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**CHALLENGES ON GLOBAL POVERTY AND GLOBAL HEALTH -
FROM MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS (MDG'S) TO
SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS (SDG'S)**

LESSONS FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF CHRISTIAN SOCIAL ETHICS

**PRESENTED AT THE CATHOLIC SOCIAL INSTITUTE,
BAD HONNEF; GERMANY ON THE OCCASION OF 30 YEARS OF ORDO
SOCIALIS**

1. Gratitude

I come with a basket full of warm African greetings and deep appreciation to the organizers and principal agents responsible for this high profile meeting here at the CSI. I thank most heartily the Director Mr Andre' Schroeder and his team of hard working staff.

I appreciate Dr Josef Thessing whose correspondences always brings joy and challenge at occasions of social-ethical collaboration. Some few years ago, he invited me Brussels under the Konrad Adenauer Foundation, the OrdoSocialis and the Moenchengladbach Catholic Insitute jointly organized conference which fruits we still nourish in our work in Africa.

We in Nigeria are proud of the CSI which has collaborated with Enugu Diocese as our current Bishop Most Reverend C.V.C Onaga was once a chaplain here during his doctoral studies under Professor Monsiognore Dr. LotharRoos, my own teacher. Because I have mentioned Ordo Socialis which started in 1986, I mention that I was part of the early witnesses to this Foundation, having known Mr Cornelius Fetsch and some of the Original "Dramatis Personae" who worked hard to establish this dimension of studies, spearheaded by the Great Josef Cardinal Hoffner of Blessed Memory, Dr Johannes Stemmler, the BKU, my own teacher, friend and mentor Prof LotharRoos and a host of many other good friends.

We established the Ordo Socialis “Africa Chapter” in Enugu Nigeria under the Catholic Institute for Development Justice Peace and Charity (CIDJAP) which was founded in 1986 and celebrates its 30 years of existence as the Ordo Socialis. In Enugu we research on, train people and disseminate the Social Teaching of the Church on the African continent in both its theoretical and practical applications. These teachings continue to elevate the quality of our laity and clergy who yearn for the knowledge and deepening of the Social Teaching of the Church as reliable guide to the many questions of contemporary social, political and cultural life of nations.

I come therefore to this meeting with much gratitude and reminiscences of how humans make History and how ideas begun by humans in history shape the destinies of nations and of the world. This is what the Ordo Socialis stands for. This is what many other Institutes try to do. And with our institutional collaboration such as between the CSI of the Archdiocese of Cologne, the Ordo Socialis and the CIDJAP in Enugu, partnerships for the Common Good and actions for Justice and peace emerge. To all participants at this conference I say NDEWO!

2. Global Poverty and Global Health Concerns are not simply Political or Economic but essentially Ethical, Moral and Spiritual

Permit me to start my contributions at this dignified audience with some questions as we face difficult challenges worldwide. These challenges are not new but they seem to have increased in their intensity as we hear and experience terrors, wars, global insecurity and economic uncertainty including areas of political turmoil experienced in virtually all nations at this time. The continuing disrespect for human life and dignity and the seeming lack of will and value driven leadership to solve the problems poses urgent imperatives on the discipline of the Social Teaching of the Church to Teach and to Act, using the words of Pope John XXIII in *Mater et Magistra* who referred to the link “*between Social teaching and Social Action of the Church*”.

It is gradually clear that the most important challenges we face are not simply political, economic or technical. They are rather Ethical, Moral and Spiritual. Our time and countries face fundamental questions of life and death. This implies who moves ahead and who is left behind.

In his recent Address to the Pontifical Academy for Life, Pope Francis used similar words to characterize the point we are trying to make here and they equally apply to this conference:

“These days will be dedicated to the study of the virtues in the ethics of life, a subject of academic interest, which addresses an important message to contemporary culture: the good that man does is not the result of calculations or strategies, nor is it the product of the genetic order or social conditionings, but it is the fruit of a well disposed heart, of the free choice that tends to true good. Science and technology are not enough to do good. Wisdom of the heart is necessary...” (Pope Francis, Message to the Pontifical Academy on Life, Vatican City, 3rd March 2016, Cf. Zenit, Vatican News Agency).

The Holy Father continues this thought with an exegesis into Holy Scripture, referring to Mark chapter 7:21 where Jesus affirms that “out of the heart of man come evil thoughts” and makes it clear that good or bad intentions do not come into man from outside. They flow from his “heart”. Ancient African and Hebrew wisdoms teach that *“it is in the heart that both reason and Will reside. It is the seat of decisions, of the way of thinking and acting. The heart, in sum, is the synthesis of humanity molded by the very hands of God (Genesis 2:7)”* (Cf. Pope Francis, op.cit).

