



## Global Governance and the Universal Common Good

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Benedict XVI's reproposal of the need for a world political authority in his social encyclical *Caritas in Veritate* drew a predictable outcry from many quarters.<sup>1</sup> Resistance to such an idea has numerous causes, not least of which is the experience of the United Nations Organization in the past half century. The fact that Benedict speaks of a renewal of the United Nations in the same section of the encyclical where he treats of global authority, and that in so doing he expresses hope that the concept of the family of nations can acquire "real teeth," only served to exacerbate the consternation of those who consider the idea of international political authority utopian at best and perilous at

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<sup>1</sup> As just a sampling of this consternation, Douglas Farrow wrote: "The frequent rhetoric about human solidarity, embodied in institutions with global reach and authority, for example, left some wondering whether they had picked up the latest white paper from the United Nations" (Douglas Farrow, "Charity and Unity," *First Things* 196 [October 2009], 37). Or as George Weigel wrote, more pointedly still: "And another Justice and Peace favorite — the creation of a 'world political authority' to ensure integral human development — is revisited, with no more insight into how such an authority would operate than is typically found in such curial fideism about the inherent superiority of transnational governance" (George Weigel, "Caritas in Veritate in Gold and Red," *National Review Online*, July 7, 2009).

worst.<sup>2</sup> As the closest thing we have to an international authority, the United Nations Organization has not exactly shone as a beacon either of efficiency or of disinterested defense of international justice; the reality has been quite otherwise.<sup>3</sup> Often the UN has found itself a pawn to manipulation from lobbyists and special interest groups that have pushed UN positions far left of the mainstream on questions such as “reproductive rights,” marriage and radical feminism.<sup>4</sup>

Skepticism concerning the United Nations is not the only cause of opposition to the idea of global governance, however. As political authority moves further from the people who are governed, it risks disconnecting itself from their real concerns and wishes, as we have seen in recent years in the case of the European Parliament. One of the mainstays of representative government is its accountability to the people it serves. This accountability, in turn, relies on the people’s ability both to follow the activity of their representatives and to replace those who do not responsibly and effectively carry out this service. Such accountability has been next to non-existent in the case of the United Nations, and is hard to envision at the international level. The inner workings of faraway governments (one need go no farther than Brussels) tend to become less transparent and murkier than most people are accustomed to in their own countries.<sup>5</sup>

The problems don’t stop here. In order to handle even minimal tasks on a world scale, a global government would necessitate yet another immense bureaucracy, which would almost certainly be less efficient than existing national governments. Citizens who did not agree

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<sup>2</sup> Actually the official Latin text was more subdued than the “real teeth” translation, expressing desire only that “*familiae Nationum notio re efficiatur*,” or that the concept of the family of nations might become more real or effective.

<sup>3</sup> As Held and McGrew have stated, the achievements of global governance “appear decidedly thin” (David Held and Anthony G. McGrew, *Governing Globalization: Power, Authority and Global Governance* [Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2002], xi).

<sup>4</sup> Thus Stutzer and Frey of the University of Zurich have noted: “It is argued that, rather than reflecting ‘world opinion,’ [international organizations] represent the specific interests of the donors who fund NGO activities” (Alois Stutzer and Bruno S. Frey, “Making International Organizations More Democratic,” *Review of Law and Economics* 1/3 [2005], 306).

<sup>5</sup> The distancing of government from the governed means that “taxpayers of the nations funding the international organizations... do not effectively and sufficiently control the behavior of bureaucrats in international organizations” and that the delegation of competencies to international organizations and their policy-making “do not meet adequate procedural conditions to ensure that people in member countries feel like empowered citizens with autonomy and influence” (Alois Stutzer and Bruno S. Frey, “Making International Organizations More Democratic,” *Review of Law and Economics* 1/3 [2005], 306).

with the policies of such an entity would end up paying for them anyway. In addition, they would have no ultimate recourse except submission to such policies, since the possibility of migration—which has always been an extreme escape hatch for the disgruntled—would cease to exist in a one-government world.

Speaking as an American, I have seen among my countrymen hostility to global governance for other reasons as well, though these reasons, *servatis servandis*, may well exist among other nationalities as well. For one thing, Americans tend to trust their own elected officials more than a hypothetical body of international bureaucrats with power to meddle in US affairs. For all the criticism of US politicians, they are still considered more reliable than other figures that do not share our national values, education and principles. Many Americans believe that the United States has served as a force for good in the world, such as effectively putting an end to the Second World War and uniquely in history helping our defeated enemies to rebuild, as well as defending other nations from the threat of Soviet Communism during the long Cold War. In addition, Americans perhaps rightly suppose that they have more to lose than any other country if they were to submit to international governance, while having virtually nothing to gain. It is hardly a secret that some other nations harbor envy toward the United States and would love to start issuing directives regarding how the United States should manage its political, military and economic affairs. Besides, many reason, taxes are already high enough; support of a bureaucratic international body would further drain limited resources and unfairly allocate them.

