

Liberation, Development, and Human Advancement: Catholic Social Doctrine in *Caritas in Veritate**

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In this effort to come to know the message of Christ and to make it a guide for our own lives, we must remember that evangelization has always developed alongside the promotion of the human person and authentic Christian liberation.

—*Address of Benedict XVI at Aparecida* (2007), §3

“Between evangelization and human advancement—development and liberation—there are in fact profound links”: on the basis of this insight, Paul VI clearly presented the relationship between the proclamation of Christ and the advancement of the individual in society. Testimony to Christ’s charity, through works of justice, peace and development, is part and parcel of evangelization, because Jesus Christ, who loves us, is concerned with the whole person.

—*Caritas in Veritate*, §15

Where truth and love are missing, the process of liberation results in the death of a freedom which will have lost all support.

—*Libertatis Conscientia*, §24; *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis*, §46

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IN *Caritas in Veritate*, Pope Benedict XVI describes the Christian vocation to overcome the obstacles that hinder the establishment of authentic fraternity in the world. Through the theme integral human development, the pope maps a theological grammar for Catholic social doctrine that takes charity in truth as its principle and purpose. This understanding of charity in truth is developed in continuity with the teachings of Paul VI and John Paul II, and as an explicit continuation of the interpretive tradition of *Populorum Progressio*. In this essay I focus on the aspect of that interpretive tradition having to do with the theologies of liberation. My central claim is that the magisterial response to the liberation theology movement is important background for our interpretation and reception of *Caritas in Veritate*.

In the first section of this essay I briefly introduce three texts that show the relationship between the themes “liberation,” “development,” and “authentic human advancement” in the thought of Joseph Ratzinger/Pope Benedict, and I outline the figuration of those themes in anticipation of *Caritas in Veritate*. Second, taking my cue from *Caritas in Veritate*, I sketch a retrospective “doctrinal grammar” of human advancement toward authentic fraternity as it unfolds in Paul VI’s and John Paul II’s social teachings on development and liberation. In section three I describe how the thematic configuration and entailments of charity in truth at the heart of *Caritas in Veritate* were developed and refined, in part, through Joseph Ratzinger’s varied engagements with the liberation theologies. In the fourth section I discuss *Caritas in Veritate* directly, with the aim of showing Pope Benedict’s reception of the doctrinal framework established by his predecessors, and I highlight the extension of key doctrinal themes in the encyclical. Finally, I trace the contours of Catholic social doctrine in the light of *Caritas in Veritate*’s figuration of charity in truth as the heart of Christian social existence.

The Relationship between “Liberation,” “Development,” and “Human Advancement”

In his work as theologian, as prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith (CDF), and as the bishop of Rome, Joseph Ratzinger/Pope Benedict has considered liberation (or liberative action), integral development, and human advancement from various perspectives. Three particular texts stand out in his body of work and illuminate the significance of these themes in *Caritas in Veritate*: his essay *The Open Circle* (1958), the CDF instruction *Libertatis Conscientia* (1986), and his papal address at CELEM in Aparecida, Brazil (2007).

In his essay *The Open Circle: The Meaning of Christian Brotherhood*, Fr. Ratzinger outlines the Christian understanding of fraternity or “brother-

hood” in historical, dogmatic, and moral terms. His basic claim is that “Christian brotherhood,” in stark contrast to Stoic, Enlightenment, and Marxist renderings of socio-political fraternity, is distinctive in two ways.¹ First, every social and natural barrier is understood to be relativized through our incorporation into Christ’s Body.² And, second, a “new duality” is thereby recognized among humanity: the distinction between Church and World.³ Having been set apart from the World, and united in Christ, the Church is directed by God to serve the World.⁴

When *The Open Circle* is considered in light of *Caritas in Veritate*, one of its most striking features is Ratzinger’s insistence that Christian service to the World is essentially evangelistic, entailing both the *proclamation of the truth* and the *performance of charity*.⁵ In particular, Ratzinger highlights the compassionate love of Christian charity as the evangelistic response to oppression and suffering: Christians direct

their love to all those who need them, without asking for thanks or a response. . . . The last and highest mission of the Christian in relation to non-believers is to suffer for them and in their place as the Master did.⁶

Thirty years later, in *Libertatis Conscientia*, Cardinal Ratzinger again outlines the evangelical task as consisting of both message and action, and as concerned with the holistic advancement of humanity. He writes:

The love which impels the Church to communicate to all people a sharing in the grace of divine life also causes her, through the effective action

¹ *The Open Circle: The Meaning of Christian Brotherhood* (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1966).

² Ratzinger explains that our union with Christ relativizes every barrier that might arise from the social and natural differences that are brought together in the community of the Church. Each generation of Christians, therefore, is tasked to continually identify and overcome both the old and the new barriers that arise from our differences. Moreover, each generation is called to allow the recognition of our social and natural differences to continually purify Christian fraternity by illuminating through “crisis” the barriers that remain. See *The Open Circle*, 89–90, 94–95.

³ See *ibid.*, 109–15. In *The Open Circle*, the Church-World distinction is cast as the most determinative distinction for the *Ecclesia Militans*. In contrast to the “one true barrier: that between Creator and creature” (89).

⁴ Ratzinger, *The Open Circle*, 114–16.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 116–19. “The first obligation laid on a Christian is that of missionizing . . . to witness publically before the world to the public salvation work of God. . . . The second obligation of the Christian toward the non-Christian is *agape*.” On the correspondence of *caritas* and *agape*, see *Deus Caritas Est* (2005), §§22, 25

⁶ *Ibid.*, 118–19.

of her members, to pursue people's temporal good, help them in their needs, provide for their education and to promote an integral liberation from everything that hinders the development of individuals. The Church desires the good of man in all his dimensions, first of all as a member of the city of God, and then as a member of the earthly city.⁷

In *Libertatis Conscientia*, Ratzinger expresses the need for an "integral theology of liberation," oriented toward the authentic freedom of humanity in all its dimensions: the temporal and eternal, the natural and the supernatural. The authentic freedom announced in the gospel, Ratzinger explains, is the principle way Christians understand the significance of their work for justice, in defense of vulnerable persons, and in service to the common good.⁸ Specifically, Christian evangelism entails working to establish a social order that anticipates the final and complete fraternity of Christian eschatological hope. Ratzinger concludes *Libertatis Conscientia* with this forward-thinking gesture:

Liberation, in its primary meaning which is salvific, thus extends into a liberating task, as an ethical requirement. Here is to be found the social doctrine of the Church, which illustrates Christian practice on the level of society. The Christian is called to act according to the truth, and thus to work for the establishment of that "civilization of love" of which Pope Paul VI spoke. The present document, without claiming to be complete, has indicated some of the directions in which it is urgently necessary to undertake in-depth reforms.⁹

In *Libertatis Conscientia* the unity of truth and love is the condition for identifying, in the light of the gospel, how Christian practice "on the level of society" must respond to the obstacles that frustrate integral human development. For Christians, by Ratzinger's account, authentic and integral freedom entails being liberated from these obstacles. He maintains, moreover, that the "noble" task of articulating the full anthropological and eschatological scope of overcoming those obstacles is the deep aspiration of an integral "theology of freedom and liberation," one "which faithfully echoes Mary's *Magnificat*."¹⁰

The continuity between Ratzinger's early work as a theologian and his work as prefect is unmistakable, particularly when his writings are consid-

⁷ *Libertatis Conscientia* (LC) (1986), §63. Clearly Ratzinger's articulation of the Christian task, as pilgrim members of the earthly city, has deep thematic resonances with the central concern of *Caritas in Veritate* (2009) (e.g., CV §7).

⁸ Cf. *Libertatis Nuntius* (LN) (1984), §XI.5–8.

⁹ LC, §99.

¹⁰ LC, §98.

ered by way of the themes liberation, development, and human advancement. *Caritas in Veritate* is a document that is likewise in continuity with Ratzinger's earlier treatment of these themes. Moreover, there is reason to believe that *Caritas in Veritate* addresses important aspects of the forward-looking gesture articulated at the conclusion of *Libertatis Conscientia*.

The thematic and doctrinal links between the CDF instructions on liberation theology and *Caritas in Veritate* are recognizable in the Holy Father's recent address at Aparecida (2007), where Pope Benedict gave the opening speech at the fifth general conference of the Latin American Bishops (CELEM). In his message, Pope Benedict reminds those gathered that, ultimately:

it is only the truth that can bring unity, and the proof of this is love. That is why Christ, being in truth the incarnate Logos, "love to the end", is not alien to any culture, nor to any person; on the contrary, the response that he seeks in the heart of cultures is what gives them their ultimate identity, uniting humanity and at the same time respecting the wealth of diversity, opening people everywhere to growth in genuine humanity, in authentic progress.¹¹

Benedict highlights for his brother bishops the understanding that the unity of truth and love which conditions authentic progress is a unity that originates from "God with a human face," the God who loves humanity even to the point of death on the Cross. It is through Christ's Cross, he continues, that the Christian disciple receives

a family, the universal family of God in the Catholic Church. Faith releases us from the isolation of the "I", because it leads us to communion: the encounter with God is, in itself and as such, an encounter with our brothers and sisters, an act of convocation, of unification, of responsibility towards the other and towards others. In this sense, the preferential option for the poor is implicit in the Christological faith in the God who became poor for us, so as to enrich us with his poverty.¹²

Men and women are liberated from the self-imposed isolation of sin when they encounter Christ. Those who have been set free are enriched by Christ's poverty and are made responsible for brothers and sisters within the Church, and for those outside the Church. Pope Benedict highlights the outward impulse of Christian freedom and makes explicit the connection

¹¹ Opening Address at the Inauguration of the Fifth General Conference of the Bishops of Latin America and the Caribbean at Aparecida (13 May 2007), §1.3.

