

Pacis Progressio: How Francis' Four New Principles Develop Catholic Social Teaching into Catholic Social Praxis

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In the end, a peace which is not the result of integral development will be doomed.

—Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium*, no. 219

IN ASSESSING THE DYNAMICS of the Catholic Church's social doctrine, Russell Hittinger has noted that the "tradition is not only multi-disciplinary, but internally multi-faceted as one pope introduces new themes even while circling back upon the work of his predecessors. It is the Roman way to introduce new considerations while at the same time tightening their connection to the preceding tradition."¹ Pope Francis has tightened the connection of his magisterium to that of prior popes in relying on Paul VI for the link between evangelization and development in *Evangelii Gaudium* and in recapitulating and expanding upon the teaching of John Paul II and Benedict XVI on care for creation in *Laudato Si'*. Yet what are the "new considerations" in Francis' contribution to Catholic social doctrine? One is his proposal of four new principles of Catholic social teaching in *Evangelii Gaudium*, nos. 217-237, principles that complete the work of Paul VI on evangelization and development: time is greater than space, realities are greater than ideas, unity prevails over conflict, and the whole is greater than the part. These four principles are a uniquely Latin American contribution—born of the Latin and South American struggles to achieve the common good amidst the residue of colonialism, economic ideologies, violence, and poverty—and, while drawing on the classic principles of Catholic social teaching, return to the mode of praxis. One might best think of them as maxims for practicing Catholic social teaching, maxims themselves normed by the theoretical content of what the common good is but adding the element of how to achieve it.

¹ Russell Hittinger, "The Coherence of the Four Basic Principles of Catholic Social Doctrine: An Interpretation," in *Pursuing the Common Good: How Solidarity and Subsidiarity Can Work Together*, ed. Margaret S. Archer and Pierpaolo Donati (Vatican City: Pontifical Academy of Social Sciences, 2008), 77. On the "Roman way," see Rémi Brague, *Europe, la voie romaine* (Paris: Éditions Critérior, 1992), which argues that the essential cultural mode of Europe is the Roman capability of recognizing and assimilating superior sources of culture outside of itself in a constant process of renewal.

This paper will first outline the history and prevalence of the new principles in the magisterium of Francis. He used these principles prior to becoming pope in response to the growing Catholic emphasis in the 1970s on the pursuit of social justice as integral to faith. In many ways, the key link between faith and justice was made in Paul VI's *Populorum Progressio* and *Evangelii Nuntiandi*. Since becoming pope, Francis has referred frequently to these new principles in both written and oral settings. Second, the paper will explain the nature of Francis' new principles within their setting in *Evangelii Gaudium* and why Francis holds that these principles emerge from the nature of society itself on the one hand and from the tenets of Catholic social teaching on the other. This section will therefore expand upon Francis' remarks by using Juan Carlos Scannone's recent suggestion that, in these principles, Francis is indebted to the thought of Romano Guardini, albeit in application to Latin American ecclesial and social questions.² Third, the paper will explain how Francis understands Catholic social teaching as a praxis, a necessary means to the end of social peace through participation and dialogue. For Francis, Catholic social teaching is a praxis that anticipates and even constitutes social peace.

ORIGINS OF THE NEW "BERGOLIAN" PRINCIPLES

As pointed out by Scannone, Francis has been thinking with these new principles since his 1974 talk as provincial of the Jesuit Argentinian province.³ While not denying the uniquely Argentinian and personal sources of Francis' principles, one should observe that Francis articulates his principles in a period in which the Church was discerning the relationship between evangelization and social development. Paul VI's 1967 encyclical *Populorum Progressio* held out the concept of integral human development, which is "the development of each man and the whole man" (no. 15), a "true humanism" that is "open to values of the spirit and to God who is their source" (no. 42). Integral human development entails that the human person's material, economic, social, and spiritual needs should ultimately not be separated, not only in theory but even in practice, and must be pursued in society simultaneously. The historical context for Paul's insistence on the "integral" nature of human development included the inability of the United Nations to issue a unified rights treaty in 1966, instead issuing two separate covenants, one on civil and political rights and one on economic, social, and cultural rights.⁴ Western nations in particular

² Juan Carlos Scannone, SJ, "Pope Francis and the Theology of the People," *Theological Studies* 77, no. 1 (2016): 118-135, 129.

³ Scannone, "Pope Francis and the Theology of the People," 128, note 32; See also, Austen Ivereigh, *The Great Reformer: Francis and the Making of a Radical Pope*, Second Edition (New York: Picador, 2015), 140-43.

⁴ United Nations, "International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (December 16th, 1966)," *United Nations Treaty Series* 999 (1976): 171-301; United Nations,

hesitated to pursue a unified document, since they denied an equivalent urgency and force to economic and social rights as they did to civil rights, belying official UN rhetoric about the unicity of all human rights.⁵ To the contrary, Paul noted that “political freedom is not enough” and that nations “must also acquire the social and economic structures and processes that accord with man’s nature and activity” (no. 6). On the Church’s role in development, Paul also noted, “True to the teaching and example of her divine Founder, who cited the preaching of the Gospel to the poor as a sign of his mission, the Church has never failed to foster the human progress of the nations to which she brings the faith in Christ” (no. 12). This connection of the Church’s activity in evangelization to integral human development, even if presented in a somewhat accidental manner, inspired continued conversation about how the Gospel and social justice cohere. In this way, *Populorum Progressio* continued the papal magisterial concern for ensuring participation, now directed against a neocolonialism in which poorer, less developed states were hindered from participation at the international level on account of foreign political and economic pressure.⁶

In the wake of Paul’s intervention, both regional and universal gatherings of bishops responded by more explicitly linking together the spiritual good of the person (to which the gospel pertains) and the material and social good of the person (to which Catholic social teaching speaks). The Episcopal Conference of Latin American and the Caribbean (CELAM) issued a comprehensive document at Medellín in 1968 that included discussions of justice, peace, social structures, catechesis, and the poverty of the Church.⁷ In 1971, the second Synod of Bishops issued “Justice in the World,” in which the bishops claimed at the end of their introduction that “action for justice and participation in the transformation of the world appear clearly to us as a constitutive dimension of the preaching of the Gospel, that is to say, of the Church’s mission in favor of the human race’s redemption and liberation from all oppressive situations.”⁸ The Synod of Bishops returned

“International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (December 16th, 1966),” *United Nations Treaty Series* 993 (1976): 3-106.

