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The Church Engaged in Economy— Is It Necessary?

Abstract: In the light of the statements of the Magisterium, the presence of the Catholic Church in the world of economy seems obvious and necessary.

However, this article focuses on the need to define (1) the type of economy referred to in the Church documents, (2) the type of the presence of the Church in economy as defined in these documents and (3) the kind of necessity mentioned in the abovementioned records. It is in these three dimensions that the author depicts the outline of the attitude presented by the Church with regard to the basic economic issues (interventionism, social market economics, subsidiarity and solidarity in economics, the logic of unselfishness and gift).

The conclusion of the text is that the ultimate reason for the presence of Catholic Church in economy is its social mission aimed at creating a society of relations, where the fundamental principle is social friendship (*amicitia socialis*).

Keywords: social teaching of the Church, interventionism, social market economy, subsidiarity and solidarity in economy, logics of selflessness and gift, society of relations, social friendship

Introduction

The question posed in the title constitutes an attempt to put into words one of the most important dilemmas of contemporary people; in fact, it is a question regarding the relation between economic activity and morality; between freedom and social structure; between alienation and community. Primarily, it is addressed to the Church for which “man is the [first] way.”¹ Whereas people—

¹ John Paul II, Encyclical Letter *Centesimus Annus*, 6, https://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_01051991_centesimus-annus.html. Hereinafter as CA.

in the face of the lack of mutual interest and kindness they are experiencing, in the world of weakened solidarity, helpless against common problems and incomprehensible political and economic mechanisms, or the domination of simplified cultural styles in which religion and family are no longer the point of reference, and in which decisions are influenced by the need for mobility and competitiveness, the economic and ecological crises, or persistence in the first ranks of consumer competition—feel increasingly lonely. The sphere of human concerns, relations, and ties is neither attractive to the free market, ever more focused on the individual consumer, nor to the state, occupied with monitoring the international capital.² In the anonymous world of stock exchange charts, the desire for subjectivity—or, in other words, sociality—left to itself, must seek allies among whom the Church seems to occupy one of the top places. And the Church, according to Archbishop Damian Zimoń, “though called an expert in human affairs, cannot become an expert in economic matters. When it speaks out on social issues, the institution does so out of concern for human dignity, the preservation of which lies at the heart of Christian anthropology.”³

What Economy?

The answer to the question—posed in the anthropological context outlined above—may be concise and unambiguous: the competence of the Church to express itself in economic matters has been clearly indicated by Pope Benedict XVI when he writes that “the economic sphere is neither ethically neutral, nor inherently inhuman and opposed to society. It is part and parcel of human activity and precisely because it is human, it must be structured and governed in an ethical manner.”⁴ He also emphasizes that “striving to meet the deepest moral needs of the person also has important and beneficial repercussions at the level of economics. *The economy needs ethics in order to function correctly*—not any ethics whatsoever, but an ethics which is people-centred” (CiV, 45). The social doctrine of the Church concretes this approach by concentrating propos-

² M. Hulaś, Obronić „socialitas.” Perspektywa „Caritas in veritate” [Defend “Socialitas.” The Prospect of “Caritas in Veritate”], in *Spółeczeństwo – Gospodarka – Ekologia. Perspektywa encykliki społecznej Caritas in Veritate* [Society – Economy – Environment. The Prospect of Social Encyclical *Caritas in Veritate*], ed. S. Fel, M. Hulaś, and S. G. Raabe (Lublin: KUL 2010), 231–47.

³ D. Zimoń, *Kościół katolicki na Śląsku wobec bezrobocia* [Catholic Church Against Unemployment in Silesia], ed. Kuria Metropolitalna w Katowicach (Katowice 2001).

⁴ Benedict XVI, Encyclical Letter *Caritas in Veritate*, 36, https://w2.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_ben-xvi_enc_20090629_caritas-in-veritate.pdf. Hereinafter as CiV.

als for the resolution of economic issues on subjects such as the Church and the order of earthly things, man at the centre of economics, the true development of humanity and the world, the importance of human labour, the principles of solidarity, the common good and subsidiarity.