In summary of this point therefore, Pope Francis mentions that *“the first nature to protect, so that it will bear fruit, is our own humanity. We must give it the clean air of freedom and the vivifying water of truth; protect it from the poisons of egoism and lies. Then on the terrain of our humanity, a great variety of virtues will be able to flower”*.

From this reflection, attempts to solve the issues of Global Poverty and Global Health through orientations which do not recognize the mark of divine wisdom in the created realities and not even in man, fail in their agenda. Once human nature remains reduced only to matter, to be

shaped according to any design, it becomes difficult for technology and strategies alone to solve the enormous problems facing mankind, some of which I shall mention immediately as fundamental questions. Gospel demands command us to bear a responsibility in public life as the leaven in society..."You are the Light of the World... You are the Salt of the Earth... A city set on a hill cannot be hidden" (Mathew 5).

The current challenges worldwide does not leave us in apathy or lethargy but rather to swing urgently and renewed into more Christian response, founded on sound reason, common sense, natural law and the light of charity to act in the sphere of the Socio-Political and cultural milieu with the leaven of faith.

There is consensus and rejection of the world and its governance as it is experienced currently because many believe that it was meant to be different and better.

- 1. How can we build not only a safer world for some but a better world for all, a world that is more just, more secure, more peaceful, more respectful of human life and dignity and for all?*
- 2. Is it not possible to protect the weakest in our midst, especially those who have no voice, including the innocent unborn children, the aged, sick, homeless and destitute?*
- 3. How can nations refuse violence as a means to solve some of its most difficult problems? The continued production and sales of weapons and ammunitions makes wars near and possible on the short run. Why should wars, even in extreme cases be made an instrument to settle matters which normally dialogue and openness could have solved including industrial disasters?*
- 4. Addressing poverty, how does humanity allow its conscience to sleep when we are confronted with the tragic fact that more than 30, 000 children die every day as a result of hunger, international debt, and lack of development around the globe?*
- 5. On the youth, what future do we offer the teeming young people facing poverty in the midst of plenty without even any hope, at a*

time jobs are replaced by robots to encourage efficiency and competitiveness which makes business sense, yet, humanity grows with persons unfulfilled in their destinies because we opted to maximize capital and not humanity even if un-sustainable?

- 6. Can our parents in various nations of the world raise their children with some relaxed absence from many fears and anxieties, with respect for life, sound moral values, a sense of hope, an ethic of STEWARDSHIP and of RESPONSIBILITY?*
- 7. The central institution of MARRIAGES and better support to FAMILIES in their moral role is challenged by cultures of relativism which not only opts to exist but insists that it be carried to all countries and cultures and peoples with the same intensity. How therefore do we offer economic and moral support to families with Real Choices and financial Resources needed to obtain balanced livelihoods, quality education and decent houses?*
- 8. Children, majority in Africa, Asia and Latin America die of malaria and preventable diseases. Medications are produced in large quantities and then burnt off as well as food because the spaces for stocking them in warehouses are filled. Yet people are hungry and they die young. Is it not possible across parties and nations to address affordable Health Care?*
- 9. Is it impossible for societies to combat continuing prejudices based on racial, tribal, class, religions, gender without an ideological agenda even as new forms of xenophobic behavior emerge, wiping away much of the gains nations made since the second world war?*
- 10. Linked to the questions already asked, and in view of current realities peoples and nations face from regions of the middle east and Africa seeking a home and safety in Europe, how do we overcome hostility toward immigrants and refugees?*

11. Is poverty a destined phenomenon or is it man-made? And if poverty was not destined beyond man's capabilities, could humanity not overcome widespread poverty, contain exploding worldwide populations that are unsustainable in a world of over seven billion people nearing a statistical proportion of double that number in another half a century? Do we not need urgent attention on the population debate in view of climatic changes and environmental and ecological disasters already scientifically determined?. Alongside our pursuit of values that protect humanity, respect cultural differences, promote more justice and contain peace is not time to insist that global health and global poverty are linked to integral solutions on a multi-disciplinary level?

12. Can we not fortify, improve our determination to work for greater respect for human life, dignity, Religious freedom, democracy and rule of law.

These and other questions cross my mind as I consider the topic you have given to me to reflect upon in this audience. We shall not necessarily find the answers immediately. But we may at least ask the questions and genuinely search for answers along the lines of the Christian Social Principles and Ethics which see as containing the leaven of faith and life as Pope Benedict XVI in his Encyclical Letter "*Veritas in Caritate*" teaches.

