

booklets

**A NEW CHURCH
FOR A NEW WORLD**
Justice, peace, and the integrity
of creation in *Gaudium et Spes*



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J. I. González Faus

A NEW CHURCH FOR A NEW WORLD
JUSTICE, PEACE, AND THE INTEGRITY OF CREATION
IN GAUDIUM ET SPES

José Ignacio González Faus, sj.

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«The way of the Church is humanity»

(JOHN PAUL II, RH, 14)

«The Church is church only when she exists for others»

(D. BONHOEFFER, letter written from a Nazi prison in August 1944)¹

«A Church that does not serve serves for nothing»

(J. GAILLOT, bishop of Évreux)²

«The whole world has to be remade from its foundations»

(PIO XII, 1952)³

José I. González Faus, sj. member of the theological area of Cristianisme I Justícia, has published other works in this same collection, including *Nothingness dressed up: Fraternity stripped bare* (Booklet no. 138), *I'm coming, Lord: Contemplatives in relation* (Booklet no. 144), and *Unicity of God, Multiplicity of mysticisms* (Booklet no. 147).

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1. INTRODUCTION: CHURCH, WORLD, HUMANITY, CHRIST

Before entering on the topic I have been asked to discuss, a little prior orientation seems to me to be indispensable. I consider *Gaudium et Spes* [GS] to be most original document of Vatican II.

And the first lines of that document are among the most important and (above all) most significant of everything that came out of Vatican II. The initial paragraph has the following logical structure.

1.1. Self-portrait of the Church of the Council

The image that the Church offers of itself has three parts:

a) A definition of the Church as a «Christian community composed of men and women united in Christ and led by the Holy Spirit, with Good News for the world». The mention of «Christian community» is important; it is the best definition of the Church since it prescind from how the Church is organized.

b) One consequence of that definition: the intimate solidarity between the Church and the human race «in history».

c) And the final consequence: «The joys and the hopes, the griefs and the anxieties..., especially of those who are poor or in any way afflicted, these are the joys and hopes, the griefs and anxieties of the followers of Christ». (Note that it does not say, «of the Church»!).

Thus this final part (final from a logical point of view) becomes the principal part because it is the most powerful statement in the whole paragraph. It appeals to the world, but it appeals also to the Church herself.

This paragraph of great theological depth is meant to be taken seriously, and it provokes immediately an unavoidable series of questions, such as these: Can we say in truth that this is

the case today, especially at the level of Church authorities and institutions? Is there real contact and familiarity that allows the Church to make her own the sorrows and joys of others, especially the poorest? Or is there only a generic, theoretical empathy such as cannot be renounced without renouncing the faith? How many of those coarse-handed men looking for work have our bishops and Monsignors embraced? How many meetings have they attended of neighborhood women who tell their stories and recount their struggles? How many children have they held in their arms, taking them perhaps from the arms of a Muslim woman with a veil on her head but with no documents in her bag? I'm afraid we have to say that, while such actions are performed by some members of the Christian community, they are not performed by the majority nor by those who have institutional responsibilities. But aren't we all «men and women united in Christ and led by the Holy Spirit?» And if we truly want a «new» evangelization—one that is not «more of the same», only with more publicity—then this outreach is absolutely necessary.

In keeping with this depiction, *Gaudium et Spes* is addressed «to the whole of humanity» [GS 2] because it is the whole of «human society that deserves to be renewed» in a dialogue that seeks to «foster the brotherhood and sisterhood of all» [GS 3]. Accordingly, the document does not take the form of an authoritative church teaching for the faithful (or for all humankind); rather it is in the form of a dialogue of «the Christian community» with the larger

society. I would add that this is what the Church's magisterium should always be.

With this perspective on what that Church is, GS continues with a:

1.2. A look at the world

The introduction has a global character that is at once dogmatic and pastoral, and the text as a whole adopts the methodology of «See, Judge, and Act». Chapters 4-11 set down the starting point of the document: the Church desires to relate to the world with all its positive and negative aspects and with all its questioning. There are three noteworthy features of these chapters:

a) The starting point is the world, not the Church. The document doesn't say that the world should relate to the Church with all her hierarchies and forms of worship. It makes it clear that it is this world and this humanity with all their grandeur and all their misery and all their questioning that God loves so dearly that he handed over his own «Son» to save them.

b) There are two things that stand out in the way humankind is characterized: first, humanity is no longer seen «from a static concept of reality» but from a «more dynamic, evolutionary one» [GS 5]; and second, «the imbalances under which the modern world labors are linked with that more basic imbalance which is rooted in the human heart» [GS 10]. And so:

c) This root problem, this mystery of the human heart, directly encounters the «faith which throws a new light on everything and manifests God's design

for our total vocation» [GS 11]. The Church therefore defines her mission as:

1.3. Knowing human beings «for the sake of fraternity»

Both personal and structural aspects find adequate integration in this formulation. This word (fraternity) perhaps helps us draw close to the essence of what I would like to explain: Justice, Peace, and the Integrity of Creation form a triad that can serve as an apt description of fraternity. For true peace—in the positive sense of the fullness of fraternal relations, and not merely in the negative sense of absence of conflict—cannot exist except as the fruit of true justice, and true justice cannot content itself only with the idea of freedom while forgetting the fraternity and the equality which must be its inseparable companions. Moreover, even though human beings may have «dominion» over creation—as the ones responsible for it!—they cannot exercise it without relating fraternally to the earth as their «sister».

1.4. The divine dignity and the inner division of humanity

The anthropology of GS is simple but fundamental; it can be summed up in the two traits named in the title of this section. Humanity has «divine dignity» by virtue of being the image of God, but it experiences «inner division» because, as Genesis tells us, human beings have abused that dignity (= freedom) by seeking «to attain their goal apart from God» [GS 13]. The first trait is emphasized by GS when it speaks of the great

freedom and therefore the great dignity of the human conscience: «the most secret core and sanctuary of a man, where he is alone with God, whose voice echoes in his depths» [GS 16].

In describing the second trait, the problem of division, GS reflects on modern atheism, and it quite honestly recognizes that we Christians bear some of the blame for atheism, not only because of our incoherencies and neglect of religious education (factors which perhaps affect the faithful more than atheists) but above all for having «concealed rather than revealed the authentic face of God and religion» [GS 19].

Although the reference is not made explicit, it seems undeniable, given the tremendous verticality of the Catholic Church, that this last statement is addressed especially to the ecclesiastical authorities. Those of us who have frequent contact with non-believers are quite aware of how culpable the religious institution is for people's loss of faith or their inability to find faith. Even before losing faith, people often lose hope because the Gospel is encrusted in antique forms and is poured into fragile wineskins that cannot contain the dazzling newness of the Spirit. As Ratzinger brilliantly put it, we run the risk of «replacing the inescapable scandal of the cross with the scandals of our indolence, our fear, and our convenience»⁴. The churches are also culpable because the God they announce is too often a god who can be reached without passing through love of neighbor; he is a god who is «unseen» except when one is faithful to the Pope, in clear contradiction to the teaching of 1 John 4. What

the churches announce often falls short of what the letter of James calls the «religion that is pure and undefiled before God the Father» (James 1,27). Rather, it is empty worship like that denounced by Jesus and the Old Testament prophets. It is religion that turns worship of God into an excuse for ignoring the needs of the poor. There is an urgent need to recover the teaching of GS about the need for Christian communities and church institutions to examine themselves regarding their own culpability in the loss of faith experienced by many of our contemporaries.