However, it seems pragmatic here to recapitulate the reasons and inspirations why the answer to the question at hand is so positive and clear. First of all, one needs to bear in mind that both the economic activity itself and the assessment of its mechanisms are not homogeneous. The negative consequences of free market capitalism are indicated from both conservative and liberal perspectives. In the former, attention is paid to personalistic elements (e.g., to the fact that economic free market systems lead to the loss of the ability to understand the truth—which “was felt almost instinctively in the pre-industrial era”—that also the economic side of human activity must have its goal (*télos*), subject to the highest, supernatural goal of man, namely eternal salvation).⁵ On the other hand, liberal criticism places greater emphasis on unsustainable development (e.g., the fact that the development of information and communication technologies and the enormous growth in mutual, though partly virtual, global economic connections are not accompanied by progress in many more fundamental areas of individual and social life. The latter fall into natural, though of increasing amplitude, periods of recession which—for example in the case of fluctuations in energy and food prices—not only affect the level and economic security of everyday life, but in many cases constitute an effective barrier to the development of individuals, regions, and entire nations).⁶

Regardless of the assessment, however, this multicoloured palette of economic systems and schools is interconnected by a number of elements: new social phenomena connected with the transition from industrial production to

⁵ Jacek Bartyzel enumerates, inter alia, the following: “the destruction of many local communities and human bonds; the uprooting and proletarianisation of a large number of individuals [...]; the undeniable exploitation of the working class beyond measure and in conditions that offend human dignity [...]; religious indifference and moral scourges [...]; the destruction of natural environment by the ruthless exploitation and severance of the unity between nature and culture [...]; the birth and overwhelming development of the primitive [...] so-called mass culture [...]; the appearance of a universal climate of approval and understanding for utilitarian values only, and even the cult of money and profit as the only measure of all goods and the only source of prestige; the loss of bearings in an atmosphere of constant haste in the economic ‘rat race’ and of a higher meaning of life and the value of contemplative life for the sake of constant need to acquire material means.” J. Bartyzel, “Liberalizm” [“Liberalism”], in: J. Bartyzel, B. Szlachta, and A. Wielomski, *Encyklopedia polityczna. Myśl polityczna: główne pojęcia, doktryny i formy ustroju* [Encyclopaedia of Politics. Political Thought: Main Concepts, Doctrines, and Forms of the Political System], vol. I (Radom Polskie Wydawnictwo Encyklopedyczne „Polwen” 2007), 204–209.

⁶ See: M. Zięba, *Papieska ekonomia. Kościół – rynek – demokracja* [Pontifical Economy. Church – Market – Democracy], (Kraków: Znak, 2016).

the service sector, which is made up of many professions not directly linked to production; the emergence of a “service-class society” with high levels of social welfare, insurance system, universal access to education, health and recreation; the development of a “technetronic society” based on “intellectual technology,” focusing more on information processing than on raw materials; a high level of social dynamics driven by technological development and, consequently, the emergence of a “knowledge society” in which education and training are at the heart of systems of values and of everyday life, where the possibility of business applications is a fundamental criterion of “scientificity.”⁷

Working in such a manner, the system transforms the entire class structure and stratification hierarchy.⁸ Not only is the gap between the “rich north” and the “poor south” growing alarmingly fast, but there is also a gap between the “global sphere” and “local communities,” where the sense of having lost control over technology, political decisions, and social phenomena is growing exponentially. “More and more threats are falling on local communities from the outside, and nobody feels and is really responsible for their occurrence,” writes Marek Dutkowski from the University of Szczecin. Economic and political crises as well as the persistent underdevelopment and poverty are most severely felt on the local scale, although they largely originate in the global sphere. In the times of “liquid modernity,” when formal structures lose their significance and power, in view of the uncertainty accompanying these processes, the addressee of possible complaints and protests remains impossible to define.

On the other hand, what is rapidly expanding are the areas of marginalization, which manifest the depreciation of values in social life, such as failure to respect human dignity or disregard for solidarity and the common good. Marginalization also has its consequences: it induces passivity, apathy and faith in lucky coincidence, rather than active attitudes, such as rebellion, opposition, participation, or co-decision.⁹ In view of the growing number of the so-often-erroneously-called *underclass* European societies, which had hitherto seemed stable, the welfare models started swaying in their foundations, and the famous Welfare State—the Golden Fleece of European societies in the last thirty years of the 20th century—has suddenly found itself “in a serious predicament, not to

⁷ See: A. Sarnacki, *Krytyczne uwagi na temat koncepcji społeczeństwa wiedzy* [Critical Remarks on the Concept of Knowledge Society], in: *Odczarowania. Człowiek w społeczeństwie* [Disenchantments. Man in Society], ed. A. Gielarowski, T. Homa, and M. Urban (Kraków: WAM, 2008), 157–71.

⁸ See: P. Sztompka, *Socjologia zmian społecznych* [Sociology of Social Change], trans. J. Konieczny (Kraków: Znak 2005), 83.

