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## Social principles in John Paul's II encyclical "Laborem exercens"

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WŁADYSŁAW PIWOWARSKI, LUBLIN

**SOCIAL PRINCIPLES  
IN JOHN PAUL'S II ENCYCLICAL  
„LABOREM EXERCENS”**

In most recent publications pertaining to Catholic social teachings attention is directed to the necessity of educating Catholics in the spirit of social principles on the one hand, which is called „the social dimension of religion”. On the other hand, it is emphasized that there is a need to work out an adequate system of these principles in view of their increasing relevance for the solution of social issues in the changing conditions of societies.

The former is connected with the evolution of social teachings of the Church where, although attention to certain socio-ethical principles has always been paid, early social encyclicals (*Rerum novarum* and *Quadragesimo anno*) emphasized model solutions of the social problem more than social principles themselves, which admitted of initiative and certain pluralism as far as the solution of this issue was concerned. An example is furnished by Pius's XI encyclical *Quadragesimo anno*, which attaches a significant importance to the principle of subsidization. However, it promotes the so-called class-professional order based on medieval corporations. Pius XI probably meant the overcoming of the „spirit of individualism”, which contributed to the destruction of „intermediate structures” between an individual and the state. Therefore, it paved the way for the spread of totalitarian (fascist) systems. The introduction of „professional classes” allowed to reconstruct these structures, overcome class hatred, realize solidarity within the working classes and what is more important to realize a juster social system, free from extremes into which social systems of that time went. However, it should be stressed that the class-professional order was only one of many possible applications of the principle of subsidization, to which the encyclical pointed. But the commentators on the encyclical emphasized too much this very model solution forgetting about the social principle on which it was based. Maybe it is the reason why in the post-war period in Poland certain Catholic circles maintained that social teaching of the Church could be applied to capitalism only. According to them, what that teaching was aimed at was the reform of capitalist sy-

stem by way of evolution. Beginning with John's XXIII encyclical *Mater et Magistra*, the Church in its social teaching directs its attention not to the models of social solutions but to social principles. More precisely, it is concerned with exposition, internalization and realization of social principles, which find application in every social system existing in the contemporary world. Church was not called into being in order to create an alternative social system in the countries of the First, Second or Third Worlds but it „considers it to be its obligation", John Paul II writes, „to speak its views about the questions of labour from the point of view of its human values and from the point of view of social moral system connected with labour"<sup>1</sup>. The Pope refers his words to labour since „human labour is probably the most significant key to the whole social issue"<sup>2</sup>. However, he understands the social issue broadly and in different dimensions and consequently he refers the „duty" of the Church to all manifestations of this problem.

The latter consists in working out such a system of social principles which would allow to systematize, at least in a general way, basic principles if not all of them that is those specific applicational principles close to praxis<sup>3</sup>. The erection of such a system is not easy on the score of the lack of an adequate set, even in reference to basic principles, in the literature of the subject. There does not exist a set which would be generally approved of.

According to G. Ermecke<sup>4</sup>, representatives of Catholic social teaching are unanimous as to the following points: a) there exist certain principles; b) there are more than one of these; c) generally, everybody recognizes at least two principles — solidarity and subsidization; d) the principle of subsidization is more important than the principle of solidarity; e) it is difficult to find some fundamental principle from which to deduce all others<sup>5</sup>. However, authors are not in agreement as to the following points: a) the way to define the notion of social principle (contents and functions); the number of social principles; c) how to bring them into relationship in order to build up a certain system.

The above spheres of agreement and disagreement between the authors in their views upon social principle reveal the difficulty mentioned above even in a sharper way. If there exists lack of con-

<sup>1</sup> John Paul II: *Laborem exercens*. Warsaw 1982, No 24 (abbreviation: Enc. L.e.).

<sup>2</sup> Enc. L.e., No 3.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Cz. Strzeszewski: *Ewolucja katolickiej nauki społecznej*. Warszawa 1978 p. 298.

<sup>4</sup> *Beiträge zur christlichen Gesellschaftslehre*, hrsg. von R. Padberg und M. Pankoke-Schenk. Paderborn 1977 p. 105.

<sup>5</sup> For Ermecke, the basic principle from which all others may be deduced is "the principle of familiarism" (*Das Grundprinzip des Familiarismus*), *ibid.*, pp. 116—121.

sistency as to one and the same notion of social principle how can one expect to build up an ordered system of even basic principles. This situation is probably conditioned by a number of factors, among others by ideological standpoint, philosophical orientation, school and trend of social thought.

Having in mind both the exposition of social principles in the social teaching of the Church and theoretic-methodological problems connected with it, it is worth entering upon a task of systematizing the problems associated with these principles. Although the present article concentrates upon social principles as they appear in the encyclical *Laborem exercens*, one should tentatively attend to two other problems, namely: which social principles are present in the social teachings of the Church before this encyclical and next, what a social principle is or — to put it better — what the genesis and contents of social principle are. In this latter problem the side-issue concerns the investigation of philosophical grounds on which the social teachings of the Church is based.