1.5. The mission of the Church and a Christological foundation

Given this situation, «it is the function of the Church, led by the Holy Spirit who renews and purifies her ceaselessly, to make God the Father and his Incarnate Son present and in a sense visible» [GS 21]. The whole of this conciliar text can be considered a reflection on how the Church makes God the Father and Jesus Christ present in today's world; the text also stresses that «what most reveals God's presence is the fraternal charity of the faithful who are united in spirit» (ibid.).

In this way we also glimpse again the themes of justice, peace, and the integrity of creation as expressions and expansions of the fraternity that the document is proposing. For the Council, Jesus Christ is above all the «new man» who makes sisters and brothers of all people; his newness in some way rubs off on all human beings. Citing Tertullian, the Council recovers a truth

that is not usually expressed in the traditional dogmatic Christology: «By his incarnation the Son of God has united himself in some fashion with every woman and man» [GS 22]. As a result, we are not merely God's creatures; we are his children since we are made brothers and sisters with Christ, and that universality extends from the incarnation to the cross and the resurrection because Christ «died for all» (and not for «many» as we are now incomprehensibly required to recite). For this reason «we ought to believe that, in a manner known only to God, the Holy Spirit offers to every person the possibility of being associated with this paschal mystery»⁵ [GS 22].

Moreover, GS borrows some of the finest phrases used by the Third Council of Constantinople to insist that our union with God in no way diminishes our humanity but, to the contrary, dignifies and saves it. In its desire to defend the Christification of human beings, GS tries to speak to everyone, and it does so not from a distance, like an demanding authority, but from within the heart of each human person, helping them to discover the best of human nature and make it manifest.

But this is not the moment for us to talk about Christology. Let us therefore bring our introduction to a close by saying that GS contains a Christological core that grounds both an anthropology and an ecclesiology (which we'll discuss in our conclusion). Let us now look at the three points I have been asked to address –justice, peace, and the integrity of creation– all of which belong to the anthropology of fraternity found in GS.

2. THE PROBLEM OF JUSTICE IN THE WORLD

In *Gaudium et Spes* the treatment of justice focuses mainly on the importance of equality.

2.1. Justice vs. inequalities

If we as human beings are all children of the same Father, a Father who loves everyone equally but with special preference for the most poor and excluded, then «every type of discrimination, whether social or cultural, whether based on sex, race, color, social condition, language or religion, is to be overcome and eradicated as contrary to God's intent». The document also asserts that «the basic equality of all must receive increasingly greater recognition» [GS 29].

The mention of sexual discrimination presents the Church with two serious questions that are still not resolved, namely, the questions concerning women and homosexual couples. Regarding

the first, we have recognized that even apart from priesthood, which the Pope considers forbidden to women by God, there are a thousand other areas in the Church where women suffer discrimination: from the diaconate to the cardinalate, which does not require either priestly or episcopal ordination.

As regards homosexual couples, we should begin by distinguishing what is certain and what is uncertain.

a) It is not certain whether homosexuality is simply a variation (like being blond or dark-skinned) that does not indicate a deviance or a sickness; some anomalous conditions (e.g., celiac disease) vary from the normal processes without being properly considered sicknesses.

b) At the same time, it is certain that homosexuals have been socially mistreated and humiliated to the point that accusing a person of being homosexual is considered a grievous insult. Homosexuals consequently experience an exaggerated (though understandable) need to be recognized in a way that will help them assume their condition.

c) It is not certain whether homosexuality can be reversed; my opinion is that in some cases it may result from psychological factors, as when an abusive parent instills in the child a type of hatred or fear of his or her sex, thus preventing the child's sexuality from developing normally. If these cases are caught in time, they can be cured, but there are other cases in which the tendency appears to be genetic and clearly irreversible.

d) In these cases it is not possible to impose obligatory celibacy, not even by appealing to religious motivations. The New Testament itself states that «it is better to marry than to burn». Likewise, it is better for homosexuals to express their sexuality in a dignified manner, in a relationship of sincere love, instead of being promiscuous.

e) The biblical texts condemning homosexuality fail to recognize this situation and are actually referring to heterosexuals whose sexuality is out of control and who are seeking «new» experiences.

f) Given what has been said so far, there can still be debate as to whether the union of homosexual couples should be called matrimony. I have argued against such a designation because of

the very etymology of the word («*matrimunio*» = «protection for the mother» as provided by the man). But if the royal academy of the language changes the meaning of the word (as it just did in Spain), then I can offer no objections. Even as we state this all very briefly, we must still lament that, as in other cases, the official Church denies any opportunity for dialogue or for study and discussion of the question about a reality that is actually quite new.

Let us return to the matter of equality, one of the three great ideals of modernity championed by the French Revolution, along with liberty and fraternity. Nowadays it is recognized that, of the three, equality is the one ideal that has been sacrificed. Given how difficult equality is to achieve, it perhaps requires a much stronger foundation than does fraternity, which derives from the common origin of the whole human race. The only true foundation for equality must be found in the higher fraternity that derives from the fatherhood/motherhood of God and our recapitulation in Christ.

It is also important to point out that GS distinguishes clearly between differences (*diversitates*) and inequalities (*inaequalitates*). The Council teaches that differences are «just» and therefore should be respected as much as possible. Inequalities, on the other hand, are profoundly unjust and prevent people from attaining «a more humane social situation». GS consequently points to the economy as the basic root of all human inequalities; it states that «excessive economic and social ine-

qualities between the members of the one human family or population groups cause scandal; they militate against social justice, equity, the dignity of the human person, and social and international peace» [GS 29]. Later on it makes the same point more harshly, speaking about the need to «remove as quickly as possible the immense economic inequalities which now exist and which in many cases are growing and are connected with individual and social discrimination» [GS 66].

2.2. The economic root of inequalities

The document goes on to speak about the need to overcome the «merely individualistic morality» [GS 30] that North American conservatives have been tragically imposing on the whole world. Naturally, GS recognizes that human beings must act responsibly, but it also states that people «can scarcely arrive at the needed sense of responsibility unless their living conditions allow them to become conscious of their dignity and to respond to their vocation» [GS 31]. Two different ways of judging responsibility are therefore needed: one to judge the responsibility of the rich and the powerful and another to judge the responsibility of the poor and excluded. This two standard of judgment is contrary to the one now practiced by the world.

As Church we should take the document's call for responsibility very seriously, but we are not responding to it in a Christian manner. Fifty years later, the inequalities among human beings

have grown scandalously. From the time of the Council to our own day this growth has been fostered by a highly individualist ethic, one that is exported by the North American right. The scandalous increase in inequality makes serious demands on our responsibility as Church because it «militates against social and international peace» [GS 29].

