

***Caritas in Veritate* and Integral Human
Development
A Critical Appraisal**

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At last it is out, some four years after it was first signaled. The long awaited third encyclical of Pope Benedict XVI, *Caritas in Veritate* (CV) is the first Social Encyclical of the Pope, issued on June 29, 2009, feast of SS Peter and Paul. Commemorating Pope Paul VI's famous encyclical *Populorum Progressio* (PP - *On the Development of Peoples*, 1967), CV focuses exclusively, as the sub-title of the encyclical puts it, on the integral development in today's context of globalization. CV is addressed, as in the case of PP, to the Bishops, Priests and Deacons, Men and Women Religious, the Lay Faithful, and All People of Good Will, manifesting that the Pope wants it to be a document of universal significance.

1. General Remarks

The Pope introduces the topic of the encyclical in the very first sentence: "Charity in truth... is the principal driving force behind the authentic development of every person and of all humanity" (# 1). Paying tribute to the memory of Pope Paul VI, and revisiting his teachings on integral human development, Pope Benedict XVI wants to address the issue of development to contemporary situation marked, especially, by globalization and financial crisis. It is significant that it was released on the eve of the G8 Summit held in L'Aquila, Italy, discussing the world-wide financial crisis and recession caused by a crisis of moral values in the global economy.

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Spread in Six Chapters, this long and complex document focuses on integral human development, as part of a social renewal, based on a theological analysis of the inseparable connection between love and truth. The theme of truth and charity recurs throughout the entire document, like the thread in a garland, precisely because these two virtues are deeply rooted in the human qua human: "They are the vocation planted by God in the heart and mind of every human person" (# 1). In the pursuit of authentic human development, the concern of the Pope is how to link charity and truth with justice and common good so that they preserve an authentic integrity of the concept itself. This is the way he introduces his attempt: "'Caritas in veritate' is the principle around which the Church's social doctrine turns, a principle that takes on practical form in the criteria that govern moral action. I would like to consider two of these in particular, of special relevance to the commitment to development in an increasingly globalized society: *justice and the common good*" (No. # 6).

CV looks at the complexities of integral human development and proposes to all the actors of economy – individuals, public officials, corporates, government officials, politicians – to evaluate their mutual economic responsibilities in the light of charity governed by truth especially at a time when there is a meltdown in the financial market of the world. Troubled by the economic meltdown that is just taking place at the time of the completion of the document, he is challenging all parties concerned to replace a greed based economic transaction with a person centered ethics in a globalised economy, promoting a vision of economic solidarity rooted in a moral vision. The Pope is very insistent in holding that economic activities cannot be outside the realm of ethics and morality.

Besides proposing various principles and a moral framework for reflecting and critiquing the globalised economy and economic transactions with its current manifestation of the pathetic meltdown, the encyclical touches on a variety of topics: poverty, dehumanizing deprivations, food insecurity, development, ecology, international aid, outsourcing, corruption, violence, relativism, labour, culture, religious freedom, globalization, market mechanism, technology, secularism, fundamentalism, abortion, sterilization, euthanasia, sex tourism, *in vitro* fertilization, embryonic research, exploitation of non-renewable resources, exclusive reliance on technology, and an inhuman humanism which denies God, so on and so forth. He introduces even a new phrase, "human ecology" – covering human life and natural environment: "(I)f there is a lack of respect for the right to life and

to a natural death, if human conception, gestation and birth are made artificial, if human embryos are sacrificed to research, the conscience of society ends up losing the concept of human ecology, and along with it, that of environmental ecology." Our relationship to the human person is linked very much with our duties to environment as well.

