

An Outline Of the Pastoral On the Economy

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5. Job placement services should be improved and expanded.

IV. POVERTY

The fact that more than 15 percent of our nation's population live below the official poverty level is a social and moral scandal that must not be ignored.

A. Institutional Factors

1. *Racial and Ethnic Discrimination.* The rates of poverty are highest among those groups who have historically borne the brunt of racial prejudice and discrimination.
2. *Feminization of Poverty.* Families with female heads now have a poverty rate six times that of two-parent families. Many women work fulltime outside the home but are still poor because of low wages and discrimination in employment opportunity.
3. *Distribution of Income and Wealth.* The distribution of income and wealth in the U.S. is so inequitable that it violates the minimum standard of distributive justice. In 1982, the richest 20 percent of Americans received more income than the bottom 70 percent combined. The disparities in the distribution of wealth are even more extreme.

B. Norms for Action

Dealing with poverty is an imperative of the highest order. The following are some of the elements necessary for a national strategy to deal with poverty:

1. Building a healthy economy to provide employment opportunities for all.
2. Action to remove barriers to full and equal employment for women and minorities.
3. Reforms in the tax system that would reduce the burden on the poor.
4. Programs and policies to foster self-help programs among the poor.
5. Improvements in the quality of education for poor children.
6. Improved child-care services.

C. Welfare Reform

The present welfare system is woefully inadequate and in need of major reform. Attitudes toward the poor are frequently characterized by unfortunate stereotypes, stigmatization and false impressions.

We propose six guidelines for welfare reform:

1. Welfare programs should be adequately funded and provide adequate support.
2. National eligibility standards and a national minimum benefit level for public assistance programs should be established.
3. Welfare programs should strengthen rather than weaken marriage and the family.
4. Welfare programs should encourage rather than penalize gainful employment.
5. The design of public assistance programs should involve the participation of recipients and should avoid stigma to clients.
6. The administration of public assistance programs should show respect for clients.

V. FOOD AND AGRICULTURE

This section will be completed in the coming months and will be included in the second draft of the pastoral letter.

VI. A NEW AMERICAN EXPERIMENT: COLLABORATING TO SHAPE THE ECONOMY

America needs a new experiment in cooperation and collaboration to renew a sense of solidarity, enhance participation and broaden the sharing of responsibility in economic society.

A. Cooperation within Individual Firms and Industries

Management and workers should develop new forms of partnership and cooperation, such as cooperative ownership and worker participation in ownership and decision-making.

B. Local and Regional Cooperation

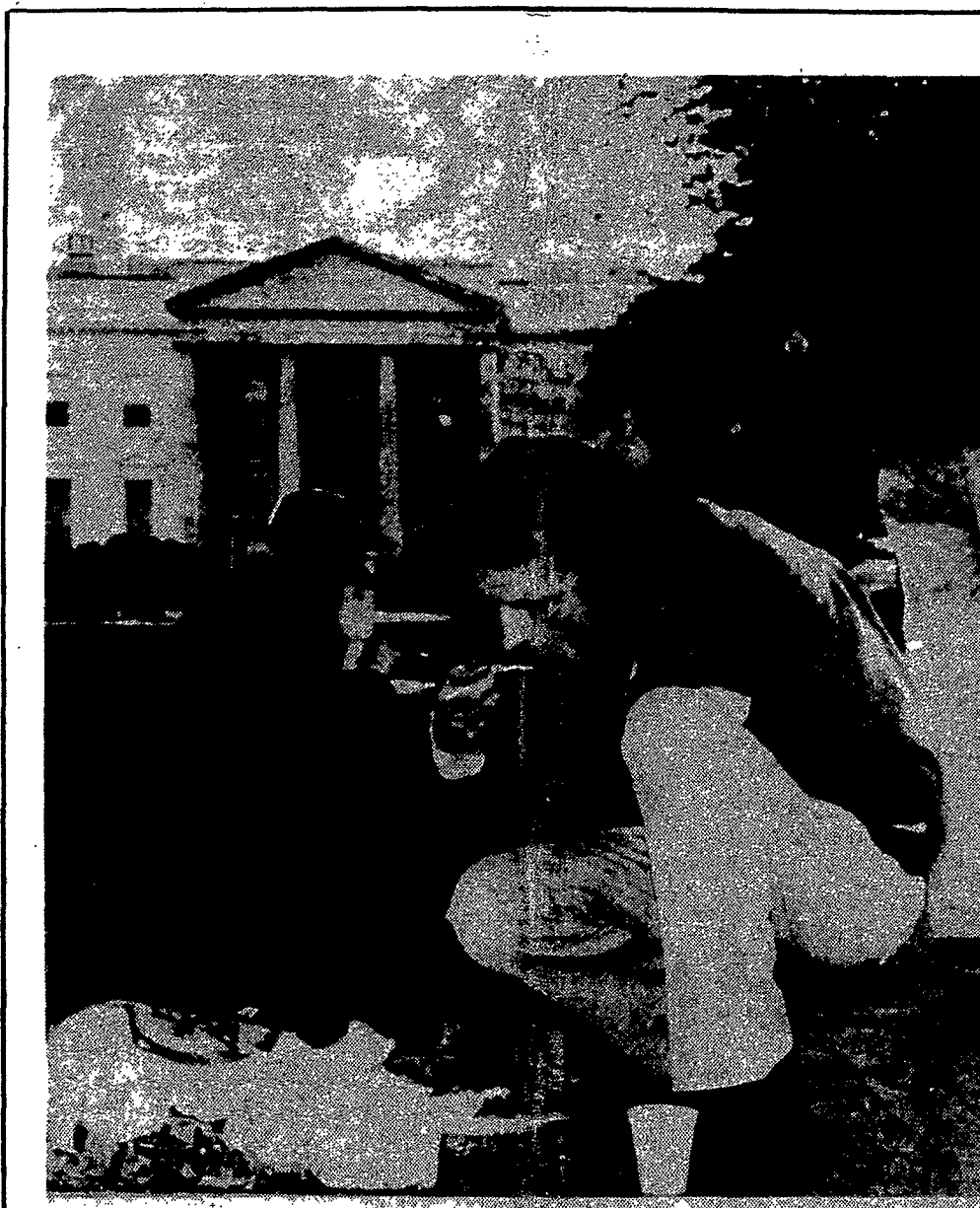
Government, business, labor and other institutions can work together at the local and regional level to develop new cooperative structures to promote such goals as job creation and community economic development.