The document will later warn us that such a situation of inequality runs the risk of leading the world toward war or uncontrolled violence.⁶ What is interesting is that a similar observation was made thirty years before the Council by one of the great economists of the 20th century, John Maynard Keynes. In his most famous work Keynes recognized that the two great evils of our economic system are its inability to create employment and its inability to avoid conflicts among human beings.⁷ This is quite true. Our system is a powerful creator of wealth, and that is why it seduces people so effectively, but the only way it knows how to create wealth is by distributing it iniquitously. Keynes was no socialist; he was just a conservative with common sense. The present situation is all the more scandalous because in our time it is possible for «the development of economic life to mitigate social inequalities»⁸, but instead «it often makes them more grievous, and in some places it even results in a decline of the social status of the underprivileged and in contempt for the poor» [GS 63]. At the same time, «our contemporaries are coming to feel these inequalities with an ever sharper awareness; consequently, many reforms in the socioeconomic realm are needed, and a change of men-

tality and attitude are required of all» (ibid.). Despite such warnings, it appears undeniable that the last thirty years have moved the world in precisely the opposite direction.

Insofar as the Council is addressing all humankind, it is expressing an ethical plan based on human reason. From a more Christian viewpoint, I believe that on this point *Gaudium et Spes* can be accused of not adhering closely enough to the spirit of Jesus. The teachings of Jesus with regard to the differences between rich and poor are of such a caliber that they raise to the third power any conclusion reached by human reason.⁹

It is true that the doctrine of GS in this regard has been extended and amplified by the later teaching of John Paul II,¹⁰ but it is important to note that GS distances itself clearly (as does all classical Catholic tradition) from the customary morality regarding property in the Western world. That morality «treats workers as mere tools for profit rather than as free and responsible persons» [GS 27], and it has aggravated such treatment by combining it with deportations, slavery, and human trafficking.

Without going into questions of labor, migration, worker management, etc., I want to focus on what seems to me the most decisive issue, the teaching about property.

2.3. The main point: property

«God intended the earth, with everything contained in it, for the use of all

human beings and peoples. Thus, under the leadership of justice and in the company of charity, created goods should be abundantly available all in like manner» [GS 69]. This is an important initiative for GS: reasserting the universal destiny of goods as the one and only «natural» right. That means that private property is not a natural but a «secondary» right, something that earlier popes had neglected to point out.¹¹ Only after strongly affirming the natural right of the universal destiny of goods does GS proceed to speak of private property. It states that «attention must always be paid to this universal destination of earthly goods» and insists that «people should regard the external things they legitimately possess not only as their own but also as common in the sense that they should benefit other persons as well as themselves» [GS 69]. In my view, this indicates not only the «social function» or «social obligation» of private property but something more: it indicates the social limit of property, which leads to the classic principle that «in case of extreme need all things are common», as GS affirms a few lines later. But if it is true that «everyone has the right to a share of earthly goods sufficient for oneself and one's family» [GS 69], then we are talking about something more than cases of extreme need. We are talking about what the Fathers of the Church taught, namely, that as long as there are people do not possess «sufficient earthly goods», then all that is superfluous in the possessions of others ceases to belong to them. That's why the Fathers stated that when the rich

give alms, they are not performing an act of charity but one of justice: they are returning to others what belongs to them. That is also why Jesus called private wealth unjust wealth (*mamona tēs adikias*: Luke 16:9).

It seems to me, however, that the Council is ambiguous on this point. On the one hand, it states that «it is the right of public authority to prevent anyone from abusing his private property to the detriment of the common good» [GS 71], a statement that in my opinion favors an interpretation more in line with patristic teaching. On the other hand, what has been taught has often been limited to the famous «social function» of property –and even then only in theory! The Council itself seems to support this limitation in what it says right after the statement I just quoted: it gives a splendid description of the cruel and unjust situation of many migrant workers on large plantations (coffee, cotton, etc.), but then it limits itself to proposing solutions that don't go beyond improving wages, labor conditions, and safety. Only with reluctance (with an «indeed») does it accept the expropriation of «insufficiently cultivated estates», and even then it notes that «whenever the common good requires expropriation, compensation must be reckoned in equity after all the circumstances have been weighed» [GS 71]. These qualifications are understandable if we consider that GS is speaking to «all humankind» and is therefore contemplating not the law of God but civil laws. Nevertheless, we should add that authentic Catholic doctrine, when addressing Christians

and not all humankind, defends the actual limiting of property rights, not just the «social function» of property (which itself is not accepted by a large part of our present-day society). One serious limitation of GS is its failure to treat in depth the topic of taxes.

I emphasize this topic of property because it is clear to me that the Church has been gradually adopting a pagan vision of society, one that is partly derived from Roman law, the *ius utendi et abutendi*, and partly from what Locke called «possessive individualism». In adopting such legal precedents, the Church has betrayed the best of its tradition and violated the Pauline precept, «Be not conformed to this world» (Rom. 12:2), a text that is cited in GS 37! Sadly, in this question of property the Church has conformed herself almost totally to the criteria of this world.¹² She has failed to follow the the Council's recommendation in this regard: «An effort must be made to avoid regarding certain customs as altogether unchangeable» [GS 69], a viewpoint that has contributed to making it totally impossible for «economic activity to be carried on according to... God's plan for mankind» [GS 64]. Similar accommodation to the world has ended up damaging the Church herself. GS was affirming already what John Paul II would later assert in *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis*, that when necessary the Church should dispense with luxurious cultic objects to help the dispossessed [GS 88]. The silence with which this precept has been received in the universal Church –a silence that is neither obsequious nor respectful but

rather is disrespectful— prevents the ecclesial community from being a «light for the peoples» and a «sacrament of the communion» of all men and women of the planet.¹³

In treating of equality and the economy (which in my opinion are themes that should be more closely united), *Gaudium et Spes* offers another ecclesiological reflection which has three points worthy of discussion:

a) The document solemnly affirms that the «divorce between the faith which many profess and their daily lives deserves to be counted among the more serious errors» in the present-day Church [GS 43]. The location of this statement, inserted between the two points treated above, makes it clear that this divorce between faith and life refers to the inconstancy of many people who call themselves Catholic but who do nothing to make the lives of other human beings on this planet more just and more fulfilling. In my modest opinion, the only response that has been given in the whole Catholic world to this allegation of the Council has been liberation theology, no matter how much may be said against it (and is said mostly to defend those who attack it). Many bishops, for example, seem to believe that the most solid basis for a Christian society lies exclusively in defense of the family and family-oriented morality. They fail to perceive that an essential condition for such morality is having minimally decent living conditions, which are systematically denied to a great many people. The result is that such Christian «morality» can be practiced only by the

middle and upper classes. But even as these classes supposedly comply with the Church's family-oriented morality, they almost completely ignore their social obligations. As a result, the classical expression, «practicing Catholic», takes on a whole new meaning, and the concern that the Church's own liturgy shows for the poor is brought to naught. This is what causes the divorce between faith and daily life that is vigorously denounced by *Gaudium et Spes*.