2. The Principle of 'Love in Truth'

In his attempt to articulate a new socio-economic humanism, placing the person at the centre of creation, the key words and conceptual principles picked up by the Pope are Charity, Truth, Justice, and common good, and their interrelationships. In order to expand the interrelationship he proposes the principles of solidarity and subsidiarity. One could say that he proposes a 'new principle,' or, rather, a new relational way of looking at what is considered as two different principles (Charity and truth), and combines them, like the two sides of the same coin - though distinct but cannot be separated - and names it as **love in truth** (*caritas in veritate*) (#9). The Truth is the truth of God's love for us, and all that it entails, and the truth of Christ's love in society. The inter-relatedness is brought to maintain a relevant and authentic love (the love with which God has loved us): "A Christianity of charity without truth would be more or less interchangeable with a pool of good sentiments, helpful for social cohesion, but of little relevance.... Without truth, charity is confined to a narrow field devoid of relations" and is not helpful to usher the promotion of authentic human development of universal range (#4). Besides, "*Only in truth does charity shine forth*, only in truth can charity be authentically lived. Truth is the light that gives meaning and value to charity. Truth frees charity from the constraints of an emotionalism that deprives it of relational and social content and of a fideism that deprives it of human and universal breathing-space" (#3). There is a dynamism in this charity when truth is its locus: "This dynamic of charity received and given is what gives rise to the Church's social teaching, which is *caritas in veritate in re sociali*: the proclamation of the truth of Christ's love in society. This doctrine is a service to charity, but its locus is truth" (#5). The truth is the Truth of Christ's love in society, and of God's love for us. In short, truth makes charity meaningful, valuable, authentic and worthy of being human. The Pope observes:

Truth preserves and expresses charity's power to liberate in the ever-changing events of history. It is at the same time the truth of faith and of reason, both in the distinction and also in the convergence of those two cognitive fields. Development, social well-being, the search for a

satisfactory solution to the grave socio-economic problems besetting humanity, all need this truth. ... Without truth, without trust and love for what is true, there is no social conscience and responsibility, and social action ends up serving private interests and the logic of power, resulting in social fragmentation, especially in a globalized society at difficult times like the present (#5).

This new humanism would want to keep the person as the centre of reality especially now in the age of globalization when there is a manifest attempt to keep 'mammon' as the centre of one's value system. Already in *Gaudium et Spes* a proposal is given for a social order we need to create: a social order that is based on faith, built according to justice, vivified by love and enacted in freedom. One can say right at the outset that, listening to the signs and agonies of especially the poor all over the world, the Pope is attempting to link the age old Christian understanding of the virtue of love (*caritas*) with that of Truth (*Veritas*) in order to achieve authentic justice in a world entangled by the negative effects of globalization and thus eliminate the scandal of injustice and non-freedom so that we can walk in the 21st century molding it to be an era of peace that is born of truth, solidarity and justice and achieved with authentic and integral development in freedom. Justice is intrinsic to love. Striving towards common good is a requirement of justice and love. When the rights of the people are recognized and respected, justice is given in love. Love completes and goes beyond justice when, in the process of continual giving, one enters into the realm of forgiving love.

3. Methodology

Before we explore more into this Encyclical, a word about its method would be in order. The Pope keeps up with the traditional method of the encyclicals and other ecclesial documents and goes beyond it. First theological principles are proposed; they are explained and then they are applied in the cotemporary reading of the signs of the times. The signs of the times are re-read in the light of the tradition (the Vatican II and the encyclical tradition) and scripture. So we see a dialectic operating in his method. So methodologically the starting point is not our experience in the contemporary times (as we see in *Rerum Novarum*, the first social encyclical given in 1891 by Pope Leo XIII), but reiterating the fundamentals of doctrinal truths. First the relationship between truth and love is explored.

The **truth of love** is revealed in the "extraordinary force which leads people to opt for courageous and generous engagement in

the field of justice and peace,” and as “force that has its origin in God” (# 1) as the Eternal Love; and the **love of truth** is manifested in our earnest “adherence to God’s plan” for each one of us and in this adherence the full realization of ourselves is experienced. In other words, when we manifest as a force, a force that has its origin in God, our courageous engagement with others in the service of justice and peace, we are manifesting the truth of our love. Further, when we ardently adhere to God’s prepared plan for us as our true life, a plan whose truth is manifested by Jesus Christ, then we manifest our love of truth. This truth of God’s plan is revealed relationally in our adherence. Though our humanity brings impoverishment to this truth and love, they are purified and liberated by Jesus Christ when he “reveals to us in all its fullness the initiative of love and the plan for true life that God has prepared for us (#1).”