¹² Aparecida, §III.9; cf. *Spe Salvi*, §14.

between liberation, development, and human advancement under the logic of evangelism. He writes that in the

effort to come to know the message of Christ and to make it a guide for our own lives, we must remember that evangelization has always developed alongside the promotion of the human person and authentic Christian liberation. . . . The disciple, founded in this way upon the rock of God's word, feels driven to bring the Good News of salvation to his brothers and sisters. Discipleship and mission are like the two sides of a single coin: when the disciple is in love with Christ, he cannot stop proclaiming to the world that only in him do we find salvation. In effect, the disciple knows that without Christ there is no light, no hope, no love, no future.¹³

In *Caritas in Veritate* Pope Benedict expands upon those basic themes in a manner continuous with his earlier formulations. He recalls to the mind of the Church that charity and truth are indeed the principle and purpose of authentic human advancement—which, first and foremost, pertains to humanity's liberation from sin and the restoration of freedom.¹⁴ This baptismal restoration of the freedom of divine grace elevates the actions of liberated men and women to the supernatural vocation which is the preferential option for the poor.¹⁵ Called by God, Christian men and women are made free to witness to the goodness of God in Christ through the suffering love of charitable self-sacrifice and, likewise, they are empowered to receive the sufferings of others into their own bodies.¹⁶ It is an authentic Christian humanism that is ordered towards the performance of Christian mercy, and which is exemplified in witness of the compassionate martyrs.¹⁷ Christians are enriched by Christ's poverty when they freely respond to the misery and sufferings of their neighbors with complete and unambiguous solidarity. Anything less than a full response is to choose the bondage of isolation and alienated self.

According to Pope Benedict, Christian men and women proclaim the gospel truth through the "open circle of the Church in the world" with the uttered word and by their concrete work to overcome the sin-saturated obstacles that hinder authentic development.¹⁸ The Pope explains that liberated men and women respond to God's love in the performance

¹³ Aparecida, §III.15.

¹⁴ CV, §34, 77; cf. *Evangelii Nuntiandi* (EN) (1975) §9 and LC §37.

¹⁵ CV, §§5a, 13, 17; cf. *Spe Salvi* §3.

¹⁶ CV, §78; cf. *Spe Salvi* §4.

¹⁷ Cf. *Spe Salvi* §10, 38–39.

¹⁸ CV, §§16, 18; cf. LC §§63, 99; and *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis* (SRS) (1987) §46.

of their individual and collective vocation to pursue the integral development of their own person and of their fellow human being.¹⁹ Thus, for Christians, the work for integral development presupposes a freedom secured through a process of integral liberation.

Moreover, the Pope contends that this vocation to responsible freedom is a vocation that belongs to the whole Church.²⁰ The aim of this work is the discovery and establishment of the common good of authentic fraternity in the world—justice, unity, and peace—a social order that anticipates and prefigures the undivided city of God.²¹ For Pope Benedict, the aspiration to authentic fraternity, which is the “more human condition” sought in the work of integral development, is a grace-animated and profoundly supernatural aspiration of free men and women.²² This aspiration is the freedom to love, which is nothing other than the natural consequence of our own liberation from sin and death; our salvation in Jesus Christ.²³

Pope Benedict explains that the actions of love, inspired and ordered by the truth of the gospel, are the only means available to Christians to overcome the obstacles to integral human development in a global society that “makes us neighbors, but does not make us brothers.”²⁴ For where truth is missing, he maintains, the actions of Christian charity lack the *logos* that constitutes the bare intelligibility of those liberative and charitable efforts *qua* Christian acts.²⁵ Moreover, Benedict contends, insofar as the fullness of human creaturely being is obscured or denied, appeals for a charity-informed social order will amount to little more than a “pool of good sentiments.”²⁶ Such sentimental adherence to the values of Christianity may be “helpful for social cohesion, but of little relevance” to the goal of advancement toward a more just and peaceful society and to the establishment of the integral freedom necessary for the work of integral human development.²⁷ Whatever “freedom” is secured by such truth-deficient social action will, as a matter of course, be a temporary and incomplete liberation that ultimately does violence to the politically liberated.²⁸

¹⁹ CV, §17; cf. *Populorum Progressio* (PP) (1967) §18.

²⁰ CV, §16.

²¹ CV, §§7, 17.

²² CV, §§16, 20; cf. *Spe Salvi* §34.

²³ CV, §1, 5a.

²⁴ CV, §19; cf. §9.

²⁵ CV, §4.

²⁶ CV, §4.

²⁷ CV, §§4, 7.

²⁸ CV, §5; cf. SRS §41c.

In *Caritas in Veritate*, Pope Benedict observes Pope Paul's eschatological configuration of authentic human advancement.²⁹ For Pope Paul, authentic human advancement is best understood in terms of a thick theological anthropology rooted in our ultimate return to God. Thus in the first section of *Caritas in Veritate* we see that the supernatural destiny of every particular man and woman is taken to entail and correspond to the yearning of all human creatures for love and truth. This search finds its end in Christ, for it is a restlessness purified and liberated in the "Face of his Person."³⁰

The Interpretive Tradition of *Populorum Progressio* and the Notion "Integral Liberation"

In *Caritas in Veritate*, the matter at stake in the question of integral human development is the establishment of "authentic fraternity."³¹ One prominent theme in Benedict XVI's doctrinal formulation of authentic fraternity is the vocational exercise of "responsible freedom" to overcome the "obstacles and forms of conditioning that hold up development" in our time.³² Obviously, there is more than one way to parse *Caritas in Veritate* for the purpose of interpretation. In this essay I've chosen to focus on the grammar of the Catholic social teaching displayed in *Caritas in Veritate* as it relates to the liberation theology movement and the interpretive tradition of *Populorum Progressio*.³³

²⁹ *PP*, §§15–16.

³⁰ *CV*, §1.

³¹ *CV*, §20.

³² *CV*, §17.

³³ The structure I am presuming looks like this: In chapters 2–6 we see the provisional application of the doctrinal propositions mapped in the Introduction, in chapter 1, and in the Conclusion of the encyclical. In this essay I am primarily interested in the theological grammar that frames both the doctrinal propositions and the prescriptive proposals of the encyclical. In particular, I am interested in how that grammar illuminates the unity of the document and its integral nature within the interpretive tradition of *Populorum Progressio*. For that reason, despite its relevance, I will not address the constructive application of the doctrinal teaching as it unfolds in chapters 2–6 of the encyclical. This should not be read as a division of the encyclical into "more true" and "less true" parts. Rather, it is merely to claim that the unity of an encyclical is not exclusively located in the intra-systematic integrity of the doctrinal propositions and the prescriptive proposals contained in the encyclical. Like *Populorum Progressio*, *Caritas in Veritate* is a document with roots, and it seems to me to be a worthwhile endeavor to view *Caritas in Veritate*—to paraphrase the Holy Father—within the context of Benedict XVI's specific magisterium and within the tradition of the Church's social doctrine (cf. *CV* §10).

The programmatic and doctrinal horizon of *Caritas in Veritate* is summarized in §§8–9 of the encyclical. The program of the encyclical is relatively straightforward: it is to revisit the teachings of Pope Paul VI on integral human development and to apply those teachings to the present moment.³⁴ What I am here calling the doctrinal grammar of the encyclical has both semantic and syntactical entailments. First, the *semantic aspect* has to do with Pope Benedict's decision to accentuate certain doctrinal themes (and not others) as he receives the teachings of Pope Paul VI and Pope John Paul II. Second, those semantic judgments are given *syntactical form* by Pope Benedict in their application to the challenges that presently face the Church, and he organizes the judgments around the principle *charity in truth*.³⁵

For Benedict XVI, the occasion of this encyclical is the challenge Christians face in their performance of charity in truth amid the process and fact of societal globalization.³⁶ In that way, *Caritas in Veritate* is a fresh application of the grammar of Catholic social teaching to new circumstances and the challenges of the present moment.

Crucial to the Pope's adoption of Paul VI's semantic field is Benedict's development of the doctrinal formulation of those themes according to the evangelical horizon of Catholic social teaching, as framed by Paul VI and John Paul II. Specifically, the social doctrine of *Caritas in Veritate* is organized around the principle of charity and truth, and according to the evangelical imperative of Christian social existence outlined in *Populorum*

³⁴ CV, §8.

³⁵ CV, §§6, 9.

³⁶ CV, §5. I think that one of the most important things to remember in our reading of *Caritas in Veritate* is that by most reports Benedict began writing it within the first few months of his elevation (April 2005). Moreover, he even announced in the first days of his papacy his intention to write a social encyclical. Further, we have at least ten major interviews with Ratzinger from 1996 to 2005 in which he explains that there is a great need for a social encyclical—one that would “update the themes of *Populorum Progressio*.” With all that in mind, the economic and political concerns of the encyclical can be understood as thematically relevant, but not central to the overarching *theological* concern of *Caritas in Veritate*. This is to suggest that the practical economic and political guidance of the encyclical is provisional, though by no means irrelevant. The proposals are broad, aesthetic gestures that illuminate what the implications might be of the central *theological arguments* at the heart of the text. Understood in that way, we are pressed to attend more carefully to the Introduction, chapter 1, and the Conclusion as setting the heuristic terms for a reading of the text focused on doctrinal matters. When we read *Caritas in Veritate* in this way, it seems to me, the broad gestures of chapters 2–6 are more intelligible and far richer than are commonly recognized.