⁵ Sarah Joseph and Melissa Castan, *The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights: Cases, Materials, and Commentary, Third Edition* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 7.

⁶ Michael J. Schuck, *That They Be One: The Social Teaching of Papal Encyclicals 1740-1989* (Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 1991), 120-21; See also, Allan Figueroa Deck, SJ, “Commentary on *Populorum progressio*,” in *Modern Catholic Social Teaching: Commentaries and Interpretations*, ed. Kenneth R. Himes (Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 2005), 292.

⁷ CELAM, “Documentos finales de Medellín,” www.celam.org/conferencia_medellin.php.

⁸ Synod of Bishops, “A justiça no mundo,” www.vatican.va/roman_curia/synod/documents/rc_synod_doc_19711130_giustizia_po.html.

to this question of evangelization and justice in their third meeting in 1974, “Evangelization in the Modern World,” to which Paul VI responded with his 1974 post-synodal exhortation *Evangelii Nuntiandi*. While focused on the proclamation of the gospel as essential to the Church’s activity, Paul also noted that:

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 ... about the rights and duties of every human being, about family life ..., about life in society, about international life, peace, justice and development—a message especially energetic today about liberation. (no. 29)

Shortly thereafter, the Society of Jesus modified their mission under the leadership of superior general Pedro Arrupe at General Congregation 32 in late 1974 and early 1975. Appealing to both the 1971 and 1974 synods, Decree Four claimed that the current world situation demanded that the Jesuits reinterpret their mission in light of the fact that “the promotion of justice is an absolute requirement” in “the service of faith.”⁹

The connection between the Argentinian “Theology of the People” and Catholic social teaching was established in this period of interplay between papal and regional episcopal teaching documents.¹⁰ It is well known that the work of Argentinians Fr. Lucio Gera, the founder of *teología del pueblo*, and Eduardo Cardinal Pironio, present at the 1974 synod, influenced Paul VI’s *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, especially in Paul’s emphasis on the evangelization of culture (e.g., no. 20). This Argentine strand of liberation theology included the emphasis on the liberation of the poor common to other liberation theologies, doing so not on the Marxist economic or political concerns animating other strands

⁹ Society of Jesus, General Congregation 32, Decree 4, no. 2 (1975). See also Ivereigh, *The Great Reformer*, 120-121. Ivereigh quotes a Fr. Swinnen as saying that Bergoglio “did not have much sympathy for that Decree Four” and never quoted the document when forming Jesuit novices (121). Recently, however, Francis cited Decree Four in his discourse to General Congregation 36 of the Society of Jesus (gc36.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/20161024_Discourse_Pope_GC36_EN.pdf): “The Lord who looks at us with mercy and chooses us, sends us out to bring with all its effectiveness, that same mercy to the poorest, to sinners, to those discarded people, and those crucified in the present world, who suffer injustice and violence. Only if we experience the healing power first-hand in our own wounds, as people and as a body, will we lose the fear of allowing ourselves to be moved by the immense suffering of our brothers and sisters, and will we hasten to walk patiently with our people, learning from them the best way of helping and serving them. (cf. General Congregation 32, d. 4 n. 50)”

¹⁰ This paragraph closely follows the histories of Scannone, “Pope Francis and the Theology of the People,” 120, 123-124, and Ivereigh, *The Great Reformer*, 184-185.

but through a focus on the history and culture of the people. The 1979 CELAM meeting in Puebla yielded another document that drew upon *Evangelii Nuntiandi* in order to deepen Latin American discussions of the place of culture and popular religiosity in evangelization.¹¹ The Argentinian version of liberation theology thus answered the question of how evangelization and social justice are linked by reference to the life of “God’s faithful people.” In addition, Bergoglio’s particular struggles with political parties, economic ideologies, and abuses of state power in Argentina confirmed for him this focus on the people as the subject of development. From the divisions suffered by the people along Marxist and Peronist lines in the “dirty war” of the 1970s up to the corruption of the Kirchners in the 2000s, Bergoglio would constantly keep his focus on what was necessary to serve the people, who were living at the peripheries of the elites’ ideological programs. He therefore developed his four principles in relation to constant tensions in Argentine social questions, tensions that were being reduced, collapsed, or ignored by the predominant powers. It is for this reason that Ivereigh calls Bergoglio’s four principles “anti-ideological” and working against “the schemes of the elites.”¹²

One should therefore understand Francis’ four new principles as originating from, entering into, and completing this period’s debate about the essential link between evangelization and social justice by proposing and developing an Argentine way of reconciling faith and justice in the task of “building a people.” Like Paul’s *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, Francis’ exhortation responds to a meeting of the Synod of Bishops about evangelization, this time the 2012 synod on “New Evangelization and the Transmission of the Christian Faith.” Francis gives his fullest magisterial description of the four principles in the post-synodal apostolic exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium*, proposing for the universal Church his principles worked out in conversation with the “theology of the people.” In the context of the social dimension of Christian evangelization, Francis addresses “building a people” in justice and peace together with Christian discipleship. It therefore should also not surprise anyone that Francis draws from *Populorum Progressio* and *Evangelii Nuntiandi* when expounding his four new principles. In *Evangelii Gaudium*, at the beginning of his chapter on the social dimension of evangelization, Francis quotes Paul’s statement in *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, no. 17 that “any partial or fragmentary definition which attempts to render the reality of evangelization in all its richness, complexity and dynamism does so only at the risk of impoverishing it and even of distorting it” (no. 176). Francis continues: “The kerygma has a clear social content: at the very heart of the Gospel is life in community and engagement with others” (no. 177).

