

## Caritas: Our Role and Identity on the National Level

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### Reading through the encyclical “Caritas in veritate”

#### Challenges and impacts for Caritas

by Prof. Dr. Erny Gillen  
President of Caritas Europa

Text passages	Ref.	Challenges / impacts for Caritas
Hence the need to link charity with truth not only in the sequence, pointed out by Saint Paul, of <i>veritas in caritate</i> (Eph 4:15), but also in the inverse and complementary sequence of <i>caritas in veritate</i> . Truth needs to be sought, found and expressed within the “economy” of charity, but charity in its turn needs to be understood, confirmed and practised in the light of truth.	CIV 2	Caritas as an organization has a) to read reality and to study in depth and b) to tell the truth in its advocacy campaigns and messages.
<i>Only in truth does charity shine forth</i> , only in truth can charity be authentically lived. Truth is the light that gives meaning and value to charity.	CIV 3	In the encyclical this leads to a new definition of Catholic Social Teaching “ <i>caritas in veritate in re socialis</i> ”. Should this lead to a new definition of Caritas as the organized branch of charitable work within the church as well?
“ <i>Caritas in veritate</i> ” is the principle around which the Church's social doctrine turns, a principle that takes on practical form in the criteria that govern moral action. I would like to consider two of these in particular, of special relevance to the commitment to development in an increasingly globalized society: <i>justice and the common good</i> .	CIV 6	Our aim should be justice and the common good within our charitable work.

... justice is inseparable from charity, and intrinsic to it. Justice is the primary way of charity or, in Paul VI's words, "the minimum measure" of it, an integral part of the love "in deed and in truth" (1 Jn 3:18), to which Saint John exhorts us.	CIV 6	Caritas as an organization cannot delegate its commitment to social justice and fairness.
This is the institutional path — we might also call it the political path — of charity, no less excellent and effective than the kind of charity which encounters the neighbour directly, outside the institutional mediation of the <i>pólis</i> .	CIV 7	Caritas has to give its input to political debates.
The Church does not have technical solutions to offer and does not claim "to interfere in any way in the politics of States."	CIV 9	With regards to political issues, Caritas can keep its role to raise awareness.
The different aspects of the crisis, its solutions, and any new development that the future may bring, are increasingly interconnected, they imply one another, they require new efforts of holistic understanding and a <i>new humanistic synthesis</i> . The complexity and gravity of the present economic situation rightly cause us concern, but we must adopt a realistic attitude as we take up with confidence and hope the new responsibilities to which we are called by the prospect of a world in need of profound cultural renewal, a world that needs to rediscover fundamental values on which to build a better future. The current crisis obliges us to re-plan our journey, to set ourselves new rules and to discover new forms of commitment, to build on positive experiences and to reject negative ones. The crisis thus becomes <i>an opportunity for discernment, in which to shape a new vision for the future</i> . In this spirit, with confidence rather than resignation, it is appropriate to address the difficulties of the present time.	CIV 21	Caritas has to contribute in its own way to a new humanistic synthesis.
<i>The world's wealth is growing in absolute terms, but inequalities are on the increase</i> . In rich countries, new sectors of society are succumbing to poverty and new forms of poverty are emerging. In poorer areas some groups enjoy a sort of "superdevelopment" of a wasteful and consumerist kind which forms an unacceptable contrast with the ongoing situations of dehumanizing deprivation. "The scandal of glaring inequalities" continues.	CIV 21	How do we deal with our own disparities?
Today, as we take to heart the lessons of the current economic crisis, which sees the State's <i>public authorities</i> directly involved in correcting errors and malfunctions, it seems more realistic to <i>re-evaluate their role</i> and their powers, which need to be prudently reviewed and remodelled so as to enable them, perhaps through new forms of engagement, to address the challenges of today's world. Once the role of public authorities has been more clearly defined, one could foresee an increase in the new forms	CIV 24	Caritas as an organization is able to and ought to mobilize people within its organization (employees / volunteers) and in