3. Integral Education - Key to the solution of concerns on Global poverty and Health

Theory by experts contend that "Poverty and inequality have long been concerns of development economics". A social development paradigm with an emphasis on pro-poor growth is replacing the trickle-down industrialization model. Eradicating poverty and rectifying extreme levels of inequality go hand in hand with economic growth. It is true that a broad-based participation of people in productive activities can increase a nation's total output of goods and services, and promote economic development. However, poverty and inequality are not just economic issues. They are ethical issues as well,

When we see people suffering from materially and psychologically desperate conditions, we are compelled to act. Reference is made to the Superior General of the Jesuit Order, Father Adolfo Nicolas, who identified about four challenges facing humankind. In his 2008 speech addressing the students of Sophia University, he declared *world poverty* as a “*social challenge*”, and called for practical action to eradicate it. He referred to the “lack of worldwide access of learning opportunities” as a “*cultural challenge*”, and encouraged all to work to achieve “*education for all*”. He also mentioned the “*protection of the environment*” as an “*ethical challenge*” .

These four challenges are all linked. The eradication of poverty is supported by equal access to quality education and a fairer society so that everyone who receives education can have more options in their lives and fulfill their aspirations. Universal access to education and a fair society are not about promoting economic growth. They are about ensuring human dignity. These challenges call upon our sense of ethical responsibility. As Catholic Social teaching suggests, we need to have faith in the poor to organize themselves and choose the life they wish.

Inequality also tests our ethics. Inequality is not just about income gaps. We may not value the same things in life. People and society may pursue different paths whose values cannot be compared by a simple measure of how much you possess.

Still, an extreme income gap in a society and between societies is alarming because it could erode cohesion a basic sense of trust between people who do not know each other. A reasonable degree of social cohesion is needed so that a society (and the world) can function, and for people to have the chance to increase their opportunities in life.

Again, education is perhaps one of the most important public policies to address inequality and trust. Education can reproduce an unequal society if it is not offered equally to all. Equal and fair provision of educational services, however, can rectify issues of inequality. Education can also promote bonding of different groups when it draws children of different social, cultural and economic backgrounds. In both cases, a national government plays a critical role, even in this globalized and increasingly borderless world.

4. The United Nations Millennium Development Goals (MDG'S) – 2000 to 2015 and Sustainable Development Goals (SDG'S)

At the beginning of the 21st century and the new millennium, world leaders gathered to reflect on how to address issues of poverty and global sustainability in a free, fair and peaceful world. Thus the enunciation of the **MDG's** which set targets and goals for action by all. The MDG's correspond to the Eight International Development goals that were established following the Millennium Summit of the UN in 2000 and the adoption of the UN millennium Declaration. They are the world's time-bound, measurable, universally agreed objectives and quantified targets for addressing extreme poverty in its many dimensions. These eight aims are:

- 1. Income Poverty.**
- 2. Hunger.**
- 3. Disease.**
- 4. Lack of adequate Shelter.**
- 5. Exclusion.**
- 6. Promoting Gender Equality.**
- 7. Education for All.**
- 8. Environmental Sustainability.**

After fifteen years of attempts to realize the MDG's and with clear noticeable modest successes and huge failures in realizing the targets set for 2000 to 2015, the Assembly of World Leaders following agitations by millions of people shifted the attention of the UN to another set of objectives now called the Sustainable Development Goals (**SDG's**).

Progress towards the Millennium Development Goals were remarkable. Including, for instance, poverty reduction, improvements and increased access to safe drinking water, the HIV, tuberculosis and malaria epidemics where “...*child mortality and maternal mortality decreased great respectively, since 1990) despite falling short of the MDGs &SDGs set a new health goal (ensure healthy lives and wellbeing for all at all ages)*” with a broad set of targets on universal health coverage (UHC) thus providing the integrated action across all 13 health targets. The MDG's had a set of Global health concerns for children on the following thematic areas:

MDG 1: child underweight
MDG 4: child health

MDG 5: Immunization

MDG 5: Maternal and reproductive health

MDG 6. HIV/AIDS

MDG 6: Malaria

MDG 6: neglected tropical diseases

MDG 7: water and sanitation

MDG 8. Essential medicines.

Mortality and global health estimates

Non-communicable diseases

Mortality/morbidity

Risk factors

Health system response

The SDG'S replaced the MDG's on 15th September 2015 as the world leaders gathered at the UN in New York to adopt the 2030 Agenda for sustainable Development. The 2030 Agenda comprises SEVENTEEN new Sustainable Goals, which guide policy and Funding for the next fifteen years, beginning with a historic pledge to end poverty, everywhere and permanently.