Progressio. This evangelistic orientation is given clear articulation in Paul VI's apostolic exhortation *Evangelii Nuntiandi* (1975), and is subsequently expanded in John Paul II's 1979 opening address at the Puebla Conference and in John Paul II's social encyclical *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis* (1987). In essence, *the integral process of overcoming the obstacles (i.e., liberation) that stand in the way of integral human development is an evangelical endeavor rooted in charity and truth, and oriented toward the establishment of authentic fraternity*. Paul VI's and John Paul II's magisterial engagements with the various iterations of the liberation theology movement illuminate the contours of this doctrinal grammar, which I will now treat in greater detail.

The Foundation Set by Paul VI

A theological account of human advancement toward authentic fraternity is the fundamental concern of *Populorum Progressio*.³⁷ Pope Paul's account provides a basic conceptual vocabulary for the articulation of the object and aim, practical means and functional intent, of human advancement as a distinctively evangelical Christian practice. For Paul VI the concerns of the Church in her promotion of "genuine progress and the true development of peoples" are implicit in the gospel message.³⁸ The truth of the gospel, moreover, demands a particular kind of response from Christians. He writes:

The progressive development of peoples is an object of deep interest and concern to the Church. This is particularly true in the case of those peoples who are trying to escape the ravages of hunger, poverty, endemic disease and ignorance. . . . With an even clearer awareness . . . of the demands imposed by Christ's Gospel in this area, the Church judges it her duty to help all men explore this serious problem in all its dimensions, and to impress upon them the need for concerted action at this critical juncture.³⁹

It is important for Pope Paul that the duty of the Church in response to these obstacles extends to *all the dimensions* of the problems confronting modern society, and not just the social problems. The Church is impelled by the gospel to a manner of action that seeks to overcome these "less than human conditions" in their authentic complexity and their full existential breadth: the natural and the supernatural, the technological and the moral.

Pope Paul proposes that authentic and integral human development requires a "full-bodied humanism" that respects the natural and super-

³⁷ *PP*, §85.

³⁸ *PP*, §86.

³⁹ *PP*, §1.

natural destiny of the human creature.⁴⁰ He explains that only a humanism of this sort “will permit the fullness of authentic development, a development which is for each and all the transition from less human conditions to those which are more human.”⁴¹ According to Pope Paul, faith and our loving unity in Christ constitute the highest and most authentically human conditions toward which Christians can aspire to advance.⁴²

Pope Paul concludes *Populorum Progressio* with an exhortation to lay Catholics to embrace their task to improve the temporal order.⁴³ Specifically, he calls upon the Catholic laity to recall that their work is eminently evangelical in character: “Changes must be made; present conditions must be improved. And the transformations must be permeated with the spirit of the gospel.”⁴⁴ Thus, a profound interconnectedness between evangelization and the work for integral human advancement is articulated in *Populorum Progressio*, and that thematic constellation is presented as paradigmatic to the Catholic view of faithfulness during the time of the world.⁴⁵ Paul VI writes:

It must be admitted that men very often find themselves in a sad state because they do not give enough thought and consideration to these things. So We call upon men of deep thought and wisdom—Catholics and Christians, believers in God and devotees of truth and justice, all men of good will—to take as their own Christ’s injunction, “Seek and you shall find.” Blaze the trails to mutual cooperation among men, to deeper knowledge and more widespread charity, to a way of life marked by true brotherhood, to a human society based on mutual harmony.⁴⁶

Pope Paul develops that constellation of themes in his apostolic letter *Evangelii Nuntiandi* (1975). There, he takes up the task of unfolding the implications of the deep connection between “Christian social witness to the truth of the gospel” and the role of Christians in humanity’s “transition from less human conditions to truly human conditions.”⁴⁷ Pope Paul traces the contours of the complete or authentic evangelization to which the Church aspires. He writes that

⁴⁰ *PP*, §§14–21, 42; cf. *CV* §18.

⁴¹ *PP*, §20.

⁴² *PP*, §21.

⁴³ *PP*, §81a.

⁴⁴ *PP*, §81b.

⁴⁵ Cf. *CV* §13.

⁴⁶ *PP*, §85.

⁴⁷ *EN*, §§ 20–21.

evangelization would not be complete if it did not take account of the unceasing interplay of the Gospel and of man's concrete life, both personal and social. This is why evangelization involves an explicit message, adapted to the different situations constantly being realized, about the rights and duties of every human being, about family life, without which personal growth and development is hardly possible, about life in society, about international life, peace, justice and development—a message especially energetic today about liberation.⁴⁸

In *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, Pope Paul shows the formal connection between salvation in Christ and the political liberation of human beings. It is worth noting that in this instance, as indicated by the textual apparatus of the exhortation, the pope is referencing the 1968 bishops' conference at Medellín, Colombia. Pope Paul is careful first to distinguish between *salvation in Christ* and *political liberation*, explaining that many discrete conceptualizations of temporal liberation are inconsistent and incompatible with the evangelical vision of humanity.⁴⁹ On the basis of that fundamental distinction, he continues with the strong affirmation that the Christian vocation to work toward the political liberation of oppressed peoples from the "less human conditions" in which they are caught is implicit in the message of salvation in Christ that the Church proclaims. For Pope Paul, the proper understanding of the Christian vocation to work for the political liberation and temporal wellbeing of our neighbors can never be separated from that most determinative liberation which the Church proclaims: the complete liberation announced in the gospel and which was wrought for humanity through Christ's death on the Cross.⁵⁰

Pope Paul makes these connections explicit:

Between evangelization and human advancement—development and liberation—there are in fact profound links. These include links of an anthropological order, because the man who is to be evangelized is not an abstract being but is subject to social and economic questions. They also include links in the theological order, since one cannot dissociate the plan of creation from the plan of Redemption. The latter plan touches the very concrete situations of injustice to be combated and of justice to be restored. They include links of the eminently evangelical order, which is that of charity: how in fact can one proclaim the new commandment without promoting in justice and in peace the true, authentic advancement of man?⁵¹

⁴⁸ EN, §29.

⁴⁹ EN, §35.

⁵⁰ EN, §38.

⁵¹ EN, §31.

Thus we see that for Pope Paul the proclamation of the gospel, understood as encompassing both the anthropological and theological aspects of human advancement, is a vocation to charity. Moreover, according to Pope Paul, this vocation entails both the proclamation of the truth of the gospel and the promotion of human advancement. The development of peoples, as part of that work for human advancement, corresponds to the anthropological order: where the freedom for the new commandment of the gospel—love of God and love of neighbor—is offered to people who necessarily exist amid complex social and political circumstances. The liberation of humanity, as likewise part of the work for authentic advancement, corresponds to the theological order: where freedom from injustice and violence, in the plan of creation and the plan of redemption, is rooted in the eschatological hope of the gospel.

John Paul II

In 1979, Pope John Paul II addressed the Latin American bishops at the opening of their third international conference in Puebla, Mexico. In his address, the themes of development, liberation, and evangelism were organized around a central concern: namely, the fraternal and eucharistic unity of the Church in the truth of the faith. There was little ambiguity in John Paul II's address regarding the way those themes were related to, and illuminated by, the questions that were arising for the Church of Latin America by way of various theologies of liberation. Pope John Paul declared to his brother bishops:

The truth that we owe to man is, first and foremost, a truth about man. As witnesses of Jesus Christ we are heralds, spokesmen and servants of this truth. We cannot reduce it to the principles of a system of philosophy or to pure political activity. We cannot forget it or betray it. . . . Thanks to the Gospel, the Church has the truth about man . . . this complete truth about the human being constitutes the foundation of the Church's social teaching and the basis also of true liberation. In the light of this truth, man is not a being subjected to economic or political processes; these processes are instead directed to man and are subjected to him.⁵²

For Pope John Paul, the truth of the gospel is the truth about human beings. Moreover, the evangelistic proclamation of that truth in Catholic social teaching is the foundation of "authentic liberation." Understood in

⁵² Address of His Holiness John Paul II at the Inauguration of the Third General Conference of the Bishops of Latin America and the Caribbean at Puebla (28 January 1979), §I.9.

this way, the freedom attained through the liberating proclamation of the gospel is the context from which human beings are able to recognize their proper relationship to the economic and political processes of development. In particular, the gospel of Jesus Christ liberates human beings to order those processes to accord with the truth of humanity. Pope John Paul recalls the bishops to their ministry as “teachers of the Truth,” encouraging them to continue to proclaim “the truth concerning the mission of the Church,” because the “Church was established by the Lord as a *fellowship of life, love and truth*.”⁵³

By situating the processes of integral development as endeavors that follow *and do not precede* the liberation from sin in the proclamation of the gospel, Pope John Paul highlights the evangelistic character of Catholic social teaching. This evangelistic mission of liberation is a ministry of truth and love, for it is only by way of the truth of the faith and the practical proclamation of the gospel in society that the freedom for integral development is properly realizable. He concludes his address to the Latin American bishops with the following picture of authentic Christian liberation:

Pastoral commitment in [the transformation of hearts and the humanization of the political and economic systems] must be encouraged through a correct Christian idea of liberation. The Church feels the duty to proclaim the liberation of millions of human beings, the duty to help this liberation become firmly established; but she also feels the corresponding duty to proclaim liberation in its integral and profound meaning, as Jesus proclaimed and realized it. . . . Liberation made up of reconciliation and forgiveness. Liberation springing from the reality of being children of God, whom we are able to call Abba, Father; a reality which makes us recognize in every man a brother of ours, capable of being transformed in his heart through God's mercy. Liberation that, with the energy of love, urges us towards fellowship, the summit and fullness of which we find in the Lord. Liberation as the overcoming of the various forms of slavery and man-made idols, and as the growth of the new man. Liberation that in the framework of the Church's proper mission is not reduced to the simple and narrow economic, political, social or cultural dimension, and is not sacrificed to the demands of any strategy, practice or short-term solution.⁵⁴

In 1987, John Paul II picks up and deepens this evangelistic schematic of development and liberation in his encyclical *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis*, written to commemorate the twentieth anniversary of *Populorum Progressio*. There Pope John Paul outlines a programmatic process for interpret-

⁵³ Ibid., §I.6 (emphasis mine).