b) The same paragraph 43 contains an appeal to lay people, reminding them of their mission to «be witnesses of Christ in the midst of society at every moment» and in this way to «christianize the world». In this context, being witnesses of Christ and christianizing the world are not simple exhortations to practice a form of Catholicism reducible to marital fidelity and Sunday Mass. Rather, they must refer to all that was mentioned above concerning the need to create a more egalitarian world.

c) It also seems to me highly questionable to claim that the bishops «are the ones who by their daily conduct and concern are revealing the face of the Church to the world and that people will judge the power and truth of the Christian message thereby» (no. 43). In my view, at the present time most bishops are disfiguring the face of the Church and giving people a terrible impression regarding the efficacy of the Christian message, as GS already stated with regard to the causes of atheism. Revealing «the power and the truth of the Christian message» is really a mission for the whole Church and of the entire «community of Christians»,

as GS also stated in its first pages. In fact, as the document affirms in the very next lines, «even now the Church by her presence alone and by all the gifts which she contains (bishops, religious, and faithful) is an unspent fountain of those virtues which the modern world needs the most» [GS 43]. We might recall how in the early centuries it was not the bishops, who were mostly Arians, but the faith of the people that showed the world the true face of the Church. Sometimes conciliar texts contain inconsistencies that result from the juxtaposition of different positions, but the last phrase I quoted seems quite consistent with what is said in the decree on the laity about «the apostolic dynamism of the people of God and the function of lay people in the Church's mission» [AA 1].

It is understandable –and we should therefore be grateful– that after putting forth its marvelous program *Gaudium et Spes* recognizes «how great a distance lies between the message she offers and the human failings of those to whom the Gospel is entrusted» [GS 43]. Let me add that that distance has become much greater today, fifty years after the council, as even Cardinal Ratzinger seemed to realize. On Good Friday of 2005¹⁴ he lamented the wars being waged within the Roman curia, the pederasty scandals covered up by so

many bishops, and the corruption introduced into Rome itself by the founder of the Legionaries of Christ.

In any case, we end this chapter by recognizing that by carrying out what they have been taught «Christians can make a great contribution both to the prosperity of humankind and to the peace of the world» [GS 72].

With this we are already entering into our next chapter, but I don't want to pass on without evoking some precious but painful words that GS offers further on. They are precious and painful because they express a concern of the Council that fifty years later has become a reality: «Let us not give scandal because some countries with a majority of citizens who are counted as Christians have an abundance of wealth, whereas others are deprived of the necessities of life and are tormented with hunger, disease, and every kind of misery» [GS 88]. At the present time the traditionally Christian countries are the «rich man» of the parable of Jesus while the non-Christian «Lazaruses» are at our gates, «desiring to be fed with the crumbs that fall from our tables». This is a scandal deeply felt by many devout Christians, and even though it hurts to say so, they have often been hindered by ecclesiastical authorities in their efforts to eliminate the scandal.

3. PEACE

I am going to examine the way GS treats social harmony and international peace without taking into account possible allusions to the interior peace that all persons desire.

According to the council document, peace implies good relations and absence of conflicts, and these are impossible without justice (cf. Isaiah 32,17): «Peace is not merely the absence of war; nor can it be reduced solely to the maintenance of a balance of power between enemies; nor is it brought about by dictatorship. Instead, it is rightly and appropriately called an enterprise of justice» [GS 78]. Among the causes of discord among human beings the document expressly mentions the «excessive economic inequalities and the delay in taking steps to remedy them» [GS 83].

Consequently, the arms race, which is the very opposite of peace, is a first fruit of injustice for, as the great man of Assisi said, «when we (unjustly) possess goods, we need arms to defend them». I would like at this point, then,

to offer some comments on the «new atheisms», which are based on some of the flimsiest arguments I'm aware of. The new atheists hold that monotheism is intrinsically violent, and the reason they give is the tragic experience of 9/11 in New York.

3.1. A prior problem: monotheism and war

To be sure, the Bible has many pages of spectacular violence which, from the time of Marcion down to Simone Weil, have led some Christians to reject totally the First Testament. The Church, however, would never do that, and we should understand why. Before considering that, however, we need to examine at least three arguments of these new atheisms, for the problem they present is real.

a) First of all, the monotheist texts, though they mention violence, have plenty of non-violent, peace-filled passages that have made shalom (salaam, shanti, peace, etc.) a trademark greeting characteristic of the monotheist religions. Scientific methodology requires us to analyze all the cases and not allow just a few cases to define the object of our study.

b) Second, a great deal of Israel's violence took place when the people were not strictly monotheist but only «monolatrous», that is, when their faith in Yahweh did not deny the existence of other gods but affirmed only that Israel's God was superior to them all. Thus, polytheism would seem to be more intrinsically violent because it gives rise to an inevitable struggle between diverse gods and absolute powers.

c) Third, much of Israelite violence was directed not at «foreign infidels» but occurred among the monotheist people themselves. Israel despised the pagans and avoided contact with them in order to remain free of contamination, but it never proclaimed crusades against the infidels (as medieval Christendom did and as Islam presently does, according to some). Instead, monotheistic Judaism led the people to live closed in upon themselves, without much concern for other nations, even though they were called to be a «light for the people», according to Isaiah.

What, then, is the cause of Jewish violence? Let us try now to find the root of this violence, but let us be mindful that, even if the violence occurred within monotheism, that does not mean

that it was caused by monotheism. Let us prescind for now from the time of the conquest, for at that time, as I've said, the people practiced monolatry rather than of monotheism. We need to study the later life and history of the Jewish people, and our best sources for that are not just the historical books but the collection of prayers that we call the psalms. As we are well aware, that collection mixes together incredibly violent curses and some of the most sublime religious sentiments recorded in human history. How are we to understand this contradiction?

The key is not to be found in the realm of any particular religion but in the ethics and morality that all human beings share in common. Pious Jews who believed in Yahweh were constantly shaken by what they saw: if the one and only God is all-powerful and just, then things should go well for good people, and they should go badly for evil people. But what was happening was just the opposite: the good people were being robbed, maltreated, and defeated while the wicked were prospering while claiming that God didn't see their evil or didn't care about it. The impious were exploiting good people and boasting in the streets about their wealth. At first the psalmist believes that he will soon see the wicked punished, and he prays with confidence: «Truly you will disperse them in their foolishness...» But the punishment never arrives.

The psalmist then begins to worry that if things continue that way, the young will begin to follow the example of the wicked and the «portion of

Yahweh will be corrupted forever». Obsessed with the triumph of injustice and the power of bad example, the psalmist's words become decidedly more violent. He expresses confidence in God («I saw the evil man, but then I passed by again and he wasn't there») but in terms so harsh that they cannot be prayed (psalm 108 is an example). The Jewish people would have to wait until Jesus before the prayer of the just would become «Father, forgive them» instead of «God, punish them».