<p>of political participation, nationally and internationally, that have come about through the activity of organizations operating in civil society; in this way it is to be hoped that the citizens' interest and participation in the <i>res publica</i> will become more deeply rooted.</p>		<p>contact with its organization (clients / donators) should participate in the “res publica”.</p>
<p>Some non-governmental Organizations work actively to spread abortion, at times promoting the practice of sterilization in poor countries, in some cases not even informing the women concerned. Moreover, there is reason to suspect that development aid is sometimes linked to specific health-care policies which <i>de facto</i> involve the imposition of strong birth control measures. Further grounds for concern are laws permitting euthanasia as well as pressure from lobby groups, nationally and internationally, in favour of its juridical recognition.</p>	<p>CIV 28</p>	<p>Caritas should stand for living the “Culture of Life”.</p>
<p>The “broadening [of] our concept of reason and its application” is indispensable if we are to succeed in adequately weighing all the elements involved in the question of development and in the solution of socio-economic problems.</p>	<p>CIV 31</p>	<p>Caritas should contribute to new criteria measuring politics, poverty and wealth.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- spiritual poverty in its own organization</li> <li>- communitarian aspects of poverty</li> <li>- isolation</li> <li>- ...</li> </ul>
<p>The dignity of the individual and the demands of justice require, particularly today, that economic choices do not cause disparities in wealth to increase in an excessive and morally unacceptable manner, and that we continue to <i>prioritize the goal of access to steady employment</i> for everyone.</p>	<p>CIV 32</p>	<p>New ways for Caritas in creating jobs?</p>
<p>The principal new feature has been the <i>explosion of worldwide interdependence</i>, commonly known as globalization. Paul VI had partially foreseen it, but the ferocious pace at which it has evolved could not have been anticipated. Originating within economically developed countries, this process by its nature has spread to include all economies. It has been the principal driving force behind the emergence from underdevelopment of whole regions, and in itself it represents a great opportunity. Nevertheless, without the guidance of charity in truth, this global force could cause unprecedented damage and create new divisions within the human family. Hence charity and truth confront us with an altogether new and creative challenge, one that is certainly vast and complex. It is about <i>broadening the scope of reason and making it capable of knowing and directing these powerful new forces</i>, animating them within the perspective of that “civilization of love” whose seed God has planted in every people, in every culture.</p>	<p>CIV 33</p>	<p>How do we as a Caritas organization deal with globalization as an opportunity and not only as a threat for national “sovereignty”?</p> <p>Should we not build a community of good practice for a new type of globalization? By not adding and adding, but by concentrating on the real issues and challenges.</p>

Because it is a gift received by everyone, charity in truth is a force that builds community, it brings all people together without imposing barriers or limits.	CIV 34	Caritas should overcome the boundaries of its own circles and collaborate with all people of good will.
Perhaps at one time it was conceivable that first the creation of wealth could be entrusted to the economy, and then the task of distributing it could be assigned to politics. Today that would be more difficult, given that economic activity is no longer circumscribed within territorial limits, while the authority of governments continues to be principally local. Hence the canons of justice must be respected from the outset, as the economic process unfolds, and not just afterwards or incidentally. Space also needs to be created within the market for economic activity carried out by subjects who freely choose to act according to principles other than those of pure profit, without sacrificing the production of economic value in the process. The many economic entities that draw their origin from religious and lay initiatives demonstrate that this is concretely possible.	CIV 37	Caritas as an actor within a new social and solidarian economy? Should we transform Caritas into self-supporting organizations?
While in the past it was possible to argue that justice had to come first and gratuitousness could follow afterwards, as a complement, today it is clear that without gratuitousness, there can be no justice in the first place.	CIV 38	Making gratuitousness visible.
In order to defeat underdevelopment, action is required not only on improving exchange-based transactions and implanting public welfare structures, but above all on gradually <i>increasing openness, in a world context, to forms of economic activity marked by quotas of gratuitousness and communion</i> . The exclusively binary model of market-plus-State is corrosive of society, while economic forms based on solidarity, which find their natural home in civil society without being restricted to it, build up society. The market of gratuitousness does not exist, and attitudes of gratuitousness cannot be established by law. Yet both the market and politics need individuals who are open to reciprocal gift.	CIV 39	Playing our role as church and communities of praxis in open societies.
We should not be its victims, but rather its protagonists, acting in the light of reason, guided by charity and truth.	CIV 42	An invitation to behave responsibly.
Striving to meet the deepest moral needs of the person also has important and beneficial repercussions at the level of economics. <i>The economy needs ethics in order to function correctly</i> — not any ethics whatsoever, but an ethics which is people-centred.	CIV 45	Being advocates for the deepest needs of people and communities – and not only for the poorest of the poor!