⁹ See: Z. Bauman, *Praca, konsumpcjonizm i nowi ubodzy* [Work, Consumerism and the New Poor], trans. S. Obirek (Kraków: WAM, 2006); I. Camacho, *Ubóstwo i wykluczenie a nauka społeczna Kościoła* [Poverty and Exclusion Versus the Social Doctrine of the Church], trans. T. Żeleźnik. *Spoleczeństwo 2000* no. 1, 59–89.

say ‘total disintegration.’”¹⁰ Nevertheless, this does not necessarily have to mean rejecting the idea of a welfare state which tries to combine economic freedom with solidarity. The cause of the crisis, which few in a politically correct Europe dare to mention, lies deeper, and is more precisely diagnosed by Alberto Wagner de Reyna (1915–2006), the former Ambassador of Peru to UNESCO, rich in the benefits provided by the perspective of experience and distance. Observing Europe, he argues that the main cause of the economic crisis as well as of its anthropological and social consequences is the “de-humanisation of humanism,” which has its origins in the detachment of economy from the idea of God. Thus, the multifaceted crisis rather constitutes a call for the necessary reform of economic structures, restoring proper meaning to Catholic social principles in the economy.¹¹

What Engagement?

The Second Vatican Council, as the first in the history of the Church, developed a comprehensive doctrine on the Church’s attitude to the world in general and on the Church’s attitude to the economy and society in particular. This is manifested most fully in the pastoral Constitution on the Church in the modern world *Gaudium et Spes* (1965) and in the Decree on Secular Apostolate *Apostolicam Actuositatem* (1965). In the latter document, the Council speaks of the need to revive the Church in social terms and to reformulate its attitude towards the world, the economy and society. The Council emphasizes that “Christ’s redemptive work, while essentially concerned with the salvation of men, includes also the renewal of the whole temporal order. Hence the mission of the Church is not only to bring the message and grace of Christ to men but also to penetrate and perfect the temporal order with the spirit of the Gospel” (AA, 5). In the *Gaudium et Spes* constitution, the Council teaches that “[i]nspired by no earthly ambition, the Church seeks but a solitary goal: to carry forward the work of Christ under the lead of the befriending Spirit. And Christ entered this world to give witness to the truth, to rescue and not to sit in judgment, to serve and not to be served” (GS, 3).

Before these thoughts have matured, the Church made a series of attempts to define the manner and scope of its involvement in the economic space. Focusing our attention solely on the most recent times, we can indicate some directions and outcomes of its investigations.

¹⁰ Such a state was described by Anthony Giddens in *L’Europa nell’età globale [Europe in the Global Age]*, trans. di F. Galimberti (Roma–Bari: Editori Laterza 2007), 4.

¹¹ A. W. de Reyna, *L’homme au XX^e siècle [The Man in the 21st Century]*, *Catholica* 2009 no. 2, n.p.

Interventionism in the Economy

In his encyclical *Rerum Novarum* (1891), Leo XIII outlined a positive vision of an active, subsidiary society in which every citizen and social group consciously pursues their own objectives in the interest of common good (see: RN 41). Recognizing the initiatives already in place, the pope states that “such manifold and earnest activity has benefited the community at large” and hopes that “the associations [will] continue to grow and spread, and [will be] well and wisely administered” (RN, 55). Pragmatically, he also delivers the following appeal: “The State should watch over these societies of citizens banded together in accordance with their rights, but it should not thrust itself into their peculiar concerns and their organization, for things move and live by the spirit inspiring them, and may be killed by the rough grasp of a hand from without” (RN, 55).

Not only does he legitimize, but Leo XIII also demands an intervention on the part of the State to ensure the conditions for social justice, particularly in order to protect the weak and the poor. The issue of fairness and scope of such an intervention of the State are especially relevant to the economic sphere, and the Pope explains its nature as follows: “the rulers of the State should be to make sure that the laws and institutions, the general character and administration of the commonwealth, shall be such as of themselves to realize public well-being and private prosperity. This is the proper scope of wise statesmanship and is the work of the rulers” (RN 32). Considering that “it lies in the power of a ruler to benefit every class in the State,” and implement it “without being open to suspicion of undue interference” (RN 26), the State intervention in economic matters is motivated as follows: “The members of the working classes¹² are citizens by nature and by the same right as the rich; they are real parts, living the life which makes up, through the family, the body of the commonwealth; and it need hardly be said that they are in every city very largely in the majority. It would be irrational to neglect one portion of the citizens and favor another, and therefore the public administration must duly and solicitously provide for the welfare and the comfort of the working classes; otherwise, that law of justice will be violated which ordains that each man shall have his due” (RN, 33).