Not being an Old Testament expert, I don't know whether it's possible to date with precision each of the psalms. I am suggesting an evolution that is more or less in accord with the present ordering and numeration of the psalms. I am not sure, though, to what extent such an evolution might correspond to the behavior described in the historical books, such as the punishment of Korah in the book of Numbers. Still, there is no need to indulge our historical curiosity for the case we are considering. What I would like to point out is that, contrary to what the new atheisms affirm, the temptation to violence arises mainly from the ethical desperation that results from the triumph of injustice in the world. The new atheists themselves confirm this when they state that their greatest concern is the triumph of injustice and the death of innocent people in the attack on the twin towers. But from that premise they proceed with a total lack of scientific rigor to see monotheism as the cause of that great injustice. Having made that diagnosis, they become violent themselves, calling unabashedly for «intolerance toward

those who are tolerant», that is, toward those non-believers who tolerate believers instead of trying to do away with them. The intolerance of these new atheists is not very different from that of the authors of the psalms.

Peace and non-violence are thus closely linked with ethics, confirming the diagnosis of the prophet Isaiah, which is much more accurate than that of the new atheists: «peace is the fruit of justice». If the new atheists had taken this view, perhaps they would have asked whether there was not, beneath the criminal barbarity of the 9/11 attacks, another prior injustice against which the attacks were a desperate and disproportionate reaction. I am referring, of course, to the injustice of Western imperialism and, more concretely, financial imperialism. Jesus used an Aramaic word that captures quite well the sense of this imperialism: the word «Mammon» designates the idolatrous worship of money as a lord and god over human beings. Money becomes something that people serve unconditionally because it appears to have a saving power far superior to that of all the other gods.

These reflections on Isaiah and 9/11 bring us to a concept we cannot avoid if we want to speak about peace: structural violence. «Structural» means, among other things, that it is violence that goes unpunished; it is violence that corrupts. And if that weren't enough, it also means anonymity because there are no personal faces behind structural violence; it is part of the texture of our society. It is the kind of violence that incites people to produce a violent response, and that can end up generating the classical

«spiral of violence» so lucidly denounced by Helder Camara. Structural violence is often atheist –or maybe simply pagan– but at times it also uses God as a justification, confusing the will of God with what E. Mounier called the «established disorder». For that reason, the idea of God is silently present in everything we are going to say.

After these comments about our present times, let us examine some of the teachings of *Gaudium et Spes*.

3.2. World authority and the arms race

Gaudium et Spes complains that «there is no competent and sufficiently powerful authority at the international level». This very important and mostly forgotten lament is followed by a warning: «possessing military power does not legitimize any and all use of it for political or military ends» [GS 79] –clearly an allusion to the United States. These words make evident the ridiculous helplessness of the United Nations, especially now on the occasion of the UN’s fiftieth anniversary. Important proposals for urgent reforms have been made, but they were rejected by the officials of that organization.¹⁵ Our world today has become weary of contemplating tragic situations that require a strong world authority but are never resolved because that authority has been reduced to a farce. *Gaudium et Spes* returns to this theme a few paragraphs later: «It is our clear duty, therefore, to strain every muscle in working for the time when all war can be completely outlawed by international consent. This

goal undoubtedly requires the establishment of some universal public authority acknowledged as such by all and endowed with the power to safeguard security, regard for justice, and respect for rights on the behalf of all» [GS 82]. This splendid text arises from a lucid reading of another sign of the times, namely, that the concept of war has changed totally with the advent of modern arms, and «this obliges us to examine warfare with a totally new mentality» [GS 80]. This phrase adds a nuance to what was previously said about not denying the right of legitimate self-defense to governments in the absence of a world authority [GS 79]. The new mentality called for, therefore, leads us once again to the urgent need to establish a world authority.

In this context condemnation of the arms race is logical. What is more, it is absolutely necessary, both for reasons of peace («This accumulation of arms, which increases each year, likewise serves in a strange way to deter possible enemy attacks. Rather than being eliminated thereby, the causes of war are in danger of being gradually aggravated».) and for reasons of justice («While extravagant sums are being spent for the furnishing of ever new weapons, an adequate remedy cannot be provided for the multiple miseries afflicting the whole modern world») [GS 81].¹⁶ Here, as in the prayer of the psalmist, justice and peace are intimately joined, but it’s a shame that that they are so closely coupled only in prayer and not in the politician’s actions. And this is the case despite the impressive invocation that precedes this

text: «the bishops of the whole world gathered together, beg all men, especially government officials and military leaders, to give unremitting thought to their gigantic responsibility before God and the entire human race» [GS 80]. There was only one head of state who seemed to consider his responsibility «before God», but he did so by the ridiculous, if not sacrilegious, act of praying before he met with his councils of ministers and then accelerating and amplifying the arms race.

That is why in the future it is extremely important that we pay less attention to the mere enunciation of the word «God» and concentrate more on the image of God to which that word refers. This is the responsibility of the Church herself, which has so often concealed—instead of revealed—the true face of the God of Jesus Christ.

In this context it helps to know that it was difficult to get statements condemning the arms race into the text of GS. Those who were most opposed to having this included in GS were precisely the American bishops, who were generally more liberal in other areas. I suppose they felt pressured by their government. According to rumors circulating during the Council, Paul VI gave solid backing to this text despite pressure from the American bishops and the curia. In exchange, however, it was necessary to accept some «compensations» in the form of teachings about family and matrimony, which we won't go into here. We are more interested in something else: the United States, the largest arms trafficker in the world, can today get away with saying that Israel

has a right to defend itself, but it behaves very badly when it does not add that such self-defense should be proportionate; it should not be criminal, like the military action carried out by Netanyahu in November 2012. Unfortunately, the United States cannot state this clearly, not so much because the American Jewish lobby can influence voting, but above all because the U.S. sells Israel the super-sophisticated armaments that give it overwhelming superiority. Thus, by reason of this arms trade the United States—whether governed by Republicans or Democrats— forfeits all claims to moral authority in this world, and it also leaves almost completely ignored and abandoned that Jewish minority that represents all that is most ethical and honest in Israel.

In order for this concord among peoples to become a reality, it is necessary for «peace and justice» to embrace one another. And that is why GS closes this final chapter with two observations that are worth citing. The first one is more vague and alludes to the need to «establish an authentic economic order on a world-wide basis». In order for that to happen «an end will have to be put to profiteering, to national ambitions, to the appetite for political supremacy, to militaristic calculations, and to machinations for the sake of spreading and imposing ideologies» [GS 85]. This council decree was thus a precursor of the U.N. decree issued ten years later, in 1974, on the need for the «establishment of a new international economic order». The U.N. approved this decree with 120 votes in favor, only 6 against, and ten abstentions. If a decision approved by such an

overwhelming majority has come to naught, it is because the «no» votes were cast by countries like the United States, Great Britain, Germany, and Denmark, while the abstaining countries included Japan, France, Italy, Holland, Israel, and Canada. These two lists offer the best proof that our world continues to be dominated not by concord but by the tyranny of the wealthy nations. Sadly, the «world authority» becomes present only in the pain caused by its absence.

The second observation I wanted to cite from the document is the proposal that «an organism of the universal

Church be set up to stimulate the Catholic community to promote progress in needy regions and international social justice» [GS 90]. This proposal anticipates what was later recommended as the assignment of 0.7% of the GNP of every country to development aid. However, the shameful failure of this proposal makes plain not only the lack of human solidarity but also the ineffectiveness of ecclesiastical authorities in motivating Catholics to put into practice proposals such as those here cited. Once again, faith is divorced from real life.