<p>Social concern must never be an abstract attitude. Development programmes, if they are to be adapted to individual situations, need to be flexible; and the people who benefit from them ought to be directly involved in their planning and implementation. The criteria to be applied should aspire towards incremental development in a context of solidarity — with careful monitoring of results — inasmuch as there are no universally valid solutions. Much depends on the way programmes are managed in practice. “The peoples themselves have the prime responsibility to work for their own development. But they will not bring this about in isolation.” These words of Paul VI are all the more timely nowadays, as our world becomes progressively more integrated. The dynamics of inclusion are hardly automatic. Solutions need to be carefully designed to correspond to people's concrete lives, based on a prudential evaluation of each situation. Alongside macro-projects, there is a place for micro-projects, and above all there is need for the active mobilization of all the subjects of civil society, both juridical and physical persons.</p>	<p>CIV 47</p>	<p>How do clients participate in Caritas programs?</p>
<p><i>International cooperation</i> requires people who can be part of the process of economic and human development through the solidarity of their presence, supervision, training and respect. From this standpoint, international organizations might question the actual effectiveness of their bureaucratic and administrative machinery, which is often excessively costly. At times it happens that those who receive aid become subordinate to the aid-givers, and the poor serve to perpetuate expensive bureaucracies which consume an excessively high percentage of funds intended for development. Hence it is to be hoped that all international agencies and non-governmental organizations will commit themselves to complete transparency, informing donors and the public of the percentage of their income allocated to programmes of cooperation, the actual content of those programmes and, finally, the detailed expenditure of the institution itself.</p>	<p>CIV 47</p>	<p>What about our own structures on the national, European and international level?</p>
<p><i>Nature expresses a design of love and truth.</i> It is prior to us, and it has been given to us by God as the setting for our life. Nature speaks to us of the Creator (cf. <i>Rom</i> 1:20) and his love for humanity. It is destined to be “recapitulated” in Christ at the end of time (cf. <i>Eph</i> 1:9-10; <i>Col</i> 1:19-20). Thus it too is a “vocation”. Nature is at our disposal not as “a heap of scattered refuse”, but as a gift of the Creator who has given it an inbuilt order, enabling man to draw from it the principles needed in order “to till it</p>	<p>CIV 48</p>	

<p>and keep it” (<i>Gen 2:15</i>). But it should also be stressed that it is contrary to authentic development to view nature as something more important than the human person. This position leads to attitudes of neo-paganism or a new pantheism — human salvation cannot come from nature alone, understood in a purely naturalistic sense. This having been said, it is also necessary to reject the opposite position, which aims at total technical dominion over nature, because the natural environment is more than raw material to be manipulated at our pleasure; it is a wondrous work of the Creator containing a “grammar” which sets forth ends and criteria for its wise use, not its reckless exploitation. Today much harm is done to development precisely as a result of these distorted notions. Reducing nature merely to a collection of contingent data ends up doing violence to the environment and even encouraging activity that fails to respect human nature itself. Our nature, constituted not only by matter but also by spirit, and as such, endowed with transcendent meaning and aspirations, is also normative for culture. Human beings interpret and shape the natural environment through culture, which in turn is given direction by the responsible use of freedom, in accordance with the dictates of the moral law. Consequently, projects for integral human development cannot ignore coming generations, but need to be marked by solidarity and <i>inter-generational justice</i>, while taking into account a variety of contexts: ecological, juridical, economic, political and cultural.</p>		<p>To be included and mainstreamed in all our activities.</p>
<p><i>The way humanity treats the environment influences the way it treats itself, and vice versa.</i> This invites contemporary society to a serious review of its life-style, which, in many parts of the world, is prone to hedonism and consumerism, regardless of their harmful consequences.</p>	<p>CIV 51</p>	<p>Pope Benoît XVI. – Abbé Pierre</p> 

<p><i>The Church has a responsibility towards creation</i> and she must assert this responsibility in the public sphere. In so doing, she must defend not only earth, water and air as gifts of creation that belong to everyone. She must above all protect mankind from self-destruction. There is need for what might be called a human ecology, correctly understood. The deterioration of nature is in fact closely connected to the culture that shapes human coexistence: <i>when “human ecology” is respected within society, environmental ecology also benefits.</i> Just as human virtues are interrelated, such that the weakening of one places others at risk, so the ecological system is based on respect for a plan that affects both the health of society and its good relationship with nature.</p>	CIV 51	<p>Franz Assisi (* 1181/1182 † 3. Oktober 1226)</p> 
<p>In order to protect nature, it is not enough to intervene with economic incentives or deterrents; not even an apposite education is sufficient. These are important steps, but <i>the decisive issue is the overall moral tenor of society.</i> If there is a lack of respect for the right to life and to a natural death, if human conception, gestation and birth are made artificial, if human embryos are sacrificed to research, the conscience of society ends up losing the concept of human ecology and, along with it, that of environmental ecology. It is contradictory to insist that future generations respect the natural environment when our educational systems and laws do not help them to respect themselves. The book of nature is one and indivisible: it takes in not only the environment but also life, sexuality, marriage, the family, social relations: in a word, integral human development. Our duties towards the environment are linked to our duties towards the human person, considered in himself and in relation to others. It would be wrong to uphold one set of duties while trampling on the other. Herein lies a grave contradiction in our mentality and practice today: one which demeans the person, disrupts the environment and damages society.</p>	CIV 51	<p>Caritas an advocate of integral human development The whole person and the person as a whole.</p> <p>Climate justice and commitments for life in all its aspects forms part of one and the same Caritas invention.</p>
<p>One of the deepest forms of poverty a person can experience is isolation. If we look closely at other kinds of poverty, including material forms, we see that they are born from isolation, from not being loved or from difficulties in being able to love. Poverty is often produced by a rejection of God's love, by man's basic and tragic tendency to close in on himself, thinking himself to be self-sufficient or merely an insignificant and ephemeral fact, a “stranger” in a random universe.</p>	CIV 53	<p>To challenge isolation within the church and within societies.</p>

