

The Virtue of Sobriety: Integral Ecology in Its Full Flourishing

JENNIFER E. MILLER
Notre Dame Seminary
New Orleans, Louisiana

Introduction

POPE FRANCIS'S 2015 social encyclical entitled *Laudato Si'* (LS) introduces a new term into Catholic social teaching, "integral ecology," and with it, gives an impetus to the further development of theologically based virtue ethics, or virtuous morality, as found in the virtue of sobriety. In order to understand the term "integral ecology" and its implications in sobriety properly, it is necessary to situate it within the context of earlier social encyclicals. Thus, I will first review the social encyclicals to show how integral human development forms the background for integral ecology. Then I will further investigate the meaning of integral ecology by following the pontiff's Scriptural exposition of the natural moral law. Finally, I will conclude by demonstrating how the praxis of integral ecology, rooted within the natural moral law, comes to maturity in the virtue of sobriety. Although there has been a suggestion that proportionalist moral reasoning might be one way of understanding the moral implications of integral ecology,¹ through

¹ This suggestion is made by Christopher J. Thompson in the conclusion of his article regarding the Thomist nature of *Laudato Si'*; he notes that while "as criteria for assessing intrinsically evil acts concerning human life and related matters, the method was declared out of bounds in *Veritatis Splendor*, . . . as a method of assessing the prudential use of creatures and created goods, it is likely to experience a renewal" ("*Laudato Si'* and the Rise of Green Thomism," *Nova et Vetera* [English] 14, no. 3 [2016]: 755–56). This seems to ignore the presence of virtue ethics within the text itself, as well as to discount the

Careful examination of the text, Pope Francis's call for integral ecology can then be understood as the summons to a full flourishing of the natural moral law in the virtue of sobriety, needed by society especially to realize this broadened idea of integral human development within the context of all of Creation.

The Context of Integral Ecology

"Integral human development,"² meaning "the context within which . . . an adequate approach to ecology can be conceived,"³ was first introduced by Blessed Pope Paul VI in 1967, two years after the close of the Second Vatican Council.⁴ In contrast to earlier methodology: "[Paul VI] did not take the current conception of economic development as a starting point and then modify it. Instead, he laid down certain basic criteria by which we can measure to what extent any changes brought about in society deserve to be called authentic human development, . . . [thus providing] a *heuristic* notion of development, a framework or

reality of the interconnected relations between the human, or social, and environmental dimensions of integral ecology: one cannot be altered without affecting the other.

² David L. Schindler elaborates thus: "'Integral human development' is rightly called the central principle of Catholic social teaching, from *Populorum Progressio* through *Sollicitudo rei socialis* and *Caritas in veritate*, and now taken up by Pope Francis in *Evangelii gaudium* and especially *Laudato si'*" ("Habits of Presence and the Generosity of Creation: Ecology in Light of Integral Human Development," *Communio: International Catholic Review* 42 [Winter 2015]: 575). The inclusion of *Evangelii Gaudium* here is certainly interesting, but since it was not a social encyclical and Pope Francis clearly delineates two distinct goals for these two documents ("In my Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium*, I wrote to all the members of the Church with the aim of encouraging ongoing missionary renewal. In this Encyclical, I would like to enter into dialogue with all people about our common home" [*Laudato Si'*, 2015, §3]), it will not be included in this brief survey of documents preparatory to *Laudato Si'* [LS].

³ Schindler, "Habits of Presence," 574.

⁴ "During the Council, the attention of the Church was jolted by the comparative economic stagnation of Latin America, Africa, and Asia [in comparison with Europe]. This is the problem that Paul VI addressed in *Populorum Progressio*. He had become the first 'pilgrim pope,' and had been deeply impressed, as he notes, by what he had seen on his worldwide trips" (Michael Novak, "The Development of Nations," in *Aspiring to Freedom. Commentaries on John Paul II's Encyclical "The Social Concerns of the Church,"* ed. Kenneth A. Myers [Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1988], 73).

anticipation of the ‘shape’ of genuine development.”⁵ This framework of genuine development, christened by the Pontiff “integral human development,” insisted upon promoting the good of every man and of the whole man⁶ in the “transition from less human conditions to those which are more human.”⁷ In order to ensure the integral nature of such development, it enumerated four aspects of progress that required respect and promotion: economic, social, cultural, and spiritual.⁸ Paul VI saw the elaboration of these four interrelated aspects of human development as constitutive of the Church’s contribution to society: “The Church, . . . which ‘seeks but . . . to carry forward the work of Christ himself under the lead of the befriending Spirit,’ . . . wishes to help [men] to obtain their full flowering and that is why she offers [them] what she possesses as her characteristic attribute: a global vision of man and of the human race.”⁹

This global vision of the development of the human person, emphasizing the relationship of the various aspects of integral human development, as well as that between the development of each individual person and that of society as a whole, became a constant reference point elaborated in later encyclicals. St. John Paul II’s 1987 social encyclical *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis* (SRS), written to coincide with the twentieth anniversary of *Populorum Progressio* (PP),¹⁰ begins by stating that “the aim of the present reflection is to emphasize, through a theological investigation of the present world, the need for a fuller

⁵ Donal Dorr, “Solidarity and Integral Human Development,” in *The Logic of Solidarity. Commentaries on Pope John Paul II’s Encyclical “On Social Concern,”* ed. Gregory Baum and Robert Ellsberg (New York: Orbis Books, 1989), 145.

⁶ Paul VI, *Populorum Progressio* [PP] (1967), §14.

⁷ Ibid., §20.

⁸ Ibid., §13.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ In fact, although “the text did not appear until the end of February 1988, it was backdated by fifty-one days so as to be dated in 1987 (30 December), in time to mark at least the year of Paul VI’s encyclical, *Populorum Progressio* (26 March 1967)” (Novak, “The Development of Nations,” 67). This is significant, as Pope Leo XIII’s *Rerum Novarum* (1891), the document that marks the beginning of the modern social encyclical tradition, is the only other social encyclical to be commemorated on anniversaries by further social encyclicals (by Pope Pius XI’s 1931 *Quadragesimo Anno*, Bl. Pope Paul VI’s 1971 *Octogesima Adveniens*, and St. John Paul II’s 1981 *Laborem Exercens* and 1991 *Centesimus Annus*). This highlights the importance of integral human development in Catholic Social Doctrine.

and more nuanced concept of development.”¹¹ The idea of integral human development here becomes more Scripturally, and thus more theologically, rooted. It emphasizes the revelation of the “*specific nature of man*”¹² in the Creation story of Genesis and reveals and establishes the importance of the virtue of solidarity in having and being for such development.¹³ *Caritas in Veritate*, Pope Benedict XVI’s 2009 social encyclical, also written to commemorate *PP*, continues to insist that “progress of a merely economic and technological kind is insufficient.”¹⁴ He highlights the importance of civil society in the education for, and the diffusion of, virtues and attitudes such as the spirit of gift and communion.¹⁵ When this sphere is given its due, it prevents the “exclusively binary model of market-plus-State, . . . [which is] corrosive of society,”¹⁶ and helps to maintain the close bond between the virtue of solidarity and the principle of subsidiarity.¹⁷

The brief retracing of these social encyclicals indicates some of the key points necessary for us to develop an understanding of integral ecology. In fact, although referenced only briefly at the beginning of *LS*,¹⁸ the inclusion of the phrase “human development” at the beginning of the document, as well as in Francis’s declaration during his outline of the document in §15 that, “convinced as I am that change is impossible without motivation and a process of education, I will offer some inspired guidelines for human development to be found in the treasure of Christian spiritual experience,” highlights the importance of integral human development as the context for the encyclical.