### **I. Social principles in the social teachings of the Church before the encyclical "Laborem exercens"**

The basic question which comes to mind in connection with social encyclicals refers to the variety of social principles and what is more to the exposition of various principles at different periods. Can one speak of „changeability“ of social principle in such a case? In its social teachings the Church supports social moral order which points to the fact that natural and legal principles are meant. Therefore the principles established in the objective course of natural law are referred to. As a consequence of this, „changeability“ mentioned above should be treated as the „evolution“ of social principles. „Changeability“ could suggest absolute relativity and therefore substantial changeability of natural law<sup>6</sup> which social principles constitute a part of. But „evolution“ of social principles in encyclicals may be understood in a variety of ways too. It seems that one can enumerate at least three meanings of the notion of „evolution“ in social teachings of the Church:

1) Evolution in the sense of stressing certain principles in definite historical conditions. For example, Leo XIII accentuated the principle of common good in the epoch of pervading economic liberalism whereas Pius XI emphasized the principle of subsidiarity in the epoch of developing totalitarisms. In accordance with

<sup>6</sup> J. Leclercq wrote an article where he expressed an opinion that natural law is not known (*Natural Law the Unknown*, *Natural Law Forum* 7, 1962, pp. 1—15). However, he meant not the problem of the existence of natural law but its contents which should be investigated empirically.

the teachings of these popes, both principles are considered „basic”<sup>7</sup>. The fact that one of them is emphasized at the time when it is violated more than others does not contradict the existence of other principles, which need not be reminded of at a given time. Therefore, „evolution” means the reminding of definite basic principles on account of „signs of time”.

2) Evolution in the sense of increasing knowledge of the contents and functions of social principles. An example may be furnished by the principle of subsidization, which was implicit in the official statements of Leo XIII. This principle was clearly formulated by Pius XI, who enclosed its contents and functions in the negative aspect mainly. The popes who came after Pius XI paid greater attention to its positive meaning and functions and what is more they referred it to the sphere of political life (*Pacem in terris, Octogesima adveniens*), to the autonomy of the world and culture (*Gaudium et spes*) and to the whole human community (*Mater et Magistra, Populorum progressio*). Therefore here evolution means the increasing knowledge of the contents and functions of social principles.

3) Evolution in the sense of the application of social principles to the changing manifestations of social life. An example may be furnished by the principle of man's rights, which should be understood as a part of the principle of subsidization. For the first time this principle was clearly formulated by John Paul II in his enc. *Redemptor hominis*<sup>9</sup> although it had been implicit in all social documents of the Church. In spite of its general formule it may be interpreted and applied in all social conditions regardless of the socio-political system and what is more in every form of social life such as family, „intermediate communities”, the state and human community. In his encyclical *Redemptor hominis*, Pope John Paul II applies it to macro-structures and to basic spheres of social life. However, he makes concrete requirements and calls for the respect for man's dignity and rights.

It is worth adding gratier A. Rauscher<sup>10</sup> that the problem of the application of social principles has been treated one-sidedly in the social teachings of the Church. It is so because they do not properly appreciate the specific socio-moral problems connected with the

<sup>7</sup> Leo XIII called the principle of common good the "first and the last law in society after God" (*Breve Au milieu des sollicitudes* dated Febr. 16, 1892. In: *Acta Leonis XIII Pontificis Maximi*, vol. XII. Rome 1893, p. 33), whereas Pius XI called the principle of subsidization the "highest law of social philosophy" (*Quadragesimo anno*, No. 79).

<sup>8</sup> Speech dated Febr. 20, 1946. In: *Utz-Groner: Aufbau und Enttaltung des gesellschaftlichen Lebens. Soziale Summe Pius XII*. Freiburg/Schw. 1954, No. 4994.

<sup>9</sup> No. 17.

<sup>10</sup> *Soziallehre der Kirche und katholische Verbände*. Köln 1980 pp. 26—27.

tensions and conflicts in social life. The moral aim was given greater emphasis than the means to attain this aim in definite social conditions. They spoke more about man and his rights, about common good and fair distribution of goods, about harmonious cooperation for the sake of world peace than about competition, strikes, revolution, functions of the market, prizes, etc. Therefore, evolution understood as the application of social principles deserves special attention, particularly in the perspective of the development of contemporary societies.

Evolution of social principles has a bearing on the difficulty of finding them out in social documents of the Church. As can be seen, they are formulated in various historical contexts, on different levels of generalization, narrowly or broadly and they are not always explicit. What is more, sometimes they are associated with the theory of social life, sometimes with concrete conditions of a given place and time. It is certainly conditioned by the reference to the order of natural law in the sense that the author of encyclicals and social statements refer either to its primary principles or only to its direct and indirect conclusions. Depending on these levels one can come across fewer or more principles. Moreover, some of them may constitute an obstacle in the erection of a system of social principles because — as J. Majka stresses — they are correlative, i.e. inter-connected in such a way that „one cannot be realized without another“ or that one can be interpreted out of another one<sup>11</sup>. Moreover, some of them are in opposition to one another in the sense that an attempt to absolutize one of them puts it in the opposition to another. Summing this up, it means that both formulation and interpretation of each of these social principles must be carried out in the context of the others. This leads to a certain system of social principles because in reality they constitute, at least implicitly, some system and they can be competently formulated and interpreted in this very system only.