<p>Aid programmes must increasingly acquire the characteristics of participation and completion from the grass roots. Indeed, the most valuable resources in countries receiving development aid are human resources: herein lies the real capital that needs to accumulate in order to guarantee a truly autonomous future for the poorest countries. It should also be remembered that, in the economic sphere, the principal form of assistance needed by developing countries is that of allowing and encouraging the gradual penetration of their products into international markets, thus making it possible for these countries to participate fully in international economic life. Too often in the past, aid has served to create only fringe markets for the products of these donor countries. This was often due to a lack of genuine demand for the products in question: it is therefore necessary to help such countries improve their products and adapt them more effectively to existing demand.</p>	CIV 58	Not hindering economic development with development aid.
<p>One possible approach to development aid would be to apply effectively what is known as fiscal subsidiarity, allowing citizens to decide how to allocate a portion of the taxes they pay to the State. Provided it does not degenerate into the promotion of special interests, this can help to stimulate forms of welfare solidarity from below, with obvious benefits in the area of solidarity for development as well.</p>	CIV 60	How to integrate such an idea into our discussions about financial burden-sharing on the national and international level?
<p>An illustration of the significance of this problem is offered by the phenomenon of <i>international tourism</i>, which can be a major factor in economic development and cultural growth, but can also become an occasion for exploitation and moral degradation.</p>	CIV 61	Are we promoting social tourism as a mean of development for young people in our societies? Locally and globally.
<p>In the face of the unrelenting growth of global interdependence, there is a strongly felt need, even in the midst of a global recession, for a reform of the <i>United Nations Organization</i>, and likewise of <i>economic institutions and international finance</i>, so that the concept of the family of nations can acquire real teeth. One also senses the urgent need to find innovative ways of implementing the principle of the <i>responsibility to protect and of giving poorer nations an effective voice in shared decision-making</i>. <i>This seems necessary in order to arrive at a political, juridical and economic order which can increase and give direction to international cooperation for the development of all peoples in solidarity. To manage the global economy; to revive economies hit by the crisis; to avoid any deterioration of the present crisis and the greater imbalances that would result; to bring about integral and timely disarmament, food security and peace; to</i></p>	CIV 67	Are we promoting a world political authority?

<p><i>guarantee the protection of the environment and to regulate migration: for all this, there is urgent need of a true world political authority, as my predecessor Blessed John XXIII indicated some years ago. Such an authority would need to be regulated by law, to observe consistently the principles of subsidiarity and solidarity, to seek to establish the common good, and to make a commitment to securing authentic integral human development inspired by the values of charity in truth.</i> Furthermore, such an authority would need to be universally recognized and to be vested with the effective power to ensure security for all, regard for justice, and respect for rights. Obviously it would have to have the authority to ensure compliance with its decisions from all parties, and also with the coordinated measures adopted in various international forums. Without this, despite the great progress accomplished in various sectors, international law would risk being conditioned by the balance of power among the strongest nations. The integral development of peoples and international cooperation require the establishment of a greater degree of international ordering, marked by subsidiarity, for the management of globalization. They also require the construction of a social order that at last conforms to the moral order, to the interconnection between moral and social spheres, and to the link between politics and the economic and civil spheres, as envisaged by the Charter of the United Nations.</p>		<p>What can we learn from the universal church and the local church?</p>
<p>Only together will they save man. <i>Entranced by an exclusive reliance on technology, reason without faith is doomed to flounder in an illusion of its own omnipotence. Faith without reason risks being cut off from everyday life.</i></p>	CIV 74	<p>Daniel Düsentrieb</p> 
<p>The greatest service to development, then, is a Christian humanism that enkindles charity and takes its lead from truth, accepting both as a lasting gift from God.</p>	CIV 78	<p>A new type of evangelization is required. Balancing evangelization and universalism of salvation.</p>
<p>Development is impossible without upright men and women, without financiers and politicians whose consciences are finely attuned to the requirements of the common good.</p>	CIV 71	<p>Count on people, support upright men and women.</p>