¹¹ John Paul II, *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis* [SRS] (1987), §4.

¹² *Ibid.*, §29.

¹³ See *Ibid.*, §§28, 38–40.

¹⁴ Benedict XVI, *Caritas in Veritate* (2009), §23.

¹⁵ See especially Ch. 3, “Fraternity, Economic Development and Civil Society,” §§34–42.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, §39.

¹⁷ See especially, *Ibid.*, §§58–59.

¹⁸ In fact, it may not be immediately clear to the reader that this integral human development is key to the understanding of integral ecology, since the phrase “human development” occurs only six times in *LS* (§§5, 15, 18, 109, 128, and 191), and *Populorum Progressio* is referenced only once, in *LS* §127. Furthermore, the references to previous social encyclicals with which Pope Francis begins highlight previous references to ecology, rather than the setting of integral ecology within the context of integral human development. See references to *Octogesima Adveniens*, *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis*, *Centesimus Annus*, and *Caritas in Veritate* in *LS* §§4–6. However, even if the term may not be emphasized throughout the document, the concept is clearly present.

Integral human development as the context within which integral ecology is best understood is then confirmed in three diverse ways. Most clearly, there are constant references throughout the encyclical to the economic, the social, and the cultural, especially within the subtitles.¹⁹ Moreover, the encyclical is permeated by the omnipresent influence of Christ, Creation, and the spiritual, as it begins with the *Laudato Si'* hymn and ends with a prayer to the Trinitarian God. Finally, there is the call for an education and lifestyle characterized by the virtue of sobriety,²⁰ and such a call for the flourishing of integral human development in virtue is consistent with the social encyclicals as a whole, and even more so with the theological development of solidarity as found in *SRS*, as we will soon see.

What then is this integral ecology, and how does it fit within such a context? Chapter 4 of the encyclical, which treats specifically of this idea, begins thus: “Since everything is closely interrelated, and today’s problems call for a vision capable of taking into account every aspect of the global crisis, I suggest that we now consider some elements of an *integral ecology*, one which clearly respects its human and social dimensions. . . . Ecology studies the relationship between living organisms and the environment in which they develop; . . . everything is interconnected.”²¹ What this means is that: “We are faced not with two separate crises, one environmental and the other social, but rather with one complex crisis. . . . Strategies for a solution demand an integrated approach.”²² The term “environment,” however, cannot be understood merely as a reference to a material substance capable of use or manipulation,²³ nor is it meant to conjure

¹⁹ See especially *LS*, ch. 4, section I, “Environmental, Economic and Social Ecology” (§§138–42), and section II, “Cultural Ecology” (§§143–46).

²⁰ References to virtue occur throughout the encyclical, beginning with §9, which highlights the contribution of Patriarch Bartholomew to the ecological discourse: a request “to replace consumption with sacrifice, greed with generosity, wastefulness with a spirit of sharing, an asceticism which ‘entails learning to give, and not simply to give up.’ ” However, ch. 6, “Ecological Education and Spirituality” contains the paragraphs that are most focused and most explicit in their treatment of the virtues (§§216–32).

²¹ *LS*, §§137–38.

²² *Ibid.*, §139. Other paragraphs emphasizing the interrelated nature of the social (which here seems to be used not as distinct from the economic, cultural, and spiritual, but rather as pertaining to the human person and thus encompassing all four of these established categories) are §§79, 91, 117–118, and 124.

²³ See, for example, *ibid.*, §159.

up images of a divinization of the earth.²⁴ Rather, Pope Francis's use of the term within the concept of integral ecology is meant to refer primarily to Creation: "The word 'creation' has a broader meaning than 'nature,' for it has to do with God's loving plan in which every creature has its own value and significance. Nature is usually seen as a system which can be studied, understood and controlled, whereas creation can only be understood as a gift from the outstretched hand of the Father of all, and as a reality illuminated by the love which calls us together into universal communion."²⁵ Situating this call for an integral ecology within the context of integral human development recognizes then that to the integration of the economic, social, cultural, and spiritual aspects of the human person at the core of human flourishing must be added another aspect: the environment, understood as Creation and, thus, as a gift from God, from which these previous aspects are also developed. In "Habits of Presence and the Generosity of Creation," David L. Schindler notes: "Pope Francis, following Paul VI, says that integral development concerns all human beings and the whole human being. According to Francis, this principle—the principle of universality—is intrinsic to the Gospel, which involves the salvation of every man and woman and includes 'gathering up all things in Christ, things in heaven and on earth' (Eph 1:10; cf. *EG*, 181)."²⁶

Integral Ecology and the Natural (Moral) Law

How then does Pope Francis seek to explain this integral ecology as essential to the human flourishing sought by integral human development? What is the basis for the virtue of sobriety in which integral ecology and the encyclical culminate? The answer begins with a theological, scriptural understanding of the natural moral law that highlights "issues that are at once theological and anthropological, . . . whether we speak of the order of nature, the Covenant, or the Gospel."²⁷ In the

²⁴ Ibid., §90.

²⁵ Ibid., §76.

²⁶ Schindler, "Habits of Presence," 575.

²⁷ In his discussion of the theological foundation of the natural law, as participation in the eternal law, Russell Hittinger notes the terminological change introduced by *Veritatis Splendor*, present also once in *Humanae Vitae* (1968) and used in *Donum Vitae* (1987) and in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (1992), in which the natural law is referred to as the natural "moral" law; see Hittinger, *The First Grace: Rediscovering the Natural Law in a Post-Christian World* (Wilmington, DE: ISI Books, 2003), xxxix–xli. He suggests: "As I see it, the rubric

line of patristic theologians such as Tertullian,²⁸ as well as John Paul II's scriptural idea of natural law rooted in the first chapters of Genesis,²⁹ Pope Francis uses the Creation account to illuminate an understanding of the natural law that gives primacy to its theological origin as a participation in the eternal law.³⁰ Hence, as the world has been created, we recognize that: "We are not God. The earth was here before us and it has been given to us."³¹ Therefore, the dominion given to man in Genesis 1:28 is not "absolute."³² Rather, in line with the earlier thought of John Paul II, Francis states: "We must forcefully reject the notion that our being created in God's image and given dominion over the earth justifies absolute dominion over other creatures. The biblical texts are to be read in their context, with an appropriate hermeneutic, recognizing that they tell us to 'till and keep' the garden of the world (cf. Gen 2:15). 'Tilling' refers to cultivating, ploughing or working, while 'keeping' means caring, protecting, overseeing and preserving."³³ The earlier

'natural moral law' highlights issues that are at *once theological and anthropological*. Whether we speak of *the order of nature, the Covenant, or the Gospel*, the creature is not in a condition in which morals and law have to be brought together *ab initio* by the human mind—*fiat lex* . . . The terminology of *Veritatis* . . . is somewhat novel, but the definitional scheme is virtually the same as that of St. Thomas, who, relying on St. Augustine, distinguished all law proceeding from the divine mind from laws promulgated by the human mind. The moral order remains within the setting of divine wisdom, though our location in, and participation in, this order differs in each case" (ibid., xl–xli; emphasis mine).

²⁸ Ibid., 5–6.