The SDG's applies to all countries, promotes peaceful and inclusive societies, creates better jobs and tackles the environmental challenges of our time on climate change. The SDG,s include the following:

- 1. End Poverty.**
- 2. Zero Hunger.**
- 3. Good Health and Well Being.**
- 4. Quality Education.**
- 5. Gender Equality.**
- 6. Clean Water and Sanitation.**
- 7. Affordable and Clean Energy.**
- 8. Decent Work and Economic Growth.**
- 9. Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure.**
- 10. Reduced Inequalities.**
- 11. Sustainable Cities and Communities.**
- 12. Reasonable Consumption production.**
- 13. Climate Action.**
- 14. Life Below Water.**
- 15. Life on Land.**
- 16. Peace Justice and Strong Institutions.**
- 17. Partnerships for the Goals.**

The SDG,s are guided by indicators and factors with measurable mechanisms to ensure that they work and are realized. This sets therefore to improve on the limitations of the MDG's and hope for a world that resembles the biblical "**Adumbratio**" (**pre-shadow**); the "**already but not yet** " understanding of the Kingdom of heaven.

Unfortunately, it has to be said and with a certain level of realism but sadness, that with existing realities and global tendencies and political configurations, including doubts and lack of value-driven leadership and strong ethical will on the side of leaders of nations and the people led themselves, the SDG.S shall not be met as enunciated in 2030. The world population alone expected to double the present population of over 7 billion people to near 13 billion at the date set, shall stall this expectation.

5. United Nations and Experts Statistics on Global health and Poverty -

Permit me to share with you statistical data obtained from the offices concerned and official Website of the United Nations, the World health Organization (WHO), the UNDP, the UNICEF and other relevant organs of the UN. These statistics which can be contested and may not claim authority to be absolute but surely a good guide, give a gloomy but appropriate and realistic picture of world poverty and global health situations.

- The poorest 40 percent of the world's population accounts for 5 percent of global income. The richest 20 percent accounts for three-quarters of world income.
- According to UNICEF, 22,000 children each day die due to poverty. And they "die quietly in some of the poorest villages on earth, far removed from the scrutiny and conscience of the world. Being meek and weak in life makes these dying multitudes even more invisible in death.
- Around 27-28 percent of all children in developing countries are estimated to be underweight and Asia and sub-Saharan Africa.
- If current trends continue, Millennium Development Goals target of having the proportion of underweight children will be missed by 30 million children, largely because of slow progress in Southern Asia and sub-Saharan Africa.

- Based on enrollment data, about 72 million children of primary school age in the developing world were not in school in 2005; 57 percent of them were girls. And these are regarded as optimistic numbers.
- Nearly a billion people entered the 21st century unable to read a book or sign their names.
- Less than one percent of what the world spent every year on weapons was needed to put every child into school by the 2000 and yet it didn't happen.
- Infectious diseases continue to blight the lives of the poor across the world. An estimated 40 million people are living with HIV/AIDS, with 3 millions deaths in 2004. Every year there are 350—500 million cases of malaria, with 1 million fatalities: Africa accounts for 90 percent of malaria deaths and African children account for over 80 percent of malaria victims worldwide.
- Almost two in three people lacking access to clean water survive on less than \$2 a day, with one in three living on less than \$1 a day.
- More than 660 million people without sanitation live on less than \$2 a day, and more than 385 million on less than \$1 a day.
- Access to piped water into the household averages about 85% for the wealthiest 20% of the population, compared with 25% for the poorest 20%.
- 1.8 billion people who have access to a water source within 1 Kilometer, but not in their house or yard, consume around 20 liters per day. In the United Kingdom the average person uses more than 50 litres of water a day flushing toilets (where average daily water usage is about 150 liters a day. The highest average water use in the world is in the US, at 600 liters a day.)
- some 1.8 million child deaths each year as a result of diarrhea

- the loss of 443 million school days each year from water-related illness.
- Close to half of all people in developing countries suffering at any given time from a health problem caused by water and sanitation deficits.
- Millions of women spending several hours a day collecting water.
- To these human costs can be added the massive economic waste associated with the water and sanitation deficit.... The costs associated with health spending, productivity losses and labor diversions... are greatest in some of the poorest countries.
- Sub-Saharan Africa loses about 5% of GDP or some \$28.4 billion annually, a figure that exceeds total aid flows and debt relief to the region in 2003.
- Number of children in the world ...2.2billion
- Number of poverty...1billion (every second child)
- Shelter, safe water and health for the 1.9 billion children from the developing world, are ;
- 640 million without adequate shelter (1 in 3)
- 400 million with no access to safe water (1 in 5)
- 270 million with no access to health services (1 in 7)
- children out of education worldwide 121 million
- survival for children worldwide:
- 10.6 million died in 2003 before they reached the age of 5 (same as children population in France, Germany Greece and Italy)
- 1.4 million die each year from lack of access drinking water and adequate sanitation health of children.
- Worldwide 2.2 million children die each year because they re not immunized

