented the assassinations of Robert F. Kennedy and Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. (12) He decried the Six Day War between Israel and the Arab nations, the war in Vietnam, the Czech-Soviet confrontation, and the Biafra civil war with its practices of genocide. II. Identify the major/key themes or principles of the encyclical and briefly explain these themes or principles. * Sanctity of human life and dignity of the person The foundational principle of all Catholic social teachings is the sanctity of human life. Catholics believe in an inherent dignity of the human person starting from conception through to natural death.

They believe that human life must be valued infinitely above material possessions. Pope wrote and spoke extensively on the topic of the inviolability of human life and dignity in his watershed encyclical, *Evangelium Vitae*, (Latin for “ The Gospel of Life”). Catholics oppose acts considered attacks and affronts to human life, including abortion, euthanasia, capital punishment, genocide, torture, the direct and intentional targeting of noncombatants in war, and every deliberate taking of innocent human life.

In the Second Vatican Council’s Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World, *Gaudium et Spes* (Latin for “ Joy and Hope”), it is written that <https://assignbuster.com/octogesima-adveniens-essay/>

“ from the moment of its conception life must be guarded with the greatest care. “. The Church does not oppose war in all circumstances. The Church’s moral theology has generally emphasized just war theory. * Call to family, community, and participation According to the Book of Genesis, the Lord God said: “ It is not good for the man to be alone”.

The Catholic Church teaches that man is now not only a sacred but also a social animal and that families are the first and most basic units of a society. It advocates a complementation view of marriage, and family life, religious leadership. Full human development takes place in relationship with others. The family—based on marriage (between a man and a woman)-is the first and fundamental unit of society and is a sanctuary for the creation and nurturing of children. Together families form communities, communities a state and together all across the world each human is part of the human family.

How these communities organize themselves politically, economically and socially is thus of the highest importance. Each institution must be judged by how much it enhances, or is a detriment to, the life and dignity of human persons. Catholic Social Teaching opposes collectivist approaches such as Communism but at the same time it also rejects unrestricted laissez-faire policies and the notion that a free market automatically produces social justice. The state has a positive moral role to play as no society will achieve a just and equitable distribution of resources with a totally free market.

All people have a right to participate in the economic, political, and cultural life of society and, under the principle of subsidiarity, state functions should

be carried out at the lowest level that is practical. * Rights and responsibilities Every person has a fundamental right to life and to the necessities of life. In addition, every human has the right to what is required to live a full and decent life, things such as employment, health care, education. The right to exercise religious freedom publicly and privately by individuals and institutions along with freedom of conscience need to be constantly defended.

In a fundamental way, the right to free expression of religious beliefs protects all other rights. The Church supports private property and teaches that “ every man has by nature the right to possess property as his own. ” The right to private property is not absolute, however, and is limited by the concept of the social mortgage. It is theoretically moral and just for its members to destroy property used in an evil way by others, or for the state to redistribute wealth from those who have unjustly hoarded it.

Corresponding to these rights are duties and responsibilities—to one another, to our families, and to the larger society. Rights should be understood and exercised in a moral framework rooted in the dignity of the human person * Preferential Option for the poor and vulnerable Jesus taught that on the Day of Judgment God will ask what each of us did to help the poor and needy: “ Amen, I say to you, whatever you did for one of these least brothers of mine, you did for me. This is reflected in the Church’s canon law, which states, “ The Christian faithful are also obliged to promote social justice and, mindful of the precept of the Lord, to assist the poor from their own resources. ” Through our words, prayers and deeds we must show solidarity with, and compassion for, the poor. When instituting public policy

we must always keep the “ preferential option for the poor” at the forefront of our minds. The moral test of any society is “ how it treats its most vulnerable members. The poor have the most urgent moral claim on the conscience of the nation.

We are called to look at public policy decisions in terms of how they affect the poor. ” Pope Benedict XVI has taught that “ love for widows and orphans, prisoners, and the sick and needy of every kind, is as essential as the ministry of the sacraments and preaching of the Gospel”. This preferential option for the poor and vulnerable includes all who are marginalized in our nation and beyond—unborn children, persons with disabilities, the elderly and terminally ill, and victims of injustice and oppression. * Dignity of work

Society must pursue economic justice and the economy must serve people, not the other way around. Employers must not “ look upon their work people as their bondsmen, but ... respect in every man his dignity as a person ennobled by Christian character. ” Employers contribute to the common good through the services or products they provide and by creating jobs that uphold the dignity and rights of workers. Workers have a right to work, to earn a living wage, and to form trade unions[44] to protect their interests.