²⁹ John Paul II's development of the natural moral law as rooted in Genesis is clearly present in *Laborem Exercens* §47, *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis* §§30, 34, *Veritatis Splendor* §§40–44, and the theology of the body catecheses that develop the meaning of "in the beginning." See St. John Paul II, *Man and Woman He Created Them: A Theology of the Body*, trans. Michael Waldstein (Boston: Pauline Books & Media, 2006), 131–23. The theological development of natural law that recognizes "all three foci . . . (1) an order of nature ('the truth about man'), (2) the rudiments of which are 'in principle accessible to human reason,' and (3) are expressions of divine providence," (Hittinger, *The First Grace*, 26) and that emphasizes the last has been pursued in a notable way by Hittinger in the aforementioned work and by Matthew Levering in *Biblical Natural Law: A Theocentric and Teleological Approach* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008).

³⁰ St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica* [ST] I–II, q. 91, a. 2, resp. (all English of ST will be from the translation by the Fathers of the English Dominican Province, 5 vols. [Notre Dame, IN: Christian Classics, 1981]).

³¹ *LS*, §67.

³² This term is used eleven times in the document, usually negatively, to indicate that absolute dominion is not the meaning of this verse.

³³ *LS*, §67. See also *SRS*, §30: "The task is 'to have dominion' over the other

reason given for an integral ecology, that Creation is understood as gift from God, becomes even more urgent when we realize that: “All creatures are moving forward with us and through us towards a common point of arrival, which is God, in that transcendent fullness where the risen Christ embraces and illumines all things. Human beings, endowed with intelligence and love, and drawn by the fullness of Christ, are called to lead all creatures back to their Creator.”³⁴ This invocation of the rational faculties in regard to the “very good” Creation of God³⁵ highlight man’s “inclination to the good,”³⁶ according to the nature of his reason, which nature is proper to him: a natural inclination to know the truth about God, and to live in society.”³⁷ Pope Francis continues to recall this first natural inclination, that to the truth about God, who is Creator, and thus our recognition that we are not the Creator, but made to be provident in his image,³⁸ by constant references to man being made in the image and likeness, man’s dignity, which flows therefrom, and the creativity with which he is called to respond to the challenges of an integral ecology. These references, such as that to “our unique dignity and our gift of intelligence, [by which] we are called to

created beings, ‘to cultivate the garden.’ This is to be accomplished within the framework of obedience to the divine law and therefore with respect for the image received, the image which is the clear foundation of the power of dominion recognized as belonging to man as the means to his perfection (cf. Gen 1:26–30; 2:15–16; Wis 9:2–3).” See also St. John Paul II, *Evangelium Vitae* (1995), §52: “Man’s lordship however is not absolute, but ministerial. . . . Hence man must exercise it with wisdom and love, sharing in the boundless wisdom and love of God. And this comes about through obedience to God’s holy Law.”

³⁴ *LS*, §83.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, §65.

³⁶ Levering sees the natural inclinations clearly present in the Genesis account (*Biblical Natural Law*, 58–59). The first principle of practical reason, to do good and avoid evil, is indicated as God’s beholding Creation, “and it was very good” (Gen 1:31).

³⁷ *ST I-II*, q. 94, a. 2, resp. Pope Francis is clear about this at the beginning of ch. 2, “The Gospel of Creation,” when he states, “I would like from the outset to show how faith convictions can offer Christians, and some other believers as well, ample motivation to care for nature and for the most vulnerable of their brothers and sisters” (*LS*, §64).

³⁸ *ST I-II*, q. 91, a. 2, resp. Levering points to Gen 1:26, “Let us make man in our image, after our likeness,” as indicative of the natural inclination to know the truth about God: “Created in the image and likeness of God, human beings possess a natural inclination toward knowing truth, the fulfillment of the spiritual capacity to know” (*Biblical Natural Law*, 59).

respect creation and its inherent laws,”³⁹ leave no doubt that it is the natural moral law to which he refers in his exposition of Genesis.

Along with the natural inclination to the truth about God, understood as the truth about man in relationship to God, Pope Francis makes appeal to the natural inclination of man to live in society, and he does so in a way that relates it with knowing the truth about God as Creator and leads to giving special preeminence to the poor and to our children, to future generations. The first mention of man’s inclination to life in society is found in the same phrase that emphasizes man’s inclination to the truth about God: “The Bible teaches that every man and woman is created out of love and made in God’s image and likeness (cf. Gen 1:26).”⁴⁰ This reference to the creation of the first man and woman refers to the first society,⁴¹ as “It is not good that the man should be alone (Gen 2:18).”⁴² Man is thus capable of and called to “freely giving himself and entering into communion with other persons.”⁴³ The story of Cain and Abel and the Jubilee laws are used to further highlight the “duty to cultivate and maintain a proper relationship with my neighbor, for whose care and custody I am responsible.”⁴⁴ Within this context, the Leviticus laws regarding reaping highlight the preeminence given by the Lord to the care of the poor and vulnerable: “When you reap the harvest of your land, you shall not reap your field to its very border, neither shall

³⁹ *LS*, §69. See, in a similar vein, §§68, 61 (whose presumably Spanish original reads “los fines de la acción humana,” or “the ends of human action,” rather than “the goals of human activity,” as the English has translated it, about which “we have stopped thinking”), and 155 (which most explicitly declares, “Human ecology also implies another profound reality: the relationship between human life and the moral law, which is inscribed in our nature and is necessary for the creation of a more dignified environment”). (I say “presumably” for §61 above because the Post-Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium* was known to have been written first in Spanish, translated into and then corrected in Italian, and then translated into the other languages. Thus, looking at the Spanish and the Italian at certain points can give us some insight into the pontifical bent of mind that the English may not make so evident.)

⁴⁰ *LS*, §65.

⁴¹ Russell Hittinger, “The Coherence of the Four Basic Principles of Catholic Social Doctrine: An Interpretation,” in *Pursuing the Common Good: How Solidarity and Subsidiarity Can Work Together*, ed. M.S. Archer and P. Donati (Vatican City: The Pontifical Academy of Social Sciences, 2008), 85.

⁴² Levering, *Biblical Natural Law*, 59.

⁴³ *LS*, §65.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, §70.

you gather the gleanings after the harvest. And you shall not strip your vineyard bare, neither shall you gather the fallen grapes of your vineyard; you shall leave them for the poor and for the sojourner (Lev 19:9–10).”⁴⁵ Further description and warning against the pretense of an “absolute” dominion of man over Creation then continue to highlight the impact that nonprovident interventions have on the poor: the lack of access to safe drinking water,⁴⁶ the depletion of fishing reserves, rises in the sea level, premature death in conflict over scarce resources,⁴⁷ the export of solid and toxic liquids to developing countries,⁴⁸ and the lack of housing.⁴⁹ The connection here between the social and environmental crises—in truth, the one crisis of integral ecology—becomes clear: “The deterioration of the environment and of society affects the most vulnerable people on the planet.”⁵⁰ Moreover, the “notion of the common good also extends to future generations.”⁵¹ The section on “Justice Between the Generations” (in chapter 4, on integral ecology) addresses both intragenerational and intergenerational solidarity: “Once we start to think about the world we are leaving to future generations, we look at things differently; we realize that the world is a gift which we have freely received and which we must share with others.”⁵² In other words, in the acceptance of the world as gift of the Creator, the particular dignity of the human person in the order of Creation must guide man’s “tilling” and “keeping.”⁵³

⁴⁵ Ibid., §71.

⁴⁶ Ibid., §30.

⁴⁷ Ibid., §48.

⁴⁸ Ibid., §51.