- 15 million children orphaned due to HIV/AIDS (similar to the total children population in Germany or United Kingdom)
- Rural areas account for three in every four people living on less than US\$1 a day and a similar share of the world population suffering from malnutrition. However, urbanization is not synonymous with human progress. Urban slum growth is outpacing urban growth by a wide margin.
- Approximately half the world's population now live in cities and towns. In 2005, one out of three urban dwellers (approximately 1 billion people) was living in slum conditions.
- In developing countries some 2.5 billion people are forced to rely on biomass fuel wood, charcoal and animal dung to meet their energy needs for cooking. In sub-Saharan Africa, over 80 percent of the population depends on traditional biomass for cooking, as do over half of the populations of India and China.
- The world's wealthiest countries (approximately 1 billion people) accounted for \$36.6 trillion dollars (76%)
- The world's billionaire's just 497 people (approximately 0.000008% of the world's population) were worth \$3.5 trillion (over 7% of world GDP).
- Low income countries (2.4 billion people accounted for just \$1.6 trillion of GDP (3.3%))
- Middle income countries (3 billion people) made up the rest of GDP at just over \$10 trillion (20.7%)
- The world's low income countries (2.4 billion people) accounted for just 2.4% of world exports
- The total wealth of the top 8.3 million people around the world rose 8.2 percent to \$30.8 trillion in 2004, giving them control of nearly a quarter of the world's financial assets.

- In the other words, 0.13% of the world's population controlled 25% of the world's financial assets in 2004. A conservative estimate for 2010 finds that at least a third of all private finance wealth, and nearly half of all offshore wealth, is now owned by world's richest 91,000 people ---just 0.001% of the world's population.
- The next 52 percent of all wealth is owned by the next 8.4 million just 0.14% of the world's population. Almost all of it has managed to avoid all income and estate taxes, either by the countries where it has been invested and or where it comes from.
- For every \$1 in aid a developing country receives, over \$25 is spent on debt repayment.
- 51% of the world's 100 hundred wealthiest bodies are corporations.
- The wealthiest nation on Earth has the widest gap between rich and poor of any individualized nation.
- The poorer the country, the more likely it is that debt repayments are being extracted directly from people who neither contract the loans nor receive any of the money.

In 1960, the 20% of the world's people in the richest countries had 30 times the income of the poorest 20% — in 1997, 74 times as much.

An analysis of long-term trends shows the distance between the richest and poorest countries was about:

- 3 to 1 in 1820
- 11 to 1 in 1913
- 35 to 1 in 1950
- 44 to 1 in 1973
- 72 to 1 in 1992
- “Approximately 790 million people in the developing world are

still chronically undernourished, almost two-thirds of whom reside in Asia and the Pacific.”

- For economic growth and almost all of the other indicators, the last 20 years [of the current form of globalization, from 1980 - 2000] have shown a very clear decline in progress as compared with the previous two decades [1960 - 1980]. For each indicator, countries were divided into five roughly equal groups, according to what level the countries had achieved by the start of the period (1960 or 1980). Among the findings:
- Growth: The fall in economic growth rates was most pronounced and across the board for all groups or countries.
- Life Expectancy: Progress in life expectancy was also reduced for 4 out of the 5 groups of countries, with the exception of the highest group (life expectancy 69-76 years).
- Infant and Child Mortality: Progress in reducing infant mortality was also considerably slower during the period of globalization (1980-1998) than over the previous two decades.
- Education and literacy: Progress in education also slowed during the period of globalization.
- A mere 12 percent of the world’s population uses 85 percent of its water, and these 12 percent do not live in the Third World.

Consider the global priorities in spending in 1998

. Global Priority	. \$U.S. Billions
. Cosmetics in the United States	. 8
. Ice cream in Europe	. 11
. Perfumes in Europe and the United States	. 12
. Pet foods in Europe and the United States	. 17
. Business entertainment in Japan	. 35
. Cigarettes in Europe	. 50
. Alcoholic drinks in Europe	. 105
. Narcotics drugs in the world	. 400

. Military spending in the world . 780

. And compare that to what was estimated as *additional* costs to achieve universal access to basic social services in all developing countries:

. Global Priority	. \$U.S. Billions
. Basic education for all	. 6
. Water and sanitation for all	. 9
. Reproductive health for all women	. 12
. Basic health and nutrition	. 13

Notes And Sources

. Sources:

- Shaohua Chen and Martin Ravallion, *The developing world is poorer than we thought, but no less successful in the fight against poverty*, World Bank, August 2008
- For the 95% on \$10 a day, see Martin Ravallion, Shaohua Chen and PremSangraula, *Dollar a day revisited*, World Bank, May 2008. They note that 95% of developing country population lived on less than \$10 a day. Using 2005 population numbers, this is equivalent to just under 79.7% of *world* population, and does *not* include populations living on less than \$10 a day from industrialized nations.