The question is what that truth is which Jesus manifested? One could very well say that Jesus Christ is the Love Letter of the Father to each one of us in His Spirit. In other words, He is the manifestation of the unconditional love of the Father to each one of us. That is the truth of Jesus Christ. The authenticity of His love is manifested in his adherence to his mission (which is the will of the Father) and in the fulfillment of that mission (which is the carrying out of the will of the Father). It is here that our social engagement, acting on God’s behalf, in terms of “integral human development’ takes a sacramental significance because of the life and mission of Jesus. Hence we see meaning and rationale in the Pope’s recurring reiteration of love and truth all throughout the encyclical, when he speaks of integral human development in the age of globalization.

4. Integral Human Development

The term and the notion, “**Integral Human Development**” is set in a wider ecclesial context as given in Chapter One of the Encyclical. He emphasizes that “*the whole Church, in all her being and acting - when she proclaims, when she celebrates, when she performs works of charity - is engaged in promoting integral human development*” (# 11). Secondly, “*authentic human development concerns the whole of the person in every single dimension.*” Hence without a transcendent vision of the person, without God, we cannot truly speak of authentic development. The heart of the Christian social message is the notion of development (#13). As a vocation to progress this notion drives us “to do more, know more and have more in order to be more” (#18). It is integral implying that “it has to promote the good of every person and of the whole

person. It is a divine vocation to pursue authentic development. True development consists in its completeness: it has to involve the whole of the person and every person. When understood as a vocation it “brings with it the central place of charity within that development” (#19). Hence underdevelopment is the sign of “lack of brotherhood (*sisterhood*) among individuals and peoples” (#19). Globalisation need not, in and by itself, make us brothers; at the most it may make us neighbours. Human rationality may take us to the realm of accepting equality in our civic coexistence; it will not establish fraternity. So, the present Pope agrees with Paul VI in feeling an urgency to work for true and authentic development of all peoples, irrespective of culture, colour or creed. Pope Benedict adds that this “urgency is also a consequence of charity in truth. It is Christ’s charity that drives us on: “*caritas Christi urget nos*” (2Cor 5:14). (#20).

The uneven or under development of India could, then, be explained as the sign of caste mindset. It is the lack of feeling of fraternity and fellowship that perpetuates poverty in India. Though world’s wealth, including that of India, is growing in absolute terms, inequalities are on the rise. It is precisely because profit has become the exclusive goal of modern undertakings, and it is produced by improper means and without the common good as its ultimate end, that it is creating poverty and destitution (#21). In rich countries too new sections of society are succumbing to poverty and new forms of poverty are emerging. At the same time in poor countries “some groups enjoy a sort of “superdevelopment” of a wasteful and consumerist kind which forms an unacceptable contrast with the ongoing situations of dehumanizing deprivation” (#22). The Pope enumerates very well the plight of the present, that I quote him at length:

The scandal of glaring inequalities” continues. Corruption and illegality are unfortunately evident in the conduct of the economic and political class in rich countries, both old and new, as well as in poor ones. Among those who sometimes fail to respect the human rights of workers are large multinational companies as well as local producers. International aid has often been diverted from its proper ends, through irresponsible actions both within the chain of donors and within that of the beneficiaries. Similarly, in the context of immaterial or cultural causes of development and underdevelopment, we find these same patterns of responsibility reproduced. On the part of rich countries there is excessive zeal for protecting knowledge through an unduly rigid assertion of the right to

intellectual property, especially in the field of health care. At the same time, in some poor countries, cultural models and social norms of behaviour persist which hinder the process of development. (#22)

Hence growth and progress of a merely economic and technological kind is insufficient. True, integral and authentic human advancement ought to be strived at. Respect for life, right to food and water (#27), openness to life (#28), right to religious freedom (#29), fostering interaction of the different levels of human knowledge (30) – all these are essentials of integral development. In view of the complexity of issues relevant for authentic development, one has to work in an interdisciplinary manner:

Charity does not exclude knowledge, but rather requires, promotes, and animates it from within. Knowledge is never purely the work of the intellect. It can certainly be reduced to calculation and experiment, but if it aspires to be wisdom capable of directing man in the light of his first beginnings and his final ends, it must be “seasoned” with the “salt” of charity. Deeds without knowledge are blind, and knowledge without love is sterile. Indeed, “the individual who is animated by true charity labours skilfully to discover the causes of misery, to find the means to combat it, to overcome it resolutely”. Faced with the phenomena that lie before us, charity in truth requires first of all that we know and understand, acknowledging and respecting the specific competence of every level of knowledge. Charity is not an added extra, like an appendix to work already concluded in each of the various disciplines: it engages them in dialogue from the very beginning. The demands of love do not contradict those of reason. Human knowledge is insufficient and the conclusions of science cannot indicate by themselves the path towards integral human development. There is always a need to push further ahead: this is what is required by charity in truth. Going beyond, however, never means prescinding from the conclusions of reason, nor contradicting its results. Intelligence and love are not in separate compartments: *love is rich in intelligence and intelligence is full of love* (#30).

5. Challenges in the Age of Globalisation

Challenging the ideologies of both left and right, the Pope points out the limitations of both government and private market. It is a call to think and act anew. The call is in the context of the phenomenon of globalisation. How to face the challenges of Globalisation?

The current economy is marked by globalization, liberalization, migrations, financing, new technologies, global migrations, social inequalities, identity conflicts and environmental risks. Encyclicals like *CV* do not propose or develop practical solutions to economic problems. They look at the roots of social conflicts. *CV* looks at the economic situation and theories like capitalism and state socialism historically, and reiterate that no system of economics is a “guarantee of happiness.” At the same time, the Pope adds that all those who participate in the economic system, whether it is market, supply, or demand, should benefit from the business transactions.

The Pope is unhappy the way globalization is unfolding in today's world. The Pontiff is pointing out that, though there is logic in the phenomenon of globalization, it has no ethic. This is a very correct analysis and understanding of the Pope. Globalisation may make “us neighbours”, but not “brothers/sisters” – the problem of impersonality of the market. At the same time, creating an atmosphere of relationality and corporeality is necessary for integral development.

The Pope is upholding “the insights and aspirations contained in *Rerum Novarum* that the civil order, for its self-regulation, also needed intervention from the State for purposes of redistribution.” (#39). So in this globalized economy definitely the Pope is seeing a positive role for the state. Here the Pope is at variance with Friedmanian economists professing a totally free market and free choice devoid of any restraint of the state to which many in the contemporary globalised world wish to tread. At the same time, the way in which markets and countries are unwrapping themselves it is impossible to build a fully humane economy without the interventions of the state (# 39).

But one must go beyond the state. If the market mechanism and the logic of the state solely divide the economic pie among themselves much is lost (# 39). Solidarity between citizens, democratic participation, actions of gratuitousness, stand in contrast with giving in order to accumulate – this is the logic of exchange – or giving through duty (the logic of public obligation, imposed by the state).

Today's international economic scenario is marked by “grave deviations and failures.” This implies that the business enterprise itself needs a new understanding and approach (#40). Limiting their social value, today business is solely answerable to their investors. This needs a revision (# 40). Social value of business cannot and should not just be limited by being only responsible to

the investors. The workers, the clients, suppliers, the consumers, the natural environment, the broader society, the community of reference – all these are partners in business. Hence greater social responsibility on the part of business is required. Investment has always moral, as well as economic significance. Speculative capital has created havoc in recent years. The Pope cautions,

What should be avoided is a speculative *use of financial resources* that yields to the temptation of seeking only short-term profit, without regard for the long-term sustainability of the enterprise, its benefit to the real economy and attention to the advancement, in suitable and appropriate ways, of further economic initiatives in countries in need of development. It is true that the export of investments and skills can benefit the populations of the receiving country. Labour and technical knowledge are a universal good. Yet it is not right to export these things merely for the sake of obtaining advantageous conditions, or worse, for purposes of exploitation, without making a real contribution to local society by helping to bring about a robust productive and social system, an essential factor for stable development (#40).