⁴⁹ Ibid., §152.

⁵⁰ Ibid., §48.

⁵¹ Ibid., §159.

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ Ibid., §119. As John Cuddeback notes, “Francis seems especially intent on emphasizing that, in our relationship with the natural world around us, as in the moral life in general, man has received from God the gift of an order that should govern all our actions” (“Reflections of a Green Thomist on Pope Francis’s *Laudato Si’*,” *Nova et Vetera* [English] 14, no. 3 [2016]: 738).

Integral Ecology and the Virtue of Sobriety⁵⁴

What then does this look like concretely? How is the natural moral law, the basis for integral ecology, or an expanded notion of integral human development, to be lived fruitfully in society? Since “the rational soul is in every man a natural inclination to act according to reason . . . to act according to virtue,”⁵⁵ it is clear that the natural moral law, lived fruitfully, flourishes in virtue. That this is true in regard to integral human development, as understood in the earlier social encyclicals, is clearly manifest in the theological definition of the virtue of solidarity as found in *SRS*. While it is traditionally one of the four principles of Catholic Social Doctrine, along with subsidiarity, common good, and the dignity of the human person,⁵⁶ this virtuous elaboration of solidarity augments its significance. Looking at the pertinent section in some detail will prepare us to better understand the flourishing of the virtue of sobriety in *LS*.

John Paul II’s *SRS* addresses authentic human development by first indicating certain extremes in regard to development: underdevelopment, characterized by misery, and superdevelopment, the excessive use and waste of goods, or “consumerism.”⁵⁷ These extremes have their origin in the interconnection between “having” and “being.”⁵⁸ The human person must “have” certain goods in order to “be,” in

⁵⁴ This is not the only time that the virtues have played an important part in Pope Francis’s pontificate. See also the 2015 Post-synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Amoris Laetitia*, ch. 4, “Love in Marriage” (§§89–164), which performs an exegesis of 1 Cor 13:4–7 in terms of love and its associated virtues as well as the 2014 and 2015 Christmas Greetings to the Roman Curia, which first listed the vices, or “curial diseases,” that weaken service to the Lord (2014 Address, accessed October 30, 2017, https://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2014/december/documents/papa-francesco_20141222_curia-romana.html) and then listed needed virtues for the Curia, which corresponded to the word *misericordia*, or mercy, in Italian (2015 Address, accessed October 30, 2017, https://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2015/december/documents/papa-francesco_20151221_curia-romana.html).

⁵⁵ *ST* I-II, q. 94, a. 3, resp.

⁵⁶ Although the term “principle” is not used systematically in Catholic Social Doctrine, these four primary principles are consistently found to structure its presentation and elaboration. See Hittinger’s “The Coherence of the Four Basic Principles of Catholic Social Doctrine” and the United States Council of Catholic Bishops’ section on “What Does the Church Say About Catholic Social Teaching in the Public Square?—Four Principles of Catholic Social Teaching,” in *Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship* (2015), §§40–62.

⁵⁷ *SRS*, §28.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

order to realize the vocation to which he is called. However, obstacles to his “being” arise from the “lack,” or ill use, of the goods he “has.” There is both the danger that, having kept the importance of “being” always before him, he will not “have” the goods necessary to “be,” and the danger that “possessions eat us up”⁵⁹ or consume the human person if he focuses on the possession itself and not on its creative use for his vocation or his “being.” As “contrary to what is true and good happiness,”⁶⁰ the extremes of underdevelopment and superdevelopment, corresponding to either an intentional deprivation or accumulation of “having” at the expense of “being,” must be diagnosed as moral evils—in fact, as social evils or structures of sin—“in order to identify precisely, on the level of human conduct, *the path to be followed*.”⁶¹ While such structures are always rooted in personal sin, within the culture, they begin to become consolidated: “They grow stronger, spread, and become the source of other sins, and so influence people’s behavior.”⁶² In order to combat such social structures rooted in individual human persons and working against the common good,⁶³ people acting morally, making moral decisions, or converting is necessary.⁶⁴ These moral decisions must be rooted in

⁵⁹ Gabriel Marcel, “Outlines of a Phenomenology of Having,” in *Being and Having: An Existentialist Diary*, trans. Katherine Farrer (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1965), 165. Although I have found this noted only in Derek S. Jeffrey’s “A Deep Amazement at Man’s Worth and Dignity: Technology and the Person in *Redemptor hominis*,” in *The Legacy of John Paul II: An Evangelical Assessment*, ed. Tim Perry (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2007), 47–49, John Paul II’s use of “having” and “being,” while he explicitly references its roots in *PP* §14 and in the Second Vatican Council’s *Gaudium et Spes*, §35 (see *SRS* §28), is clearly influenced in its use and definition of these terms by that of Marcel: “‘Our possessions eat us up,’ . . . and it is truer of us, strangely enough, when we are in a state of inertia in face of objects which are themselves inert, but falsier when we are more vitally and actively bound up with something serving as the immediate subject-matter of a personal creative act, a subject-matter perpetually renewed. (It may be the garden of the keen gardener, the farm of a farmer, the violin of a musician, or the laboratory of a scientist.) In all these cases, we may say, having tends, not to be destroyed, but to be sublimated and changed into being” (Marcel, “Outlines of a Phenomenology of Having,” 165). My great thanks to James Jacobs for having pointed out this connection between Marcel and John Paul II.

⁶⁰ *SRS*, §28.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, §36 (*italics original*).

⁶² *Ibid.*

⁶³ *Ibid.*

⁶⁴ See, for example, *ibid.*, §§33, 35, and 38.

the natural law, in “all the demands deriving from the order of *truth* and *good* proper to the human person,” whom the Christian recognizes as made in the image of God.⁶⁵

John Paul II then begins to characterize in detail this conversion or these moral decisions, and he does so specifically in terms of virtue, “that which makes its possessor good and his work good likewise.”⁶⁶ He writes: “It is above all a question of interdependence, sensed as a system determining relationships in the contemporary world, in its economic, cultural, political and religious elements, and accepted as a *moral category*. When interdependence becomes recognized in this way, the correlative response as a moral and social attitude, as a ‘virtue,’ is *solidarity*.”⁶⁷

This characterization of solidarity as a virtue is key to understanding the flourishing of the natural law in integral human development.⁶⁸ In fact, this moral and social attitude, or *habitus*,⁶⁹ is meant to combat the moral evils, or perhaps vices, of underdevelopment and superdevelopment.⁷⁰ As these vices take hold in structures of sin “rooted in personal sin, and thus always linked to the concrete acts of individuals who introduce these structures, consolidate them and make them difficult to remove,”⁷¹ they are not just personal, but also social vices, or social expressions of vice. It follows, then, that, just as sin is personal but can also lead to the creation of structures of sin and manifest itself socially, so also virtue, which is also personal and rooted and flourishing in concrete human persons, can lead to the creation of virtuous structures, or the social expression of such a virtue. Therefore, solidarity, as “*a firm and persevering determination to*

⁶⁵ Ibid., §33 (italics in the original).

⁶⁶ ST I-II, q. 55, a. 3, resp.

⁶⁷ SRS, §38.