4. THE INTEGRITY OF CREATION

Gaudium et Spes does not address the ecological question which is now so critical and urgent, nor does it recognize the threat of technology which would later be given serious consideration by Jacques Ellul. It does observe, however, that science and technology do not penetrate to the deepest dimensions of reality, and it warns that if science and technology are given the last word about the meaning of life, then the result will be a false agnosticism [GS 57].

What is perhaps most pertinent to this third point of our exposition is the vision GS has of human reality and what it says about anthropocentrism, which modern ecologists see as being at the root of the ecological problem.

In the October 2012 meeting of liberation theologians at the UNISINOS in Brazil, this point was discussed by theologians from Europe and Latin America. They blamed European anthropocentrism for forgetting about the earth, and they advocated a renewal of the Pachamama devotion characteristic of the different Latin American religious traditions.

It seem to me undeniable that the modern West has lost its respect for what Francis of Assisi called «sister, mother Earth». While it is true that this loss of respect can be attributed to anthropocentrism, it seems to me necessary to distinguish between a «natural» anthropocentrism which acts responsibly and a self-attributed anthropocentrism which despoils. The Bible itself distinguishes between the anthropocentrism of the first two chapters of Genesis (dominion over the earth in the sense of caring for it and making it habitable) and the anthropocentrism of the tower of Babel, which makes the land unin-

habitable because of the confusion that reigns among human beings.¹⁷

Having reached this point, let us see what *Gaudium et Spes* says: «Human beings, created to God's image, received a mandate to subject to themselves the earth and all it contains, and to govern the world with justice and holiness... Thus, by the subjection of all things to human beings, the name of God would be wonderful in all the earth... And thus, far from thinking that works produced by human talent and energy are in opposition to God's power, and that the rational creature exists as a kind of rival to the Creator, Christians are convinced that the triumphs of the human race are a sign of God's grace and the flowering of His own mysterious design. For the greater human power becomes, the farther both individual and community responsibility extends» [GS 34].

This paragraph might seem anthropocentric, but as I said before, it describes a «natural, responsible» anthropocentrism oriented to God as a sign of his greatness. Dominion over the world is exercised not as domination but «in justice and holiness». What is made perfectly clear is that greater power demands greater responsibility. Anthropocentrism of this type is opposed to that which acts as a «rival» to God. What is undeniable, however, is that the optimism of GS regarding reconciliation with the modern world prevents it from seeing the true dimensions of the problem. It fails to see how seriously irresponsible Western economic thinking is, whether in its communist or its capitalist version.

In view of this distinction, we should not speak of anthropocentrism in general as the cause of the present threat to the environment. The distinction allows us to view human beings in communion with nature without having to reduce them to fortuitous features of nature, thus depriving them of their special place in creation. According to Hegelian dialectic, the advances in history should not suppress the earlier phases but should preserve and transform them. Following a more Christian perspective, GS desacralizes the world in a way that places it in the hands of human beings, but without divinizing human beings in any absolute way.

Even if we understand anthropocentrism in this positive sense, it does not help us confront our present-day ecological problem, which may well be the most serious and most pressing of all the threats to our planet. Since this is a problem that came to fore only after Vatican II, we cannot expect a council document to address it adequately. What we need today is a convincing prophetic voice in that Church that will speak out against the growing irresponsibility of «individual-centrism» (rather than anthropocentrism). The whole social system of the West is characterized by a type of individualism that is holding the world prisoner, and there is no easy way out of this prison.

To see the truth of this, there is no need to recall how disappointing and saddening have been the results of all the meetings on climate change and similar problems. World leaders at times give the impression of being aware of the problem, but then they seem inca-

pable or unwilling to treat it with all the seriousness it demands. That's why I say that this is probably the most imminent and grievous threat that hangs over our planet today. The integrity of creation is now in need of a new council document even though, to judge by the scant attention paid to all the problems addressed in GS, more words are not likely to produce much change.

I will therefore limit myself to stating that the distinction I've made between the two forms of anthropocentrism will rescue us from the danger that I detect in some recent declarations of Leonardo Boff. I'm not sure that his statements go beyond what the title of his first book claimed: that the «cry of the earth» ends up almost completely drowning out the «cry of the poor».

5. THE ECCLESIOLOGY THAT IS NEEDED

What we have said so far can be implemented only if we have a certain conception of the Church's mission. As we indicated in the introduction, GS offers a theology of the Church *ad extra* that emerges from the *ad intra* theology found in *Lumen Gentium* and beautifully complements it. In this way the document brings together these two aspects of the Church, the outward-oriented and the inward-oriented, which Paul VI and Cardinal Suenans thought summed up all the teaching of the Council.

I have my own personal way of summing up this double aspect. *Outwardly* the Church should be radically a «Church of the poor», a Church that serves the world rather than managing it, a Church that unites all Christians rather than being fragmented into a variety of denominations. The Gospel roots of these three traits are easy to see. *Inwardly*, the Church needs a profound reform of the papacy and the hierarchy, such as will make it truly a «communion» and not an absolute monarchy.

But it's not just a question of my particular vision. In a dispersed and unstructured way, GS offers a series of intuitive insights that can be systematized around three themes: a) short descriptions or definitions that the Church gives of herself; b) positive aspects, which express the Church's good intentions or desires regarding its conduct; and c) negative aspects, which, even if formulated positively, are really confessions of errors or limits that the Church recognizes in her relations with the world.

Let us examine these three themes as spelled out with texts from the document:

5.1. What the Church says about herself

5.1.1. Council texts

«The Christian community, made up of men and women united in Christ and guided by the Spirit in their pilgrimage toward the Kingdom, has received the Good News of salvation which is meant for all peoples» [GS 1].

«The spirit of poverty and charity are the glory and witness of the Church of Christ» [GS 88].

«Every benefit which the People of God during its earthly pilgrimage can offer to the human family stems from the fact that the Church is the universal sacrament of salvation» [GS 45].

«The Church, whose duty it is to foster and elevate all that is found to be true, good, and beautiful in the human community, strengthens peace among people for the glory of God» [GS 76].

«She serves as a leaven and as a kind of soul for human society» [GS 40].

«In virtue of her mission and nature she is bound to no particular form of human culture, nor to any political, economic, or social system» [GS 42].

«The Church, sent to all peoples of every time and place, is not bound

exclusively and indissolubly to any race or nation, any particular way of life, or any customary way of life recent or ancient. Faithful to her own tradition and at the same time conscious of her universal mission, she can enter into communion with the various civilizations, for their enrichment and the enrichment of the Church herself» [GS 58].

5.1.2. Commentary

It is not difficult to find here a small «dogmatic» ecclesiology that coincides nicely with *Lumen Gentium*: the Church is a community of believers gathered around the meaning of the Christ event, a community that knows that it possesses Good News that is capable of improving and humanizing the world. That's why I think it is important to stress that GS prefers to speak of the «community of believers» rather than of the Church. As a community aware of its poverty, it offers its message lovingly and not by imposition. That is, it lives out that Good News in the hope that it will act as a leaven and an incitement in the world.