The fact of globalisation as an inevitable economic process is taken for granted (# 42). The Pope is acknowledging the reality of the contemporary market force and the phenomenon of globalization. Whether we like it or not, globalization is going to stay. How to control it; how to work *with, for or against* this octopus force is the question.

The Pope has recognized the fact that “the hands of people from developed countries” has benefited more from the process of liberalization with the mobility of capital and labour (# 42). Finally what the Pope says is that an economic activity which does not incorporate the social dimension cannot be morally acceptable and is not in keeping with the truth of the matter.

To be human is to be ethical. Market is seen as an important ‘public’ institution not just a place to make a profit.

Authentic development requires that the world of the human is understood and taken as a single family – implying equality, freedom, trust, acceptance as one’s own, relational, corporate and social; the notion that I am in relation to the other, and that the other is in relation to me. This feeling of reciprocal relationship in one’s anthropological understanding is very much needed in an authentic development process. The question is who the other is

in relation to me; and who I am in relation to the other. We go back to the very same question: who is my neighbour? The Pope is correct in saying that, “(T)he truth of globalization as a process and its fundamental ethical criterion are given by the unity of the human family and its development towards what is good. Hence a sustained commitment is needed so as to *promote a person-based and community-oriented cultural process of world-wide integration that is open to transcendence*” (#42).

What has people made of globalization? The Pope is cautious in his analysis: “The processes of globalization, suitably understood and directed, open up the unprecedented possibility of large-scale redistribution of wealth on a world-wide scale; if badly directed, however, they can lead to an increase in poverty and inequality, and could even trigger a global crisis. It is necessary to *correct the malfunctions*, some of them serious, that cause new divisions between peoples and within peoples, and also to ensure that the redistribution of wealth does not come about through the redistribution or increase of poverty: a real danger if the present situation were to be badly managed.” (# 42). It is badly managed as far as the majority of people in India is concerned. It may be so even in the majority of the poor people of the world. Looking from the optic of the marginal people of India globalization has adversely affected their lives. They are worse off than before.

Today there is availability of material resources to remove poverty from the face of the world. But, “they have ended up largely in the hands of people from developed countries, who have benefited more from the liberalization that has occurred in the mobility of capital and labour” (#42). The world-wide prosperity ought not to be held up by projects that are self-centred, protectionist or only at the interest of private players. The Pope is optimistic that we can “steer the globalization of humanity in relational terms, in terms of communion and the sharing of goods” (#42).

6. Pope’s Proposals

Speaking about a general reform of the international economic and financial systems, the Pope proposes to reorganize the UN system as well. This reform is thought to be necessary “to manage the global economy, to revive economies hit by the crisis; to avoid any deterioration of the present crisis and the greater imbalances that would result; to bring about integral and timely disarmament, food security and peace; to guarantee the protection of the environment and to regulate migration.”

In this “progressively and pervasively globalized” world, though de facto we are experiencing and recognizing the interdependence

of people and nations, it “is not matched by ethical interaction of consciences and minds that would give rise to truly human development” (# 9). The conclusion that he wants to draw is that “Only in *charity, illumined by the light of reason and faith*, is it possible to pursue development goals that possess a more humane and humanizing value. The sharing of goods and resources, from which authentic development proceeds, is not guaranteed by merely technical progress and relationships of utility, but by the potential of love that overcomes evil with good (cf. Rom 12:21), opening up the path towards reciprocity of consciences and liberties” (#9).

Today, for reasons of economic utility, when the negotiating capacity of labour unions are limited, the Pope is realizing that the “traditional networks of solidarity have more and more obstacles to overcome.” So he is urging, “the promotions of workers’ associations that can defend their rights must therefore be honoured today even more than in the past, as a prompt and far-sighted response to the urgent need for new forms of cooperation at the international level, as well as the local level.” (# 25) . In this age of “mobility of labour” the primary capital to be safeguarded and valued is the person in his or her integrity. Outsourcing and labour mobility would bring uncertainty over working conditions, new forms of psychological instability, and difficulty in forging coherent life-plans, including that of marriage. Especially at this time it should be borne in mind that the primary capital to be safeguarded and valued is the centrality of the person: “(Hu)man is the source, the focus and aim of all economic and social life” (#25). A person is not just a “cultural statistic” (#26).