⁶⁸ Solidarity, understood as a reality and a duty, was already present in the social encyclicals. See, for example, PP §17, 44, and 48, and *Laborem Exercens* §8, which use this term, and the use of “friendship” by Pope Leo XIII, the use of “social charity” by Pope Pius XI, and the use of “civilization of love” by Bl. Pope Paul VI. John Paul II sees these latter as identical to solidarity (*Centesimus Annus*, §10). It was also a part of the work of Cardinal Wojtyła, specifically in *The Acting Person*, who wrote about this attitude or “commitment . . . to participate in the life of [the] community in a way that promotes the common good” (Dorr, “Solidarity and Integral Human Development,” 152). However, it was not until SRS that solidarity was defined as a virtue.

⁶⁹ See the Latin of §37 found in *Acta Apostolicae Sedis* 80 (1988): 565.

⁷⁰ SRS, §39.

⁷¹ Ibid., §36.

commit oneself to the *common good* . . . that is to say to the good of all and of each individual, because we are *all* really responsible *for all*,”⁷² can be considered a social virtue, or a social expression of virtue. As John Paul II notes in his characterization of solidarity, “attitudes and ‘structures of sin’ are only conquered—presupposing the help of divine grace—by a *diametrically opposed attitude*: a commitment to the good of one’s neighbor with the readiness, in the gospel sense, to ‘lose oneself’ for the sake of the other instead of exploiting him . . . (cf. Matt 10:40–42; 20:25; Mark 10:42–45; Luke 22:25–27).”⁷³

However, what would it mean to speak of a social vice, or better yet, a social virtue, especially when this precise terminology is not used in the encyclical? Such a social virtue or a social expression of a virtue, we could posit, would refer to the way that a virtue is lived by each person in regard to others and society as a whole, as well as a virtue characteristic of a society and its structures.⁷⁴ This interrelationship between the personal and the social in regard to authentic human development is rooted in “the *transcendent* reality of the human being, a reality which is seen to be shared from the beginning by a couple, a man and a woman (cf. Gen 1:27), and is therefore fundamentally social.”⁷⁵ For this reason, John Paul II writes that development is given to the first man and woman as “a special task to be accomplished by each individually and by them as a couple.”⁷⁶ This emphasis on the interrelationship between the personal and the social, then, characterizes the treatment of development and, thus, solidarity throughout the section: it is “our personal and collective effort”;⁷⁷ it “obliges *each and every* man and woman, as well as soci-

⁷² Ibid., §38 (*italics original*).

⁷³ Ibid., §§38–39 (*italics original*).

⁷⁴ In fact, the term “social virtues” seems to be present in this sense in John Paul II’s Post-synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Ecclesia in America* (1999), §13. While the term “social virtues” is also used in the English, the Spanish of the *Acta Apostolicae Sedis* 91 (1999): 750, most closely emphasizes the interrelationship of the personal and social nature of these social virtues and sins: “Como los pecados y las virtudes sociales no existen en abstracto, sino que son el resultado de actos personales, es necesario tener presente que América es hoy una realidad compleja, fruto de las tendencias y modos de proceder de los hombres y mujeres que lo habitan. En esta situación real y concreta es donde ellos han de encontrarse con Jesús.” See also *Gaudium et Spes*, §30.

⁷⁵ *SRS*, §29.

⁷⁶ Ibid., §30.

⁷⁷ Ibid., §31.

eties and nations”;⁷⁸ and it is meant to change our attitudes toward ourselves and our neighbors and our relations “with even the remotest human communities, and with nature itself; and all of this in view of higher values such as the *common good*.”⁷⁹ This solidarity thus moves those who “have” more goods, which are necessary for “being,” to aid *and* be aided by those who desire ardently to “be” and yet do not “have” enough,⁸⁰ both in personal interactions and in the institutions that make up society.

To better expound on this virtue of solidarity, John Paul II then explicitly states that is a Christian virtue similar to charity.⁸¹ If we understand solidarity as charity, we see that it is best understood as a virtue of the will,⁸² “a firm and persevering determination to commit oneself” by which we love God and our neighbor, “that he may be in God.”⁸³ Solidarity and charity are so similar, as seen above, that the definition of charity can easily be substituted for that of solidarity. However, as a virtue that regards the common good, we may say that solidarity is a social expression of the virtue of charity and how charity is best lived in society. In fact, solidarity, understanding one’s neighbor as the image of the living God,⁸⁴ is both “to mark . . . and [to be] the final destiny of . . . the human community,”⁸⁵ the communion inspired by the “supreme *model of unity* . . . a reflection of the intimate life of God, one God in three Persons.”⁸⁶ Hence, integral human development, carrying forward the work of Christ, requires

⁷⁸ Ibid., §32 (italics original).

⁷⁹ Ibid., §38 (italics original).

⁸⁰ See *ibid.*, §38–40.

⁸¹ Ibid., §40. This may also be another point where John Paul II’s reading of the earlier social encyclicals, and their various names for the reality that he will call solidarity, corresponds with his understanding of “having” and “being” in Marcel. Marcel indicates love as the bridge, or as the means of transcending, the possession of what I have over and against another: “The man who remains on the plane of having (or of desire) is *centred*, either on himself or on another treated as another. . . . But we know very well that it is possible to transcend the level of the self and the other; it is transcended both in love and in charity” (“*Outlines of a Phenomenology of Having*,” 166–67).

⁸² *ST* II-II, q. 24, a. 1, sc.

⁸³ *ST* II-II, q. 25, a. 1, resp.

⁸⁴ *SRS*, §40.

⁸⁵ Richard John Neuhaus, “*Sollicitudo* Behind the Headlines,” in *Aspiring to Freedom: Commentaries on John Paul II’s Encyclical “The Social Concerns of the Church,”* ed. Kenneth A. Myers (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1988), 142.

⁸⁶ *SRS*, §40.

and flourishes in virtue, specifically the social virtue of solidarity.

However, for Pope Francis, this virtue perfecting the will necessitates as well a moral virtue, a virtue that specifically concerns the use of temporal goods, in order to render it efficacious. This can be seen as early as *Evangelii Gaudium*, his programmatic encyclical in which he encourages the Church, in the footsteps of He who took the first step (cf. 1 John 4:10), to “take the initiative” and to go out in love.⁸⁷ Social charity, or solidarity, must so perfect the will as to move the person to action. This impetus takes a particular form in a society in which consumerism and greed, despite the warnings of John Paul II, continue to flourish and threaten not only the economic, social, cultural, and spiritual aspects of integral human development but also Creation itself as a gift. The constant and gnawing desire to acquire and possess newer and more deafens the human person to the call to live in solidarity with others. The exercise of this solidarity through the moderation of one’s purchases and the use of one’s goods, the “being” and the “having” for the benefit of others as understood in the context of Creation as a gift from God to man and woman, is even more insistently a demand of integral ecology. These desires to possess require a specific virtue, or better again, a moral virtue expressed in a social way. Sobriety, or the social expression of the virtue of temperance, solidly rooted in his earlier theological engagement with the natural law, is such a virtue for Pope Francis. Thus, just as charity, the form of all the virtues, directs the moral virtues of prudence, justice, temperance, and fortitude in regard to human acts and temporal goods,⁸⁸ it follows that solidarity, the social expression of charity, will also inform and make use of sobriety. The necessity

⁸⁷ Pope Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium* (2013), §24. In fact, Francis invents here a neologism to speak about this “taking the initiative.” Found in both the original Spanish and then the Italian, but completely absent in the English, the second line of this paragraph reads, “‘Primerear’: sepan disculpar este neologismo.”