¹¹ Scannone, “Pope Francis and the Theology of the People,” 123.

¹² Ivereigh, *The Great Reformer*, 143.

Here the social magisterium of Francis represents a shift in mode from proclaiming the principles of Catholic social teaching to forming citizens in the principles of Catholic social praxis, just as *Populorum Progressio* represented a shift in the mode of Catholic Social Teaching toward integral human development on an international scale. Taking for granted Catholic Social Teaching as a theory, Francis develops it into a praxis with his four new principles (*Evangelii Gaudium*, no. 217-237): time is greater than space, realities are greater than ideas, unity prevails over conflict, and the whole is greater than the part. These are exhortatory and practical maxims, yet ones that Francis claims are “derived” from the four doctrinal-theoretical “pillars” of Catholic Social Teaching (*Evangelii Gaudium*, no. 221). These are a vision of how Catholic Social Teaching is supposed to be lived as a mode or practice in society through dialogue and encounter, beyond being a theoretical doctrine about the nature of society. In this way, Francis wishes his contribution to Catholic Social Teaching to be an orientation to praxis.

In conversation with this general environment in the universal Church and the Latin American Church, and in the process of his own leadership journey, Bergoglio began to enunciate these new principles. He applied them both *ad intra* and *ad extra*, within both ecclesial and social contexts. One encounters them in Bergoglio’s aforementioned talks as Jesuit provincial in 1974 and 1980,¹³ in various homilies and spiritual writings,¹⁴ and in his 1999 and 2002 *Te Deum* homilies. The latter, held on “Argentina’s national day,” Bergoglio “turn[ed] ... into a chance to challenge and teach political leaders on behalf of the *pueblo*.”¹⁵ It should accordingly surprise no one that Bergoglio continued to use these principles after he became Francis. This is true whether Francis is considering the link between evangelization and social development in *Evangelii Gaudium* or giving a speech before government leaders of various countries about how to pursue the common good.

¹³ For the appearance of three of the principles in the 1974 talk at Provincial Congregation 14 of the Jesuit Province of Argentina, see “Una institución que vive su carisma,” while for the 1980 talk containing all four principles, see “Formación permanente y reconciliación,” both in Jorge Mario Bergoglio, *Meditaciones para religiosos*, ed. Diego de Torres (Buenos Aires: San Miguel, 1982) and Ivereich, *The Great Reformer*, 400, note 13.

¹⁴ Jorge Mario Cardinal Bergoglio, *Open Mind, Faithful Heart: Reflections on Following Jesus*, trans. Joseph V. Owens, SJ (New York: Herder & Herder, 2013), 96-97 (reality is more important than ideas, unity overcomes conflict), 116-117 (time is greater than space), 178-180 (reality is more important than ideas), 217-220 (time is greater than space, unity overcomes conflict).

¹⁵ Ivereich, *The Great Reformer*, 247; For how the homilies utilized the four principles, see 249-51.

Francis anticipated the detailed treatment of *Evangelii Gaudium* with a very brief exposition of two of the principles in his first encyclical, *Lumen Fidei*. The fourth chapter of that encyclical, “God Prepares a City for Them,” reflects on the relation between “faith and the common good” (see no. 50). That chapter contains brief observations on how faith touches upon social dialogue and care for creation, anticipating the more extensive treatments of those topics found in *Evangelii Gaudium* and *Laudato Si’*, respectively. Faith illumines social realities and relationships by revealing that God and his love among humans are the foundation of the lasting “city”. In the light of faith’s “encounter with God’s primordial love ... love ... becomes a path and praxis leading to the fullness of love” (*Lumen Fidei*, no. 51, emphasis added). Francis turns to “building” language that will later reappear in *Evangelii Gaudium*: faith “helps us build our societies in such a way that they can journey towards a future of hope. ... The hands of faith are raised up to heaven, even as they go about building in charity a city based on relationships in which the love of God is laid as a foundation” (no. 51). In this context, Francis reflects upon forgiveness in society: “unity is superior to conflict; rather than avoiding conflict, we need to confront it in an effort to resolve and move beyond it, to make it a link in a chain, as part of a progress towards unity” (no. 55). Francis, speaking of the connection now between faith and hope, invokes another of his principles in no. 57: “Let us refuse to be robbed of hope, or to allow our hope to be dimmed by facile answers and solutions which block our progress, ‘fragmenting’ time and changing it into space. Space hardens processes, whereas time propels toward the future and encourages us to go forward in hope.” Francis has a reason for invoking these two principles together, for he claims that they stem from the same root tension in society, as will be explained below.