All workers have a right to productive work, to decent and fair wages, and to safe working conditions. Workers also have responsibilities—to provide a fair day’s work for a fair day’s pay, to treat employers and co-workers with respect, and to carry out their work in ways that contribute to the common good. Workers must “ fully and faithfully” perform the work they have agreed to do. In 1933, the Catholic Worker Movement was founded

by Dorothy Day and Peter Maurin. It was committed to nonviolence, voluntary poverty, prayer, and hospitality for the marginalized and poorest in Society.

Today over 185 Catholic Worker communities continue to protest injustice, war, racism, and violence of all forms. * Solidarity “ Solidarity is undoubtedly a Christian virtue. It seeks to go beyond itself to total gratuity, forgiveness, and reconciliation. It leads to a new vision of the unity of humankind, a reflection of God’s triune intimate life.... ” It is a unity that binds members of a group together. All the peoples of the world belong to one human family. We must be our brother’s keeper, though we may be separated by distance, language or culture.

Jesus teaches that we must each love our neighbors as ourselves and in the parable of the Good Samaritan we see that our compassion should extend to all people. Solidarity includes the Scriptural call to welcome the stranger among us—including immigrants seeking work, a safe home, education for their children, and a decent life for their families. Solidarity at the international level primarily concerns the Global South. For example, the Church has habitually insisted that loans be forgiven on many occasions, particularly during Jubilee years.

Charity to individuals or groups must be accompanied by transforming unjust structures. * Care for God’s creation A Biblical vision of justice is much more comprehensive than civil equity; it encompasses right relationships between all members of God’s creation. Stewardship of creation: The world’s goods are available for humanity to use only under a “ social mortgage” which

carries with it the responsibility to protect the environment. The “ goods of the earth” are gifts from God, and they are intended by God for the benefit of everyone.

Man was given dominion over all creation as sustainer rather than as exploiter, and is commanded to be a good steward of the gifts God has given him. We cannot use and abuse the natural resources God has given us with a destructive consumer mentality. Catholic Social Teaching recognizes that the poor are the most vulnerable to environmental impact and endure disproportional hardship when natural areas are exploited or damaged. US Bishops established an environmental justice program to assist parishes and dioceses who wanted to conduct education, outreach and advocacy about these issues.

The US Conference of Catholic Bishops Environmental Justice Program (EJP) calls Catholics to a deeper respect for God’s creation and engages parishes in activities that deal with environmental problems, particularly as they affect the poor. III. Cite concrete social issues, or situations, or realities (preferably current issues) that these themes are talking about (national or international concerns). “ Do Everything in the Name of the Lord Jesus” (Col. 3: 17) A Call to Christian Participation in the Elections Dear People of God in the Philippines, ...Politics, like all human activities, must be exercised always in the light of the faith of the gospel...” (PCP II, Conciliar Document, 344) “ Lay men and women in responsible positions in our society must help form the civic conscience of the voting population and work to explicitly promote the election to public office of leaders of true integrity. ” (PCP II, Decrees, Art 28, #1) As Election Day draws nearer we, your bishops, <https://assignbuster.com/octogesima-adveniens-essay/>

call upon you once more to prevent the many evils attendant upon every election in our country, and to help bring about a truly meaningful choice of candidates.

What we say now is in addition to what we have stated in past statements about elections. We want to make it clear that we, as a body, do not endorse any particular party or candidate. We do not want to dictate to you whom you should vote for. We respect your freedom in voting. This freedom is part of the exercise of your freedom of conscience which we, your pastors, are obliged to respect. We do have an obligation to help you form your conscience. And we do want to exhort you to act as Christians in the whole conduct of the elections, according to the injunction of St.

Paul: "...whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God, the Father through him. " (Col. 3: 17) We urge you, candidates and your followers, to act in a manner befitting Christian men and women, and believers in the one true God. We ask you, voters, to exercise and not to set aside your Christian faith when you cast your votes. Let not this coming election be a blemish to our Christianity but a credit to our Christian name. Hence, in the name of God, we ask the CANDIDATES, THEIR PARTIES AND FOLLOWERS: Stop violence. " You shall not kill. " (Ex. 0: 13) Those who want to serve the people should not grab power by hurting or killing the people they profess to serve. Killings and other acts of violence have regularly marred our elections. This is a national disgrace especially for a country where the majority are Christians and practically all inhabitants believe in God. Do not cheat. To cheat is to steal public office. " You shall not steal. " (Ex. 20: 15) A person who wins by

cheating has no moral right to occupy a position stolen from another. Such a person will have to answer before God for depriving the people of the services of the rightful winner.