⁸⁸ *ST II-II*, q. 23, a. 8, resp. See, as an earlier example of this concept, St. Augustine’s *De moribus ecclesiae* 1.15, which defines each one of the cardinal virtues in terms of a diverse aspect of love: “Now since this love, as I have said, is not love of things in general, but rather love of God, that is, of the supreme good, the supreme wisdom, and the supreme harmony, we can define the virtues thus: temperance is love preserving itself whole and unblemished for God, fortitude is love enduring all things willingly for the sake of God, justice is love serving God alone and, therefore, ruling well those things subject to man, and prudence is love discriminating rightly between those things which aid it in reaching God and those things which might hinder it.”

for such a virtue was already hinted at in John Paul II's exhortation toward "the practice of virtues which favor togetherness, and which teach us to live in unity, so as to build in unity, by giving and receiving, a new society and a better world."⁸⁹ In fact, Donal Dorr, commenting on *SRS*, notes: "[The Pontiff] speaks of 'the urgent need to change the spiritual attitudes which define each individual's relationship with self, with neighbor, with even the remotest human communities, and with nature itself' (*SRS*, no. 38.3). This indicates that the moral dimension of genuine human development involves a sense of responsibility for the whole cosmos; such moral responsibility is either *a part of the virtue of solidarity itself or else it is a sister virtue that has very much in common with it.*"⁹⁰ What then is precisely this virtue of sobriety, and how is it the flourishing of the natural law in integral ecology?

First mentioned in regard to the poverty and austerity of Saint Francis⁹¹ and the *ora et labora* of St. Benedict of Norcia and his monks,⁹² this sobriety is a necessary part of conversion in the face of a "constant flood of new consumer goods."⁹³ The social vice of consumerism, taken up again as in *SRS*, leads the human person to become self-centered: "In this horizon, a genuine sense of the common good . . . disappears."⁹⁴ Greed, compulsive buying and spending, and the need to consume are all used to characterize this vice not just as personal but as social, and thus endemic to society as a whole.⁹⁵ However, "no system can completely suppress our openness to what is good, true and beautiful, or our God-given ability to respond to his grace at work deep in our hearts."⁹⁶ The educational challenge to respond to this vice is not merely a question of the transmission of information, since even those who know that such a lifestyle does not bring them joy feel unable to renounce such habits.⁹⁷ Education in terms of mere information partnered with adequate laws, even if well-enforced, is insufficient; it is rather "good habits"

⁸⁹ *SRS*, §39.

⁹⁰ Dorr, "Solidarity and Integral Human Development," 151 (emphasis mine).

⁹¹ *LS*, §11.

⁹² *Ibid.*, §126.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, §222.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, §204.

⁹⁵ See *Ibid.* §§203, 204, and 209.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, §205.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, §209.

or “sound virtues” that are necessary to counter such a vice.⁹⁸ Sobriety is the fruit of that response to the call to conversion,⁹⁹ away from this social vice and the passivism that reinforces it.¹⁰⁰

To be distinguished from the more particular Thomistic definition of sobriety, which focuses upon the moderation of strong drink,¹⁰¹ this sobriety seems rather to be a social expression of the virtue of temperance. In fact, the definition of sobriety given by Francis, “a growth marked by moderation and the capacity to be happy with little, . . . to be spiritually detached from what we possess, and not to succumb to sadness for what we lack, . . . [which] implies avoiding the dynamic of dominion and the mere accumulation of pleasures,”¹⁰² appears to mirror the Thomistic definition of temperance: “a kind of moderation . . . chiefly concerned with those passions that tend towards sensible goods, . . . and consequently with the sorrows that arise from the absence of those pleasures.”¹⁰³ This can be seen in the examples Pope Francis provides of this virtue lived out daily, such

⁹⁸ Ibid., §211. This, of course, does not deny the importance of these laws (see *ibid.* §177).

⁹⁹ See especially ch. 6, Section III, “Ecological Conversion” (*LS*, §§216–21).

¹⁰⁰ Pope Francis speaks in *LS* §217 also about the need for conversion for those who either ridicule concern for Creation or are passive in its regard. The need for conversion to a life of virtue is evident also here when we see that virtues increase and are maintained through deliberate acts of equal and greater intensity, while they are corrupted through acts of diminished intensity (*ST* I-II, q. 52, a.3, resp.) or the lack of such acts (*ST* I-II, q. 53, a. 2, resp.).

¹⁰¹ *ST* II-II, q. 149, a. 1, resp.

¹⁰² *LS*, §222. This understanding of sobriety is also present in some of Francis’s discourses, notably his Homily at Midnight Mass on December 24, 2015, in which he proclaims, “In a society so often intoxicated by consumerism and hedonism, wealth and extravagance, appearances and narcissism, this Child calls us to act *sobriety*, in other words, in a way that is simple, balanced, consistent, capable of seeing and doing what is essential” (accessed October 30, 2017, https://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/homilies/2015/documents/papa-francesco_20151224_omelia-natale.html), as well as during his Angelus on November 27, 2016, in which the Advent Angelus examines the light that the Incarnation shines up our lives, indicating that “from this perspective there also comes an invitation to *sobriety*, to not be controlled by the things of this world, by material reality, but rather to govern them” (accessed October 30, 2017, https://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/angelus/2016/documents/papa-francesco_angelus_20161127.html). Obviously, this is not an exhaustive list, but merely a summary confirmation that Francis’s understanding of sobriety as a virtue is distinct from that of Aquinas.

¹⁰³ *ST* II-II, q. 141, a. 3, resp.

as moderating the use of heating,¹⁰⁴ air-conditioning,¹⁰⁵ plastic and paper, and water, engaging in car-pooling, and “cooking only what can be *reasonably* consumed.”¹⁰⁶ While the use of the term “reasonably” points specifically once more to temperance, inasmuch as it moderates the use of these pleasurable goods,¹⁰⁷ all of these examples presuppose a lack of ultimate comfort or pleasure on the part of the acting person, who is sacrificing this pleasure for others. Pope Francis also notes that “happiness means knowing how to limit some needs which only stupefy us,”¹⁰⁸ which is another way of phrasing the ill effect of a lack of temperance. It is important to keep in mind, however, that the Christian understanding of temperance is not a rejection of the world and of its pleasurable goods.¹⁰⁹ Creation, as gift, is first good, before it is *a* good! For this reason, Pope Francis can speak of a priority “of *being* over that of *being useful*.”¹¹⁰ Sobriety, then,

¹⁰⁴ *LS*, §211.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, §55.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, §211 (*italics mine*).

¹⁰⁷ The use of the term “reasonably” leads us once more to think of virtue, and specifically of temperance, since “sensible and bodily goods . . . are not in opposition to reason, but are subject to it as instruments which reason employs in order to attain its proper end” (*ST* II-II, q. 141, a.3, resp.).

¹⁰⁸ *LS*, §223. The English translation reads here “diminish us,” but the Spanish *antontan* and the Italian *stordisco*, both translating as “stun,” “daze,” and “stupefy,” seem to justify a stronger reading of the term.

¹⁰⁹ “Its rarity in the [Bible seems to be] a clear indication that it does not play an important part in the thinking of biblical wisdom. . . . When it does occur, its meaning must be determined in the light of the whole biblical outlook. The Greek ideal [that] looked towards [self-perfection, and temperance] was the art of keeping all one’s natural drives and instincts under one’s command in order to produce a well-rounded personality” (*The Interpreter’s Dictionary of the Bible, An Illustrated Encyclopedia*, ed. George Arthur Buttrick et al. [New York: Abingdon Press, 1962], 268). However, “belief in creation . . . saw in the world with its gifts the hand of the Creator” (*Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, ed. Gerhard Kittel, ed. and trans. Geoffrey W. Bromiley, vol. 2 [Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964], 342), gifts that “were to be enjoyed and appreciated” (*The Interpreter’s Dictionary of the Bible*, 268). Thus, for example, the act of fasting by Jesus in Luke 4:1–13 is not considered to be a rejection of the goods of the earth or an end in itself, since his eating and drinking has led to the accusation that he is a glutton and a drunkard (Luke 7:34), but instead, as preparation for His testing by the devil, it was to allow “the mind [to] arise more freely to the contemplation of heavenly things” (*ST* II-II, q. 147, a. 1, resp.).