⁵⁴ LN, §III.6.

ing and advancing the teachings of Paul VI on the development of peoples.⁵⁵ He writes:

Following the example of my predecessors, I must repeat that whatever affects the dignity of individuals and peoples, such as authentic development, cannot be reduced to a 'technical' problem. If reduced in this way, development would be emptied of its true content, and this would be an act of betrayal of the individuals and peoples whom development is meant to serve. This is why the Church has something to say today, just as twenty years ago, and also in the future, about the nature, conditions, requirements and aims of authentic development, and also about the obstacles which stand in its way. In doing so the Church fulfills her mission to evangelize, for she offers her first contribution to the solution of the urgent problem of development when she proclaims the truth about Christ, about herself and about man, applying this truth to a concrete situation.⁵⁶

For John Paul II, the true content of authentic development is founded upon the truth about the dignity of human beings in relation to God, the Creator. For that reason, when faced with the problems of underdevelopment, the evangelistic mission of the Church is a ministry of truth that directly addresses the full scope of the obstacles that stand in the way of authentic development in their natural and supernatural breadth. It is in the *proclamation of the truth* and the *application of the truth* to concrete situations that the Church, according to Pope John Paul, contributes to the common endeavor to overcome the obstacles to authentic development. In this way, he explains, when men and women are liberated by the truth, the reflections of Christian men and women on the nature, conditions, requirements, and aims of authentic human advancement are likewise liberated from the temptation to reduce development to a technological problem. Thus, for Pope John Paul, it is through the evangelical process of working for true or authentic liberation (that is, the proclamation and concrete performance of the truth of the gospel) that the freedom for authentic development is established.

On the Catholic view, integral liberation is first and foremost liberation from sin, which is the aim of the Church's proclamation of Christ's love. However, the integral liberation proclaimed by the Church is an embodied witness that likewise works to overcome the societal structures produced by sin—in particular, those social structures that obscure the oppression or suffering of vulnerable peoples. Absent the freedom secured

⁵⁵ SRS, §4.

⁵⁶ SRS, §41c.

by the process of authentic and integral liberation, development is emptied of its true content, and any efforts to realize a social order corresponding to the dignity of individuals and peoples is destined, according to Pope John Paul, to frustration. Pope John Paul concludes the encyclical with a formal account of the nature and aim of authentic liberation. He writes:

The aspiration to freedom from all forms of slavery affecting the individual and society is something noble and legitimate. This in fact is the purpose of development, or rather liberation and development, taking into account the intimate connection between the two. . . . The principal obstacle to be overcome on the way to authentic liberation is sin and the structures produced by sin as it multiplies and spreads. The freedom with which Christ has set us free encourages us to become the servants of all. Thus the process of development and liberation takes concrete shape in the exercise of solidarity, that is to say, in the love and service of neighbor, especially of the poorest: "For where truth and love are missing, the process of liberation results in the death of a freedom which will have lost all support."⁵⁷

The unity of the twofold process of integral development and integral liberation is rooted in the mission of the Church. Moreover, the process of integral liberation addresses the obstacles to development in the freedom of truth and love. In *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis*, John Paul II gestures toward a configuration of Catholic social teaching in which the unity of love and truth is shown as the principle and purpose of Christian work in the process of liberation. For Christians, according to Pope John Paul, the purpose of liberation is the freedom to proclaim the truth of Christ and apply that truth in the love and service of our neighbor, especially the poor. As such, for Christians, the process of integral liberation is the necessary condition for any work in the area of human development. Authentic and true liberation, where the obstacles that stand in the way of authentic development are overcome, is the precondition and essential requirement of authentic development.

Reflecting upon the largely negative picture (in his time) of the distinctively Christian vision of freedom and liberation, Pope John Paul reaffirms the prominent place of liberation in the evangelistic horizon of Catholic social teaching on development, human advancement, and authentic fraternity during the time of the world. He writes:

In the context of the sad experiences of recent years and of the mainly negative picture of the present moment, the Church must strongly

⁵⁷ SRS, §46.

affirm the possibility of overcoming the obstacles which, by excess or by defect, stand in the way of development. And she must affirm her confidence in a true liberation.⁵⁸

Cardinal Ratzinger's Engagement with the Theologies of Liberation

In this section, I discuss the themes liberation, development, and human advancement as they are found in the CDF instructions *Libertatis Nuntius* and *Libertatis Conscientia*. In doing so, I draw upon a number of Ratzinger's other writings and some secondary accounts of his work as prefect of the CDF. When viewed as part of a trajectory that ends in *Caritas in Veritate*, the twin CDF instructions on liberation theology suggest a preoccupation on the part of Ratzinger to protect the core intuitions of the liberation theology movement. He is concerned with protecting the foundational principles of a theology of liberation adequate to the task of describing the lives of those Christians who embrace and love the most vulnerable among us. Such a theology, according to Ratzinger, would illuminate the challenge and the way forward in the formation of Christian martyrs for our day: a people of virtuous compassion, who reject the temptation to violence, and who are prepared to give their lives in the performance of charity in truth.

Joseph Ratzinger's work as prefect of the CDF is best understood as belonging to the specific Magisterium of John Paul II. Nevertheless, a germ of the distinctively Ratzingerian contribution to Catholic social teaching (the primacy of charity and truth) is evident in his work as prefect. In that regard, it is important to take special note of John Paul II's identification of the principle of authentic liberation as a "unity of truth and love" in §46 of *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis* (1987)—that is, "where truth and love are missing, the process of liberation results in the death of a freedom which will have lost all support." The formulation is referenced by Pope John Paul as belonging to the CDF instruction *Libertatis Conscientia* (1986), written one year earlier by then-Cardinal Prefect Joseph Ratzinger.

When it is read in context, Ratzinger's distinctive articulation of Catholic social teaching is readily identifiable:

To different degrees, the sense of faith, which is at the origin of a radical experience of liberation and freedom, has imbued the culture and the customs of Christian peoples. But today, because of the formidable challenges which humanity must face, it is in a wholly new way that it has become necessary and urgent that the love of God and freedom in

⁵⁸ SRS, §47.

truth and justice should mark relations between individuals and peoples and animate the life of cultures. *For where truth and love are missing, the process of liberation results in the death of a freedom which will have lost all support.* A new phase in the history of freedom is opening before us. The liberating capacities of science, technology, work, economics and political activity will only produce results if they find their inspiration and measure in the truth and love which are stronger than suffering; the truth and love revealed to men by Jesus Christ.⁵⁹

The historical and conceptual warrant for reading *Caritas in Veritate* in light of the magisterial response to the liberation theology movement is well represented in Pope John Paul's use of Ratzinger's formulation in *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis*. Specifically, in his meditation on *Populorum Progressio*, Pope John Paul nuances his description of the "intimate connection" between liberation and development in Catholic social teaching by invoking Ratzinger's figuration of truth and love as the animating principle of Christian work for integral liberation.

In *Libertatis Conscientia*, Ratzinger explains that the salvific and ethical dimensions of the Christian view of integral liberation are united by the truth of a transformative encounter with Christ. Moreover, it is precisely the experience of salvation that animates the Christian desire to rightly use this newfound freedom to confront the challenges that face humanity. Ratzinger writes:

The power of this liberation penetrates and profoundly transforms man and his history in its present reality and animates his eschatological yearning. The first and fundamental meaning of liberation which thus manifests itself is the salvific one: man is freed from the radical bondage of evil and sin. In this experience of salvation, man discovers the true meaning of his freedom, since liberation is the restoration of freedom. It is also education in freedom, that is to say, education in the right use of freedom. Thus to the salvific dimension of liberation is linked its ethical dimension.⁶⁰

Because Christians know that they are loved by God, they "live in the freedom which flows from truth and love."⁶¹ And it is by that freedom, Ratzinger claims, that the Christian is privileged to recognize the destiny of her or his vocation "to the extent that he recognizes that truth and love are at the same time the principle and the purpose of his freedom."⁶²

⁵⁹ LC, §24 (emphasis mine).

⁶⁰ LC, §23–24.

⁶¹ LC, §21.

⁶² LC, §37.

A Catholic Social Teaching Worthy of the Blood of the Martyrs

A commonly held view persists that during his time as prefect of the CDF, Ratzinger rejected the liberation theology movement of Latin America as a homogenous and uniformly unorthodox reduction of the Christian faith to political and social action. Very often, accounts of Ratzinger's engagement with the liberation theology movement identify particular iterations of liberation theology as representative of the whole lot, and presume that Ratzinger did the same.⁶³ However, despite the pervasiveness of that common misconception, Ratzinger's actual engagement with the theologies of liberation was usually nuanced and carefully stated.⁶⁴ Certainly, Ratzinger's explicit treatment of the various theologies of liberation is limited and occasional in comparison to his other, more systematic projects. Nevertheless, the consistency of Ratzinger's reflections on liberation and freedom as theological themes, and the incorporation of those assessments into his fundamental theology provide a positive vantage from which to unpack some important threads pertaining to *Caritas in Veritate*. To be clear, Ratzinger never articulates an unqualified rejection of liberation theology, nor did he issue such a rejection during his time as prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith.