So how are we supposed to view Benedict's call for an international political authority? Should we simply ascribe his views to a benighted European, quasi-socialist mindset that refuses to die, despite its evident failures where it has been applied? Furthermore, how do our changing socio-political landscape and the inexorable advance of economic and cultural globalization affect our traditional understanding of law, national sovereignty, war, and the common good, especially as they relate to development and the growing threat and reality of terrorism? Benedict's encyclical *Caritas in Veritate* provides a helpful stimulus to revisit these questions, as well as furnishing some surprising insights that can help better orient our attitudes toward and understanding of these issues.

### Political authority and the universal common good

Some of the criticism leveled against Benedict has grown out of mistaken suppositions, which must be cleared away before we can serenely evaluate his proposal. The first necessary clarification concerns the consistent nature of the Church's teaching on the need for political authority, even on an international level. From the tone of some commentaries on *Caritas in Veritate* one could get the impression that Pope Benedict was proposing something quite innovative in calling for a world political authority. He wasn't. This is a basic tenet of Catholic social doctrine, and represents an application of perennial Christian teachings regarding the common good. Its present articulation goes back to Pope Leo XIII (1878-1903), a devoted Thomist, and received a decisive push during the pontificate of Blessed John XXIII (1958-1963).

Following the doctrine of Saint Thomas Aquinas, and the classical tradition he draws from, Catholic political philosophy teaches that the purpose of all law, and of the public authority that promulgates and enforces it, is promotion of the common good.<sup>6</sup> Political authority exists for the sake of the common good, and the common good, in turn, calls out for an authority to safeguard it.<sup>7</sup> Above and beyond the particular good and particular interests of individuals, exists the common good of society.<sup>8</sup> This common good is not the good of the abstract collectivity or the state, nor is it merely the amalgamation of the particular goods of the individual members, but rather the good of every person both as an individual and as a social being in relation to the others.

Catholic social teaching defines the common good as "the sum total of social conditions which allow people, either as groups or as

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<sup>6</sup> Aquinas states that "the end of law is the common good" (S.Th. I-II.96.1, resp.).

<sup>7</sup> Aquinas later adds: "And as the care of the common weal is committed to those who are in authority, it is their business to watch over the common weal of the city, kingdom or province subject to them" (S.Th. II-II.40.1, resp.). Elsewhere he writes that "in every community, he who governs the community, cares, first of all, for the common good" (Ibid. I-II.21.4).

<sup>8</sup> The role of public authority is "to ensure as far as possible the common good of the society" (*Catechism of the Catholic Church* [hereafter CCC], no. 1898). Leo similarly noted that "civil power ... was established for the common good of all" (Pope Leo XIII, encyclical letter *Immortale Dei* (1885), no. 5).

individuals, to reach their fulfillment more fully and more easily.”<sup>9</sup> It is the specific mission of the law and public authority to guarantee these social conditions and opportunities for the good of all. This ensemble of conditions comprised by the common good can be broken down into three component categories: (1) respect for the dignity of the person as such and the protection and satisfaction of his rights, (2) social well-being and development of the group itself (material prosperity, health, education, culture, etc.), (3) peace: the stability and security of a just order.<sup>10</sup>

The common good does not exist only on the level of the state or nation, however, but at the level of every human group or community.<sup>11</sup> Thus we can speak of the common good of families, associations, local communities, the Church, states and nations and of any other human groups that fall somewhere in between. Moreover, along with the *particular* common good of these different human groups, we can also recognize the *universal* common good of the entire human family. A constant teaching of Catholic social doctrine has been that wherever a human society exists, some sort of authority must also exist to safeguard and promote the common good of that society. This goes for the world society as well.

As long as the universal “family of mankind” remained something of a theological and sociological abstraction, the need for an authority to effectively secure the universal common good remained similarly nebulous and theoretical. The inexorable process of globalization has altered that, effectively creating a true global community, and heightening the need for care of the universal common good.<sup>12</sup> Christians have always believed in the idea of a common human family, united under the common fatherhood of God. Yet until quite recently nation-states were relatively autonomous and independent. With the exponential growth of communications and transportation, however, the world’s nations have become more and more interde-

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<sup>9</sup> CCC, no. 1906; Second Vatican Council, Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World *Gaudium et Spes* (1965) [hereafter GS], no. 26; cf. GS, no. 74.