¹¹⁰ *LS*, §69 (*emphasis original*). Other references to the rejection of a utilitarian mindset that sees Creation as a good to be used, rather than first and foremost a good with an intrinsic meaning as gift to be respected and then developed

or “poverty,”¹¹¹ “voluntary simplicity,”¹¹² and “responsible austerity,”¹¹³ as Pope Francis has called it in other places, is thus clearly likened to a social expression of the virtue of temperance, while the consumerism and indifference he denounces are easily likened to the vice of intemperance.

The effects of this sobriety are also plainly that of temperance. The section under which Pope Francis develops this social virtue as rooted and flourishing in the human person in chapter 6 of *LS* is entitled “Peace and Joy,” and the initial paragraphs emphasize the joy and the tranquility that follow from living such a virtue. The enjoyment that comes from living such a lifestyle, from resting in this good,¹¹⁴ is

in accord with that intrinsic meaning, can be found in §§82, 115, 132, 140, 155, 159, and 161.

¹¹¹ This idea, at the forefront in Pope Francis’s pontificate, as indicated even by the choice of his name, is well-developed theologically in his Lenten Message for 2014. Using as his meditation the words of St. Paul in 2 Cor 8:9, he focuses upon the meaning of the phrase “that by his poverty you might become rich.” Pope Francis writes: “God did not let our salvation drop down from heaven, like someone who gives alms from their abundance out of a sense of altruism and piety. . . . So what is this poverty by which Christ frees us and enriches us? It is his way of loving us, his way of being our neighbor, just as the Good Samaritan was neighbor to the man left half dead by the side of the road (cf. Luke 10:25ff). . . . Christ’s poverty which enriches us is his taking flesh and bearing our weaknesses as an expression of God’s infinite mercy to us.” He persists: “In every time and place God continues to save mankind and the world *through the poverty of Christ*, who makes himself poor in the sacraments, in his word and in his Church, which is a people of the poor. God’s wealth passes not through our wealth, but invariably and exclusively through our personal and communal poverty, enlivened by the Spirit. . . . In imitation of our Master, we Christians are called to confront the poverty of our brothers and sisters, to touch it, to make it our own and to take practical steps to alleviate it” (Lenten Message 2014, “He Became Poor So That by His Poverty You Might Become Rich,” December 26, 2013, accessed October 30, 2017, https://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/messages/lent/documents/papa-francesco_20131226_messaggio-quaresima2014.html).

¹¹² Pope Francis, General Audience, “The Family, 17: Family and Poverty,” June 3, 2015, accessed October 30, 2017, https://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/audiences/2015/documents/papa-francesco_20150603_udienza-generale.html.

¹¹³ *LS*, §214. In Spanish, this virtue enjoined specifically upon the clergy and religious is not the “responsible simplicity” of the English, but rather “una austeridad responsable.”

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, §222. Cf. *ST* II-II, q. 23, a. 4, resp., and the passion of joy or delight from obtaining the good.

accompanied by “serenity”¹¹⁵ and “peace.”¹¹⁶ “An integral ecology,” he notes, “includes taking time to recover a serene harmony with creation, reflecting on our lifestyle and our ideals, and contemplating the Creator.”¹¹⁷ This harmony or peace recalls the tranquility of soul, most excellent in temperance, which moderates the concupiscible passions.¹¹⁸ The passions, or the reaction of the person to a perceived good, such as an object to be bought or possessed, are always initially concupiscible, either love or hate in regard to a perceived good or lack thereof, such as the latest high-tech gadget, the newest theological work, or an incredibly outrageous pair of red Prada shoes. The person who longs after or loves this good immoderately, incessantly trolling the web for the best prices and constantly discussing or posting on social media with the latest updates, when she encounters the obstacle of her minimal budget, may perceive even more strongly the irascible passion of daring and then stretch her budget past believability or acquire evermore debt to possess these new goods. (This is obviously a foreign experience to most of us academics, with our well-stocked libraries!) However, instead of bringing peace, the acquisition of the gadget, tome, or shoes will actually lead to a greater desire for more goods; this kind of “having” does not contribute to one’s “being.” As Aquinas notes, “the desire for artificial wealth is infinite, for it is the servant of disordered concupiscence, which is not curbed.”¹¹⁹ When, instead, the exercise of the virtue of sobriety, exercised in solidarity with those who have no shoes, no education, or no electricity, has helped the person to moderate the attraction or pull of the concupiscible nature of the good, then, despite the absolutely delightful nature of the product, the daring in regard to their exaggerated expense is also thereby moderated.¹²⁰ It becomes easier to buy necessary goods at sensible prices, as a gesture of solidarity, and to use any excess to aid others in the acquisition of their necessary goods to “be.”¹²¹ Thus, if the vices of greed and compulsive buying consume the human person

¹¹⁵ See *LS*, §§222, 225, and 226.

¹¹⁶ See *Ibid.*, §§225, 230, and 246. In this latter paragraph, part of the closing prayer, peace is connected specifically with life in society.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, §225.

¹¹⁸ *ST* II-II, q. 141, a. 2, ad 2.

¹¹⁹ *ST* I-II, q. 2, a. 1, ad 3.

¹²⁰ *ST* I-II, q. 141, a.3, ad 1.

¹²¹ See *ST* II-II, q. 141, a.6, in which Aquinas discusses the two meanings of “necessary” in regard to goods: both those that are necessary for one’s bodily health and those that are so for one’s station in life.

and deafen his ears to the call to solidarity, sobriety, in its moderation of the buying and use of these goods as part of our relationship with others, brings a much-desired peace. In fact, this harmony or peace, for Pope Francis, becomes part of a virtuous cycle: the moderation of the use of sensible goods leads to peace and harmony, and a sober life is also possible when one possesses inner peace.¹²²

Finally, sobriety is explicitly associated with humility,¹²³ one of the potential parts or secondary virtues of temperance.¹²⁴ It is in this association that Pope Francis specifically indicates that to speak of sobriety and humility is to speak of “a certain virtue in personal and social life.”¹²⁵ Hence, similar to the relationship between solidarity and charity, the definition of temperance could be substituted for Francis’s definition of sobriety, but with one exception: its explicit orientation to the common good, or society as a whole. While such a possible orientation is implicit in Aquinas’ treatment of temperance, especially inasmuch as he connects it with the precepts regarding love of neighbor,¹²⁶ it is only here in *Laudato Si’* that such implications are drawn out. This “attitude of the heart,” this approach to life,¹²⁷ is indicated as “a certain virtue in personal and social life [whose lack of exercise] ends up causing a number of imbalances, including environmental ones,” although “it is not easy to promote this kind of healthy humility or happy sobriety when we consider ourselves autonomous, when we exclude God from our lives or replace him with our own ego, and think that our subjective feelings can define what is right and what is wrong.”¹²⁸

This virtue, then, is substantially rooted in Pope Francis’s earlier engagement with a theological understanding of the natural moral law. The “tilling” and “keeping” of Creation, which affirms the unique dignity of man, allows “the human person . . . through his acts of knowing (intelligence) and loving (freedom), to deepen and amplify non-human beings’ own inherent giftedness: to magnify the generosity that is already inscribed in . . . nature as created by God.”¹²⁹

¹²² *LS*, §225.

