

of the human person. As the human person exists prior to the state, any state that restricts religious freedom deforms itself because it restricts human persons from expressing concretely what is deepest within them and attempts to deny that dimension of the human person that transcends the state. This is why denial of religious liberty often leads to a totalitarian state.

Rights, however, have corresponding responsibilities and duties. With the right to life comes the responsibility to foster the lives of others, especially those associations that support the family and foster human growth and economic development. This includes active support for national and international bodies that work for justice among nations and safeguard the natural environment. This duty extends far beyond the responsibility to vote; it means taking responsibility for the political landscape and for the shape of specific policies. The right to participate in society is the obligation to participate, not ideologically but critically. The right to freedom of religion is also a responsibility to respect and foster all faiths and religious traditions.

4. The common good. As indicated, the common good involves creating social conditions that permit all people to participate and realize their human dignity. Today, in an increasingly interdependent and globalized world, the common good involves a universal common good that creates international structures to coordinate resources and projects for the good of the human race and the care of the planet.

5. The preferential option for the poor. This principle has already been treated; however, it is worth noting how Peruvian theologian Gustavo Gutierrez underscored the reason for the option for the poor: "We must be committed to the poor because we believe in the God of the Kingdom. The preferential option for the poor is a theocentric option. We must be committed to the poor, not necessarily because they are good,

but because God is good" (*Theology of Liberation*, 266). Thus, according to this principle, the important question to ask about policies and decisions of government and the manner of constructing society is this: How will this affect the poor? To answer this question properly, however, one must know the poor and have experienced in some way their misery and powerlessness. Today this principle urgently forces the question about the "rightness" of developed consumer societies based on surplus of goods while the remaining underdeveloped societies suffer from hunger.

6. Dignity of work and rights of workers. The economy must serve people, not the other way around. John Paul II said work is the key to the whole social question. Labor is not to serve capital as a tool in the productive process, but rather, capital is to serve labor. This implies not only a more equitable redistribution of income and wealth but also a more equitable redistribution of work itself in order to provide employment for all. John Paul II insisted on a just wage and other social allowances that "suffice for establishing and properly maintaining a family and for providing security for its future" (*Laborem Exercens* 3, 19). This right to work applies to the handicapped and to those forced to migrate from their homeland in order to find work elsewhere. In the eyes of the Church, all work has dignity because all work is done by human persons created by God, and as workers, they participate in the creative activity of God. Respecting the right of all persons to work "promotes an economy that protects human life, defends human rights, and advances the well being of all" (*Sharing Catholic Social Teaching*, 1998).

7. Principle of solidarity. The principle of solidarity became a key component of John Paul's approach to social issues. He wrote that we are all responsible for all. In *On Social Concern* (76-78), he emphasized that solidarity is the Christian virtue that "helps us to see the other—whether a person, a people, or a nation— . . . as our