These two mentions of the principles were simply the beginning. Francis’ frequent use of all four principles indicates that they are important maxims for praxis and pastoral exhortation for him. His only other encyclical, *Laudato Si’*, appeals to each maxim: “realities are more important than ideas” (nos. 110, 201), “the whole is greater than the part” (no. 141), “time is greater than space” (no. 178), and “unity is greater than conflict” (no. 198). There are numerous other examples of Francis’ use of these principles in speeches and allocutions.¹⁶ To

¹⁶ The following is a non-exhaustive list of allocutions that contain mention of one or more of the principles, usually accompanied by a corresponding citation of *Evangelii Gaudium*. “General Audience,” 19 June 2013 (unity is greater than conflict); “Homily at Vespers on Solemnity of the Conversion of Saint Paul the Apostle,” 25 January 2014 (unity is greater than conflict); “Address to Members of the ‘Catholic Fraternity of Charismatic Covenant Communities and Fellowships,’” 31 October 2014 (the whole is greater than the part); “Address to Third Congress of Ecclesial Movements and New Communities,” 22 November 2014 (unity is greater than con-

understand why they are clearly important to Francis necessitates turning to his extended presentation in *Evangelii Gaudium*.

EVANGELII GAUDIUM: FOUR NEW PRINCIPLES

Francis outlines his four principles in chapter four of *Evangelii Gaudium*, which is devoted to the “social dimension of evangelization.” Part three, the immediate context, concerns attaining the common good and peace in the “slow and arduous task” of “becoming a people” (no. 220). The new principles are: “time is greater than space” (nos. 222-225); “unity prevails over conflict” (nos. 226-230); “realities are more important than ideas” (nos. 231-233); and “the whole is greater than the part” (nos. 234-237). They “derive from the pillars of the Church’s social doctrine” (no. 221), namely, the dignity of the human person, the common good, subsidiarity, and solidarity.¹⁷ Lest the pillars remain “mere generalities which challenge no one” (no. 182), Francis proposes his new principles to guide the application of the pillars in constructing a peaceful society. In this way, he affirms in the order of theory the priority of the pillars, for his new principles “derive” from them, but, in the order of practice, he affirms the priority of process, dialogue, and encounter. The origins of Leo XIII’s seminal encyclical *Rerum Novarum* in the various experiences and activities of nineteenth-century lay European “social Catholicism” and in the Thomistic theorizing of Leo’s theologians, show that this twofold priority has always been more or less operative in the Church’s approach to the social question.¹⁸

flict, realities are more important than ideas, the whole is greater than the part); “Address to the Council of Europe,” 25 November 2014 (time is greater than space, unity is greater than conflict); “Address to European Parliament,” 25 November 2014 (realities are more important than ideas); “Address to Young People in Manila, Philippines (Impromptu remarks),” 18 January 2015 (realities are more important than ideas); “Address to United States Congress,” 24 September 2015 (time is greater than space); “Address to the General Assembly of the United Nations Organization,” 25 September 2015 (time is greater than space, an allusion to realities more important than ideas); “Acceptance Speech for Charlemagne Prize,” 06 May 2016 (time is greater than space, the whole is greater than the part). See also, *Amoris laetitia*, 19 March 2016, note 3 and 261 (time is greater than space). Interestingly, Francis has referred twice to Europe as “a family of peoples,” in the address to the European Parliament and in his acceptance of the Charlemagne Prize.

¹⁷ Francis cites Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church* (Vatican: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2004), no. 161. The *Compendium* identifies the four “pillars” in the prior paragraph: the dignity of the human person, the common good, subsidiarity, and solidarity (160). The German translator of *Evangelii Gaudium*, perhaps thinking this reference would be lost on the reader, makes this explicit: “Diese leiten sich von den Grundpfeilern der kirchlichen Soziallehre (Menschenwürde, Gemeinwohl, Subsidiarität, Solidarität) her.”

¹⁸ Robert Talmy, *Aux sources du catholicisme social: l'école de la Tour du Pin* (Tournai, Belgium: Desclée, 1961), *passim*; Joan L. Coffey, *Léon Harmel: Entrepreneur as Catholic Social Reformer* (University of Notre Dame Press, 2003), 101-

Francis' axioms respond to ineluctable "bipolar tensions" that arise in the life of any social body and which must be "managed and resolved" in order to "construct a common project in the life of a people."¹⁹ Each axiom is meant, then, to lead individuals and the community through some tension to a hard-won synthesis, without collapsing the tension to one side or the other. Romano Guardini's thought is the origin of Francis' attention to this notion of the synthesis of inherent tensions. Guardini believed that "inherent oppositions ... produce the creative tensions in human life and thought."²⁰ Guardini's classic work in this regard is his 1925 habilitation, *Der Gegensatz*.²¹ It was this work in particular that Francis—then Bergoglio—had intended to study during his abortive 1986 doctoral studies in Germany.²² The basic idea is that a healthy synthesis of opposites in a living thing, including civil society or the Church, will not destroy or collapse the contrast into one side or another. Rather, by embracing the polarity, the organism comes most fully alive.

In addressing the challenge of inherent tensions and conflicts in social development, Francis fills a gap left by Paul VI's *Populorum Progressio*, which "can ultimately be criticized for failing to

144; Russell Hittinger, "Pope Leo XIII (1810-1903): Commentary," in *The Teachings of Modern Roman Catholicism on Law, Politics, and Human Nature*, ed. John Witte Jr. and Frank S. Alexander (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007), 41.

¹⁹ Jorge Mario Cardinal Bergoglio, "Nosotros como ciudadanos, nosotros como pueblo" (homily at Conferencia del Sr. Arzobispo en la XIII Jornada Arquidiocesana de Pastoral Social, Buenos Aires, October 16th, 2010), www.arzbaires.org.ar/inicio/homilias/homilias2010.htm#XIII_Jornada_Arquidiocesana_de_Pastoral_Social. Here Bergoglio identifies three such tensions and groups the first two principles of time over space and unity over conflict with the first tension of fullness and limitation. The second tension of idea and reality correlates with that principle of reality's superiority, and the whole's greatness with respect to the part responds to the global/local tension. In this homily, Bergoglio claims that these principles guide a group of people through the struggle amidst the tension to becoming both citizens (a "logical" category) and a people (a "historico-mythical" category).