¹²³ *Ibid.*, §224.

¹²⁴ *ST* II-II, q. 143, a. 1, resp.

¹²⁵ *LS*, §224.

¹²⁶ See *ST* II-II, q. 170, a. 1, resp., and q. 170, a. 2, resp.

¹²⁷ *LS*, §226.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*, §224.

¹²⁹ Schindler, “Habit of Presence,” 580. This is also seen clearly in those paragraphs addressing the universal destination of goods and private property, such as *LS* §§71, 82, 93–95, 158.

In this understanding of the world as gift, given from the hand of the Creator, who has written “into it an order and a dynamism that human beings have no right to ignore,”¹³⁰ its meaning as gift must also be lived in our relationships with others, those with whom we are meant to share both this world and the next. Hence, as a flourishing of the natural inclinations, while it is a moderation of the concupiscible appetite, sobriety flourishes in a way particular to life in society, especially concerned with the weak, the vulnerable, and our children, since being provident as parents—or, we could say, as members of the same family, united in solidarity—means that the respect of others through the virtue of sobriety is seen in a “much stronger light when considered in relation to man’s social and domestic obligations.”¹³¹

This importance of sobriety in social life is more deliberately spelt out in the section of *LS* entitled “Civic and Political Love,” a title reminiscent of solidarity as the social expression of charity: “Along with the importance of little everyday gestures, social love moves us to devise larger strategies to halt environmental degradation and to encourage a ‘culture of care’ which permeates all of society. When we feel that God is calling us to intervene with others in these social dynamics, we should realize that this too is part of our spirituality, which is an exercise of charity and, as such, matures and sanctifies us.”¹³² The living out the virtue of sobriety, then, is integral to the living out of solidarity, as already hinted at in the relationship between “having” and “being” in John Paul II’s *SRS*.¹³³ This occurs

¹³⁰ *LS*, §221.

¹³¹ Leo XIII, *Rerum Novarum*, §12. Like solidarity, which had already found a place in the social encyclicals before it was defined as virtue, the importance of sobriety in regard to others is also a thread present in the social encyclical tradition. See especially *Rerum Novarum*, §§43–48, on just wages and the frugality of the worker, and *PP*, §§18–19, 21, and 49, with warnings against the greed of the rich in the face of the poor and a “turning toward the spirit of poverty,” as a more human condition.

¹³² *LS*, §231.

¹³³ See *SRS* §§28–31 and 39, especially the statements that “development cannot consist only in the use, dominion over and *indiscriminate* possession of created things and the products of human industry, but rather in *subordinating* the possession, dominion and use to man’s divine likeness and to his vocation to immortality” (§29), and that “part of the teaching and most ancient practice of the Church is her conviction that she is obliged by her vocation—she herself, her ministers and each of her members—to relieve the misery of the suffering, both far and near, not only out of her ‘abundance’ but also out of her ‘necessities’” (§31).

both in personal actions of virtue and in society as a whole. In fact, while the corresponding paragraphs precede those on the virtue of sobriety and offer indications to be further developed, Pope Francis does place a strong emphasis on the solidarity and subsidiarity that structure social life in tripartite society, as illuminated and envisioned in Benedict XVI's *Caritas in Veritate*.¹³⁴ Pope Francis's insistence is especially incisive in *LS* §206, which proclaims that such community networks, through "social habits"—or, we could read, "social virtues," such as the virtue of sobriety—can influence the way social institutions are run.¹³⁵ Politics and the economy are called, in view of their particular roles, to work together according to the principle of subsidiarity, inseparable from the virtue of solidarity,¹³⁶ in order to realize a society of sober institutions. Such solidarity, as already indicated in *SRS*, culminates and participates in "that global solidarity that flows from the mystery of the Trinity," in whose image and like-

¹³⁴ *Caritas in Veritate*, §§38–39. Benedict XVI indicates that such a structure of society was already envisioned by John Paul II in *Centesimus Annus*, §35. The tripartite society has drawn considerable engagement from various scholars such as Russell Hittinger (see "The Problem of the State in *Centesimus Annus*," *Fordham International Law Journal* 15, no. 4 [1991]: 952–96); Michael Novak (see *Catholic Social Thought and Liberal Institutions, Freedom with Justice*, 2nd ed. [Oxford, UK: Transaction, 1989], 207, and *The Catholic Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* [New York: The Free Press, 1993], in which he identifies such a system in *Gaudium et Spes* [275], *Centesimus Annus* [172ff], and Heinrich Pesch, the father of the school of Solidismus [72ff]); and Stefano Zamagni (see his elaboration of its grounding principles in *L'economia del bene comune* [Rome: Città Nuova, 2007] and *Dizionario di economia civile*, ed. Luigino Bruni and Stefano Zamagni [Rome: Città Nuova Editrice, 2009]). See especially *LS* §213, which indicates that the family is the place of integral education, as well as §157, which reiterates its place as the basic cell of society.

¹³⁵ This paragraph begins by stating, "A change in lifestyle could bring healthy pressure to bear on those who wield political, economic and social power," and then focuses specifically on consumer movements in regard to businesses by indicating, "When social pressure affects their earnings, businesses clearly have to find ways to produce differently." The English "social pressure" is read in the Spanish as "los hábitos de la sociedad" and the Italian as "abitudini sociali," indicating that we are speaking of social operative habits, or social virtues.

¹³⁶ See *LS* §§157, 189, 196, and 198. The inseparable nature of the virtue of solidarity and the principle of subsidiarity is highlighted in *Caritas in Veritate*, §58, as the manner in which the extremes of social privatism and paternalism are avoided. This is highly reminiscent of the school of the *economia civile*, an important part of the background to *Caritas in Veritate*. For an English publication on this school, please see Luigino Bruni and Stefano Zamagni's *Civil Economy: Efficiency, Equity, Public Happiness* (Oxford, UK: Peter Lang, 2007).

ness man is made.¹³⁷ Thus, rooted in each person and characteristic of society as a whole, sobriety informed by solidarity becomes a way of living out the virtues in society so as to contribute to the flourishing of each man and of all men, in the transition from less human to more human conditions.

Conclusion

This article, in order to better understand Pope Francis's newly coined term, "integral ecology," and its implications for a virtuous moral theology, has relied upon its insertion in the social encyclical tradition, and specifically within the context of integral human development, which originates in *Populorum Progressio*, so as to better understand its implications. Seeing integral ecology in the light of the natural law tradition that highlights its theological origin in Genesis, such as is done in *SRS*, allows us to realize that Creation is a gift from God and that man, made in his image and likeness, is called to be provident in his use of Creation for others, especially the poor, the weak, and future generations. The specific virtue in which Pope Francis sees the natural moral law flourish is sobriety, a social expression of temperance, which is informed by the virtue of solidarity. In line with *Caritas in Veritate*, this virtue is best learned within civil society, from which it is meant to permeate and transform the society as a whole. It is in this way that integral human development, as social, economic, cultural, and spiritual, embraces the Creation given to man and finds its evolution in integral ecology, and in the full flourishing of the virtue of sobriety. NEV

¹³⁷ *LS*, §240.