<sup>10</sup> cf. CCC, nos. 1907-1909.

<sup>11</sup> “Each human community possesses a common good which permits it to be recognized as such” (CCC, no. 1910).

<sup>12</sup> “In view of the increasingly close ties of mutual dependence today between all the inhabitants and peoples of the earth, the apt pursuit and efficacious attainment of the universal common good now require of the community of nations that it organize itself in a manner suited to its present responsibilities, especially toward the many parts of the world which are still suffering from unbearable want” (GS, no. 84).

pendent and interrelated, and the decisions of each nation affect the others much more powerfully than in centuries past.<sup>13</sup>

Benedict characterizes the “explosion of worldwide interdependence, commonly known as globalization” as the “principal new feature” of the world situation in recent decades.<sup>14</sup> And where he readily acknowledges that globalization has been “the principal driving force behind the emergence from underdevelopment of whole regions” and in itself “represents a great opportunity,” he also recognizes that without proper guidance “this global force could cause unprecedented damage.”<sup>15</sup>

### Solidarity and global governance

How, then, can the universal common good be provided for and furthered? How can globalization be “guided” to its proper end? What is to keep the particular interests of the stronger members of human society, whether they be individuals, robber bands, states or other social or economic institutions, from triumphing over the interests of weaker members? The Catholic Church proposes two solutions to this problem, one at the level of *virtue* and the other at the level of *structures*.

The first, “virtuous” solution goes by the name of *solidarity*. In his 1987 encyclical *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis*, Pope John Paul II wrote that the growing economic, cultural, political and religious interdependence characteristic of the contemporary world constituted a moral category, to which corresponds the moral *virtue* of solidarity. Solidarity, he wrote, “is not a feeling of vague compassion or shallow distress at the misfortunes of so many people.” It is, rather, “a firm and persevering determination to commit oneself to the common good; that is to say to the good of all and of each individual, because we are all really responsible for all.”<sup>16</sup> In *Caritas in Veritate*, Pope Benedict added to

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<sup>13</sup> “Thanks to increased opportunities for many kinds of social contact among nations, a human family is gradually recognizing that it comprises a single world community and is making itself so” (GS, no. 33). “The risk for our time is that the de facto interdependence of people and nations is not matched by ethical interaction of consciences and minds that would give rise to truly human development” (Pope Benedict XVI, encyclical letter *Caritas in Veritate* [2009] [hereafter CV], no. 9).

<sup>14</sup> CV, no. 33.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

<sup>16</sup> Pope John Paul II, encyclical letter *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis* (1987) [hereafter SRS], no. 38. Despite the novelty of the term, John Paul’s definition sounds remarkably similar to a

this his reflection regarding “the implications of our being one family,” which includes the need to embark upon a new trajectory “so that integration can signify solidarity rather than marginalization.”<sup>17</sup>

Solidarity, therefore, as a virtue, impels persons and communities to expand their horizons of moral concern, looking beyond individual interests to include the needs of other individuals and groups and to act with their interests in mind. Each decision we make has a moral dimension, which derives not only from the object of the act, but also from the consequences of that action on others. As these consequences become more significant and far reaching, they assume a greater weight in evaluating our choices. And so as human beings and societies become more interconnected, our decisions affect others more deeply, and the virtue of solidarity becomes more and more necessary.

Though the virtue of solidarity must be cultivated by all persons, it is especially important for those in public authority and for those whose actions most directly affect the situation of others.<sup>18</sup> Public authority is responsible first to its own citizenry, that is, the portion of humanity under its tutelage, according to the Augustinian principle of *ordo amoris*.<sup>19</sup> There is nothing wrong with public authority looking first and foremost for the good of its own people, in the same way that parents are called to focus first and foremost on the good of their own children. At the same time this priority is not exclusive, and public authority must widen the scope of its interest and concern to the whole of humanity. The Catechism does not mince words when it declares:

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much older virtue which Thomas Aquinas called “legal justice.” Aquinas, again following Aristotle, wrote that legal (or general) justice is that virtue “which directs human actions to the common good.” (See S.Th., I-II.60.3 obj. 3 and ad 3).

<sup>17</sup> CV, no. 53.

<sup>18</sup> Regarding the moral duty of solidarity in the economic sphere, Pope John Paul wrote: “Therefore political leaders, and citizens of rich countries considered as individuals, especially if they are Christians, have the moral obligation, according to the degree of each one’s responsibility, to take into consideration, in personal decisions and decisions of government, this relationship of universality, this interdependence which exists between their conduct and the poverty and underdevelopment of so many millions of people” (SRS, no. 9).