C. Cooperation in the Development of National Policies

In an advanced economy like ours, all actors of society, including government, must actively and positively cooperate in forming national economic policies. Catholic social teaching supports the need for society to make provision for overall planning in the economic domain, but it must be done in such a way that strikes a balance between individual initiatives and the common good.

A primary criterion for judging the moral value of national economic policies is their impact on the poor and marginalized.

Greater coordination in the development of national economic policies is called for.



The formation of national economic policies should be accountable to the people through their democratically elected representatives.

D. International Cooperation

As U.S. citizens, we must widen our horizons and work to enhance collaboration and mutual responsibility on a global level.

VII. THE U.S. AND THE WORLD ECONOMY: COMPLEXITY, CHALLENGE AND CHOICES

A. Economic Relations in an Interdependent World

The U.S. economy has enormous influence on the rest of the world. Recognizing the fact and meaning of global interdependence is central to assessing the role of the United States in the world economy. Linked together in a finite world, we can help or hurt one another by the policies we adopt.

B. The Relevance of Catholic Social Teaching

Our challenge is to shape the conditions of interdependence according to the standards of justice, equity and charity. The factual and moral challenges of global interdependence require that rules be devised to govern the activities of three key sets of actors: individual nations, multilateral institutions and transnational corporations.

Catholic teaching suggests three key principles that should be part of the policy debate on the international economic order: the need for reform of the international system, the need to refashion national policies and the acceptance of a "preferential option for the poor" as an overall policy imperative.

C. U.S. International Development Policy: A Critique

U.S. policy toward the developing world has shifted from its earlier emphasis on basic human needs and social and economic development to a selective assistance based on an assessment of the relevance of countries and policies to U.S. geopolitical strategy.

There is an urgent need for a change in the U.S. approach to developing countries -- in terms of perspective, policy and posture. Our nation has a moral obligation to help reduce poverty in the Third World.

D. The United States and Developing Countries: Constructive Choices

1. *Trade Relations.* International trade has been and continues to be a key component of economic progress for the developing countries. In view of the disadvantageous terms of trade under which the developing countries operate, we consider international trade as the testing ground of social justice for the developing countries.

Within a frame of reference characterized by the "preferential option for the poor," we lean toward an open trading system, but we recognize that there are new situations in the 1980s and new challenges that require a trading system that is both free and fair.

2. *Third World Debt.* We recommend that the United States take immediate steps to help relieve the debt burden especially of the poorest and least developed nations.

3. *Development Assistance.* The U.S. should increase its commitment to foreign aid, both in quality and quantity. Though still the largest single donor, our nation lags behind most other industrial nations in the relative amount of aid we provide the Third World. In addition, the decisions about who gets aid and how it is transferred are too often based on reasons of national security rather than human need.

4. *Private Foreign Investment.* Direct foreign investment can provide needed capital for Third World nations but it can also create or perpetuate dependency and become a particular danger to people at the bottom of the economic ladder. We support efforts to ensure that private foreign investment contributes to the appropriate development of Third World nations and to the common good of those societies.

E. U.S. Responsibility for Reforms in the International Economic Order

The international economic order is in crisis; the gap between the rich and poor countries and between rich and poor people within countries is widening. The United States is the most powerful actor on the international scene, and it has a commensurate responsibility to use that power in the service of human dignity.

CONCLUSION:

A CALL TO WHOLENESS AND HOLINESS

The Christian perspective on the meaning of economic life must transform the lives of individuals and our culture as a whole.

A. Labor and Leisure

Labor and leisure must become more congenial to each other. Building both the pattern and the pace of work on a more human scale will enable people to experience the dignity of their labor and give them time to reflect on the deeper questions of life's meaning.

B. Work and Worship

Overcoming the split between the Christian vision and economic life calls for a deeper awareness in the Church of the integral connection between worship and the world of work.

For lay men and women the effort to make our national economic life more just is an especially important way of achieving holiness. Clergy and religious are also called to forms of discipleship in which the links of faith and economic justice are made visible.

The unity of work and worship finds its expression in a privileged way in the Liturgy of the Eucharist. In the Eucharist, the One Bread, One Body and One Spirit make of the Christian community a sign and symbol -- a sacrament -- of the unity in justice and peace that God wills for the whole of humanity.

We believe the moment has come to examine in greater depth the need for true justice in the economic sphere, so that the poor in our country and the world will benefit more fully from God's gifts.

Homeless

"... society has a moral obligation to take the necessary steps to ensure that no one among us is hungry, homeless, unemployed or otherwise denied with is necessary to live with dignity." Some of Washington, D.C.'s homeless eat a free meal provided for them on Thanksgiving by the Community for Creative Non-Violence.