Now let us look closely at the sets of social principles which occur in social documents of the Church and in the literature of the subjects based on these very documents. As far as social documents of the Church are concerned, they enumerate such principles as: solidarity, common good, subsidization, justice and social charity. The principles of superiority of an individual, human rights, freedom, truth, dialogue, compromise, democracy are not so frequently found. This set refers to the frequency of the above principles. In actual fact, one can often come across specific instructions based on many of these principles but the principles themselves are not reminded of. Moreover, the epoch when they are reminded

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<sup>11</sup> *Filozofia społeczna*. Warszawa 1982 p. 167.

of and exposed by the Church plays a significant role here. For example, the principles of the superiority of an individual and human rights have been particularly accentuated recently.

It is more difficult to devise such sets of social principles among representatives of Catholic social teachings. It seems that such sets are subject to certain confusion and they displace the catalogue of social principles which frequently deviate from social documents of the Church. While dealing with this phenomenon, Fr. von Nell-Breuning emphasizes that differences between the authors of Catholic social teachings are not of factual character and they are not opposite to one another<sup>12</sup>. As an example, two foreign and two Polish authors will be drawn attention to. J. Höffner in his famous manual<sup>13</sup> enumerates the following principles: solidarniy, subsidization and common good as well as two efficiencies: justice and social charity. A. Klose in one of his recent manuals pertaining to Catholic social teachings<sup>14</sup> enumerates the following principles: solidarity, subsidization, common good, the principle of a human being, natural law, order and freedom. Cz. Strzeszewski presents a different set of social principles, namely the principles of personalism, justice, freedom, equality, democracy, compromise and dialogue<sup>15</sup>. This set varies from the project by J. Majka as presented in his recent publication<sup>16</sup>. The author enumerates the principle of personalism and other principles connected with it: freedom, subsidization and social pluralism, the principle of social justice and the principle of democracy associated with the former, then the principle of truth and the principle of love, which he considers to be the condition of peace.

On the basis of the above „catalogues” of social principles we can attempt to undertake certain systematization. However, it would not be sufficient since on the one hand there does not exist a precise definition of the social principle itself and on the other, there do not exist sufficient philosophical grounds which make it possible to present a clear concept of the system of these principles, naturally in the „spirit” of social teachings of the Church. The analysis of both of these problems is not easy, however it is necessary in order to avoid a haphazard system of social principles which would not be based upon adequate criteria. Those last-mentioned should be searched for in personalistic concept of social order in

<sup>12</sup> *Soziallehre der Kirche. Erläuterungen der lehramtlichen Dokumente*. Wien 1977 p. 21.

<sup>13</sup> J. Höffner: *Christliche Gesellschaftslehre. Studienausgabe*, 2. Auflage der Studienausgabe nach der 7., erweiterten Auflage. Köln 1978 p. 32.

<sup>14</sup> A. Klose: *Die katholische Soziallehre. Ihr Anspruch — ihre Aktualität*. Graz, Wien, Köln 1979 pp. 15—17.

<sup>15</sup> *Ewolucja katolickiej nauki społecznej* *ibid.* p. 297 ff.

<sup>16</sup> *Filozofia społeczna* *ibid.* p. 168 ff.

which both an individual and common good are taken into consideration. Therefore, both „extremities” of social reality are taken into account which allows neither for individualism nor for totalitarianism.

## II. Genesis and substance of social life vs. social principles

In order to define the notion of social principle and to find criteria for a system of social principles on the grounds of social teachings of the Church, one should refer oneself to the genesis and substance of social life. It is so because here lies the „meta-physical” foundation of social principles as well as of their substance and functions. It is the way to decide what they are and how they act in the framework of social life.

As far as the genesis is concerned, it may be stated that generally nobody rejects the Aristotelian-Thomist thesis, according to which man is a social creature<sup>17</sup>. This assumption, as P. Rybicki stresses, was of great importance in the history of social thought<sup>18</sup>. It made it possible to stand out against statistical approaches to the subject which treated man as something which is given, ready, self-sufficient on the one hand, and on the other it allowed a realistic and dynamic concept of man to be developed. As is accepted by this realistic philosophic anthropology, man — a material and spiritual creature, is a perfect, complete and „accomplished” being in the aspect of its substantial existence. However, he has potential, ability to develop and perfect himself in the aspect of his activity<sup>19</sup>: In other words, man is born to be a man, an individual who deserves special dignity and worth on the score of his reason. However, in the aspect of his rational, free and responsible activity, he has a chance to realize his humanity, to develop human properties, to become a full realization of his own personality.