<sup>19</sup> “The ordering of the degrees of attention, the distinction between justified and unjustified neglect of consequences, the boundaries between what we will as the means and what we ought to accept as the secondary consequences, this is all the affair of that *ordo amoris* which sketches out the structure of moral responsibility” (Robert Spaemann, *Happiness and Benevolence*, [Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2000], 146). Elsewhere Spaemann notes that “there may be good grounds to give prior attention to self and near neighbours in many cases, since that is what is implied in the realization of our nature, which we grant to others as to ourselves on the basis of the *ordo amoris*” (Robert Spaemann, *Persons: The Difference Between ‘Someone’ and ‘Something’*, [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006], 217).

“International solidarity is a requirement of the moral order.”<sup>20</sup> Where the virtue of solidarity is assimilated and practiced, tensions between nations and peoples are reduced and the universal common good is promoted.<sup>21</sup>

In addition to this “virtuous” reaction to the phenomenon of globalization the Church proposes a second “structural” solution to insure the universal common good: an international political authority. Every human community needs an authority and a rule of law “*supra partes*” to govern it and disinterestedly provide for the common good.<sup>22</sup> Leo XIII observed that no society can hold together “unless someone be over all, directing all to strive earnestly for the common good,” and so every body politic “must have a ruling authority.”<sup>23</sup> Whereas there is a political authority<sup>24</sup> that watches over the particular common good of individual nations, there is no such authority to provide for the universal common good of the world community.<sup>25</sup> Moreover, no one nation can arrogate to itself this responsibility.

In his 1963 encyclical *Pacem in Terris*, Pope John XXIII commented on the growing interconnectedness of nations, and the need to watch over the good of the world community. “Today the universal common good poses problems of worldwide dimensions,” he wrote, “which cannot be adequately tackled or solved except by the efforts of public authority endowed with a wideness of powers, structure and means of the same proportions: that is, of public authority which is in a position to operate in an effective manner on a world-wide basis. The moral order itself, therefore, demands that such a form of public authority be established.”<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> CCC, no. 1941.

<sup>21</sup> “Solidarity... presupposes the effort for a more just social order where tensions are better able to be reduced and conflicts more readily settled by negotiation” (CCC, no. 1940).

<sup>22</sup> “Human society can be neither well-ordered nor prosperous unless it has some people invested with legitimate authority to preserve its institutions and to devote themselves as far as is necessary to work and care for the good of all” (Pope John XXIII, encyclical letter *Pacem in Terris* [1963] [hereafter PT], no. 46). See also CCC, no. 1898.

<sup>23</sup> ID, no. 3.

<sup>24</sup> “By ‘authority’ one means the quality by virtue of which persons or institutions make laws and give orders to men and expect obedience from them” (CCC, no. 1897).

<sup>25</sup> “Therefore, under the present circumstances of human society both the structure and form of governments as well as the power which public authority wields in all the nations of the world, must be considered inadequate to promote the universal common good” (PT, no. 135).

<sup>26</sup> PT, no. 137.



So whereas Benedict XVI unmistakably shares this same vision regarding the need for a global political authority, he did not invent it. He hands down a legacy that precedes him. While this surely will not alleviate all real doubts regarding the advisability of such an authority, it should at least place Benedict's statements in the broader context of Catholic social thought, which highlights the real continuity of the Church's teaching in this area. As we will see, however, though Benedict speaks from within the tradition on this point, he does not merely repeat the ideas of his predecessors, but adds some significant modifications that show an awareness of and reaction to some of the problems associated with such a global authority.

### **Government or governance?**

A second cause of the understandably severe reactions to Benedict's reproposal of an international political authority seems to come from an important misunderstanding: the conflation of the terms "global governance" and "world government." The two are radically distinct proposals. Unlike world government, global governance does not imply a single, centralized authority to decide on world affairs, and many theorists of global governance are staunchly opposed to the idea of world government.

Global governance has been defined as "the nexus of systems of rule-making, political coordination and problem-solving which transcends states and societies."<sup>27</sup> Because of this variegated matrix, global governance has moreover been described as "multilayered" in that it has no single locus of authority, but operates at various levels at the same time: the supranational level (such as the United Nations and its various offshoots), the regional level (EU, MERCOSUR, ASEAN, etc.), the transnational level (civil society, business networks, etc.), and the sub-state level (community associations, city governments, etc.).<sup>28</sup> In the midst of these different levels we find that of national government. We also note that the age-old and venerable idea of international law, or *ius gentium*, is also included in this broader notion of global governance.