Other issues where state intervention is deemed necessary by Leo XIII are those related to the protection of private property, the issue of employment, material and spiritual working conditions, protection of women and children, employment contracts and wages, and property diffusion. Still, such interference should not exceed certain limits: it must take into account civil rights and is

¹² The terms *proletarius* and *artifex* are used interchangeably in the Latin text. However, they both are meant to denote *hired workers*.

permitted only in cases which are contrary to morality, justice, and the welfare of the State (cf. RN 45).

Social Market Economy

Ordo-liberalism, also known as the Fribourg School,¹³ offers a slightly different proposal. Its representatives were primarily interested in the reconstruction of a stable society, free from the processes of disintegration caused by the break-up of ties. They consciously avoided referring to the trend represented by Adam Smith (1723–1790), but rather relating to Thomism, which meant for them the perfect, rational and cognoscible order of things that could constitute a measure and a reference for existing systems. Although some believe that in the Fribourg school's thought the necessity for an organized society "is justified not so much by a certain ontological vision as by the desire to avoid the temptation of statism,"¹⁴ there is a consensus that "[...] they definitively abandon the idea of nostalgia for organic society and demand an organized society where natural groups are to give way to arbitrary (contact) groups. At the same time, the common good ceases to have an objective value, assuming the character of a *consensus* which owes its legitimacy to the respect it receives from the citizens."¹⁵ The Ordoliberalists did not therefore follow in the footsteps of corporatism, which in their opinion depreciates the individual's abilities and overestimates the capabilities of intermediate bodies in the field of the common good. They also did not try to instill other solutions that had proved their worth in the past. Their contemporary reality, as they thought, required new solutions.

That is why they called for a whole range of measures: from the modernization of the liberal order in order to emphasize the principle of common good to the concept of social market economy, combining economic freedom with the principle of social equality, which was applied in Germany after the Second World War. Thus, they wanted to defend the model of a society in which individuals can act spontaneously, but which is at the same time an orderly society,

¹³ The theoretical development of ordoliberalism took place on two levels: at the Fribourg school, whose exponents were Walter Eucken (1891–1950), Franz Böhm (1895–1977) and Hans Grossmann-Dörth (1894–1944), and which was developing during the Third Reich as part of the so-called internal migration, that is, outside the official public life; and in exile, where such activists had their say as Friedrich August von Hayek (1899–1992), Wilhelm Röpke (1899–1966), and Alexander Rüstow (1885–1963).

¹⁴ Ch. Millon-Delsol, *Zasada subsydiarności – założenia, historia, problemy współczesne* [*The Principle of Subsidiarity - Assumptions, History, Contemporary Issues*], in *Subsydiarność. Wydanie drugie uzupełnione* [*Subsidiarity. Second Supplemented Edition*], ed. D. Milczarek (Warszawa: Centrum Europejskie Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego, 1998²), 33.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 49.

free from the threat of chaos, characterized by stability and natural organization of human activities. The ordoliberal idea is therefore an idea of “existing order, not one created by man, one that creates conditions for free action for the benefit of society and protects against destructive actions.”¹⁶

This movement was an attempt to create a program for the reconstruction of capitalism, which—in the first place—consists in the reconstruction of society and only then on the revival of market economy, based on healthy social structures.¹⁷ These processes should be carried out simultaneously, but as Jerzy Gocko points out, “their control was to be carried out according to the principle that it is not the market that has a decisive role in social life, but—the other way round—permanent inter-group and inter-individual relations create conditions for the market to properly perform the functions envisaged for it.”¹⁸ This was an important conclusion drawn by the Ordoliberals thanks to a thorough and critical analysis of the experiences of *laissez-faire*.

Subsidiarity in the Economy

In response to the State’s growing expansion as a participant in the free market game, which has taken in the ever wider areas of private initiative in the economic field, the encyclical *Mater et Magistra* (1961) refers in particular to the principle of subsidiarity. Referring directly to the teaching of Pius XI, contained in *Quadragesimo Anno* (1931), John XXIII proposes a new, broad and concrete application of subsidiarity in economic practice. At the same time, as Jean-Yves Calvez (1927–2010) emphasizes, his main intention was to point to economic aid for self-help (*en aidant les hommes à s’aider eux-mêmes [helping man to help themselves]*).¹⁹

The starting point is the opinion of Pius XI that “free trade has been replaced with economic violence, and the greed for profit has bred greed for power, while all the economic activity has become incredibly harsh, merciless and cruel” (MM, 38 [40]).²⁰ John XXIII adds that “as a result, even state authorities have

¹⁶ J. Gocko, Ewolucja porządku gospodarczego w koncepcji liberalnej [The Evolution of Economic Order in the Liberal Concept], *Seminare 2000*, 389–420.