6. Global health Concerns

In discussing Health concerns, the following key areas are important for the national planning and for international action: Health workforce; Health financing; Essential medicines; Public health and environment; Mental health; Health Equity Monitor;

The Global Health Indicators known as GHO contains data and as a repository provides access to over 1000 indicators with priority on health topics including mortality and burden of diseases, the Millennium Development Goals (child nutrition, child health,

maternal and reproductive health, immunization, HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, malaria, neglected diseases, water and sanitation), non communicable diseases and risk factors, epidemic-prone diseases, health systems, environmental health, violence and injuries, equity among others. In addition the GHO provides on-line access to WHO's annual summary of health-related data for its member states: the World Health Statistic 2014.

A new global coalition of more than 500 leading health and development organizations worldwide is urging governments to accelerate reforms that ensure everyone, everywhere, can access quality health services without being forced into poverty. The coalition emphasizes the saving lives, ending extreme poverty, building resilience against the health effects of climate change and ending deadly epidemics such as Ebola.

“I regard universal health coverage as a single most powerful concept that public health has to offer. It is inclusive. It unifies services and delivers them in a comprehensive and integrated way, based on primary health care” (Dr. Margaret Chan, WHO Director)

7. ESSENTIALS OF UNIVERSAL HEALTH COVERAGE

- Health financing for universal coverage
- Health workforce
- Essential medicines and health products
- Health statistics and information
- National health policies
- Service delivery and safety

8. Challenges and lessons from Christian Social Ethics

8.1. Protecting human life and personal dignity

- The challenge to Action on global health and poverty lies within the domain of the ethical, occupied by the moral agent, namely **MAN, the Human person: The human Being has free choice**

and will to act and is gifted with moral reasoning. Human life is a gift from God, sacred and inviolable. Because every human person is created in the image and likeness of God, we have a duty to defend human life from conception until natural death and in every condition.

- Our world does not lack for the **threats to human life**. We watch with horror the *deadly violence of terror, war, starvation, and children dying from disease*. We face a new and insidious mentality that denies the dignity of some vulnerable human lives and treats killing as a personal choice and social good. As we wrote in living the gospel of life, “abortion and euthanasia have become preeminent threats to human life and dignity because they directly attacked life itself, the most fundamental good and the condition for all others. Abortion, the deliberate killing of human being before birth, is never morally acceptable. The destruction of human embryos as objects research is wrong. This life is compounded when human life is created by cloning or other means only to be destroyed. The purposeful taking of human life by assisted suicide and euthanasia is never an act of mercy. It is unjustifiable assault on human life. For the same reasons, the intentional targeting of civilians in war or terrorist attacks is always wrong.
- In protecting human life, “*we must begin with a commitment never to intentionally kill, or collude in the killing, of any innocent human life, no matter how broken, informed, disabled or desperate that life may seem.*”
- **Christians and all persons are urged to promote laws and social policies that protect human life and promote human dignity to the maximum degree possible.** Laws that legitimize abortion, assisted suicide, and euthanasia are profoundly unjust and immoral. We support constitutional protection for unborn human life, as well as legislative efforts to end abortion and euthanasia. We encourage the passage of laws and programs that promote child birth and adoption over abortion and assist pregnant women and children. We support aid to those who are sick and dying by encouraging health care coverage for all as well

as effective palliative care. We call on the government and medical researchers to base their decision regarding biotechnology and human experimentation on respect for the inherent dignity and inviolability of human life from its very beginning, regardless of the circumstances of its origin.

- **Catholic teaching calls people to a culture of peace which avoids war.** Nations must protect the right to life by finding ever more effective ways to prevent conflicts from arising, to resolve them by peaceful means, and to promote post-conflict reconstruction and reconciliation. All nations have a right and duty to defend human life and the common good against terrorism, aggression, and similar threats. While military force as a last resort can sometimes be justified to defend against aggression and similar threats to the common good, we have raised serious moral concerns and questions about preemptive or preventive use of force.
- **Society has a right and duty to defend itself against violent crime** and a duty to reach out to victims of crime. Yet our nations increasing reliance on the death penalty cannot be justified. We do not teach that killing is wrong by killing those who kill others. Pope John Paul II has said the penalty of death is “both cruel and unnecessary.” The antidote to violence is not more violence. In light of the holy fathers insistence that this part of our pro-life commitment, we encourage solutions to violent crime that reflect the dignity of the human person, urging our nation to abandon the use of capital punishment. We also urge passage of legislation that would address problems in the judicial system, and restrict and restrain the use of the death penalty through use of DNA evidence, a guarantee of effective counsel, and efforts to address issues of racial justice.