As is seen, the social human nature is not only an initial disposition where the course of life starts. It is everything which has been attained throughout life and living with others<sup>20</sup>. This nature comprises inclinations and needs on the one hand, and the feeling of belonging to the community on the other. Owing to the latter, man becomes conscious of really infinite possibilities of development and perfecting himself. Naturally, the process of perfecting oneself is understood as going along the line of objective demands

<sup>17</sup> „Anthrophos physei politikon dzoon” Aristoteles: *Politica*, I, 1, 1253, a. 2—3 and „Homo naturaliter est animal sociale” (D. Thomae Aquinatis: *Tractatus de rege et regno*, I, 1).

<sup>18</sup> Aristotel: *Początki i podstawy nauki o społeczeństwie*. Wrocław-Warszawa-Kraków 1963 p. 33.

<sup>19</sup> Cf. J. Maritain: *Humanisme intégral*. 2nd ed. Paris 1946 p. 64.

<sup>20</sup> Cf. P. Rybicki *ibid.* p. 32.



of human nature and being consistent with objective demands of relationships into which human existence is wound and which must be taken into account in one's activity<sup>21</sup>. Man is also aware of the fact that perfection may occur in him — on account of too insufficient inner strength — only to a limited extent. And this is the point when one must „come outside oneself” and contract relations with other people in order to realize all those values which are indispensable for general development and which are beyond the reach of an individual staying outside the frameworks of social life<sup>22</sup>. This is how human social life in its various social forms begins. These forms are to a smaller or greater degree a postulate of man's social nature and at the same time they are a means to realize personal aims for all participants of life in community.

This very social nature of a human being constitutes the metaphysical foundation and direct basis of social principle. Inclinations and needs as well as belonging to a community which are in human social nature are ontic dispositions which give direction to human activity and intentions. However, they alone do not make up social principles. However, as is stressed by E. Wetty, „natural existence also justifies the same natural duty naturally desired”<sup>23</sup>. It means that dispositions mentioned above as well as all fundamental inclinations of human nature constitute the basis for normative principles of natural law. Through reflection, human mind reveals this trait of certain moral order in human nature and on the basis of these directed tendencies it formulates normative principles concerning social life.

As is known, social principles belong to the third group of primary principles next to those which concern the preservation of the existence of an individual and the species<sup>24</sup>. This group of principles into which social principles fall concerns specifically human life together with social life, which is of spiritual character. Speaking about social principles, one can quote after J. Krucina: „good should be done jointly, collectively, socially, in a group”<sup>25</sup> in order to create common values on the one hand, and on the other, to realize personal aims through these very values. Therefore, common values as a means to realize personal ones. This is close to the notion of social principle comprises a dictate of reason to create to the definition given by J. Krucina. He writes that social prin-

<sup>21</sup> Cf. S. Olejnik: *Eudajmonizm, Studium nad podstawami etyki*, Lublin 1958 pp. 167 ff.

<sup>22</sup> Cf. A. Rauscher: *Personalität, Solidarität, Subsidiarität, Katholische Soziallehre in Text und Kommentar*. Heft 1. Mönchengladbach 1975 pp. 14—17.

<sup>23</sup> *Herders Sozial-Katechismus*, Vol. I. *Grundfragen und Grundkräfte des sozialen Lebens*. 3rd ed. Freiburg 1957 p. 54.

<sup>24</sup> D. Thomae Aquinatis: *Summa theologica*, I—II, 2.

<sup>25</sup> J. Krucina: *Dobro wspólne. Teoria i jej zastosowanie*, Wrocław 1972 p. 109.

ciple is „a dictate of practical reason, which establishes a common value and imposes it upon people to be realized jointly in a society“<sup>26</sup>. The difference between those two definitions consists in separate starting points in the creation of the concept of social life<sup>27</sup>. The first-mentioned is certainly closer to philosophical premises of social doctrine of the Church. Moreover, the notion of social principle as a natural and legal norm comprises a dictate not only to create common values but to subordinate them to the purposes and tasks of a human being, who is the „beginning and the end of all social life“<sup>28</sup>. Krucina certainly duly appreciates this moment in spite of the fact that he neglects it in his definition because he treats social principles as moral principles. J. Majka represents a vaguer standpoint. According to him social principles are general statements which concern normal functioning of society. Therefore, a „social principle“ is not necessarily a moral norm which binds on people in their activities although he admits that the majority of social principles can be given the form of moral norms and they can be justified by means of argumentation applied in ethics<sup>29</sup>. It is hard to explain this ambivalence all the more because the author himself deals with natural-legal principles which occur in social teaching of the Church.