The two final texts make an important clarification of the preceding definition; they affirm that what the Church brings to the world does not coincide with any concrete worldly reality, whether racial, cultural, or sociopolitical. What the Church brings can embrace them all and can in turn be enriched by them all.

This ecclesiology can be summed up with a terminology that I take from liberation theology: the Church is at

once an «eschatological goad» and an «eschatological restoration» for the world. That is what she is, and that is what she must be.

The same thing can be said using non-religious language: the Church that God wants must appear before the world as a «utopian horizon»: she urges us to keep moving forward but, like the horizon, she is always staying ahead of us as we walk toward her. I need not keep insisting on how far we are from this conception –it is better that we continue with the teaching of GS.

5.2. What the Church wants and what she offers

5.2.1. Council texts

«This community realizes that it is truly linked with humankind and its history by the deepest of bonds» so that «the joys and the hopes, the griefs and the anxieties of the men and women of this age, especially those who are poor or in any way afflicted, are also the joys and hopes, the griefs and anxieties of the followers of Christ» [GS 1].

«She desires to unite the light of revealed truth to humankind's store of experience so that the path which humanity has taken in recent times will not be a dark one» [GS 33].

«Christians who take an active part in present-day socio-economic development and fight for justice and charity should be convinced that they can make a great contribution to the prosperity of mankind and to the peace of the world» [GS 72].

«May the bishops by their lives and speech, in union with religious and their faithful, demonstrate that even now the Church, by her presence alone and by all the gifts which she contains, is an unspent fountain of those virtues which the modern world needs the most» [GS 43].

5.2.2. Commentary

The highlighted words make very clear the Church's desire for a profound solidarity with the human race,¹⁸ a solidarity that translates into collaboration for the sake of the world's progress. In this way the Church hopes to be a «fountain» of goodness for the world, and her great desire gives rise to a series of concrete attitudes, spelled out in the following section.

5.2.3. What the Church offers according to GS

«Honest assistance in fostering the fraternal spirit among all people» [GS 3].¹⁹

«This council regards with great respect all the true, good, and just elements inherent in the very wide variety of institutions which the human race has established for itself and constantly continues to establish... The Church is willing to assist and promote all these institutions to the extent that such a service depends on her» [GS 42].

«When circumstances of time and place produce the need, the Church can and indeed should initiate activities on behalf of all people, espe-

cially those designed for the needy» [GS 42].

«The Church does not place her trust in the privileges offered by civil authority. She will even give up the exercise of certain rights which have been legitimately acquired, if it becomes clear that their use will cast doubt on the sincerity of her witness or that new ways of life demand new methods» [GS 76].

«It is the duty of the whole People of God, following the word and example of the bishops, to alleviate as far as they are able the sufferings of the modern age. Moreover, they should do this, as was the ancient custom in the Church, out of the substance of their goods, and not only out of what is superfluous» [GS 88].

5.2.4. *Commentary*

The Church expresses sincere appreciation for the good works done by others, and she shows her readiness to establish her own works as a form of service and not self-promotion. Moreover, she renounces positions of privilege and even foregoes any rights that might cast doubt on the purity of her testimony. She is ready to surrender even her own possessions when there is need to do so. The two phrases that I have highlighted in the citations give evidence that the situation of the world's poor and destitute has become more prominent in our time.

If these ideals seem utopian for the Church, then she should recall that this document also states: «It does not escape the Church how great a distance lies between the message she offers and

the human failings of those to whom the Gospel is entrusted... The Church also realizes that in working out her relationship with the world she always has great need of the ripening which comes with the experience of the centuries» [GS 43]. In this process the Church must not allow the «goad of Satan» (2Cor 12,7) to turn her away from that direction and make her face in the opposite direction. The next section touches on this concern.

5.3. **What she confesses and what she acknowledges**

5.3.1. *Council texts*

«The Church goes forward together with humanity and experiences the same earthly lot which the world does» [GS 40] «without always having at hand the solution to particular problems» [GS 33].

«This Sacred Synod affirms the legitimate autonomy of human culture and especially of the sciences» [GS 59].

«The faithful should “not imagine that their pastors are always such experts that they can readily give him a concrete solution to every problem which arises, however complicated, or even that such is their mission» [GS 43].

«The Catholic Church gladly holds in high esteem the things which other Christian Churches and ecclesial communities have done or are doing cooperatively by way of achieving the same goal [making

humankind and its history more human]. At the same time, she is convinced that she can be abundantly and variously helped by the world in the matter of preparing the ground for the Gospel» [GS 40].

«The Church, by virtue of the Gospel committed to her, proclaims the rights of human beings; she acknowledges and greatly esteems the dynamic movements of today by which these rights are everywhere fostered» [GS 41].

«The force which the Church can inject into modern society derives from putting faith and charity into vital practice, not in any external dominion exercised by merely human means» [GS 42].

«While rejecting atheism root and branch, the Church sincerely professes that all people, believers and unbelievers alike, ought to work for the rightful betterment of this world in which all alike live» [GS 21].

«The Church recognizes that worthy elements are found in today's social movements, especially an evolution toward unity through a process of wholesome socialization and association in civic and economic realms» [GS 41].

«The Church herself knows how richly she has profited by the history and development of humanity... The Church requires the special help of those who live in the world, are versed in different institutions and specialties, and grasp their innermost significance in the eyes of both

believers and unbelievers... She can and ought to be enriched by the development of human social life... Moreover, she gratefully understands that in her community life no less than in her individual members, she receives a variety of helps from men and women of every rank and condition... Indeed, the Church admits that she has greatly profited and still profits from the antagonism of those who oppose or persecute her» [GS 44].

5.3.2. *Commentary*

The first group of citations contain a clear confession of the Church's limits, including at times her ignorance. Such a confession contrasts sharply with the image of a «know-it-all» Church that was promoted during the time of John Paul II. The Church's limitations are not rooted only in the fact of her creaturely existence but also at times in the Gospel itself. For the Gospel does not seek to impose itself by influencing civil legislation or wielding worldly power;²⁰ rather, it seeks to diffuse its values through the whole society, and this is possible because Gospel values are profoundly human and promote the best human qualities. (That is why I always say that the following of Jesus is accessible to all humankind even though faith in Jesus Christ may not be.) But the Church should be much more resolute in announcing and teaching to all people of good will her values and her arguments with regard to both private property and the arms race. She should not simply state them in a document and

then forget about them, as has happened with almost all the social teachings of the Church. Rather, she should seek ways to influence public opinion so that these values are accepted by a majority of persons, believers and non-believers, and become firmly implanted in society. As a consequence, the Church appreciates everything that can contribute to this effort, whether it come from the profane sciences or from other churches or religions.