¹⁷ See: J. Mariański, Kościół katolicki a społeczna gospodarka rynkowa [Catholic Church and Social Market], *Saeculum Christianum 2000* no. 2, 199–218.

¹⁸ See: J. Gocko, Ewolucja porządku gospodarczego w koncepcji liberalnej [The Evolution of Economic Order], 419–20.

¹⁹ J.-Y. Calvez, *Église et société économique: L’enseignement social de Jean XXIII* (Paris: Aubier Montaigne, 1963), 68.

²⁰ “[...] free competition has killed itself; free trade was followed by economic dictatorship; greed for profit was transformed into an unlimited greed for power; whole economic activity has become immensely harsh, merciless and cruel. This is doubled by severe damage and losses, following from the mixing and unfortunate association of political power with economics; one of the key losses is the depreciation of state and its importance; state, free from the influences of any political parties, serving the common good and justice, should, as the supreme rules and judge bear its flag high, and now it is reduced to the role of a slave subordinated to human pas-

come to serve the interest of the wealthy, and the accumulated wealth has in a way started to rule all the nations” (MM, 35[36]). John XXIII brings down the recommendations offered by Pius to two major indications: the first one is the absolute need to reject “the principle of regarding economic activity or benefits earned by individuals or groups or unlimited free competition, or the immense power of the wealthy, or excessive pride and the willingness to rule as expressed by certain countries, or any similar tendencies as the supreme law. On the contrary, in all kinds of economic activity, it is necessary to follow the rules of justice and love as the primary principles of social life” (MM, 37 [38–39]). The second recommendation is related to the introduction “according to the rules of social justice and thanks to creating national and international public or private institutions, of such legal order where business subjects could properly negotiate their own benefits and streamline them to the common needs of the whole community” (MM, 38 [40]).

These elements will be mentioned again in the encyclical by John Paul II *Sollicitudo rei Socialis* (1987). First it is stated that since the pontificate of Pope Paul VI the symptoms of “economic, but also cultural and political and simply human underdevelopment” have exacerbated (SRS, 17) and are “a sign of common belief that the *unity of the world*, or in other words, *the unity of humankind* is under a serious threat” (SRS 14). Among the reasons behind such a situation, the pope indicated first of all the negligence in following the rules and social values in economics (see SRS 15). “No social group, e.g., a party, has any right to usurp the role of the sole leader; just like in any other form of totalitarian regime, this is the destruction of the genuine empowerment of the society and its people—the citizens. A human being and the nations thus become an “object” in this system, despite all its declarations and verbal reassurances—claims the pope (SRS 15).

Failure to observe the principles and values, as well as “an overly restricted, i.e., mainly economic *concept* of development” as well as negligence and omissions “on the part of both developing and developed nations, which failed to see their duty to help the countries separated from the world of wealth, to which they themselves belong”—all of these lead to the arrival of numerous, new forms of underdevelopment—says the pope. The indication of these economic and international shortcomings is combined with the summon and a plea to resume the responsibility and engagement for integral development, with the awareness that “the good we are all summoned to perform and the happiness we are striving for cannot be achieved without everybody’s *effort and involvement*, without excluding anybody and without the consistent rejection of one’s own egoism” (SRS 26).

sions and selfish interests. As regards international relations, two contradictory directions result from this issue; on the one hand there is economic “nationalism” or even “imperialism,” on the other hand, “internationalism” or “international capital imperialism,” which is equally dangerous and despicable, as it assumes that homeland is where convenient.” QA, 109 [see also MM, 38].

Solidarity in Economic Life

For a long time, a promoter of such social model referring to medieval patterns was the originator of the idea of solidarity, a Jesuit Heinrich Pesch (1854–1926). The social model he promoted was built on the interpersonal moral order stemming from religion. This vision was complemented with an idea of social and economic care and aid provided to the weakest individuals and driven by religious and ethical motivation. This solidarity-based social model necessarily had to be supplemented by the stipulation that God's moral law be included in social life, and consequently, it meant the return to the class and estate structures.²¹

The new, enriched vision of economy based on solidarity is the idea of John Paul II: “[...] in today's world—among numerous human rights—the *right to economic initiative* is restricted, although it is important not only for an individual, but also for the common good. It follows from experience that refusing this right and restricting it in the name of the ostensible “equality” of all the members of the society in fact eliminates and destroys entrepreneurship, which is the creative empowerment of the citizen. As a result, it's not equality, but “pulling downwards.” Instead of the creative initiative, we have passive attitude, dependence and submission to the bureaucratic apparatus, which is the only “manager” and “decision-maker” if not the “owner” of the bulk of the production factors and as such makes all the other stakeholders to some extent dependent, which is very similar to the dependence of a proletarian worker under capitalism. This is where frustration or the feeling of helplessness comes from as well as lack of involvement in public life, readiness to emigrate—even if it is the so called inward emigration” (SRS 15).