Assuming that social principles constitute a part of natural law, a starting point from which to define their substance and functions and to divide them has been determined. Although social principles are established in man's social nature, they find their full expression and sense in social life. That is why one should analyze the essence of social life first in order to present them as the principles of existence and social activity. As follows from previous analyses, people are by nature meant for social life therefore for joint making of common values through which they gain their personal objectives. That is why one can state that the essence of social life consists in this very joint pursuit of arbitrarily chosen values, in carrying them into effect and in „inter-subjective“ communication within the framework of social cooperation. In short, it consists in „receiving and giving“<sup>30</sup>, as G. Gundlach says. This means that while striving for social life, human beings realize both social values (in the sense that these may be created in a community only) and personal values (in the sense that they have some

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.* p. 112.

<sup>27</sup> Here two schools in Catholic social teachings are meant — solidaristic and friburgian which differ in their approaches to the definition of common good.

<sup>28</sup> Pius XII: Speech dated Febr. 20, 1946. In: Utz-Groner *ibid.* No. 4093.

<sup>29</sup> J. Majka, *ibid.* p. 165.

<sup>30</sup> Quoted after A. Rauschner: *Personalität, Solidarität, Subsidiarität* *ibid.* p. 17.

meaning for a given man). These values do not exist in the abstract but they are in human beings as the only substantial subjects of social life. In this way they acquire ancillary character in relation to a human being. An individual as a participant in social life contributes to the fulfilment of common objectives and tasks as well as he receives help and enriches himself. This is an indispensable condition of his life and development.

From the above one can draw the following conclusions: a) human being is not an ordinary part of some entirety for instance of the state. Thanks to his dignity and objectives, he outgrows all other social creatures; b) Through his nature, a human being is meant for the realization of values together with other people, i.e. in social co-operation and relationship. That is why he should subordinate himself to common good; c) Common values that is common goods have not a purpose in the abstract. They are created by participants of social life. That is why in the last they should be subordinated to these very participants because they have their aim in the human being<sup>31</sup>.

Coming back to „giving and receiving", one should emphasize that there are two basic tendencies of social life. The first one from a human being towards common good whereas the second — in the opposite way — from common good towards a human being. Both tendencies constitute the fundamental for the formulation of basic social principles referring to personalistic social order. These principles might be treated as the principles of social existence therefore as ontological because they define and express the essence of social life. They can also be treated as principles of activity because norms of any kind of existence are norms of its activity, as well („activity comes after existence"). At last, they might be treated as natural-legal norms since they constitute the basis of social rights and duties.

As follows from the above, there are only two or three basic social principles. The first one, based on a tendency „from an individual towards society", stresses common good (the principle of common good); the second one, based on a tendency „from society towards an individual", stresses the good of an individual (the principle of subsidization); the third one, based on both of these tendencies, stresses common good as well as the good of an individual (the principle of solidarity). All together, these principles contribute to the creation of a personalistic social system which — as has already been mentioned — joins two extremes, i.e. common good and the good of an individual.

These principles, formulated on the basis of the fundamental tendencies which appear in social life, create the „core" of all other social principles that can be found in social documents of the Church. Some of them accentuate an individual and his rights in

relation to society or a smaller community and the rights of the latter in relation to a bigger community (principles of subsidization, supremacy of an individual, personalism, human rights, the rights of smaller communities, freedom, truth; others emphasize society, its rights in relation to a smaller community (principles of common good, the rights of a community towards an individual, the rights of bigger communities); still others accentuate both the good of an individual and common good (principles of solidarity, justice, equality, love, dialogue, compromise, democracy). This list may be incomplete. What is of primary importance here is to present a certain system of social principles based on basic social principles treated as principles of existence, activity and natural-legal principles.

Considering these principles and their references one should notice that John Paul II in his social preaching accentuates especially those principles which are associated with a human being (dignity and rights) which certainly results from a broader picture of moral influence on contemporary world. The Pope draws particular attention to the principle of the supremacy of an individual, the principle of human rights and in a broader sense to the principle of subsidization. The principles of common good, solidarity, justice, equality, love and dialogue are given less attention although they are treated as significant. Let us look closely at the preaching of the present Pope as refers to social principles on the example of the encyclical *Laborem exercens*.

### III. A human being and social principles

It seems that in the social teaching of John Paul II the principle of the supremacy of a human being is given priority. In his encyclical *Redemptor hominis* he emphasizes that „man is the main way along which the Church should go in the fulfilment of its mission, he is the main and basic way of the Church“<sup>32</sup>. He refers to this thought in his encyclical *Laborem exercens* and he adds that Church „thinks of man“ and „believes in man“<sup>33</sup>. The basis of this trust in man is his special dignity and worth established both in a rational nature as well as in supernatural appointment and destiny. Owing to this, man is always the end whereas every other thing is a means. The encyclical emphasizes man's supremacy in relation to the world, to the matter, to things and to production<sup>34</sup>.

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<sup>31</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, pp. 21—22.

<sup>32</sup> No. 14.

<sup>33</sup> Nos. 1, 4.

<sup>34</sup> Enc. L.e. Nos. 5, 7, 12, 23.