Accordingly, the second group of texts invites all the rest of humankind to

join in the Church's mission of building «the kingdom of God» (or the «other world that is possible»). The Church realizes that this mission needs the help of everybody, and she is grateful for all the help offered. Quite noteworthy is the Church's evangelical acknowledgment that she sometimes receives such help from her enemies and through persecution. The Church realizes that persecution (however unjust it may be) is often rooted in an earlier infidelity of the Church which the persecution helps to detect.²¹

6. CONCLUSION

In going over this ecclesiological synthesis, one is reminded of the words with which Paul VI brought the Council to a close: «Great sympathy has permeated the whole process. The discovery of human needs ... has absorbed the attention of our synod». And a little later he notes that this orientation has not made the Church «deviate» onto paths foreign to her mission but has «returned» her to the right path (nos. 8 and 14). These words, emanating from a deep spiritual experience, contradict the current impression of some people that Church-world relations are becoming antagonistic and that the ecclesiastical institution has turned its eyes away from human society and toward itself. In my modest opinion, this turning away is not the fault of any pope. The reason for the turning away is that the principle demand of the Council is the one that has been least implemented, namely, the reform of the Roman curia. This demand is found in the decree on the pastoral duties of bishops (nos. 9 and 10): «the Fathers of the Council want the dicasteries to be reorganized in accord with the needs of the times, the religious practices, and the rites» –and I think we have to add, in accord with the mind and the criteria of Christ Jesus and his Gospel (cf. Phil. 2,5).

1. BONHOEFFER, *Resistencia y sumisión*, Salamanca, Sígueme 1983, p. 267.
2. GAILLOT, *Una Iglesia que no sirve para nada*, Santander, Sal Terrae, 1995.
3. Pío XII, «Proclama para un mundo mejor», 1952.
4. In RATZINGER, *El nuevo pueblo de Dios*, Barcelona, Herder, 1972, p. 351-52. The nearly complete quote can be found in GONZÁLEZ FAUS, *Symbols of Fraternity*, Barcelona, Cristianisme i Justícia, Booklet 138, p. 38.
5. I also find it hard to understand how an important ecclesiastical authority was able to say that this conciliar text is exaggerated. That is like saying that it is possible to exaggerate God's love for the world and for human beings.
6. «Unless enmities and hatred are banished and firm, honest agreements concerning world peace are reached in the future, humanity, which already is in the middle of a grave crisis, even though it is endowed with remarkable knowledge, will perhaps be brought to that dismal hour in which it will experience no peace other than the dreadful peace of death» [GS 82].
7. See M. KEYNES, *General Theory of Employment, Interest, and Money*, written after the financial crisis of 1929. In the past ten years those differences have increased more in Merkel's Germany than in any place in the EU; truly poor people have made their appearance once again in the richest country of Europe.
8. The Latin American bishops assembled in Puebla in 1979 echoed this when they stated that «if this is possible, then it is an obligation» (no. 21).
9. For a little more on this, see the article «Jesus y el dinero» in *Revista Latinoamericana de teología*, no. 85 (2012).
10. See, for example, Puebla's splendid description of our economic system as one that produces «rich people who become ever richer at the expense of poor people who become ever poorer».
11. A possible exception is the following text of Pius XII, who paradoxically wrote no social encyclicals but seemed to be aware of the contradictions indicated by earlier popes: «Christian conduct cannot consider any social order just which absolutely denies or makes practically impossible or futile the natural right of property». This is in fact what happens when 10% of humankind possesses nearly 80% of the planet's wealth. The pope continues: «Therefore, wherever capitalism is based on such erroneous conceptions and arrogates to itself unlimited rights of property, without any subordination to the common good, the Church cannot purely and simply defend the established order as if it were an expression of the divine will, nor can she in principle protect the rich and the powerful over against the poor and the dispossessed» (Radio message of 1 September 1944, nos. 22, 24, 28). After the publication of *Gaudium et Spes*, Paul VI's encyclical *Populorum progressio* would make even more radical statements: «all other rights, whatever they be, including the rights of property, are subordinated to this right [the right of all persons to have what they need]» [PP 22]. It's a shame that these splendid words have been completely ignored in the present-day life of the church.
12. When I argue that the right of property is intrinsically limited because it is a secondary right serving the primary right people have to the goods of the earth, I am not advocating naive or irrational behavior. We should remember that classical Catholic morality was far more sensible in this regard than present-day morality. The great classical authors analyzed and discussed at length the question of which goods possessed by the wealthy were superfluous. They may have done so with a certain condescension toward the rich, but at least they were brave enough to pose the problem.
13. There are two issues that went beyond the purview of *Gaudium et Spes*, but after the Council moral theology should have treated them with greater perspicacity: they are the financial economy (since the social doctrine

of the Church considers labor the principal source of property) and interest-bearing loans. As regards the latter, a historic change is occurring, the exact opposite of what happened in the 13th century when the Church stubbornly condemned all interest. Now, to the contrary, money has passed from being the «occasion» of enrichment to being the «cause of wealth» (an absurd idea that once again changes the meaning of interest). Nevertheless, despite dramas such as that presented by «third-world debt», neither the official theology nor the magisterium seem to have become aware of this change.

14. «What great filth there is in the Church and in those who by their priesthood should be totally devoted to the Redeemer! What great pride! The disciples' betrayal was the greatest pain Jesus suffered».
15. I refer to the book of V. FISAS, *El desafío de Naciones Unidas ante el mundo en crisis*, Barcelona, Icària, 1994. See also my short presentation in «Supplement 87» of CJ: «Peace, the New Name of Development. The Fiftieth Anniversary of the United Nations Charter».
16. Things have now deteriorated to incredible extremes: every day four billion dollars are spent around the world on arms. With the expenditure of only twelve billion dollars a year, AIDS could be eradicated.
17. Regarding the meaning of the language of Genesis, especially the verb *kabash* (exercise dominion), I refer the reader to my book, GONZÁLEZ FAUS, *Proyecto de hermano: Visión creyente del hombre*, Santander, Sal Terrae, pp. 72-78, and to GONZÁLEZ FAUS-J. CARRERA, *Horizonte Kyoto*, Barcelona, Cristianisme i Justícia, Booklet 122 (2006).
18. As I will explain below, I think that this desire for solidarity has been lost today and has been replaced by suspicion and fear. I don't deny that there are reasons for this kind of reaction, but I also want to say that the Church should have that same suspicion and fear with regard to herself and not only with regard to the world. Saint Paul could not be more clear on this point: Christians should always proceed with «fear and trembling» in regard to themselves. What we need today is a new «letter to the Romans», addressed not to «Jews and Gentiles» but to «the Church and the world», reminding both of them that they are joined together in sinfulness. Any other attitude makes the Church look pharisaical instead of being the «sacrament of communion».
19. John Paul II thought that the Church had to play a leadership role. I think that was one of the reasons why he was uncomfortable with liberation theology.
20. As has been attempted in the question of the legality of abortion, which is quite different from the question of the immorality of this practice.
21. Whenever I read this again, I can't help but recall the impressive pages that Joan Maragall wrote after a church was burned down during the tragic week of 1909 (cf. «L'església cremada», in *La Veu de Catalunya*, December 18, 1909).

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Roger de Llúria, 13 - 08010 Barcelona

Tel: 93 317 23 38 - info@fespinal.com

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