²⁰ Robert A. Krieg, "Romano Guardini's Theology of the Human Person," *Theological Studies* 59, no. 3 (1998): 468, note 42; See also, Scannone, "Pope Francis and the Theology of the People," 129, note 35; Hans Urs von Balthasar, *Romano Guardini: Reform from the Source* (San Francisco: Ignatius, 1995), 23-24.

²¹ Romano Guardini, *Der Gegensatz, Second Edition* (Mainz: Matthias-Grünewald, 1955). Translations in this article are made from the French translation, *La polarité: Essai d'une philosophie du vivant concret*, trans. Jean Greisch and Françoise Todorovitch (Paris: Cerf, 2010).

²² See Ivereigh, *The Great Reformer*, 198, who adds, "Guardini's discussion drew on the work of a nineteenth-century Tübingen theologian, Johann Adam Möhler, who argued that in the Church, contrasting points of view (*Gegensätze*) are fruitful and creative, but can become contradictions (*Widerspruch*) when they fall out of the unity of the whole and develop in opposition to the body. This was precisely the distinction drawn on by Yves Congar in his discussion of true and false reform in the Church that had so influenced Bergoglio."

acknowledge the role that conflict plays in social change.”²³ The Latin American bishops, otherwise appreciative of *Populorum Progressio*, sought to remedy this gap. Francis accordingly seeks to complete the work of Paul VI on social progress—“building a people” in Francis’ terms—by presenting practical principles that speak to tensions that arise naturally within a social body, within a people. Since the principles correlate with “constant tensions in every social reality,” they “can guide the development of life in society and the building of a people where differences are harmonized within a shared pursuit” (*Evangelii Gaudium*, no. 221). Furthermore, since these practical principles are based on a theoretical understanding of the dynamisms inherent in the nature of a society composed of human persons, they “derive from the pillars of the Church’s social doctrine” (no. 221).

The principle “time is greater than space” speaks to the tension between “fullness and limitation,” between hoping for continued improvement along the future horizon (“time”) and the tendency to hold onto already established privileges, powers, or institutional responses in the present moment (“spaces”). Francis writes that this axiom should lead us to prefer “initiating processes rather than possessing spaces” (no. 223). For “time governs spaces, illumines them and makes them links in a constantly expanding chain, with no possibility of return” (no. 223). This axiom depends on deeper theological concepts such as time and even sin, yet it is meant to push the practitioner of Catholic Social Teaching to act by initiating new processes with a patient eye toward the future, in accordance with the objective criteria for achieving true human flourishing. Francis identifies the concern to “[obtain] immediate results which yield easy, quick short-term political gains, but do not enhance human fullness” with “space” (no. 224). Easy political success or the “mere absence of violence” is not the measure of flourishing, especially since the tensions of social life can only be harmonized through struggle (nos. 218, 220).²⁴ In this matter, Francis quotes Guardini’s *End of the Modern World*: “The only measure for properly evaluating an age is to ask to what extent it fosters the development and attainment of a full and authentically meaningful human existence, in accordance with the peculiar character and the capacities of that age.”²⁵ Time’s superiority to space is the maxim Francis most frequently uses when addressing legislative bodies such as the US Congress and the EU Parliament. Francis ties this maxim to evangelization by calling to mind “the parable of the weeds among the

²³ Deck, “Commentary,” 306. Perhaps Francis also seeks to fill a gap left by Guardini, who “offered no explicit guidance on how Christians should promote the coming of God’s kingdom by means of their work and sociopolitical activities” (Krieg, “Guardini’s Theology of the Human Person,” 474).

²⁴ See also Bergoglio, “Nosotros como ciudadanos, nosotros como pueblo.”

²⁵ See Pope Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium*, no. 224, quoting *Das Ende der Neuzeit: Ein Versuch Zur Orientierung* (Würzburg: Werkbund-Verlag, 1965), 30-31.

wheat (cf. Mt 13:24-30),” making the point that evangelization must take the long-run picture and be patient with process (no. 225).

The principle “unity prevails over conflict,” arises from the same tension between fullness and limitation.²⁶ The tensions that arise from the nature of any social body, combined with tensions resultant on the personal and structural sins that are present in every concrete society, produce conflict. Francis sees such conflict as an opportunity for advancement, so long as the parties to the conflict do not, on the one hand, deny or ignore the conflict or, on the other hand, “embrace [the conflict] in such a way that they become its prisoners” (no. 227).²⁷ Drawing on the same beatitude evoked by Medellín’s document on peace (“Blessed are the peacemakers” [Mt 5:9]), Francis proposes that “unity is greater than conflict” in such a way that “it becomes possible to build communion amid disagreement” (no. 228). Yet only those “who are willing to go beyond the surface of the conflict and to see others in their deepest dignity” are capable of building peace. Guardini’s thought on the synthesis of contraries echoes in Francis’ words here (no. 228):

Solidarity, in its deepest and most challenging sense, thus becomes a way of making history in a life setting where conflicts, tensions and oppositions can achieve a diversified and life-giving unity. This is not to opt for a kind of syncretism, or for the absorption of one into the other, but rather for a resolution on a higher plane that preserves in itself the valid potentialities of the contrary sides.²⁸

The synthesis of polarities in social development will not destroy persons and groups, but develop their potentialities in a new, higher way.

The axiom “realities are greater than ideas” corresponds to the tension between the ideas of politicians and social theorists and the social realities in question. Instead, Francis teaches, “ideas are at the service of communication, understanding, and praxis” (no. 232). When ideas do not correspond to reality’s true nature, they cannot inspire effective action. The disconnection between words and things leads to “formal nominalism” and “rhetoric,” generating a political discourse that fails to move the people and foster the common good. What does inspire to action are “realities illumined by reason.” What Francis deplores is the

²⁶ Bergoglio, “Nosotros como ciudadanos, nosotros como pueblo.”