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<sup>27</sup> David Held and Anthony G. McGrew, *Governing Globalization: Power, Authority and Global Governance* (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2002), 8.

<sup>28</sup> See *Ibid.*, 9.

As we will see, this multilayered description of global governance seems very close to the sense in which Benedict employs the term. In fact, in his remarkably nuanced discussion of the topic, he moves beyond the more simplistic understanding of global governance as expounded by his predecessors John XXIII and Paul VI.

Global governance involving international cooperation, public authority and rule of law can take a variety of practical forms, and the Church's Magisterium has refrained from specifying what sort of structures need to be instituted. The path to greater legal cooperation among nations will necessarily involve overcoming substantial hurdles, such as the perception mentioned earlier that international bodies are equally, if not more, susceptible to lobbying and particular interests than their national counterparts.

Furthermore, on the international level as well as the national level, the Church consistently reaffirms the vital principle of subsidiarity, which determines that "a community of a higher order should not interfere in the internal life of a community of a lower order, depriving the latter of its functions, but rather should support it in case of need and help to co-ordinate its activity with the activities of the rest of society, always with a view to the common good."<sup>29</sup> Therefore, any international law or authority should not be all-encompassing or invasive regarding the internal life of nations, but should be strictly limited to areas of life that cannot practically and effectively be governed by the nations themselves. The sovereignty of nations should not be compromised by overly aggressive international legal structures. A more concrete proposal of how this subsidiarity is to be applied in practice constitutes one of the original contributions of *Caritas in Veritate*.

### **The originality of *Caritas in Veritate***

John XXIII had observed that the universal common good could only be assured "by a public authority with power, organization and means co-extensive with these [global] problems, and with a worldwide sphere of activity."<sup>30</sup> He also noted that the very same principle

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<sup>29</sup> Pope John Paul II, encyclical letter *Centesimus Annus* (1991) [hereafter CA], no. 48. See also Pope Pius XI, encyclical letter *Quadragesimo Anno* (1931) [hereafter QA], no. 79, CCC, no. 1885.

<sup>30</sup> PT, no. 137.

of subsidiarity that governs relations between public authorities and individuals, families and intermediate societies in a single state “must also apply to the relations between the public authority of the world community and the public authorities of each political community.”<sup>31</sup> His analysis went no further, however, and one struggles to see how he meant for this public authority to be constituted.

Paul VI, too, had spoken pointedly, in an address to the United Nations that he cites in *Populorum Progressio*, of the need and importance of “gradually coming to the establishment of a world authority capable of taking effective action on the juridical and political planes.”<sup>32</sup> Yet once again, Paul makes no attempt to explain what this authority would look like in practice, or how subsidiarity was to be concretely applied.

Benedict XVI picks up the same theme in *Caritas in Veritate*, and seems, in large part, to be echoing the thought of his predecessors. He notes, for instance, that “there is urgent need of a true world political authority,” that 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 that it 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.”<sup>33</sup> Up to here, his analysis seems rather standard.

But Benedict’s proposal doesn’t end here. He not only expressly invokes the importance of subsidiarity, he also lays out practical means that it can be applied. In a key paragraph of the encyclical, Benedict appraises the principle of subsidiarity and its application to international society, noting that this principle “is particularly well-suited to managing globalization and directing it towards authentic human development.” The reason for its special suitability, Benedict contends, is that it is able “to take account both of the manifold articulation of plans—and therefore of the plurality of subjects—as well as the coordination of those plans.”<sup>34</sup> Benedict asserts that subsidiarity is “the most effective antidote against any form of all-encompassing

<sup>31</sup> PT, no. 140.

<sup>32</sup> Pope Paul VI, encyclical letter *Populorum Progressio* (1967) [hereafter PP], no. 78.

<sup>33</sup> CV, no. 67. In his speech to the United Nations assembly in 2008, Benedict had underscored more forcefully still the importance of subsidiarity in international relations, noting that the United Nations embodies the aspiration for a greater degree of international ordering “inspired and governed by the principle of subsidiarity” (Benedict XVI, speech to United Nations General Assembly, New York, April 18, 2008).

<sup>34</sup> CV, no. 57.

welfare state,” an affirmation that has immediate practical applications at the international level as well.

