

THOMAS MORE NEWSLETTER

SOCIAL ACTION GROUP
A National Civic Council Initiative

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Editorial
Issue Identification.

**'You cannot serve God
and mammon.'**
[Mt 6:24 ; Lk 16:13]

16,000 Ansett jobs are lost
and may not ever be found.

Along with these there are more and more jobs
being shed by companies with well fed directors
and money hungry shareholders. The number
of people who need full time work but who
only have part time is rising. This should move
us to compassion.

We seem to have an economic system which is
like a game of Monopoly. Do the values of the
Gospels inform our economics?

God made the goods of this world so that we
could use them to fulfil our vocations. Without
relatively stable employment opportunities,
human dignity is hurt and vocations to
marriage and supporting a family are
threatened.

We had in the Gospel at Mass recently our
Lord's message about money, that we should
use it for holy, noble purposes. Jesus lets us
know that we can use it to win friends who will
welcome us into the kingdom of heaven, or we
can serve money instead of God.

Well, what does the Church say about
economics? Which is right: S11 and
communism, or compassionless capitalism?
Neither!

The trajedy in America has moved Pope John
Paul II. We are utterly convinced that Jesus is
the Way and that He founded the Church. So
how are we to regard Moslems? Page four has
a few thoughts from Vatican II and our fearless
Pope.

Michael Casanova

CATHOLIC SOCIAL TEACHINGS APPLICATION

**To work as a slave is contrary to human
dignity and is damaging:**

The oppressed workers, above all, ought to be
liberated from the savagery of greedy men, who
inordinately use human beings as things for gain.
Assuredly, neither justice nor humanity can
countenance the exaction of so much work that the
spirit is dulled from excessive toil and that along
with it the body sinks crushed from exhaustion.

Leo XIII, 1891.

**But what about being used, well or poorly, and
then being dumped when there are bigger profits
for getting rid of staff?**

Discussion Questions

1. Why is it important for people to
have work? What are the effects of no work?
2. What is the cause of unemployment:
the unemployed; or employers; or ... ?
3. What are the benefits of a free market
economy?
4. One free market economist, Adam
Smith, said that an invisible hand would guide
things to the greater benefit of everybody if you
just let market forces operate freely. Is this true?
5. Pope John Paul II says that 'there are
many human needs which cannot be satisfied
by the market.' [CA 34.] What does this mean?

TMSAG meetings:

- Camberwell -**
Monday 1st October 7:45 pm
Hawthorn -
(ask Anthony, 9326 5757).
Hoppers Crossing -
Sunday 14th October 5pm
(Ask Michael 0438 50 1117)
Preston -
Tuesday 16th October, 7:30 pm
St Raphael's Presbytery, 17 Hardy St, Preston West
(ask Michael, 0438 50 1117)
Ballarat -
Thursday 25th October
(ask Marie, 5331 9513)

READINGS

POPE JOHN PAUL II

Sollicitudo Rei Socialis

18. [The phenomenon of unemployment and underemployment] too, with its series of negative consequences for individuals and for society, ranging from humiliation to the loss of that self respect which every man and woman should have, prompts us to question seriously the type of development which has been followed over the past twenty years. Here the words of the Encyclical *Laborem Exercens* are extremely appropriate: "...we cannot fail to be struck by a disconcerting fact of immense proportions: the fact that...there are huge numbers of people who are unemployed...a fact that without any doubt demonstrates that both within the individual political communities and in their relationships on the continental and world level there is something wrong with the organization of work and employment, precisely at the most critical and socially most important points."(37)

Catechism of the Catholic Church

1910. It is the role of the State to defend and promote the common good of civil society, its citizens, and intermediate bodies.

2424. "A theory that makes profit the exclusive norm and ultimate end of economic activity is morally unacceptable. The disordered desire for money cannot but produce perverse effects. It is one of the causes of the many conflicts which disturb the social order.[Cf. GS 63 # 3; LE 7; 20; CA 35.] A system that 'subordinates the basic rights of individuals and of groups to the collective organization of production' is contrary to human dignity.[GS 65 # 2.] Every practice that reduces persons to nothing more than a means of profit enslaves man, leads to idolizing money, and contributes to the spread of atheism. 'You cannot serve God and mammon.'[Mt 6:24 ; Lk 16:13 .]"

2425. "The Church has rejected the totalitarian and atheistic ideologies associated in modern times with 'communism' or 'socialism.' She has likewise refused to accept, in the practice of 'capitalism,' individualism and the absolute primacy of the law of the marketplace over human labor.[Cf. CA 10; 13; 44.] Regulating the economy solely by centralized planning perverts the basis of social bonds; regulating it solely by the law of the marketplace fails social justice, for 'there are many human needs which cannot be satisfied by the market.'[CA 34.] Reasonable regulation of the marketplace and economic initiatives, in keeping with a just hierarchy of values and a view to the common good, is to be commended."

Some other quotes from the Pope:

"It is necessary to globalize solidarity, too."
(2000)

"Globalization seems clearly 'ambivalent.' It can be something good for man and society, but could also prove harmful, with serious consequences." (2000)

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ACTION

"Economic forces should not be regulated at all!"

"What about if a company wants to sell embryos, or body parts, or women?"

"Okay, I'll admit that there are at least some things that need to be regulated."