The Logics of Gift and Disinterestedness in Economy

Benedict XVI claimed that what is of key importance to the social dimension is the Truth,²² which guarantees realism and is the foundation of the logic of

²¹ See: Z. Waleszczuk, System solidaryzmu Heinricha Pescha [The System of Solidarity by Heinrich Pesch], *Legnickie Studia Teologiczno-Historyczne* [Theological-Historical Studies in Legnica] 2001 vol. 1, 156–91.

²² As Giorgio Vattadini underlines, “In defining love as truth, the pope excludes any possibility for a moral reduction of love. In this sense, it is the truth that combines love with cognition. [...] building love on truth means restoring it to the proper aspect of theological virtues: faith, hope and love. The understanding of the very word “love” can often be reduced. [...] In this case, it is the mention of love seen as the love for human destiny. It is related to the ontological and the cognitive aspect. Cognition as a starting point for love, growth. In my opinion, it is very important: this way, in the atmosphere of chaos and confusion, in which we are living right now—in which these values have been detached from human and historical experience many

disinterestedness. It is in this light that the pope evaluated, e.g., the global economic crisis: “neither in thought nor in behavior [...] can we neglect or weaken the traditional principles of social ethics, such as transparency, honesty and responsibility, but also *the principle of gratuity in the market relations* and the logic of gift as an expression of fraternity that may and should *be present in normal economic activity*. This is currently a human need, but it has its economic merits as well. This is the need for love and truth”—writes the pope (CiV 36). Truth and love order certain actions according to the “logic of gift”: “when the logic of market and state logic agree to retain the monopoly in their own areas of influence, the solidarity among the citizens starts to disappear with time, and so does the cooperation and the feeling of community, disinterested actions, something other than *you need to give in order to have*, as characteristic of the logic of exchange, or *the obligation to give*, which is part of the logic of public behavior imposed by the public law. Overcoming the underdevelopment requires intervention not only as regards improving the transactions based on exchange, not only as regards the creation of public welfare structures, but most of all as regards gradual openness, in the global context, to the forms of economic activity characterized by gratuity and communion” (CiV 39)—says Benedict XVI.

What combines all of the abovementioned proposals is the statement that the proper condition of human affairs as well as the moral sanity of the world can never be guaranteed solely by structures, no matter how valuable they may be. “Such structures are not only important, but also necessary: yet they cannot and should not deprive people of freedom”—summarizes Benedict XVI in his encyclical *Spe Salvi* (2007). “Even the best of structures function properly only when the community truly believes in the arguments that convince them to opt for the community order of their own free will. Freedom needs conviction and belief; belief won’t exist on its own, but has to be acquired by the community all the time. Since a human being is always free and freedom is always fragile, the definitive and consolidated rule of good will never exist in the world. Whoever promises a better world—definitively and forever—makes a false promise and disregards human freedom. Freedom must be constantly acquired for the sake of good. It is virtually impossible to stick with the good on your own and of your own free will. If there could be any structures that would irrevocably establish a defined good condition of the world, human freedom would thus be negated and for this reason, such structures would not be ultimately good in themselves” (SS 24).

The above proposals are also concurrent when it comes to the involvement of the Church in economic issues. The reasons may well be summarized by

a time—everything is referred to the reality.” *Sila miłości. Wywiad Davide Perillo z Giorgio Vittadinim* [*The Power of Love. Interview of Davide Perillo with Giorgio Vittadini*], <http://www.cl.opoka.org.pl/artykuly/0150.html> (accessed 5.03.2011).

Ralf Dahrendorf (1929–2009), who says that political democracy and market economy, which aspire to rule the entire experience of human life—are “cold projects.” He explains that democracy and free market are “the inventions of the civilization of enlightened and collective minds, but they do not make your heart beat faster [...]. They are mechanisms for solving problems and were created in order to facilitate the changes of taste, policy and even leadership without bloodshed and unnecessary suffering. As such, they are indeed magnificent inventions and it is not without a reason that they are so highly valued. But they are not ‘home’; they do not provide a human with identity or sense of belonging. In this sense, they leave you outdoors, in the cold, without a shelter. Democracy and economy are important, but not all-important. [...] it is impossible to maintain the mechanisms of an open society, if the people don’t know where they belong. Democracy and anomy do not make a happy couple. In the end, anomy destroys freedom, if only because the moral vacuum it creates attract false deities and bad prophets. [...] There is also the ‘Böckenförde paradox’: democracy and market economy are based on the premises they cannot guarantee themselves. They cannot create the necessary social bonds, not have they ever aspired to do so.”²³

What Necessity?