Benedict explicitly calls for a “dispersed political authority, effective on different levels,”<sup>35</sup> a far cry from a Big-Brotheresque, one-world government. So at the same time that he reaffirms the need for an international authority to promote “a global common good,” he immediately adds that such an authority “must be organized in a subsidiary and stratified way, if it is not to infringe upon freedom and if it is to yield effective results in practice.”<sup>36</sup> Benedict rejects outright the proposal of a single, overweening international government, in favor of a coordinated, stratified authority. “In order not to produce a dangerous universal power of a tyrannical nature,” he writes, “the governance of globalization must be marked by subsidiarity, articulated into several layers and involving different levels that can work together.”<sup>37</sup> For instance, he cites the “articulation of political authority at the local, national and international levels” as an important means to ensure that globalization does not “undermine the foundations of democracy.”<sup>38</sup> In other words, he envisions a political authority truly accountable to the citizenry it was set up to serve. Benedict’s call for a “stratified” and “dispersed” authority marks an authentic advance in the vision of global governance put forward by the social magisterium.

Moreover, Benedict calls for a reevaluation of the *role* and *powers* of public authorities, suggesting that they be “reviewed and remodeled” so that they may be better suited to the characteristics of contemporary society. This new model, Benedict suggests, could involve “an increase in the new forms of political participation, nationally and internationally, that have come about through the activity of organizations operating in civil society” in order to promote greater citizen participation in the *res publica*.<sup>39</sup> In applying this idea to international governance, Benedict offers a further development of the thought of his predecessors.

In fact, Benedict’s insistence on subsidiarity, his rejection of a single world power and his advocacy of a multi-tiered approach to global governance combine to offer a more refined, realistic and de-

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<sup>35</sup> CV, no. 41.

<sup>36</sup> CV, no. 57.

<sup>37</sup> CV, no. 57.

<sup>38</sup> CV, no. 41.

<sup>39</sup> CV, no. 24.

veloped notion of how an international public authority could be structured than previously seen from the papal magisterium. So while Benedict's suggestions still remain somewhat hazy and heuristic, they begin to offer a sense of specific direction that was absent in the Magisterium of his predecessors.

### **Specific areas of global governance**

In the past century the need for international law or a supranational public authority has been invoked by the Church's Magisterium principally (though not exclusively) in the context of two practical aims: (1) the arbitration and peaceful solution of international conflicts, (2) a coordinated effort to assure economic development throughout the world. Both of these aims are component parts of the universal common good and both are seen by the Church as requiring the coordination of political authority at the global level.

#### *Arbitration of international conflicts*

The first area of concern arises from humanity's long history of armed conflict, and the especially bitter experience of the past century's bloodshed. The Church exhorts the peoples of the world to seek long-term solutions to conflict resolution that will obviate the need for war. One such solution is global governance. Since the universal common good includes the security and stability of a just international social order, creative steps must be taken to facilitate cooperation among nations and the creation of structures to insure long-term peace.

This specific reflection finds its roots in the Second Vatican Council's Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World, *Gaudium et Spes*. This text treats the role of the Church in the world, meaning, principally, the role of the Catholic laity in the evangelization of the temporal order so that the diverse components of society will conform more and more to the requirements of the common good. The document was promulgated on December 7, 1965 by Pope Paul VI at the height of the cold war, twenty years after the end of the Second World War, fifteen years after the outbreak of the Korean War, nine years after Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev's UN outbreak in which he wagged his finger and shouted to U.S. Representatives "Мы

вас похороним!” (“We will bury you!”) and just four years after the Cuban Missile Crisis.

At this time fears revolved around an all-out nuclear conflagration between the major superpowers, and it seemed to many that the only thing preventing war was the assurance of mutual destruction in which no one side could win. If we read this document carefully, we see that many of the Church’s statements then and afterward rested on these fears. In *Gaudium et Spes*, the Council Fathers noted that the “horror and perversity of war is immensely magnified by the addition of scientific weapons.”<sup>40</sup> The reason for this magnification is that acts of war involving these weapons “can inflict massive and indiscriminate destruction,” thus going far beyond the bounds of legitimate defense.<sup>41</sup> From this text we can glean a first factor in the magnification of the horror of war: the near impossibility of safeguarding the *ius in bello* criterion of discrimination, which requires the limiting of bellicose aggression to military targets, while avoiding the civilian population. By their very nature, it would seem, weapons of *mass destruction*, such as atomic warheads, eliminate the possibility of such discernment.<sup>42</sup>

A second cause of the magnification of the horror of war brought about by the development of nuclear weapons was the sheer magnitude of destruction that was envisioned. Again, *Gaudium et Spes* noted that if the weapons then found in the armories of the great nations were to be employed to their fullest, “an almost total and altogether reciprocal slaughter of each side by the other would follow, not to mention the widespread devastation that would take place in the world and the deadly after effects that would be spawned by the use of weapons of this kind.”<sup>43</sup> Such vast destruction would be virtually impossible to justify by the traditional criteria of just war theory. For one, “probability of success” (another condition for a just war) seemed extremely doubtful (with the very idea of “success” put in jeopardy), and any sort of “proportionality” between the evil cost of the war and the wrongs it sought to rectify seemed unthinkable.