For example, consider *Libertatis Nuntius* (1984), which is widely regarded as Ratzinger's most forceful and unenthusiastic engagement with the liberation theology movement of Latin America. The instruction begins with a description of the powerful and entirely valid aspiration for liberation that predicates the inquiry; it likewise indicates that the Christian aspiration to liberate those who suffer from the cause of their sufferings is uncontested as a logical consequence of the gospel. Ratzinger writes:

The Gospel of Jesus Christ is a message of freedom and a force for liberation. In recent years, this essential truth has become the object of reflection for theologians, with a new kind of attention which is itself full of promise. Liberation is first and foremost liberation from the radical slavery of sin. Its end and its goal is the freedom of the children of

⁶³ Cf. Maximilian H. Heim, *Joseph Ratzinger: Life in the Church and Living Theology* (Ignatius, 2007), 217. In a footnote, Heim takes a 1996 summary definition from Leonardo Boff as the operative norm for "liberation theology"; he then references the 1971 work of Gutierrez, as if Gutierrez's original articulation of the theology of liberation were a continuation of Boff's 1996 project.

⁶⁴ In *Principles of Catholic Theology: Building Stones for a Fundamental Theology* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1987), Ratzinger offers a very sympathetic narration of the emergence of "liberation" as a theological theme at the first assembly of the Latin American Bishops in 1966 (384–85).

God, which is the gift of grace. As a logical consequence, it calls for freedom from many different kinds of slavery in the cultural, economic, social, and political spheres, all of which derive ultimately from sin, and so often prevent people from living in a manner befitting their dignity. To discern clearly what is fundamental to this issue and what is a by-product of it, is an indispensable condition for any theological reflection on liberation.⁶⁵

Ratzinger takes it to be a given that this yearning of the Church to act corresponds to an authentic recognition of human suffering—whether it be physical suffering or moral suffering, both stand as an affront to human dignity.⁶⁶ Moreover, Ratzinger insists that scandalous inequalities and injustices persist which require a formal and practical response from the Church.⁶⁷

On the basis of these fundamental affirmations, Ratzinger explains that the narrow and circumscribed purpose of *Libertatis Nuntius* is to draw attention to the problems created when certain forms of theology “use, in an insufficiently critical manner, concepts borrowed from various currents of Marxist thought.”⁶⁸ After stating this general purpose, Ratzinger immediately warns readers who are culpably indifferent to human misery and remain hostile to the valid intuitions of the liberation theology movement. He writes that the instruction

should in no way be interpreted as a disavowal of all those who want to respond generously and with an authentic evangelical spirit to the “preferential option for the poor.” It should not at all serve as an excuse for those who maintain the attitude of neutrality and indifference in the face of the tragic and pressing problems of human misery and injustice.⁶⁹

When the instruction is read in its entirety, it is clear that Ratzinger’s critique of particular iterations of liberation theology in *Libertatis Nuntius* is not addressed to an undifferentiated and homogenous movement of “liberation theology.” Nevertheless, while Ratzinger correctly acknowledges the diversity of the theologies and theologians who take the theme of “liberation” as a point of departure, in the instruction he often refers to the iterations of liberation theology he is critiquing as “liberation theology.” When these particular passages are read in context, it is clear what is being considered. However, as a result of this stylistic ambiguity, much confusion arose in the months following the instruction.

⁶⁵ *LN*, Introduction.

⁶⁶ Cf. *Salvifici Doloris*, §5.

⁶⁷ *LN*, §I.6–9.

⁶⁸ *LN*, Introduction.

⁶⁹ *LN*, Introduction.

In any case, thinking back on his time and work as prefect, in 1997 Ratzinger spoke on what he thought was the principle threat to one of the most important ongoing movements within the Church. Ratzinger explains:

There is the basic idea of liberation theology. This idea has found an echo on every continent, really, and it must be said, too, that it can be given a very positive expression. After all, its core idea is that Christianity also has to have an outward effect in man's earthly existence. It has to give him freedom of conscience, but it also has to try to vindicate his social rights. However, when this idea is understood one-sidedly, it attempts to conceive of Christianity in general as an instrument for refashioning the world politically. This approach gave rise to the idea that all religions are basically just instruments for advocating freedom, peace, and the conservation of creation, so that they would have to justify their existence through political success and political goals.⁷⁰

During his time as prefect of the CDF, Ratzinger's most forceful objections against "one-sided" theologies centered on the risk that the instrumentalization of Christian conviction in the political sphere would ultimately leave Catholic-identified liberation movements unable to realize the integral freedom that is the basis for authentic human development. For Ratzinger, when human liberation is reduced to political liberation, the full breadth and potential of those things to which persons aspire in relation to their fellows (that is, justice, the common good, and authentic fraternity) are nothing more than vague utopian fantasies.

On Ratzinger's view, when Christians unreflectively pursue human liberation as primarily a this-worldly political enterprise, the properly Christian notion of liberation is emptied of its complex and comprehensive content. Moreover, when Christian work for liberation is reduced to political and economic ends, Christians sacrifice the very means by which we are able to make moral sense, on Christian terms, of the evangelical witness to charity in truth exemplified in the lives of Servants of God like the slain Archbishop Oscar Romero.

When separated from the truth of the gospel, Christian work for political liberation is made vulnerable to ideological manipulation.⁷¹ For

⁷⁰ Joseph Ratzinger and Peter Seewald, *Salt of the Earth: The Church at the End of the Millennium* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1997), 132.

⁷¹ D. Vincent Twomey writes, regarding the terms "theology of politics" and "political theology" (the latter of which is a concept that Ratzinger rejects entirely), that Ratzinger rejected "any theology such as that of JB Metz or the classical forms [sic] of liberation theology, that involves the instrumentalization of either the Church or the faith for political purposes or the attribution of sacral or

Ratzinger, the influence of an ideologically atheistic and reductively materialistic Marxism (in its various forms) upon Catholic social action was the principal cause of the unbalanced character of certain iterations of liberation theology in the two decades following the Second Vatican Council.⁷²

Marxism, Political Liberation, and the Semblance of Fraternity

In his biography of Pope Benedict XVI, Fr. Aidan Nichols reports on the common allegation that Joseph Ratzinger's objection to Marxism (and Marxist influence upon certain streams of Catholic theology) arose from a psychological "trauma" incurred in May 1968.⁷³ At that time, so the story goes, a series of German student revolts deeply distressed Ratzinger, who was just beginning his career as a university professor at Tübingen. Terrified by the unmoored and dissembling tendencies of the Marxist conceptual schema, Ratzinger retreated to the safe haven of Regensburg University, where he could work unperturbed by the grumblings of fanatical youth. The intrigue of this "trauma" narrative resides in the pathologization of Ratzinger's sustained critique of Marxism. Claiming to unmask his "real" motivations, it supplies a rationale for the dismissal of Ratzinger's theological conclusions without dealing with the reasons he articulates.

In contrast to that common account of Ratzinger's experience of the student revolts, Ratzinger's recollection of that time (and his experience of the events) is less dramatic. In his book *Principles of Catholic Theology*, Ratzinger explains that in the chaotic challenge of the German students against the standard accounts of the relevance, origin, and purpose of the university, the protesting youth relied heavily upon Marxist analytic categories, while failing to apprehend the implications of those categories; and failing, moreover, to recognize the very conditions that made their appropriation of the Marxist analytic possible: namely, the university as a mediating and authorizing institution.⁷⁴ For Ratzinger, the ultimate effect of this Marxist intervention upon the German university was a directionless rejection of the resources implicit to any time-tested intellectual tradition, culminating in the widespread renunciation of the basic and holistic task of theology.⁷⁵

For Ratzinger, the Marxist analytic was not an innovative or particularly interesting challenge to Christianity and the Christian intellectual tradi-

salvific significance to politics" (D. Vincent Twomey, *Pope Benedict XVI: The Conscience of Our Age* [San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2005], 72).

⁷² See Tracey Rowland's book *Ratzinger's Faith: The Theology of Pope Benedict XVI* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 43–44.

⁷³ Cf. Nichols, *The Thought of Pope Benedict XVI* (London: Burns & Oates, 2007), 182.

⁷⁴ Ratzinger, *Principles of Catholic Theology*, 387–88.