For the reasons as mentioned above, it seems that there are three major objectives of the involvement of the Church in the economy to indicate how to reconcile economic growth with environment-friendly attitude (focusing on how to use the earth and its potential better, without destroying our planet and exposing it to risk); to initiate and support actions aimed at achieving better economic cooperation and organization as a social process (such action must be two-dimensional: it should be performed on the level of technical and scientific development as well as in the interpersonal dimension, on the organizational level); and to demonstrate that economic initiative is expressed on a level much deeper than the technical process, and realized in the dynamic human nature and as such has both ethical and anthropological dimension to it.²⁴

The following elements remain the focus of the care and interest on the part of the Church:

²³ R. Dahrendorf, *Wolność a więzi społeczne. Uwagi o strukturze pewnej argumentacji* [Freedom and Social Ties. Notes on the Structure of Certain Arguments], in *Spoleczeństwo liberalne. Rozmowy w Castel Gandolfo* [Liberal Society. Conversations in Castel Gandolfo], preparation and foreword by K. Michalski, trans. A. Pawelec (Kraków–Warsaw: Znak – Fundacja im. Stefana Batorego 1996), 9–10.

²⁴ See: *Church and Economics*, ed. L. Roos, Ordo socialis, Koeln 1986 (Polish edition: ed. P. Kaczanowski and S. Sowiński) (Warsaw: Fundacja Akademii Teologii Katolickiej, 2008).

Issues related to the expansion of economism, whose source is the fact that the modern well-developed industrial economy has considerably increased contemporary financial ambitions and expectations. This is also how social life has come to rely on actual, but also ostensible, economic needs, thus pushing other values and social needs aside, which are nevertheless necessary for the genuine growth of humanity and for the proper dignity of social existence. Of course, economy as such cannot in itself create or transmit human and social values. Its shape and functioning do, however, considerably impact the axiological and moral aptitude and sensitivity of a society.²⁵

The question about the role of human being in an economic process. Human being is the objective and the source of an economic process not only in that people receive their due, fair payment or annuity in the course of the economic process, but also in that people remain or even become “more human”—as described by John Paul II—in the course of this process (LE, 27). In this context, John Paul II often admonished people and warned them against possible utopias or ideologies related to the development of production processes, against the risk of leaving the economic structure and progress exclusively to the domain of technical pragmatism and organizational rationalism.²⁶

The problem of responsibility for the development of the global economy in the context of the fear that the facilities provided by contemporary economic and technical progress are not equally shared by and available to all the nations, that they won't be used to effectively eliminate starvation in the world and provide means for development especially to Third World countries. Also the developing countries themselves must make a realistic for their own development. Focusing on this realism, the Vatican Council issues a warning against putting too much hope for the solution of economic problems only in the transfer of the economic models and mentality of industrialized countries to the Third World.²⁷

The Catholic social teaching has always combined the reforms of economic conditions with reforms of individual and social morality and customs. This dimension of the involvement of the Church in economic life remains unchanged: the Church not only wishes to define the objectives for social and ethical responsibility, but also wants to contribute to the renewal of the social and ethical awareness. The ultimate goal of each economic system is to serve man—human

²⁵ “Many people, especially in economically developed countries, seem to rely so much on economics that almost their whole personal and social lives are full of economic attitude and this is the case both in the nations supporting collective economy and others” (GS 63). John Paul II noticed a similar threat in his encyclicals *Redemptor Hominis* (1979) and *Laborem Exercens* (1981).

²⁶ See: K. Adamski, *Technokracja wyzwaniem etycznym dla chrześcijańskiej wizji ładu społecznego* [Technocracy Challenge for Ethical Christian View of Social Order], *Świdnickie Studia Teologiczne* [Theological Studies in Świdnica] 2013, 17–43.

