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Encyclical Letter

Populorum Progressio

Paul VI
(*Excerpts*)

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I. MAN'S COMPLETE DEVELOPMENT

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6. Today we see men trying to secure a sure food supply, cures for diseases, and steady employment. We see them trying to eliminate every ill, to remove every obstacle which offends man's dignity. They are continually striving to exercise greater personal responsibility; to do more, learn more, and have more so that they might increase their personal worth. And yet, at the same time, a large number of them live amid conditions which frustrate these legitimate desires.

Moreover, those nations which have recently gained independence find that political freedom is not enough. They must also acquire the social and economic structures and processes that accord with man's nature and activity, if their citizens are to achieve personal growth and if their country is to take its rightful place in the international community.

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Authentic Development

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14. The development we speak of here cannot be restricted to economic growth alone. To be authentic, it must be well rounded; it must foster the development of each man and of the whole man. As an eminent specialist on this question has rightly said: We cannot allow economics to be separated from human realities, nor development from the civilization in which it takes place. What counts for us is man - each individual man, each human group, and humanity as a whole.¹⁵

Issues and Principles

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22. In the very first pages of Scripture we read these words: "Fill the earth and subdue it."¹⁹ This teaches us that the whole of creation is for man, that he has been charged to give it meaning by his intelligent activity, to complete and perfect it by his own efforts and to his own advantage.

Now if the earth truly was created to provide man with the necessities of life and the tools for his own progress, it follows that every man has the right to glean what he needs from the earth. The recent Council reiterated this truth: God intended the earth and everything in it for the use of all human beings and peoples. Thus, under the leadership of justice and in the company of charity, created goods should flow fairly to all.²⁰

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All other rights, whatever they may be, including the rights of property and free trade, are to be subordinated to this principle. They should in no way hinder it; in fact, they should actively facilitate its implementation. Redirecting these rights back to their original purpose must be regarded as an important and urgent social duty. [317]

Programs and Planning [318]

33. Individual initiative alone and the interplay of competition will not ensure satisfactory development. We cannot proceed to increase the wealth and power of the rich while we entrench the needy in their poverty and add to the woes of the oppressed. Organized programs are necessary for "directing, stimulating, coordinating, supplying and integrating"³⁵ the work of individuals and intermediary organizations.

It is for the public authorities to establish and lay down the desired goals, the plans to be followed, and the methods to be used in fulfilling them; and it is also their task to stimulate the efforts of those involved in this common activity. But they must also see to it that private initiative and intermediary organizations are involved in this work. In this way they will avoid total collectivization and the dangers of a planned economy which might threaten human liberty and obstruct the exercise of man's basic human rights. [319]

Three Major Duties [320]

44. This duty concerns first and foremost the wealthier nations. Their obligations stem from the human and supernatural brotherhood of man, and present a three-fold obligation: 1) mutual solidarity - the aid that the richer nations must give to developing nations; 2) social justice - the rectification of trade relations between strong and weak nations; 3) universal charity - the effort to build a more humane world community, where all can give and receive, and where the progress of some is not bought at the expense of others. The matter is urgent, for on it depends the future of world civilization.

The Obstacles of Nationalism . . . [321]

62. There are other obstacles to creation of a more just social order and to the development of world solidarity: nationalism and racism. It is quite natural that nations recently arrived at political independence should be quite jealous of their new-found but fragile unity and make every effort to preserve it. It is also quite natural for nations with a long-standing cultural tradition to be proud of their traditional heritage. But this commendable attitude should be further ennobled by love, a love for the whole family of man. Haughty pride in one's own nation disunites nations and poses obstacles to their true welfare. It is especially harmful where the weak state of the economy calls for a pooling of information, efforts and financial resources to implement programs of development and to increase commercial and cultural interchange.

. . . and Racism [322]

63. Racism is not the exclusive attribute of young nations, where sometimes it hides beneath the rivalries of clans and political parties, with heavy losses for justice and at the risk of civil war. During the colonial period it often flared up between the colonists and the indigenous population, and stood in the way of mutually profitable understanding,

often giving rise to bitterness in the wake of genuine injustices. It is still an obstacle to collaboration among disadvantaged nations and a cause of division and hatred within countries whenever individuals and families see the inviolable rights of the human person held in scorn, as they themselves are unjustly subjected to a regime of discrimination because of their race or their color.

Welcoming the Stranger

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67. We cannot insist too much on the duty of giving foreigners a hospitable reception. It is a duty imposed by human solidarity and by Christian charity, and it is incumbent upon families and educational institutions in the host nations.

Young people, in particular, must be given a warm reception; more and more families and hostels must open their doors to them. This must be done, first of all, that they may be shielded from feelings of loneliness, distress and despair that would sap their strength. It is also necessary so that they may be guarded against the corrupting influence of their new surroundings, where the contrast between the dire poverty of their homeland and the lavish luxury of their present surroundings is, as it were, forced upon them. And finally, it must be done so that they may be protected from subversive notions and temptations to violence, which gain headway in their minds when they ponder their “wretched plight.”⁵⁸ In short, they should be welcomed in the spirit of brotherly love, so that the concrete example of wholesome living may give them a high opinion of authentic Christian charity and of spiritual values.

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68. We are deeply distressed by what happens to many of these young people. They come to wealthier nations to acquire scientific knowledge, professional training, and a high-quality education that will enable them to serve their own land with greater effectiveness. They do get a fine education, but very often they lose their respect for the priceless cultural heritage of their native land.

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69. Emigrant workers should also be given a warm welcome. Their living conditions are often inhuman, and they must scrimp on their earnings in order to send help to their families who have remained behind in their native land in poverty.

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Service to the World

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73. Sincere dialogue between cultures, as between individuals, paves the way for ties of brotherhood. Plans proposed for man’s betterment will unite all nations in the joint effort to be undertaken, if every citizen be he a government leader, a public official, or a simple workman is motivated by brotherly love and is truly anxious to build one universal human civilization that spans the globe. Then we shall see the start of a dialogue on man rather than on the products of the soil or of technology.

This dialogue will be fruitful if it shows the participants how to make economic progress and how to achieve spiritual growth as well; if the technicians take the role of teachers and educators; if the training provided is characterized by a concern for spiritual and moral values, so that it ensures human betterment as well as economic growth. Then the bonds of solidarity will endure, even when the aid programs are past and gone. It is not plain to all that closer ties of this sort will contribute immeasurably to the preservation of

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world peace?

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