⁷⁵ Nichols, *The Thought of Pope Benedict XVI*, 183.

tion. Years before, in his *habilitation* thesis on Bonaventure's theology of history, Ratzinger argued that the roots of Marxist thought are to be found in a twelfth-century Christian heterodoxy: Joachim of Fiore's teaching on the third age of the Holy Spirit, which expected a this-worldly fulfillment of redemptive history—a synthesis of utopia and eschatology.⁷⁶ As Heim notes, Ratzinger convincingly argued that Joachim prepared the way for Hegel's vision of history, which supplied the basic conceptual model and apocalyptic imminence to Marx's understanding of history's progressive unfolding and revolutionary consummation.⁷⁷ Ratzinger reiterates this genealogy of Marxism in his book *Eschatology: Death and Eternal Life* (1988), where he writes:

The Joachimist dispute filled the thirteenth century and, in part, the fourteenth also, ending with a renewed rejection of this particular form of hope for the future. The present-day theologies of liberation belong in this context [i.e., the context of this historical theological dispute]. But just why did the Church reject that chiliasm which would allow one to take up the political task of realizing on earth parousia-like conditions? The rejection of chiliasm meant that the Church repudiated the idea of an inner fulfillment of history. On the contrary, it affirms the impossibility of an inner fulfillment of the world. The Christian hope knows no ideas of an inner fulfillment of the world.⁷⁸

The strong resistance of Ratzinger to the influence of Marxism upon Catholic theology had much to do with what Ratzinger took to be the necessary implications of Marxism's philosophical underpinnings.⁷⁹ In particular, the integrity of the principles that frame any recognizably Christian account of Christian social existence was a major concern for Ratzinger. It was primarily his theological preoccupation with the themes liberation, unity, truth, and love—principles by which Christians are able to recognize the form and shape of *authentic fraternity*—that inspired Ratzinger's suspicion of uncritical implementations of the Marxist analytic. For Ratzinger, the distortion of these principles constitutes the medieval heritage of Marxism. And it follows for Ratzinger that the Catholic concern for the integrity of these principles is the point of departure for any critical appropriation or rejection of Marxism's utility as an analytic resource.

⁷⁶ Heim, *Joseph Ratzinger*, 160–63.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 162.

⁷⁸ Ratzinger, *Eschatology: Death and Eternal Life* (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1988), 212–13. See 209–14.

⁷⁹ Cf. Ratzinger, *Eschatology*, 57–66.

Ratzinger's deep concern in his role as prefect of the CDF was to defend the valid theological principles and Christian intuitions at the heart of the liberation theology movement: the recognition of human alienation and mortal suffering, the preferential option for the poor and dispossessed, and the Christian imperative to act with compassion. Moreover, Ratzinger was keen to resist the unreflective distortion of those properly theological intuitions by ideologically Marxist political endeavors. Ratzinger's sympathies with the essential intuitions of the liberation theology movement (intuitions that he understood as the logical consequence of the gospel)⁸⁰ frame and ultimately determine his misgivings with Marx's actual thought and his unambiguous rejection of ideologically Marxist enterprises of political liberation.

For Ratzinger, the problem with Marxism was not its use as an analytic resource. Ratzinger maintained (and continues to maintain as Pope Benedict) that the analytic is a useful tool, so long as it is understood that Marxist analysis will afford us only an incomplete understanding of any given social situation.⁸¹ The problem, according to Ratzinger, was the mistaken attribution of comprehensiveness to Marx's narrowly materialistic account of class struggle and political revolution. When Marx's view is uncritically presupposed in theological reflection, the analytic has the consequence of thinning out traditionally and conceptually thick biblical concepts into two-dimensional metaphors for social and political engagement.⁸²

Returning to *Libertatis Nuntius*, Ratzinger's primary concern, then, is that a "Christianized" Marxist analytic reduces human freedom to political and economic liberation. On that view, the class struggle is the means

⁸⁰ Cf. *LN*, Introduction.

⁸¹ *Spe Salvi*, §§20–21; cf. *Jesus of Nazareth*, where Pope Benedict writes: "Is it not true that man, this creature man, has been alienated, battered, and misused throughout his entire history? The great mass of humanity has almost always lived under oppression; conversely, are the oppressors the true image of man, or is it they who are really the distorted caricatures, a disgrace to man? Karl Marx painted a graphic picture of the 'alienation' of man; even though he did not arrive at the real essence of alienation, because he thought only in material terms, he did leave us with a vivid image of man fallen among the robbers" (*Jesus of Nazareth: From the Baptism in the Jordan to the Transfiguration* [New York: Doubleday, 2007], 199–200).

⁸² In his 1985 interview with Joseph Fessio, Ratzinger observes that "secularist liberation programs have one element in common: they are attempting to achieve this liberation exclusively in the immanent place, in history, in this world. But it is precisely this limited view, restricted to history and lacking an opening to transcendence, that has brought man to his present state" (Joseph Ratzinger and Vittorio Messori, *The Ratzinger Report: An Exclusive Interview on the State of the Church* [San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1985], 172–73).

and message of Christian liberation. For Ratzinger, one result of this methodological move is that Christians are often left unable to distinguish between the technical tool of Marxist analysis and the ideological underpinnings of the analytic method. Those ideological tenets, Ratzinger argues, are “not compatible with the Christian conception of humanity and society”—insofar as Marx’s atheistic and narrowly materialistic metaphysic are implicit to the various technical applications of Marxist analysis.⁸³ Thus, when Christians uncritically incorporated Marx’s thought into their theological treatments of liberation, they likewise incorporated metaphysical presuppositions that undermined the distinctively transcendent aspect of Catholic social doctrine. According to Ratzinger, to abandon the transcendent aspect of Christian social existence is to abandon the vital core of the logic of the Christian vocation to work for the integral liberation of oppressed and suffering persons.⁸⁴

Regarding the Marxist-influenced streams of liberation theology, then, it was not that the various political appeals to the “option for the poor” were too radical; rather, for Ratzinger, their option for the poor was not radical enough, with respect to human nature and our creaturely status before God. A truly radical politic is one that corresponds to the full reality of human life. According to Ratzinger, many Christian liberationists were seduced by the seemingly comprehensive scope of the Marxist analytic, and were left unable to get to the radical truth of the matter at hand because they did not attend to the complexities of the human creature as one who has both immanent and transcendent longings for freedom.

The result was that in theological discourse, those theologians who began from the metaphysically materialistic viewpoint of a descriptively oppressed and revolutionary class—as the Marxist analytic maps the social landscape of the Church—ended up essentializing one particular aspect of a specific social location.⁸⁵ Under that mode of theological reflection, Christ was often reduced to a revolutionary political figure whose death was the outworking of a political struggle. And the very notion of Christian

⁸³ *LN*, §VII.8.

⁸⁴ *LN*, §VIII.9

⁸⁵ *LN*, §X.3 Ratzinger writes, that the “Theological criteria for truth are thus relativized and subordinated to the imperatives of the class struggle. In this perspective, ‘orthodoxy’ or the right rule of faith, is substituted by the notion of ‘orthopraxy’ as the criterion of the truth.” *Libertatis Nuntius* continues with the observation that the most significant problem facing some of the theologies of liberation is the tendency to presume that the “poor” of Scripture unproblematically corresponds to the ‘proletariat’ of Marx (*LN*, §XI.10). As a result, the Marxist analytic is applied to the Church itself, wherein the “Church of the poor” is

salvation was likewise reduced to a matter and project of primarily political liberation from oppression.⁸⁶

For Ratzinger, the problem with thinly Christian attempts to theologize liberation as class struggle was the inevitable reduction of the “political being” of human beings to a constellation of political and economic concerns. Understood in that way, the disheartening consequence was that “their effective omission of the idea of God . . . also changed the figure of Christ fundamentally. . . . He simply was not needed in regard to the ‘reality’ that mankind had to deal with.”⁸⁷

During his time as prefect, Ratzinger was adamant that the concept of “liberation” should continue to be recognized as a legitimate locus for theological reflection and that it should be eagerly explored given its thematic versatility, prominence in scripture, and its continuous recollection in the Christian intellectual tradition. He was convinced that Christian social action on behalf of the oppressed must be rooted, if it is to remain Christian, in an understanding of liberation that is integral and complete. In particular, the basic evangelical horizon of liberation must be maintained. For Ratzinger, if social endeavors for political liberation

seen as entrenched in an oppositional class-struggle with the Church of the powerful: a ruling class of clerical elites who maintain the sacramental and hierarchical ecclesial structure in the form of a teaching Magisterium (cf. *LN* §XI.13). Understood in this way, the aim of such metaphysically thin understandings of human liberation could not help being morphed into an unmoored social critique of doctrinal conventions, ultimately seeking to destabilize through class-struggle the institutional conditions that made the distinctively Christian aspect of integral liberation possible—not altogether different from the 1968 German student revolts.

⁸⁶ Aidan Nichols argues that for Ratzinger the concepts of *eschatology* and *utopia* marked the overarching difference between an authentic theology of liberation and a secular ideology of liberation wrapped in Christian metaphors. The aim of a *utopian vision of liberation* locates the significance of humanity’s political endeavors in the actual realization of the utopic vision in the present political order, whereby the means employed to realize that end are judged good solely by the criteria of the end. In that way, violence, social chaos, and the collateral damage of revolution are taken to be suitable paths to peace and political order. In contrast, Nichols continues, the *eschatological vision of liberation* distinct to the Christian intellectual tradition locates the significance of humanity’s political endeavors in not the realization, but in the pursuit of a just and peaceful political order that can only come to fruition as a divine gift from God. Understood eschatologically, practical political endeavors in pursuit of an authentically human liberation are intrinsically subject to moral criteria that disqualify some practices as antithetical to the principal aim of Christian political engagement—which is the faithful proclamation of the truth of Christ’s love in society. See Nichols, *The Thought of Pope Benedict XVI*, 180–91; cf. CV §5b.