²⁷ Compare with Bergoglio, *Open Mind, Faithful Heart*, 97: “Maybe we get entangled in conflicts hoping for personal triumph or sectarian advantage, or, conversely, we avoid conflicts and play the role of simple referees of history. But when we avoid conflicts, we run the risk of treating everything with bland neutrality: all values are equalized, and the supreme goal becomes pluralistic coexistence at the expense of truth and justice.”

²⁸ I have modified the English translation by reference to the Spanish and French.

tendency of political ideologies to hinder the pursuit of the common good by failing to account for the concrete, historical life of the people. This principle therefore “has to do with the incarnation of the Word and its being put into practice” (no. 233, modified). In evangelization, the tension to be overcome is between “expansionist apostolic plans” and “the painful, humble reality of our people.”²⁹ The principle responds to this tension by linking “incultur[ing] the Gospel” with “perform[ing] works of justice and charity” (no. 233).

Despite the seemingly trite title, the principle “the whole is greater than the part” is a practical implication of solidarity and subsidiarity: the development of a people must preserve the diversity among the individuals and groups who compose the social order. Francis’ favorite image for this maxim is the globalism of the “polyhedron”, a globalism that does not dissolve the unique culture of each people (no. 236). That model is opposed on the one hand to the conformist notion of the “sphere”, wherein all points are equally distant from the center and thus all cultures become “abstract” and homogenized. On the other hand, the image challenges those who would otherwise turn into “a museum of local folklore” by ignoring “the beauty which God bestows beyond their borders” (no. 234). Proponents of agrarianism need not see a conflict between local and global concerns. Francis simply wishes each people to make decisions on the basis of the widest notion of the common good possible, the “global” common good, but without failing “to sink our roots deeper into the fertile soil and history of our native place” (no. 235). The application to evangelization is that the Gospel always unifies in a “totality or integrity”—both that a people receives the Gospel totally in all its expressions of religion and all its occupations, and that the Gospel reaches to all people and all aspects of humanity (no. 237).

The parallels to Guardini’s treatment of social bonds in *Der Gegensatz* are remarkable. First is the idea that social polarities have a surplus of “opposing potentialities” that render them capable of organization into superior levels of social life.³⁰ Nevertheless, the achievement of higher forms of social life does not destroy the lower forms but places them in a new position of development. This relates both to unity overcoming conflict and the whole being greater than the parts. For example, Francis says, “Nor do people who wholeheartedly enter into the life of a community need to lose their individualism or hide their identity; instead, they receive new impulses to personal growth” (no. 235). Second, that polarities are a source of much social conflict, owing to an imbalance in the living dynamism of social bodies. Hence the danger of relying on spaces over processes, since the task of peace requires constant attention to the “rhythm” of the social body’s diverse

²⁹ Bergoglio, *Open Mind, Faithful Heart*, 96.

³⁰ Guardini, *La polarité*, 125.

poles.³¹ Third, there is in Francis an echo of Guardini's point that friendship in society is the primary factor in sustaining a people. Francis' maxims can be said to flow from friendship and sustain friendship in society; they are maxims of solidarity. For his part, Guardini said that

The complex tissue of opposing relations only constitutes, in effect, the scaffolding ... of the interpersonal community properly so-called. The communal bond properly so-called effects itself from another center: personal devotion in love and fidelity. This devotion is entirely impregnated by the opposing relations that we have described, but it transcends them. If someone were simply to envision the communitarian problem in the optic of these relations, the interpersonal bond would disappear, immediately the relations between contrary attitudes which ensure society would be changed to the point of no longer sustaining the community with any confidence.³²

Finally, in both Guardini and Francis there is the cry of the Christian soul that only in the revelation of God in Jesus Christ are tensions capable of higher synthesis in a global view that does not destroy the particular. Francis claims that the principle that unity prevails over conflict is "drawn from the Gospel" and "reminds us that Christ has made all things one in himself: heaven and earth, God and man, time and eternity, flesh and spirit, person and society." Hence "Christ 'is our peace' (Eph. 2:14)" (no. 229). In Christ, the unity brought about by his "Spirit can harmonize every diversity" and "overcomes every conflict by creating a new and promising synthesis" (no. 230). Guardini, while speaking more about the epistemological position of the observer seeking a vision of the world, nevertheless speaks of the possibility of a "vision of the world [which is] the gaze that God directs to the world, that is, the gaze of Christ. In faith, we meet Christ to adopt his perspective and to participate in his gaze, if, while believing, we contemplate the world with his gaze at it."³³ It is in Christ that one is capable of recognizing the potential harmony of the diverse contraries and polarities in life. This gaze generates a personal awareness of the possibility of development and synthesis where the world simply sees irreconcilable groups and dynamics.³⁴

³¹ Guardini, *La polarité*, 127.

³² Guardini, *La polarité*, 129. Later Paul VI would meditate on the link between solidarity, dialogue, and integral development in *Populorum Progressio*, no. 73.

³³ Guardini, *La polarité*, 183. The theme of Christ's gaze illumining reality reemerges in Francis' *Laudato Si'*, nos. 96-100.