The supremacy of a human being is clearly visible against the background of the process of labour. Man is the lord of the land and this reign is to be confirmed through labour. As the Pope emphasizes „man is to subordinate the land, to reign over it because being «the image of God» he is a subjective being enabled to act according to a plan and a purpose, capable of deciding upon himself and aiming at realizing himself”<sup>35</sup>. That is why man gives worth to labour. From the subjective point of view each kind of labour is the same since it is done by man. He is the „aim of labour”<sup>36</sup> and that is why he cannot be treated as a means, which is the case in social systems based on materialistic and incomplete concept of man. Man cannot be degraded by work, he cannot be subordinated to machine, he may not be harmed and so on.

As can be inferred from the above remarks, mentioned just as examples, the principle of human supremacy finds great application in economic sphere and it constitutes the basis for the solutions of socio-moral character. Naturally, this principle should not be understood one-sidedly, in an individualistic way because it is connected with a broader concept of personalistic social order. The fact that Pope John Paul II accentuates it has a bearing on the world situation, which points to various dangers in which a working man is.

Emphasis laid on the principle of human supremacy is directly connected with another principle, namely of human rights, formulated in the encyclical *Redemptor hominis*<sup>37</sup>. Here, the Pope deals in detail with this principle and he stresses that its violation is an „inexplicable sign of fight with man”<sup>38</sup>. In *Laborem exercens* the Pope often mentions human rights, both generally<sup>39</sup> and in greater details, enumerating directly the rights of a worker or, in a broader way, the rights of working class. Moreover, he wants these rights to be abided by. Here are the following rights: the right to fair wages not only on the level of minimum existence but the one which protects a worker and his family<sup>40</sup>; the right to be protected against exploitation. This right ensues among others from such elements of exploitation as lack of work safety and the conditions of health and life of the workers and their families<sup>41</sup>. Other rights comprise the right to joint ownership of means of production, to participation in the management and incomes of an institution<sup>42</sup>;

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<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, Nos. 6 and 4.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, No. 6.

<sup>37</sup> Enc. *Redemptor hominis* No. 17.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.* No. 17.

<sup>39</sup> Enc. L.e., Nos. 11, 14.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, Nos. 8, 15, 18.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, No. 11.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, No. 14.

the right to form trade unions and the right to strike<sup>43</sup>; the right to the employment of all capable subjects, among others youth and intelligentsia<sup>44</sup>. The encyclical also deals with specific rights of certain groups and social categories like farmers<sup>45</sup>, disabled people<sup>46</sup>, immigrants<sup>47</sup>. The catalogue of workers' rights presented here is interesting on account of its wide range. It is the first specification of workers' rights in social teachings of the Church. Therefore, the Pope not only preaches the principle of human rights but points to its application in the sphere of human labour, as well.

The encyclical devotes much place to the principle of subsidization both in relation to a human being and in relation to various communities. The moment we treat the principle of subsidization as a principle of personalism broadly understood, we should treat the two principles described above as its integral components. One should be properly interpreted after all. Pius XII for instance, while man being whereas the principle itself should be expiated on on the plane of „intermediate structures“. As for these supplementary remarks, one can come across an abbreviated formula of the principle of subsidization in social documents of the Church, which should be properly interpreted after all. Pius XII for instance while referring the principle of subsidization to the state, says: „the state for citizens and not citizens for the state“<sup>48</sup>. There are many similar formulæ. In the encyclical dealt with here, the Pope writes: „labour is for man and not man for labour“<sup>49</sup>. This does not mean that everything is for man without his contribution to the creation of common good. It should be understood in such a way that „in the last analysis“ everything is for man, that is the state for citizens, work for man, etc. because man is the end of all social formations, things, matter, world. One reads in *Laborem exercens*: „The ultimate end of any work done by man... is the man himself“<sup>50</sup>. What is meant here is an activity which man is the subject of, a working man.

This encyclical also draws attention to the need of developing initiative on various stages of development and of man's realization of himself, especially in the sphere of economic life<sup>51</sup>, which is connected with his subjectivity. Subsidization has two aspects here: negative and positive ones. The former consists in a situation when social organisms do not deprive individuals of possibilities

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, No 20.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, No. 18.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, No. 21.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, No. 22.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, No. 23.

<sup>48</sup> "Civitas propter cives, non cives propter civitatem" (Pius XII: speech dated Sept. 11, 1956. In: AAS (1956, p. 679).

<sup>49</sup> *Enc. L.e.*, No. 6.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, No. 6.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, No. 18.

of activity. The latter consists in supplementing and co-ordinating their activity within the framework of common good of community or society.