⁸⁷ *Introduction to Christianity* (San Francisco: Communio Books, 2004), 16.

are to be sustained by a truth that is more determinative than a crude “will to power,” Christians must not lose sight of the fact that in light of the gospel the notion of “liberation” is first and foremost the event and the encounter with the person of Christ.⁸⁸ Ratzinger took this to mean, moreover, that Christians must always be clear about which understanding of “liberation” they are drawing upon, recalling with Paul VI in *Evangelii Nuntiandi* that not all conceptualizations of “liberation” are equal.⁸⁹

On Ratzinger’s view, the primary and fundamental point of reference for the Christian understanding of liberation consists in the radical experience of “Christian liberty.”⁹⁰ When human liberation is sought in a manner corresponding to the fullness of humanity’s created nature, liberated persons are likewise free to shape with their fellows “the earthly city in unity and peace”—an authentic fraternity—which is “an anticipation and prefiguration of the undivided city of God.”⁹¹ Ratzinger writes:

Christ, our liberator, has freed us from sin and from slavery to the Law of the flesh; which is the mark of the condition of sinful mankind. . . . This means the most radical form of slavery is sin. . . . Freedom is a new life in love.⁹²

When we consider *Caritas in Veritate* from this vantage point, we are better positioned to recognize that one of the benefits of Benedict’s social encyclical may very well be to secure a future for a robust theology of liberation with a “universal radius.”⁹³ For Benedict, in the words of Aidan Nichols, a theology of integral liberation would be realized “in the working out of the Trinitarian and Christological preconditions of Catholic social doctrine, [and would] give those who seek to realize that doctrine new inspiration and motivating power.”⁹⁴

Benedict XVI and the Liberation Theology Movement

At the conclusion of *Libertatis Conscientia* Ratzinger indicates that the “liberating message” of the gospel extends into a “liberating task,” which is the work to establish the “civilization of love.”⁹⁵ *Caritas in Veritate* is a

⁸⁸ LN, §§3–4.

⁸⁹ EN, §34.

⁹⁰ LC, §71.

⁹¹ CV, §7.

⁹² LN, §IV.2.

⁹³ H. Urs von Balthasar, “Liberation Theology in the Light of Salvation History,” in *Liberation Theology in Latin America*, ed. J.V. Schall (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1982), 131.

⁹⁴ Nichols, *The Thought of Pope Benedict XVI* (2007), 191.

⁹⁵ LC, §99.

meditation on that liberating task, insofar as 'liberation' means the Christian performance of love in truth.

Continuing in the interpretive and practical task of *Populorum Progressio*, which was initiated in *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis*, Benedict formulates his own teaching in *Caritas in Veritate* as one likewise rooted in the fundamentally evangelical character of the Christian vocation to work for the advancement of the individual and collective human condition. For his part, in *Caritas in Veritate* Benedict expands upon the relationship between charity and truth on the one hand, and, on the other, the evangelistic work of Christians to respond to human suffering as it unfolds on the global scale. Benedict writes:

This dynamic of charity received and given is what gives rise to the Church's social teaching, which is *caritas in veritate in re sociali*: the proclamation of the truth of Christ's love in society. This doctrine is a service to charity, but its locus is truth. Truth preserves and expresses charity's power to liberate in the ever-changing events of history.⁹⁶

The Pope emphasizes that the unity of charity in truth is the singular principle from which the concrete particulars of Christian social existence in the world draw inspiration and aim. Although this formulation of "charity in truth" within Catholic social teaching is unique to Benedict XVI, the essential nature of the theme is not without precedence in the teachings of his predecessors. In particular, "charity in truth" and "charity and truth" have regularly been held forth as the unified principle and programmatic aim of the evangelical essence of Catholic social teaching.⁹⁷ Pope Benedict's contribution to the interpretive tradition of *Populorum*

⁹⁶ CV, §5.

⁹⁷ "Charity in truth" as a Christian way of being in the world, is seen in Pope John XXIII's commendation of the bishops at the close of the first session of Vatican II (Address on the Occasion of the 36th General Congregation of the Council, 7 December 1962, §5). The Pope said, "Praeterea merita vestrae laudi etiam tribuimus, quod in vestris coetibus caritas in veritate profecto principem obtinuit locum; idque causa est cur Deo plurimas gratias persolvamus." Also, and most pertinently, the thematic constellation of charity and truth are emphasized in the closing challenge and exhortation of Paul VI to the Latin American Bishops at Medellin, 26 August 1968. Pope Paul says "El Episcopado de América Latina, en su Segunda Asamblea General, desde el puesto que le compete, ante cualquier problema espiritual, pastoral y social, prestará su servicio de verdad y amor en orden a la construcción de una nueva civilización moderna y cristiana. [The Episcopate of Latin America, in its Second General Assembly, from its position of competent authority, before any social, pastoral, and spiritual problem, will offer its service of truth and love according to the proper order of building a new civilization that is both modern and Christian.]"

Progressio is to highlight and expand that part of human advancement that has to do with overcoming the obstacles that hinder development. The work of overcoming the obstacles to development is the work for integral liberation. The evangelical ministry of the Catholic Church to secure the integral liberation of those who are not free is sustained by the wellspring of charity in truth. In *Caritas in Veritate*, Pope Benedict offers a formulation that reminds the Church of the fundamentally evangelical character of her corporate vocation to social action and compassionate solidarity.

As Pope Benedict locates his reflections on charity in truth within the interpretive tradition of *Populorum Progressio*, the enterprise of authentic human advancement he presumes takes integral liberation to be operationally prior to development. His understanding that development is a process conditioned and capacitated by authentic freedom is the specific aspect of development and human advancement addressed in *Caritas in Veritate*.⁹⁸

Caritas in Veritate stands in continuity with *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis* by taking *Populorum Progressio* as a point of departure. Nevertheless, there are important thematic differences between *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis* and *Caritas in Veritate*. John Paul II, on the one hand, is concerned in his encyclical with the nature and scope of integral human development (that is to say, what integral development is); Benedict XVI, on the other hand, presumes in *Caritas in Veritate* the insights of *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis* and addresses himself to the means and process of overcoming the obstacles that frustrate integral human development (that is to say, how we work for and achieve integral human development. Specifically, in *Caritas in Veritate*, Pope Benedict maps the way in which the liberative Christian performance of charity in truth makes possible the authentic freedom which is the necessary condition for the work of integral development.⁹⁹ In *Caritas in Veritate* it is the process of Christians actively performing the liberating truth of the gospel in concrete social situations that stands as the first step in securing the common good, which is the good anticipated in Christian work for an authentic human advancement.

For Benedict, the particular Christian activities that condition integral human development are vocationally sustained practical measures of compassion.¹⁰⁰ These practical measures are intended to secure the integral and authentic liberation of individuals and/or peoples from all that would hinder the integral process of their development as human beings.¹⁰¹ In

⁹⁸ CV, §17.

⁹⁹ CV, §18.

¹⁰⁰ CV, §17; Cf. SRS §46.

¹⁰¹ CV, §16.

Caritas in Veritate, Pope Benedict is keen to remind the Church that the unity of charity in truth animates faithful engagements in the field of peace and justice, and ensures that the social witness of our liberative practices are oriented toward realizing the authentic freedom necessary for integral development.¹⁰² For Joseph Ratzinger/Pope Benedict, the unity of charity and truth animates and sustains Christian engagement in the liberative work for peace and justice in the world.¹⁰³ Through this enterprising work, Christians hope to realize with their fellows the integral freedom which makes efforts of authentic human development possible.

This logic is evident in the structure of *Caritas in Veritate*: Benedict does not begin or take his point of departure in the encyclical from a problem or from an urgent call. Rather, he takes the revelation of God in Christ—*charity in truth*—as the means by which one is able to recognize a social situation as problematic and thereby understand the true urgency entailed in the call to action.¹⁰⁴ The problem addressed in *Caritas in Veritate* is indicated in the second paragraph of §5, which is framed generically as “the grave socio-economic problems besetting humanity.” The urgency, however, is the urgency of charity in truth.¹⁰⁵ By approaching the topic of integral human development in this way, Benedict reconfigures both the nature of the problem (and any other social problem that concerns human flourishing) and the condition of urgency as recognizably urgent to Christians precisely because of their faith in Christ. Thus, it is the truth of the gospel, and the freedom conferred on individuals and society by way of that truth, which distinguishes, on the one hand, the integral Christian practice of responding to urgent social problems from, on the other hand, narrowly political projects of liberation. Benedict writes:

In the present social and cultural context, where there is a widespread tendency to relativize truth, practicing charity in truth helps people to understand that adhering to the values of Christianity is not merely useful but essential for building a good society and for true integral human development. A Christianity of charity without truth would be more or less interchangeable with a pool of good sentiments, helpful for social cohesion, but of little relevance.¹⁰⁶

Displaying the evangelical character of his meditation in *Caritas in Veritate*, Pope Benedict explains that, on the Christian view, a proper under-

¹⁰² *CV*, §6.

¹⁰³ Cf. *LC* §§2–4.

¹⁰⁴ *CV*, §§1–5.

¹⁰⁵ *CV*, §20.

¹⁰⁶ *CV*, §4.

standing of authentic human advancement (natural and supernatural) takes its *principle* in the order of knowing from the Christian experience of liberation from individual sin.¹⁰⁷ However, for the Pope this understanding of liberation is incomplete without the eschatological horizon of true faith. The *purpose* of the liberation entailed within authentic human advancement is, in the order of being, fundamentally prior to the experience of liberation. In the order of being, God's preferential option for the poor, humanity impoverished by sin and the structures of sin, is purposed and oriented toward the ultimate good of man, which is the vision of divine glory.¹⁰⁸

Benedict XVI explains that the work "to shape the earthly city in unity and peace" is a vocation that belongs to every Christian.¹⁰⁹ No individual is excused from the command to love one's neighbor, which is justice animated and outdone by the transcendent gratuity of charity: God's love manifest in human relationship.¹¹⁰ For Benedict, God's gift of charity, the interior impulse to love authentically, and God's gift of truth, which is the means and end of authentic freedom—charity in truth—enkindle a truly integral humanism that desires the common good and sustains the ceaseless pursuit of that good—even to the point of martyrdom.¹¹¹ Baptized into Christ's death and Resurrection, every Christian is called to participate, according to the Pope, in the integral development of his own person, which is the life of holiness and virtue. Likewise, all Christian men and women are called to be instruments of truth-enlightened charity, which takes practical form in work for justice and in pursuit of a common good.¹¹²

Popes Paul VI, John Paul II, and Benedict XVI are consistent in highlighting the intrinsic unity that exists between evangelism and human advancement, such that the gospel message is the condition by which Christians understand what it means to aspire and advance toward anything at all. For Benedict, advancing the interpretive tradition of *Populorum Progressio*, the unity of the missional imperative of the Church in the world takes on the twofold character of salvation as achieved by Christ and as proclaimed by the Church: *freedom for* our eternal destiny, which is the beatific vision of divine glory, and *freedom from* the greatest oppression, which is sin and death. Human social advancement, understood in light of the truth of the gospel, is held forth as an enterprise of

¹⁰⁷ CV, §5.