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<sup>40</sup> GS, no. 80.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid.

<sup>42</sup> And so the Council expressly stated: “Any act of war aimed indiscriminately at the destruction of entire cities of extensive areas along with their population is a crime against God and man himself... The unique hazard of modern warfare consists in this: it provides those who possess modern scientific weapons with a kind of occasion for perpetrating just such abominations” (GS, no. 80).

<sup>43</sup> Ibid.

These considerations led the Council Fathers to suggest “an evaluation of war with an entirely new attitude.”<sup>44</sup> In other words, it was specifically the new possibilities of mass destruction occasioned by the advent of nuclear weapons, and effectively demonstrated by the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, that spurred the Council to embark on a stricter analysis and application of the conditions for a “just war” than hitherto considered. This document followed closely on the heels of John XXIII’s 1963 encyclical, *Pacem in Terris*, where he had written that “in this age of ours which prides itself on its atomic power, it is irrational to believe that war is still an apt means of vindicating violated rights.”<sup>45</sup>

It is in this context that we find the Council’s call for the creation of a global political authority, specifically for the purpose of resolving armed conflicts. In *Gaudium et Spes* the Council Fathers noted that the goal of eliminating war “requires the establishment of some universal public authority acknowledged as such by all and endowed with the power to safeguard on the behalf of all, security, regard for justice, and respect for rights.”<sup>46</sup>

Though these Magisterial statements undoubtedly reflected the feeling and fears of the times, the far-reaching effects of modern weaponry continue to provoke serious concern. As recently as 1991, just two years after the fall of the Berlin Wall, Pope John Paul II wrote:

It is not hard to see that the terrifying power of the means of destruction—to which even medium and small sized countries have access—and the ever closer links between the peoples of the whole world make it very difficult or practically impossible to limit the consequences of a conflict.<sup>47</sup>

Though recourse to war as a means of resolving international disagreements or repairing injustices is never ruled out as a matter of principle, the Church considers such recourse to be a last resort, one which should be arrived upon in a coordinated manner. Again, Pope John Paul II wrote: “Just as the time has finally come when in individual States a system of private vendetta and reprisal has given way

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<sup>44</sup> Ibid.

<sup>45</sup> *Acta Apostolica Sedis* 55 (1963), p. 291.

<sup>46</sup> GS, no. 81.

<sup>47</sup> CA, no. 51.

to the rule of law, so too a similar step forward is now urgently needed in the international community.”<sup>48</sup> John Paul insisted on the importance of global governance in this endeavor, and noted: “What is needed are concrete steps to create or consolidate international structures capable of intervening through appropriate arbitration in the conflicts which arise between nations.”<sup>49</sup> Again, what seems needed is coordination and arbitration, rather than an all-powerful, international overlord.

Benedict took up the same theme in *Caritas in Veritate*, though he limited himself to listing the practical reasons that global governance is especially necessary in our times, among which is found conflict resolution. His reflection that “in the face of the unrelenting growth of global interdependence... there is urgent need of a true world political authority” specifically references the aim to “bring about integral and timely disarmament, food security [sic] and peace.”<sup>50</sup>

Interestingly, Benedict’s reflections on the matter seem to flow not so much from the fears of global conflagration as from awareness of a more recent phenomenon: the increasing danger and scope of terrorist attacks. The World Trade Center attacks of September 11, 2001 and the Madrid train bombings of March 11, 2004 provide just two examples of the real threat that international terrorism imposes on modern civilization. The fears and insecurity that have arisen in the civilian population as a result of these atrocities, without mentioning the consequences on travelers and heightened racial strife, are simply beyond calculation.

Shortly before his election to the papacy, then-Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger wrote that today “it is not so much the fear of a large-scale war that causes us sleepless nights but rather fear of the omnipresent terrorism that can become operative and strike anywhere.”<sup>51</sup> This led him to conclude that because of this change, the questions about law and ethics have “shifted focus.”<sup>52</sup> It is critical to note that in the face of this heightened threat of terrorism, international cooperation becomes *more*, rather than less, important, while a nation’s right to legitimate

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<sup>48</sup> CA, no. 52.

<sup>49</sup> CA, no. 27.

<sup>50</sup> CV, no. 67.