8.2. Promoting family life and safe guarding children

- God established the **family as the basic cell of human society**. Therefore, we must strive to make the needs and concerns of families a central national priority. Marriage must be protected as a lifelong commitment between a man and a woman and our laws

should reflect this principle. Marriage, as God intended, provides the basic foundation for family life and the common good. It must be supported in the face of many pressures working to undermine it. Policies related to the definition of marriage, taxes, the work place, divorce, and welfare must be designed to help families stay together and to reward responsibility and sacrifice for children. Because financial and economic factors have such an impact on the well-being and stability of families, it is important that just wages be paid to those who work to support their families and that generous efforts be made to aid poor families.

- **Children must be protected and nurtured.** We affirm our commitment to the protection of children in all settings and at all times, and we support policies that ensure that the well-being of all children is safe guarded. This is reflected within our church in the charter for the protection of children and young people and other policies adopted by our bishops' conference and dioceses to ensure the safety of children.
- The **education of children** is a fundamental parental responsibility. Educational systems can support or undermine parental efforts to educate and nurture children. No one model or means of education is appropriate to the needs of all persons. Parents – the first and most important educators – have a fundamental right to choose the education best suited to the needs of their children, including private and religious schools. Families of modest means especially should not be denied this choice because of their economic status, government should help provide the resources required for parents to exercise this basic right without discrimination. To support parents' efforts to share basic values, we believe a national consensus can be reached so that students in all educational settings have opportunities for moral character formation to complement their intellectual and physical development.
- **Communications** play a growing role in society and family life. The values of our culture are shaped and shared in the print media as well as on radio, television, and the internet. We must balance respect for freedom of speech with concern for the

common good, promoting responsible regulations that protect children and families. In recent years, reduced government regulation has lowered standards, opened the door to increasingly offensive material, and squeezed out non-commercial, religious programming.

8.3. Pursuing social justice and protecting human rights

Our faith reflects God's special concern for the poor and vulnerable and calls us to make their needs our first priority in public life.

- Church teaching on economic justice insists that economic decisions and institutions be assessed on whether they protect or undermine the dignity of the human person. We support policies that create jobs for all who can work with decent working conditions and adequate pay that reflects a living wage. We also support efforts to overcome barriers to equal pay and employment for women and those facing unjust discrimination. We reaffirm the church's traditional support of the right of workers to choose to organize, join a union, bargain collectively, and exercise these rights without reprisal. We also affirm the church's teaching on the importance of economic freedom, initiative, and the right to private property, through which we have the tools and resources to pursue the common good.
- Effort to provide for the basic financial needs of poor families and children must enhance their lives and protect their dignity. The measure of welfare reform should be reducing poverty and dependency, not cutting resources and programs. We seek approaches that both promote greater responsibility and offer concrete steps to help families leave poverty behind. Welfare reforms has focused on proving work and training, mostly in low-wage jobs. Other forms of support are necessary, including tax credits, health care, child care, and safe affordable housing. Because we believe that families need help with the cost of raising children, we support increasing child tax credits and making them fully refundable. These credits allow families of modest means with children to keep more from what they earn and help lift low-income families out of poverty.

- It is useful to welcome efforts to recognize and support the work of faith-based groups not as a substitute for, but as a partner with, government efforts. Faith based and community organizations are often more present, more responsive, and more effective in the poorest communities and countries. We oppose efforts to undermine faith-based institutions and their identity, integrity, and freedom to serve those in need. We also vigorously resist efforts to abandon civil rights protections and the long-standing protections for religious groups to preserve their identity as they serve the poor and advance the common good.
- Concern is raised about the income security of low – and average-wage workers and their families when they retire, become disabled, or die. In many cases, women are particularly disadvantaged. Any proposal to change social security must provide a decent and reliable income for these workers and their dependents.
- Affordable and accessible health care is an essential safeguard of human life, a fundamental human right, and an urgent human priority. We need to reform the nation’s health care system, and this reform must be rooted in values that respect human dignity, protect human life, and meet the needs of society.

8.4. Practicing global solidarity and the common good

Responsibility of the Powerful and wealthier nations

In a world where one-fifth of the population survives on less than one dollar per day, where some twenty countries are involved in major armed conflict, and where poverty, corruption, and repressive regimes bring untold suffering to millions of people, we simply cannot remain indifferent. Powerful and wealthier nations have some capacity and the responsibility to address this scandal of poverty and underdevelopment. As a principle force in globalization, we have a responsibility to humanize globalization, and to spread

it benefits to all, especially the world's poorest, while addressing its negative consequences. As the world's sole superpower, the United States also has an unprecedented opportunity to work in partnership with others to build a system of cooperative security that will lead to a more united and more just world.