³⁴ Francis recently addressed the connection between harmonizing tensions and the grace of God and identified this harmonization with the work of the Society of Je-

CATHOLIC SOCIAL TEACHING AS A PRAXIS CONSTITUTIVE OF BUILDING A PEOPLE FOR PEACE

Someone who understands Catholic Social Teaching as merely the application to new social conditions of a set of timeless theoretical principles, worked out in abstraction from social realities and practices, would wonder how there could be any new principles. Such a view may even be proof-texted from magisterial documents (e.g. St. John Paul II, *Sollicitudo rei Socialis*, no. 4). Perhaps this model conceives of Catholic Social Teaching as a Word not “already made flesh” in social realities (cf. *Evangelii Gaudium*, no. 233). Instead, Francis assumes that social doctrine is always being worked out in conversation with social realities and, thus, is capable of further elaboration and development. The difference between older manuals of social doctrine and what Francis is saying is clear upon comparison. Take, for example, the excellent manuals of Messner and Höffner.³⁵ These give unsurpassed scientific presentations of social ethics based on a Catholic understanding of human nature as social in combination with expert knowledge of political history and economic theory. Francis does not wish to obviate such presentations in his own principles but rather is attempting to add something to them. Such manuals lack a treatment of dialogue and do not give practical rules for working with others in society to achieve the kind of social flourishing described in their manuals. Francis is therefore making explicit with his new principles what has been implicit in the prior teaching and activities of the Church: Catholic Social Teaching is not only a theory about the nature of society but also an ecclesially-embodied practice that seeks to achieve social peace. We might say that Francis’ new principles reveal that Catholic Social Teaching is a practice that 1) has an intrinsic relation to the end described by the theory, a just and peaceful society; and 2) thus has, to use Alasdair MacIntyre’s language, goods internal to its mode of applying the theoretical principles to social realities beyond mere

sus. See Pope Francis, “Discourse to General Congregation 36 of the Society of Jesus, October 24, 2016,” press.vatican.va/content/salastampa/en/bollettino/pubblico/2016/10/24/161024a.html: “this conceptual framework combining tensions [found in the Formula of Ignatius]—the salvation and perfection of one’s own soul, and the salvation and perfection of one’s neighbor’s—from the higher realm of Grace—is proper to the Society of Jesus. The harmonization of this and of all the other tensions (contemplation and action, faith and justice, charisma and institution, community and mission...) is not expressed in abstract formulations but is achieved in the course of time through what Faber called ‘our way of proceeding’.”

³⁵ Johannes Messner, *Social Ethics: Natural Law in the Western World, Second Edition*, trans. J. J. Doherty (St. Louis: Herder, 1965); Joseph Cardinal Höffner, *Christian Social Teaching, Second Edition*, trans. Stephen Wentworth-Arndt and Gerald Finan (Cologne: Ordo Socialis, 1997). Messner had doctorates in theology, law, economics, and political and social theory, while Cardinal Höffner had written dissertations in theology and economics.

expediency to that end.³⁶ Dialogue is not only the path to but also part of peace. The further implication of Francis' new principles is that the object of Catholic Social Teaching's theoretical knowledge, a peaceful and just society, can only be achieved by cultivating a "peaceful and multifaceted culture of encounter" (*Evangelii Gaudium*, no. 220) through an improved practice of Catholic Social Teaching in harmony with others in society. Hence "building a people ... is an ongoing process in which every new generation must take part" (no. 220).³⁷ Francis' new principles thus do not dispose of prior magisterial social doctrines but highlight that these are applied always in dialogue with others in the ongoing project of social development.

The orientation of these principles to action implies that applying the theory of Catholic Social Teaching to social realities is itself a practice normed by Catholic Social Teaching's own moral-social vision about what conduces to human flourishing. Just as the moral virtues are necessary means to and so constitutive of happiness, so, by analogy, the practice of Catholic Social Teaching is a means intrinsically related to achieving the just society as described by its theoretical principles. Therefore, Catholic Social Teaching as a praxis is partly constitutive of a just, peaceful society. A correct process of application constitutes a part of the peaceful society insofar as the application requires active dialogue with others in the midst of social tension. The process of dialogue, undergirded by Francis' four maxims, is a necessary means to social peace. Further, since peace requires harmonization of the members of a social body, peace in dialogue itself anticipates the social peace to be achieved as the end of dialogue. That dialogue is inchoate peace is all the more apparent once one remembers that every social unity is a unity of operation and is never a "space" definitively conquered or established.³⁸ In this way, the end described by Catholic Social Teaching is contained in it as a praxis and the praxis in the end. Hence Francis says that "these four specific principles ... can guide the development of life in society and the building of a people where differences are harmonized within a shared pursuit. I [offer them] out of the conviction that their application can be a genuine path to peace within each nation and in the entire world" (*Evangelii Gaudium*, no. 221). The process of Catholic Social Teaching, namely the four principles guiding members of a people toward a culture of

³⁶ For the concept of internal goods, see Alasdair MacIntyre, *After Virtue, Third Edition* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2007), 187-191.

³⁷ On the constant flux of social bodies on account of their inner contrarities, see Guardini, *La polarité*, 128. For example, Guardini stresses the need for dialogue and balance between the tradition-innovation and communal-individual dynamics in any social group.

³⁸ Hittinger, "Coherence of the Four Basic Principles," 81.

encounter through dialogue, is constitutive of the goal of Catholic Social Teaching, a peaceful and just social life leading to the development of every person and the whole person.³⁹

Take the example of “unity prevails over conflict.” Two parties opposed to one another in society could either ignore their conflict or they could become “prisoners” to it (nos. 226-27). But if those parties come together to dialogue about their conflict, they have already in an incipient way achieved the goal of unity. The practice of dialogue is therefore not an efficient and disposable means to unity and then to peace, but it is the necessary means to it. A successful dialogue is similar to society, which is nothing other than a cooperative peace, an operational unity of many different persons, families, and communities.⁴⁰ The participant members of society lose something when they are in general forced into unity, rather than overcoming conflict in cooperation with one another under authority. Pope Francis’ contribution, therefore, is to discuss explicitly how Catholic Social Teaching is a social theory that should both generate and be generated from a way of life oriented as a necessary means to perfecting the discipline’s subject matter, society. As a praxis, it necessarily involves various “encounters” or dialogues between government and people, scientists and ethics, proposals and realities, one religion and another, and so on. Should we expect anything different from a pope whose personal style is best summed up in the phrase, “culture of encounter”?