The Catechism of the Catholic Church says:

Regulating [the economy] solely by the law of the marketplace fails social justice, for 'there are many human needs which cannot be satisfied by the market.' [CA 34.] Reasonable regulation of the marketplace and economic initiatives, in keeping with a just hierarchy of values and a view to the common good, is to be commended. (CCC 2425)

The government regulates the economy so that entrepreneurs can make their money, but it is not doing enough to regulate (guide) the economy towards secure jobs and full employment.

Why do governments aim at 5%

unemployment as an ideal? Because they have been sold the false notion of economic rationalism – let the invisible hand look after things!

Yet now the Federal government is intervening to save some jobs: telling their employees to fly Ansett and offering indemnity in case terrorists crash Australian planes. Someone needs to bring the truth about proper regulation to our politicians, or else there will be more and more job cutting for the sake of shareholders and well paid directors.

Discuss how your group can help bring attention to the issue of Gospel values in the economy, especially regarding employment/rules for companies.

What about a joint letter to your local politicians, giving the Church's position and asking about their position on regulation of the economy to help preserve jobs. You might even visit them to discuss the issues.

A Thought about what is important to you, Monopoly style free market materialism, or the higher Gospel values:

– We Have More Of Less –

A Columbine student who experienced one of the many High School massacres in America, wrote the following on the Internet, with the accompanying message: "PASS IT ON!"

"The paradox of our time in history is that we have taller buildings, but shorter tempers; wider freeways but narrower viewpoints. We spend more but have less; we buy more but enjoy less; we have more degrees but less sense; more knowledge, but less judgement; more experts, but more problems; more medicine but less wellness; we have multiplied our possessions, but reduced our values.

We talk too much, but love too seldom, and hate too often. We've learned how to make a living, but not a life; we've added years to life, but not life to years; we've been all the way to the moon and back, but have trouble crossing the street to meet a new neighbour. We've conquered outer space, but not inner space; we've split the atom, but not our prejudice.

We have higher incomes, but lower morals; we've become long on quantity, but short on quality. These are the times of tall men, and short character; steep profits, and shallow relationships. These are the times of world peace, but domestic warfare; more leisure, but less fun; more kinds of food, but less nutrition. These are the days of two incomes, but more divorce; of fancier houses, but broken homes. It is a time when there is much in the show window and nothing in the stockroom; a time when technology can bring this letter to you, and a time when you can choose either to make a difference ... or just hit delete."

**Pope John Paul II to the people of the United States. GENERAL AUDIENCE
Wednesday 12 September 2001**

"To the President of the United States and to all American citizens I express my heartfelt sorrow. I add my voice to all the voices raised in these hours to express indignant condemnation, and I strongly reiterate that the ways of violence will never lead to genuine solutions to humanity's problems.

Even if the forces of darkness appear to prevail, those who believe in God know that evil and death do not have the final say. Christian hope is based on this truth; at this time our prayerful trust draws strength from it.

Let us beg the Lord that the spiral of hatred and violence will not prevail. May the Blessed Virgin, Mother of Mercy, fill the hearts of all with wise thoughts and peaceful intentions.

I invite you all to join me in commending the victims of this shocking tragedy to Almighty God's eternal love."

Second Vatican Council, *Nostra Aetate* (3), 1965

"The Church has also a high regard for the Muslims. They worship God, who is one, living and subsistent, merciful and almighty, the Creator of heaven and earth... Although not acknowledging him as God, they venerate Jesus as a prophet...

"Over the centuries many quarrels and dissensions have arisen between Christians and Muslims. The sacred Council now pleads with all to forget the past, and urges that a sincere effort be made to achieve mutual understanding; for the benefit of all men, let them together preserve and promote peace, social justice and moral values."

Avoid war, Pope urges the world

Pope John Paul II said the following in Kazakhstan, which is mostly Muslim but has a small Catholic community. Kazakhstan is not far from Afghanistan.

"With all my heart I beg God to keep the world in peace. We must not let what happened (in the US) lead to a deepening of divisions. Religion must never be used as a reason for conflict. I wish to make an earnest call to everyone, Christians and the followers of other religions, that we work together to build a world without violence, a world that loves life, and grows in justice and solidarity.

From this place, I invite both Christians and Muslims to raise an intense prayer to the One, Almighty God whose children we all are, that the supreme good of peace may reign in the world. May people everywhere, strengthened by divine wisdom, work for a civilisation of love, in which there is no room for hatred, discrimination or violence."

From the Herald Sun, 24 Sep 01



Thomas More Social Action Group Newsletter

Editor: Michael Casanova. Sub-Editors: Catherine Sheehan, Anthony Cappello, Eilis O'Reilly, M.J. Donnellan.

The Thomas More Social Action Groups are the work of the National Civic Council. Our groups are bringing together young people to be formed in the Catholic Social Teachings and to move on to activism and evangelisation based on the principles of the Church's Social Teachings.

If you are interested in knowing more about the work of the Thomas More Social Action Groups please call the Thomas More Centre on 9326 5757. Please note: It is important to submit any published

letters or any replies arising from the actions proposed in this newsletter. The editor also encourages contributions and comments.

Hard copies of the Newsletter are also available – simply call the Thomas More Centre. Other journals available from the Thomas More Centre are: *AD2000*, *News Weekly* and the *Thomas More Bulletin*. Please call the Thomas More Centre for subscription details.

PLEASE NOTE: IN ORDER TO CONTINUE THIS WORK THE THOMAS MORE CENTRE WELCOMES DONATIONS- C/O The Director 582 Queensberry St. North Melbourne 3051