²⁷ See: *Church and Economics*, ed. L. Roos.

being as a whole as well as each of individual humans. This is why economic activity should always be perceived in its entire anthropological context. In this context, the challenge of meeting the economic needs of the whole humanity becomes a sort of ethical horizon, which updates and amends the “methods and laws” of economy. This horizon is not subject to anyone’s arbitrary decisions, but exists as an objective requirement. It is so because each actually existing society—as observed by Mario Toso—has social awareness and is based on shared intentions and feelings, on the solidarity and friendship among its members, on their virtues and vices. It is also created by the bulk of common heritage—financial, biological, cultural, as well as the heritage of authorities, institutions and structures.²⁸

A society as a form of unifying relations among individual people is, however, only “partially” a product of human intelligence, practical reason, and human striving. Some aspects of this unity or order are the subject matter of psychological research, other aspects are discovered in the course of studying human biographies and the history, and further aspects of this unity are discovered by ethics, economics, political philosophy, and related fields of study. It is about achieving such order of human relations, which makes it possible to obtain a single, shared action oriented towards a common goal—an order in which each of the members of a society will find at least a partial self-fulfillment while assisting in the self-fulfillment of other members of the same community by ensuring and protecting their growth in the conditions of freedom and responsibility and in other aspect of human growth.

All the levels of this unity are essential in order for the society to exist. However, none of them can replace the ultimate level of “orderly unity” expressed in the cooperation and common involvement. The unity of cooperation, which is observed in fully formed societies, assumes a special type of cooperation, founded on friendship: in a family, in a society, in politics and institutions.²⁹

This friendship differs from the one present in the communities bound by shared interest or among the players of team sports. Shared interest and activities as observed among business partners or football team members ultimately focused not on the interest or love of another human being, but rather on “usefulness” or “pleasure”; in other words, it has individual and personal objectives. These are the communities where the good and common action is definitely present, but the ultimate goal is not common growth. On the contrary, a strong society is one that becomes more of a community, which assumes the kind of friendship that directly implements the love of others and the wellbeing (eternal

²⁸ See: M. Toso, *Umanesimo sociale. Viaggio nella dottrina sociale della Chiesa e dintorni* (Roma: Las, 2001), 362.

²⁹ See: S. Grygiel, *Kimże jest człowiek? Szkice z filozofii osoby* [*What is Man? Sketches from the Philosophy of the Person*], (Kielce: Jedność, 1995), 82–83.

and temporal) of all its members.³⁰ And this is the ultimate reason and purpose of the engagement of the Church in economy.

Translated by Dominika Pieczka

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³⁰ See also: P. Donati, *Invito alla sociologia relazionale. Teoria e applicazioni*, trans. P. Donati and P. Terenzi. Milano Franco Angeli, 2006). The relationship between the relational theory and the social teaching of the Church is discussed at length by: P. Donati, *Pensiero sociale cristiano e società post-moderna* (Roma: Editrice Ave), 1997.

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L'Église catholique engagée dans l'économie—est-ce nécessaire?

Résumé

À la lumière de l'enseignement de l'Église, la présence de l'Église catholique dans le monde de l'économie paraît évidente et nécessaire.

L'article dirige pourtant l'attention sur la nécessité de préciser (1) de quelle économie parlent les documents de l'Église, (2) quelle présence de l'Église dans le monde de l'économie ils postulent et (3) de quelle nécessité il y est question. Dans ces trois dimensions-ci, l'auteur présente l'abrégé de l'attitude de l'Église envers les questions économiques essentielles (interventionnisme, économie sociale du marché, subsidiarité et solidarité dans l'économie, logique de désintéressement et de don).

Le texte conduit à la conclusion que ce qui est la raison définitive de la présence de l'Église catholique dans l'économie, c'est sa mission sociale visant à créer une société de relations, où l'amitié sociale (*amicitia socialis*) est un principe fondamental.

Mots clés: enseignement social de l'Église, interventionnisme, économie sociale du marché, subsidiarité et solidarité dans l'économie, logique de désintéressement et de don, société de relations, amitié sociale

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La Chiesa impegnata nell'economia—è necessario?

Sommario

Alla luce delle affermazioni del Magistero la presenza della Chiesa cattolica nel mondo dell'economia sembra essere ovvia e necessaria.

L'articolo tuttavia presta attenzione alla necessità di precisare (1) di quale economia parlino i documenti della Chiesa, (2) quale presenza della Chiesa essi postulino nel mondo dell'economia e (3) quale necessità sia menzionata negli stessi. In queste tre dimensioni l'autore delinea un profilo del rapporto della Chiesa nei confronti delle questioni economiche fondamentali (interventismo, economia sociale di mercato, sussidiarietà e solidarietà nell'economia, logica della gratuità e del dono).

Il testo conduce alla conclusione che la ragione ultima della presenza della Chiesa cattolica nell'economia è la sua missione sociale mirata a creare una società di relazioni in cui il principio fondamentale è costituito dall'amicizia sociale (*amicitia socialis*).

Parole chiave: insegnamento sociale della Chiesa—interventismo—economia sociale di mercato—sussidiarietà e solidarietà nell'economia—logica della gratuità e del dono—società di relazioni—amicizia sociale