One of the most important things in *Laborem exercens* is attention drawn to so-called „intermediate organisms”<sup>52</sup>, which *Redemptor hominis* neglected. As it is known, reconstruction of intermediate structures in contemporary times was one of the basic postulates in social teachings of the Church. These structures are understood as smaller or bigger communities appearing on the level between an individual and the state. Here, not only so-called „free communities” are meant but first of all regional and professional communities. When these are missing, social life becomes „barracks”; human rights, his dignity and worth are threatened. The encyclical *Laborem exercens* treats these structures in a broader meaning — „of economic, social, cultural aims” and draws attention to their „real autonomy in relation to public authorities”<sup>53</sup>. It is a postulate resulting from the principle of subsidization which is understood by representatives of social teachings of the Church in the following way: „society should develop its activity as far as it is possible whereas the state as far as it is necessary”<sup>54</sup>.

The principles dealt with above point to the direction of activity in social life, namely towards man. Naturally, an assumption is made that individuals contribute to the development of the common good of a community whereas smaller communities contribute to the common good of larger communities. At this point one should direct one’s attention to another orientation namely common good.

#### IV. Common good and social principles

As was pointed out before, the other side of social life, therefore of the same social reality, is common good and the principle of common good connected with it. The encyclical *Mater et Magistra* defines common good as a complex of social conditions which allow individuals to realize their personal values<sup>55</sup>. Common good understood in such a way is not only of institutional character in the sense of conditions and mechanisms in service to the participants of social life. It has spiritual character, as well, in the sense

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, No. 14.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, No. 14.

<sup>54</sup> „So viel Gesellschaft als möglich, so viel Staat als notwendig” (J. Mesner: *Das Naturrecht. Handbuch der Gesellschaftsethik, Staatsethik und Wirtschaftsethik*. 4th ed. Innsbruck-Wien 1960 p. 260), or: „So wenig Staat wie möglich, so viel Staat wie nötig (A. Rauscher: *Personalität, Solidarität, Subsidiarität*, *ibid.*, p. 40).

<sup>55</sup> John XXIII: *Mater et Magistra*, No. 65; *Pacem in terris*, No. 58.

that it is realized within these very participans. As. A. Rauscher writes, this constitutes a functional and ancillary value<sup>56</sup>.

However, the necessary condition to realize comon good is genuine contribution on the part of all elements: the contribution of individuals to the common good of a community; the contribution of smaller communities to the common good of larger communities. This is what the principle of common good demand for the benefit of common good. This principle defines rights „from the top“ and duties „from below“, i.e. from individuals and from various kinds of communities towards uniwersal community whose aim is *bonum familiae humanae*.

The encyclical *Laborem exercens* does not mention the principle of common good explicitly. However, it often mentions the requirements of common good<sup>57</sup>, the need of co-operation between individuals and social groups for common good<sup>58</sup> and the necessity to multiply common good<sup>59</sup>. This points to the fact that at least implicitly it refers to the principle of common good.

It is characteristic that in accordance with the principle of common good the Pope opposes to group or class egoism that leads to one-sided interpretation of common good<sup>60</sup>. It should be the „just common good“<sup>61</sup> since in the last analysis it consists in the respect for human rights<sup>62</sup>. Against this background the distinction between „nationalization“ and „socialization“ is of interest. The former consists in the taking over of the means of production by the state and consequently in giving preference to a certain group of people who consider themselves to be the only dispatchers of those means just because of the fact that these people are in power. This is an expression of a certain kind of group egoism. That is why the Pope emphasizes that it is not equivalent with „socialization“. The latter takes place only when „the subjectivity of society is secured that is when everybody — on the basis of his work — may consider himself the owner of a great workshop where he works with others<sup>63</sup>. It is „socialization“ which creates proper conditions for responsible co-operation for the benefit of common good. The idea concerns various „intermediate organisms“ of economic character which according to the Pope should be granted autonomy but which should be „subordinated to common good“ at the same time<sup>64</sup>.

<sup>56</sup> *Personalität, Solidarität, Subsidiarität, ibid.*, p. 31.

<sup>57</sup> Enc. L.e., No. 20.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, No. 14.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, No. 20.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, No. 20.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, No. 20.

<sup>62</sup> *Pacem in terris*, No. 60.

<sup>63</sup> Enc. L.e., No. 14.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*, No. 10.



The principle of common good is connected with the problem of „spirituality of labour”. This especially refers to these moments which concern adaptation to the work in family, in one's profession and in society (nation)<sup>65</sup>. It is difficult to speak about the development of common good of the whole society without expert, solid and responsible work. Therefore, there is an open question of working out proper culture of labour or — to put it better — morality of human labour.

The principle of common good is an important fundamental of social life, especially against the background of other principles which are given more emphasis and of one-sided interpretation of common good. The postulates ensuing from this principle protect common good, which is after all the *sine qua non* of the realization of human rights.

### V. Solidarity and social principles

The principle of solidarity, treated by some representatives of Catholic social science as the most important social principle, is of two-fold character in the encyclical *Laborem exercens*.