¹⁰⁸ CV, §§1, 79.

¹⁰⁹ CV, §§1, 7.

¹¹⁰ CV, §6; cf. §§53–54.

¹¹¹ CV, §78; cf. §§1, 7, 16.

¹¹² CV, §5, 16.

a twofold order: the “freedom for” a more human condition, which Pope Paul called *integral and authentic development*, and the “freedom from” sin and the structures of sin, which, writing in *Libertatis Conscientia*, Cardinal Ratzinger called *integral and authentic liberation*.

The Grammar of Catholic Social Doctrine in *Caritas in Veritate*

Predicated upon the primacy of the evangelistic mission of the Church to the world, Pope Benedict XVI’s vision of the Christian vocation to work toward the establishment of authentic fraternity is twofold: First, it involves the explicit proclamation of Christ. This proclamation of the truth is the foundation of the Church’s mission and, as such, this truth animates and sustains the Church’s social witness. Second, that proclamation necessarily entails the vocational embodiment of the truth of the message in the lives of Christians. From the love of neighbor that is inspired by the truth of the gospel follows the promotion of human advancement within society, an endeavor aimed at the establishment of authentic fraternity.

The evangelical promotion of human advancement, the vocational embodiment corresponding to the second pillar of the evangelistic mission of the Church to the world, likewise has two aspects: The first aspect, which Paul VI, John Paul II, and Benedict XVI call “integral development,” is the promotion of the good of every person and the whole person.¹¹³ Reflection on the manner and mode of authentic development takes place on the anthropological order.¹¹⁴ The second aspect, which in *Caritas in Veritate* Benedict calls “responsible freedom” and which in *Libertatis Conscientia* he calls “integral human freedom and liberation,” serves as the foundation and necessary condition for integral human development. “Integral freedom” is the status of those who have been set free by Christ to address, in the words of Paul VI, the “obstacles and forms of conditioning that hold up development,” of which each person’s liberation from sin and the effects of sin is the most pressing concern.¹¹⁵ According to Paul VI, John Paul II, and Joseph Ratzinger/Benedict XVI, reflection on the manner and mode of authentic or integral liberation takes place on the theological order.¹¹⁶

For Benedict, in *Caritas in Veritate* and following Paul VI, a theologically disciplined interrogation of the problems besetting humanity takes

¹¹³ *CV*, §18.

¹¹⁴ Cf. *EN* §31.

¹¹⁵ *CV*, §17; cf. *PP* §15–16, where there is little ambiguity about the integral nature of Paul VI’s understanding of responsible freedom, pertaining to both the natural and supernatural faculties of the human creature.

¹¹⁶ Cf. *PP* §29–40; *LN* §V.1–8; *LC* §63; *SRS* §46.

the truth of the human creature as its primary object, for only “truth is the ‘guarantee of freedom’ and the possibility of integral development.”¹¹⁷ Such an inquiry is what Ratzinger called in *Libertatis Nuntius* an “authentic theology of liberation.”¹¹⁸

In essence, for Pope Benedict XVI, charity in truth is the foundation of complete or integral human freedom, and the process or work of integral human development presupposes a state of authentic freedom.¹¹⁹ Pope Benedict follows closely Leo XIII’s theological description of the two aspects of human freedom pertaining to the “anthropological order” and to the “theological order.”¹²⁰ On the anthropological order, the process in which one moves from a state of mortal bondage to a state of political freedom is rightly called liberation.¹²¹ However, when such matters are considered by way of the theological order, it becomes clear that, if the freedom received through liberation is to be authentic, the liberation must be integral—that is to say, it must correspond to the whole truth of the human creature.¹²²

For Benedict, following John Paul II, the primary aim of integral liberation, understood by way of the theological order, is freedom from sin and the structures of sin.¹²³ The work for integral liberation is a process of overcoming those obstacles that stand in the way of authentic human freedom, insofar as authentic freedom is the condition of possibility for integral development.¹²⁴

Conclusion

Adorno contends in *Minima Moralia* that the only tenderness to be found in a disordered world—a world deformed by our frenetic drive toward subhuman affections—consists exclusively in the coarse demand that no human being should ever die of hunger.¹²⁵ Those of us who do

¹¹⁷ CV, §9.

¹¹⁸ LN, §V.8; cf., EN §32.

¹¹⁹ CV, §17–18.

¹²⁰ See the Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church, §350; Also, of course, Leo XIII’s encyclical *Libertas Praestantissimum* (1888) remains an ever-relevant reminder of what, exactly, Catholics mean when we talk and meditate on human freedom and liberation—in particular, when we reflect upon the deep relationship between revealed truth and human freedom.

¹²¹ Cf. LC §§23–24.

¹²² CV, §8.

¹²³ CV, §17; cf. SRS §§33, 46.

¹²⁴ CV, §9.

¹²⁵ Theodor Adorno, *Minima Moralia: Reflections from Damaged Life* (London: New Left Books, 1974), 100. Adorno writes: “To the question of the goal of an emancipated society, one receives answers such as the fulfillment of human possibilities

not know hunger, thirst, or the threat of violence are confronted by a plundered and violated humanity in the face of neighbor. The cry of the hungry and our acute awareness of profound human misery challenges Christians to explain what exactly we mean when we proclaim Christ's teaching that "man does not live on bread alone."

When charity and truth are not understood and practiced in their intrinsic unity, the unaffected invocation of a higher order is the glutted mouth of *Dives* dropping bits of cheese and half-chewed pudding into the bowl of wretched Lazarus—it is nothing less than a revolting display of inhumanity. What, then, are we to say? How do we explain ourselves? We have no explanation or theological formula that is worthy of the challenge of profound human misery. Our only response is a gesture to the compassionate witness of our martyrs, and our daily pursuit of the virtues they exemplify. *Caritas in Veritate* is not an explanation; it is a gesture toward the radical and comprehensive character of the Christian vocation to proclaim the gospel in society.

Christians proclaim the truth of Christ's love in a world where five thousand children die every day for want of clean water. Those of us who will never hold the diarrhea-ravaged corpse of a three-year-old girl, insofar as we are Christians, are confronted with the fact of our vocation to merciful love in the profound mortal suffering of our neighbor. Christians are called to perform this truth animated love in a world where technology makes us global neighbors (we see images and hear stories of abused, suffering, and exploited humanity every day), yet cannot unify us as a human family: our work is the establishment of authentic fraternity; our responsibility is to wipe away any sentimental mercy-talk that could mask an unwillingness to embrace our suffering neighbor.¹²⁶

At the same time, according to Ratzinger/Pope Benedict, when we attempt to respond to the mortal challenge of human hunger without due attention to the truth we proclaim as Christians, we risk an inhumane and distorted response.¹²⁷ We do not take seriously the challenge of human hunger and mortal suffering when we reduce the complex truths of human creaturely existence to a narrowly materialistic struggle for resources, because "man does not live by bread alone." In *Caritas in Veritate*, the evangelical witness of lives supernaturally animated by the divine gift of charity in truth is the full and complete response of Christians taking into themselves, into their bodies, the sufferings of their

or the richness of life . . . [Yet,] there is tenderness only in the coarsest demand: that no-one should go hungry anymore."

¹²⁶ *CV*, §33; cf. §§9, 20.

¹²⁷ *CV*, §27.

fellow human beings. It is a manner of martyrdom that bears faithful witness to the revelation of God in Christ.

Throughout his body of work it is clear that Pope Benedict's nuanced refusal to accommodate the influence of metaphysically anemic political programs within Catholic social teaching originated from a theological anthropology that affirmed the full reality of the human creature: *we hunger for more than food*. That is to say, if Christians give bread, but withhold our friendship and solidarity from a starving man, we have not loved our starving neighbor in the truth of Christ's love. Moreover, if Christians parrot Christ's message of integral freedom, but remain culpably indifferent to the bondage and suffering of our neighbor, we have not proclaimed the truth of Christ's love.

The authentic fraternity to which we are commended in *Caritas in Veritate* is an integral Christian humanism that is ordered toward the performance of Christian mercy, and which is exemplified in the witness of the compassionate martyrs. This humanism bears witness to the truth of Christ's gospel, and points toward the civilization of love that was founded at Golgotha and inaugurated at Pentecost. This always-incomplete fraternity of the pilgrim people, among each other and in relation to the earthly city, is sustained by our eschatological hope in the God who became poor. *Caritas in Veritate*—charity in truth—is the principle and purpose of the Christian vocation to proclaim Christ's love through our work to shape the earthly city in unity and peace. Our work is to build a civilization of love that is an anticipation and prefiguring of the undivided city of God. This is not only an argument, it is a picture. N-V