- The West should take a leading role in helping to alleviate global poverty through a comprehensive development agenda, including substantially increased development aid for the poorest countries, more equitable trade policies, and continuing efforts to relieve the crushing burdens of debt and disease.
- More concerted efforts to ensure the promotion of religious liberty and other basic human rights should be an integral part of West, foreign policy.
- It is a moral imperative that the West work to reverse the spread of nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons, and to reduce its own reliance on weapons of mass destruction by pursuing progressive nuclear disarmament. It also should reduce its own predominant role in the conventional arms trade.
- The West should provide more consistent political and financial support for appropriate United Nations programs, other international bodies, and international law, so that these institutions may become more effective, responsible, and responsive agents for addressing global problems.
- Asylum must be afforded to all refugees who hold a well-founded fear of persecution in their homelands. Our country should support protection for persons fleeing persecution through safe haven in other countries, including the West, especially for unaccompanied children, single women, women heads of families, and religious minorities.

- The West could adopt more generous immigration and refugee policy based on providing temporary or permanent safe haven for those in need; protecting immigrant workers from exploitation; promoting family reunification; safe guarding the right of all peoples to return to their home-lands; ensuring that public benefits and a fair and efficient process for obtaining citizenship are available to immigrants; extending to immigrants the full protection of U.S law; offering a generous legalization program to undocumented immigrants, and addressing the root causes of migration.
- Building peace, combating poverty and despair, and protecting freedom and human rights are not only moral imperatives; they are wise national priorities. Given its enormous power and influence in world affairs, the West has a special responsibility to ensure that it is a force for justice and peace beyond its borders. “ Liberty and justice for all” is not only a profound national pledge; it is a worthy goal for our nation in its role as world leader.

9. Conclusion moving from knowledge to ethical and social political action

- **The role of the Church is a call to be principled but not ideological.** The Christian Church cannot compromise basic values or teaching and remain true to the Gospel. But there should be ability to “consider the signs of the times and translate them in the light of the Gospel”. This calls for openness to different ways to solve problems and advance humanity.
- We are called to be clear but also civil. A church that advocates justice and charity must practice these virtues in public life. We should be clear about our principles and priorities, without impugning motives or name-calling.
- The church is called is called to be engaged but not used. We welcome dialogue with political leaders and candidates, seeking to engage and persuade public officials. But we must be sure that

events and “photo-ops” are not substitutes for work on policies that reflect our values.

9.2. Have we any Responsibility to Help the Poor?

Generally there is disagreement about who is responsible for poverty – whose fault it is. However, even if it was not our fault, there is a question about whether we have a responsibility to help those who are poor, simply because we can.

9.3. Some say: We have no responsibility to help the poor?

Some people argue that we are not naturally responsible for anyone rather than ourselves. We chose to live in society, and thereby agree that we follow the rules, for example, respect other people’s poverty, because we too want our property respected. This school of thought maintains that I might out of kindness help someone who is starving but I am not responsible for them and do not have to do this. The argument goes that if I felt responsible for those who are starving, I ought to sell everything I have and give to the poor. But I am not required to do this. It is entirely up to me to help whom I wish and how I wish.

9.4. Some ask: Why must I must help the poor?

Other people, including most Christians, think that with great power comes great responsibility. The principle is good, and is based on the golden rule, which is one of Jesus’ key teachings but also comes up in all main religions.

The golden rule says I should act in a way that I would want you to act if I was you. To understand this, imagine you were about to go and live in a brand new town with new roles and rules. You asked “should some people live as slaves, working hard to reward, whilst others live in luxury?” you must answer before you know whether you would be a slave or master. In other words, you should ask “what would I want people in the richer countries to do if I was poor” ? So, I should help the poor because I would want to be helped if I was poor.

9.5. A balanced response

- A more informed response would take from both positions above. It's worth noting that the poor don't generally want or need handouts.' They want to be able to help themselves, so a lot of emphasis is on making things fairer for everyone.
- The wealthy countries can easily afford to help stop poverty from killing millions of people through weapons of war, consumption patterns, concrete aid to stop poverty through acts of Will and Mind founded on political and economic action. As it is in their power to easily do so, it seems only right for the under-developed and emerging countries to jointly join the developed world to do more to end poverty. It is clear that the Churches play an important role to remind all about their roles. All persons, in positions and those not called to leadership can jointly contribute to the Common Good. This is the call at this time to jointly combat growing global poverty and health concerns. It is a call to an ethical revolution and a renewal of the gifts all have received.

I thank you for your apt listening and now look forward to your kind and generous critical reactions!