Do not buy votes. This is a particularly degrading form of cheating. You do not start serving the people by corrupting them and degrading their dignity. Do not trivialize the campaign period. Educate the people during the campaign by explaining to them your platform and the issues involved. Do not be satisfied to be reduced to singing, dancing and clowning before the people. Do not tell lies to destroy the good name of another person. " You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor. " (Ex. 20: 16) This commandment remains in effect and is not suspended during the campaign period.

A person who destroys the good name of another will probably not mind doing evil to others. If the campaign remains on the level of issues much black propaganda and mudslinging will be avoided. Likewise, we ask the VOTERS: Vote intelligently. Do not be fooled by appearances, words and promises. Study the issues involved, the platforms of the candidates and their past records. Vote for persons who act in a manner consistent with Christian principles. Do not vote for opportunists. Do not give those who have grievously hurt our country another chance to hurt us again.

Christian forgiveness does not demand forgetfulness of evil deeds against our people. Christian prudence demands that we remember such deeds. Vote for persons who can serve you best and not for those who can only entertain you. You are not voting for entertainers but for public servants. Do

not sell your votes. “ Your vote, your honor. ” When you sell your vote, you sell your honor. You become nothing in the eyes of those who buy you. You harm your future and that of your countrymen. Beware of those who overspend during elections. They will surely seek to recover their expenses— with profit, at our expense.

Do not allow yourself to be cowed. Band together with your fellow citizens and seek the protection of law enforcers, the COMELEC and its deputies. There are no tyrants where there are no cowards. Election time is one of those rare times in our democracy when people directly exercise political power, which is meant to serve the common good. Do not squander or barter away the exercise of this power. Use it to give our country and people a better life. And to the COMELEC AND THEIR DEPUTIES, we say: Do your work with impartiality. You are not the hirelings of the persons who appointed you.

You are the servants of the people. It is to the people you owe loyalty and not to the appointing powers. Let God, the laws of our land and your conscience be your only guide. Do your work with competence. Election officers are expected to be capable of reading the candidates’ names and tallying their votes correctly. You are empowered and therefore are expected to be able to keep the polls honest and peaceful. Do your work with honesty. When you cheat or help in cheating you sin in a double way: you rob rightful winners of their office and you betray the public trust which you assumed on oath.

Do your work credibly. You must not only be impartial, competent and honest. You must not even give any appearance of partiality, incompetence

and dishonesty. We live at a time when the COMELEC and the electoral process have regained their credibility somewhat. You can lose that credibility again. Or you can enhance it by your performance. Expose and neutralize all private armed groups. Unless you do so, the elections cannot be honest and peaceful. They certainly will not be credible. Your credibility and competence are at stake here. Dear fellow Filipinos, the elections are the key to good government.

Credible elections will make for a credible government. Meaningful elections will make for good government. These May elections will show what kind of people we are, and will determine the kind of government we shall have. Let us all together make these elections truly honest, peaceful and meaningful. We wish to encourage persons, organizations and movements that have been working to assure for us this kind of elections. We commend the Parish Pastoral Council for Responsible Voting (PPC-RV), VOTECARE, NAMFREL and similar groups. They are rendering selfless and oftentimes heroic service to God and country. Do not be afraid!

Let us face the future with hope, and take every necessary step. While neglecting no effort, let us believe that even now Christ is at work in the hearts of our people by the power of His Spirit to bring about the transformation of Philippine society (cf. Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World, no. 38). Let us pray to God, the Lord of history, to guide our endeavors, and crown them with success. May the same Lord thwart the evil designs of evil men. And may Mary, our Mother and Protectress of the Filipino people, obtain our victory. For the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines: (Sgd.) +CARMELO D.

F. MORELOS, D. D... Archbishop of Zamboanga CBCP President April 9, 1995

Manila IV. Make individual reflection or reaction regarding these themes or principles with reference to the identified social issues. V. Choose a social problem affecting Negros or Bacolod society. Seek how the principles of Catholic social teaching can be applied and proposed a Lasallian social response, or solution. Implementation the solution and submit report and reflection. VI. Reflection http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_hb6404/is_n1_v56/ai_n28655737/ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Catholic_social_teaching <http://cbcponline.net/v2/?p=363>

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