The Pope is very clear that we need to seriously address world hunger today. What is missing today is,

A network of economic institutions capable of guaranteeing regular access to sufficient food and water for nutritional needs, and also capable of addressing the primary needs and necessities ensuing from genuine food crises, whether due to natural causes or political irresponsibility, nationally and internationally. The problem of food insecurity needs to be addressed within a long-term perspective, eliminating the structural causes that give rise to it and promoting the agricultural development of poorer countries. This can be done by investing in rural infrastructures, irrigation systems, transport, organization of markets, and in the development and dissemination of agricultural technology

that can make the best use of the human, natural and socio-economic resources that are more readily available at the local level, while guaranteeing their sustainability over the long term as well (#27).

The principle of subsidiarity needs to be exercised in all this. The involvement of local communities in choices and decisions, especially the ones that affect the agricultural land, need to be scrupulously followed. In the age of SEZ (Special Economic Zones) and seeing what is going on in India today, this proposal of the Pope is very valuable indeed.

The wisdom of the Church's social doctrine needs to be carefully studied and applied in the changed circumstances. An interdisciplinary dimension needs to be approached. Profound and far-sighted revision of the current model of development needs to be done. In order to civilize the economy charity is necessary, and an ethic of giving needs to find a place in economic activities:

The great challenge before us, accentuated by the problems of development in this global era and made even more urgent by the economic and financial crisis, is to demonstrate, in thinking and behaviour, not only that traditional principles of social ethics like transparency, honesty and responsibility cannot be ignored or attenuated, but also that in *commercial relationships* the *principle of gratuitousness* and the logic of gift as an expression of fraternity can and must *find their place within normal economic activity*. This is a human demand at the present time, but it is also demanded by economic logic. It is a demand both of charity and of truth (#36).

The priorities of the Pope is very clear. Given the international economic scene, marked by grave deviations and failures, the business enterprises itself require a profoundly new way of understanding. He is proposing a new ethic of business enterprise when he says that "*business management cannot concern itself only with the interests of the proprietors, but must also assume responsibility for all the other stakeholders who contribute to the life of the business: the workers, the clients, the suppliers of various elements of production, the community of reference*" (#40).

Conclusion

Thus we can see that the Pope makes a positive attempt to address the issues that we are confronting today. Though his optic is by and large European, his observations and proposals have universal

significance. Remaining in a theoretical level of doctrinal approach, giving principles to reflect on the problems raised especially by phenomenon like globalization, proposing some criteria to judge the economic maladies of the day, he is giving some guidelines to act. Thus he remains strictly on the traditional approach to encyclical writing. He is following strictly a natural law approach. One will hardly find scripture passages. A dialectic of the word of God and the events of history is totally missing. Some insights are offered to approach the modern problems in a transcendental reflection in a constructive way. His proposal for a world body to monitor world events seems to be ill-advised.

In Chapter 5, where he talks of “the Cooperation of the human family”, suddenly he speaks of “a true world political authority” (#67) “to manage the global economy; to revive economies hit by the crisis; to avoid any deterioration of the present crisis and the greater imbalances that would result; to bring about integral and timely disarmament, food security and peace; to guarantee the protection of the environment and to regulate migration.” Right away he adds, that “such an authority would need to be regulated by law, to observe consistently the principles of subsidiarity and solidarity, to seek to establish common good, and to make a commitment to securing authentic integral human development inspired by the values of charity in truth.” What he means by a “true world political authority” remains very fussy. At the same time he invokes the principle of subsidiarity, which implies a devolved system of decision-making at the lowest possible level, a level where the implementation takes place. How to put these two in one basket remain a bit of a mystery.

In fine, one could say, that in the end, all said and done, this encyclical has a universal significance, in spite of the many shortcomings that one could find in its pages.