Firstly, solidarity means joint a activity in a similar situation in order to overcome „anomaly”, injustice and harm. Solidarity understood in such a way took place in the initial period of the industrial development and of the creation of proletariat, which resulted in the „workman's problem” also defined as the „proletarian problem”<sup>66</sup>. The Pope writes that this very problem „became the source of right social reaction, it delivered great spurt among working classes and first of all among industrial workers”<sup>67</sup> This „spurt of solidarity” meant a call to a joint activity in order to change working conditions, to protect the workers against exploitation, injustice and harm which called for vengeance<sup>68</sup>. In short, it was a call to fight for workmen's rights. The situation has changed since that time. There ensued greater class consciousness, distinct „fronts” of solidarity were created such as trade unions and other social systems whose aim was to act for the benefit of working classes. Nevertheless, the Pope writes: „One should still ask the question concerning the subject of labour and the conditions of the existence”<sup>69</sup>. One should pay attention to still present pauperization and proletarianization if not of whole societies then of at least certain classes and social categories. We still need the „solidarity

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, No. 8.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*, No. 8.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, No. 8.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*, No. 8. The encyclical quotes the Bible here (Deut. 24, 15; Jas. 5, 4; Gen. 4, 10).

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*, No. 8.

of working people" as well as „solidarity with the working people"<sup>70</sup>.

From the sociological point of view, the phenomenon of solidarity may be treated as an attempt to overcome anomy. The term „anomy" was introduced to sociology by E. Durkheim and expanded by R. K. Merton and T. Parsons. Anomy occurs on the level of culture and social structure<sup>71</sup>. The former concerns the threat or even crisis of values, whereas the latter refers to the lack of social unity and stability. The way out of anomy is possible when new values appear which would be socially „contagious" as well as new social bonds based on these very values. Therefore, solidarity understood as a social fact the Pope speaks about means a search for consensus (with certain compromises) and the creation of authentic togetherness.

Another meaning of solidarity is broader and more adequate. It joins both „extremities" of social life, namely an individual and common good or — to put it otherwise — two aspects of the same social reality, i.e. „from top to bottom" and „from bottom to top". Consequently, solidarity means both total care about the protection of an individual and his rights as well as common good and the rights of society. The principle of solidarity understood in such a way contributes to the creation of the proper humane social order.

The encyclical *Laborem exercens* often mentions this principle because it aims at finding out the basis of everything which unites people and communities for the common good of all people. And so for example the Pope stresses the need for „social moral order"<sup>72</sup> which would guarantee human rights, especially the rights of the workers, the right of „intermediate structures" and where the common good of society would be secured at the same time. The Pope calls on public authorities, social and international organizations to secure this order. The principle of solidarity in particular finds application on international level. Here, the Pope points to the fact of mutual dependence of particular societies and states on the one hand, and on the other to the necessity of international co-operation between these in order to overcome inequality and injustice as well as to secure universal and proportional progress<sup>73</sup>.

The principle of solidarity is closely connected with others which are enumerated in the encyclical *Laborem exercens*, namely the principle of equality in the sense of equal dignity and human rights, the principle of justice, love and dialogue. Out of these, the Pope most frequently emphasizes the principle of justice. He

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*, No. 8.

<sup>71</sup> Cf. R. K. Merton: *Social Theory and Social Structure*. New York 1957 p. 162.

<sup>72</sup> *Enc. L.e.*, No. 17.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*, Nos. 17, 18.

speaks about „justice and peace”<sup>74</sup>, fair development „in a more universal dimension”<sup>75</sup> and about „just social system”<sup>76</sup>. Justice is a many-sided problem but a very important one on account of the highest earthly value namely peace. It constitutes the „core” of contemporary social issue.

Solidarity as a fact and as a principle is an important element of the encyclical *Laborem exercens*. It is characteristic that while pointing to the need of solidarity on the level of the state or of general human togetherness, the Pope always has man and his rights in mind. It results from the fact that in John Paul’s II social teaching man is the point from which all manifestations of social life start and at which they arrive.

The above analysis of social principles in social teachings of the Church with particular attention paid to the encyclical *Laborem exercens*, is not complete. It is just an attempt to systematize social principles which nowadays constitute the basis of social education of Catholics. As it turned out, a very important thing is to understand social principle and to find criteria which would allow to build up a system of these principles. This task may be regarded as fulfilled at least in the sense that in broached a terse discussion. That is why and it was possible to determine which principles are basic and which principles are related to those considered as basic and then to analyze these principles as they appear in *Laborem exercens*. Still, this analysis is not complete. What was meant here was to show the social principles presented by the Pope, when he taught about personalistic social system.

Summing this up, one should emphasize once again that in the system of social principles exposed in social teachings of the Church, one finds orientation towards a human being on the one hand, and orientation towards common good on the other. Both of these realities require valuation in order to AVOID going into extremes. This makes up a possibility of the third orientation namely solidarity. Within the framework of these three orientations one can formulate various social principles — general as well as detailed, applicational. Regardless of the direction of activity, all these principles contribute to the creation of personalistic, humanist just social order (system).

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<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*, Nos. 2, 18.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*, No. 2.

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*, 19, 21.