The difficulty of such dialogue in a social body requires that the practitioners of the dialogue be mentally capacitated for the task.⁴¹ Members of a people in dialogue with one another need each other’s differences, and yet the temptation is always present to either be overwhelmed by difference or attempt to annihilate it for the sake of unity. Francis offers his principles as practical-hortatory axioms for this task of dialogue. We might say that Francis is proposing maxims for solidarity, if we define solidarity with St. John Paul II as “a firm and persevering determination to commit oneself to the common good” (*Sollicitudo rei socialis*, no. 38; cf. *Evangelii Gaudium*, no. 228). Or again,

³⁹ An analogous example in *Evangelii Gaudium* of a means being constitutive of the end is the place of ecumenism within the praxis of evangelization (no. 246). Divisions between Christians hinders the evangelization of people who have not received the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Ecumenism (“commitment to [Christian] unity”) must now, by function of the concrete division between Christians, “no longer be a matter of mere diplomacy or forced compliance, but rather an indispensable path to evangelization.” This is especially true in “countries ravaged by violence,” for Christians are called to be a “leaven of peace.”

⁴⁰ This is not to deny that authority is necessary for society to flourish. See Yves R. Simon, *Philosophy of Democratic Government* (Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 1993), 19-35.

⁴¹ See Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium*, no. 205: “I ask God to give us more politicians capable of sincere and effective dialogue aimed at healing the deepest roots—and not simply the appearances—of evils in our world!”

Francis' maxims could be the Catholic Social Teaching equivalent of the rules laid down by St. Ignatius of Loyola at the end of the *Spiritual Exercises* for "having the right attitude of mind in the Church militant."⁴² In both cases, the rules are affective helps to having the right kind of conduct toward a certain goal and to avoiding behavioral pitfalls toward the same goal. For example, Ignatius proposed to praise frequent confession to a priest and reception of Holy Communion (rule two), to praise the relics of the saints (rule three), and to not have the custom of speaking of predestination, or at least not in such a way as to mislead people (rule fifteen). These maxims are more about having the right affective and practical dispositions for the sake of thinking with the Church. Francis' are about having the right affective and practical dispositions for the sake of a people's social-political development. Both are ordered to conversion and growth, though Francis' are more explicitly social and aiming at integral development in both evangelization and "building a people."

CONCLUSION

Paul VI initiated a new line of Catholic Social Teaching with his decision to issue a social encyclical off the anniversary schedule of Leo's *Rerum Novarum*. With *Populorum Progressio*, Paul turns the discussion to integral human development and the place of the Church in progress in the modern world. The various local and universal teaching documents of the bishops that responded to *Populorum Progressio* advanced this discussion by focusing on the link between evangelization and social justice. Under the additional influence of Argentina's particular brand of liberation theology, Francis added the element of developing a people through its culture. Now Francis has offered his own contribution centered on his four new principles, systematically explained in *Evangelii Gaudium* but applied throughout his magisterial works. The contention here is that Francis is building upon the four great theoretical principles of Catholic Social Teaching (dignity, common good, solidarity, subsidiarity) by adding four new criteria for praxis (time is greater than space, unity overcomes conflict, reality is greater than ideas, and the whole is greater than the part). In his own way, Francis is attending to the interpersonal mode or method of Catholic Social Teaching as simultaneously being normed by the theoretical content and being constitutive of the social peace and integral development that Catholic Social Teaching identifies as the *telos* of the people.

That Francis intends to clarify how Catholic Social Teaching is to be practiced is clear enough. It is also clear that Francis means to apply his principles within the Church as much as without. This is evident

⁴² St. Ignatius of Loyola, *The Spiritual Exercises*, trans. Anthony Mottola (New York: Image, 1964), 139-142. I am indebted to Russell Hittinger for this suggestion.

in Francis' political strategy within the Church as he "initiates processes" and lets go of what he considers "spaces." His mindset can be seen in his plan for the recent synods on the family, the modification of canon law in *Mitis Iudex Dominus Iesus*, the re-balancing of the weight of papal primacy and the authority of regional bishops' conferences, and in his appointment of bishops. Francis sees himself as holding tensions together in a process of development where others see contradictions or warring pairs of opposites. That Francis is turning Catholic Social Teaching into a praxis, however, does not prevent the conceptual content of his proposal from being at times vague. His new principles are meant to train one for dialogue through the formation of the imagination, as the principles are articulated in an imagistic way (e.g., the "polyhedron"). Perhaps this is to be expected from a Jesuit, whose tradition of formation in discernment has utilized pictures and plays to expand and hone the mindset of future leaders and missionaries. Yet inspiring images cannot substitute for knowledge about social bodies nor can they issue true judgments about particular questions. This must be why Francis emphasizes the "derivative" nature of the practical maxims as flowing from the four pillars. So long as Catholics do not mistakenly cast aside the theory of Catholic Social Teaching in seeking to better understand what dispositional attitude is necessary for practicing it, they will be able to appropriate constructively Francis' new contribution. To aim for short term successes by casting aside the teaching of prior popes, however, would be to hold on to the position of a party, and thus to deny that "time is greater than space" by clutching a "space" that prevents authentic development in the Church and the world.⁴³ **M**

⁴³ The author wishes to express his gratitude to the two anonymous reviewers, whose comments helped him to improve this article.