<sup>51</sup> Joseph Ratzinger, *Values in a Time of Upheaval* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2006), 35.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*



self-defense must be consistently upheld. Especially since terrorist groups are frequently international themselves, and not identifiable with any national political authority, the individual nations must in some way combine forces, share intelligence and coordinate efforts if terrorism is to be effectively combated and overcome.

*Development / Economic solidarity*

A second practical area where the Church has repeatedly advocated global governance is the sphere of economic development. Whereas in the developed world legal structures exist which protect the rights of workers and demand accountability from economic enterprises, such structures are often lacking in less developed nations, which makes the latter enticing targets for exploitation by unscrupulous business interests. International trade itself also requires legal structures and authorities capable of redressing injustices. Furthermore, some nations are effectively excluded from development because they do not offer interesting market opportunities and are thus passed over for investment and trade. In order for the market to effectively serve the common good on a global level, it requires some sort of regulation and direction from political structures.

Once again it was *Gaudium et Spes* that brought this question to the fore, noting that “the apt pursuit and efficacious attainment of the universal common good now require of the community of nations that it organize itself in a manner suited to its present responsibilities, especially toward the many parts of the world which are still suffering from unbearable want.”<sup>53</sup> The Council urged that economic development not be left to the judgment of “certain more powerful nations,” but that it engage the largest possible number of people and that “all nations have an active share in directing that development.”<sup>54</sup>

In *Centesimus Annus*, Pope John Paul brought the two most critical reasons for global governance together, likening the “collective responsibility for avoiding war” to a “collective responsibility for promoting development.”<sup>55</sup> He also compared the regulatory role of *national* business law to that of laws needed to orient *international* markets. Just as within individual societies it is possible and right to organize a solid economy that will direct the functioning of the market

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<sup>53</sup> GS, no. 84.

<sup>54</sup> GS, no. 65.

<sup>55</sup> CA, no. 52.

to the common good, he reasoned, “so too there is a similar need for adequate interventions on the international level.”<sup>56</sup>

John Paul II noted that the globalization of the economy “can create unusual opportunities for greater prosperity” but that the “increasing internationalization of the economy ought to be accompanied by effective international agencies which will oversee and direct the economy to the common good.”<sup>57</sup> He further observed that this task cannot be left to an individual State, since even if it were the most powerful on earth, it would not be in a position to undertake it. In order to achieve this result, he concludes, “it is necessary that there be increased coordination among the more powerful countries, and that in international agencies the interests of the whole human family be equally represented.”<sup>58</sup> One notes how John Paul speaks of “coordination” and “international agencies,” rather than global government, much as his successor Benedict would do.

In *Caritas in Veritate* Pope Benedict picked up the same call, insisting on the need for international coordination to meet the real problem of economic underdevelopment still experienced by so many peoples. He begins his reflection on international cooperation with the premise that the development of peoples depends, above all, “on a recognition that the human race is a single family working together in true communion, not simply a group of subjects who happen to live side by side.”<sup>59</sup> This is, admittedly, a theological principle, since as Benedict notes, the unity of the human race “is called into being by the word of God-who-is-Love.”<sup>60</sup> At the same time, it is a vital sociological reality, manifested by the interconnectedness we have come to call globalization. It is essential for understanding the very nature of the universal common good.

As Pope John Paul did before him, Benedict asserts that greater interconnectedness calls for greater solidarity. In the course of *Caritas in Veritate*, Benedict invokes the principle of solidarity no fewer than 28 times, most often in the context of international development. Nowhere does he speak of the need for anything akin to a top-down, global economic plan, but continues to apply his multi-tiered approach to global governance, often proclaiming the need for greater coopera-

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<sup>56</sup> Ibid.

<sup>57</sup> CA, no. 58.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid.

<sup>59</sup> CV, no. 53, emphasis in original.

<sup>60</sup> CV, no. 34.

tion among the various sectors of society. He invokes, for example, the “need for a system with three subjects: the *market*, the *State* and *civil society*.”<sup>61</sup> He further reasons that since solidarity is a sense of responsibility on the part of everyone with regard to everyone, “it cannot therefore be merely delegated to the State.”<sup>62</sup> Benedict never embraces the simplistic narrative that one encounters elsewhere, namely that economic powers, driven by greed, are the cause of the world’s problems, whereas politics, driven by a disinterested concern for the common good, is the solution. Rather, he expressly notes that the “actors and causes of both underdevelopment and development are manifold” and that “the faults and merits are differentiated,” which means that we must “liberate ourselves from ideologies, which often oversimplify reality in artificial ways.”<sup>63</sup>

So while Benedict readily points out that large multinational companies as well as local producers “sometimes fail to respect the human rights of workers,”<sup>64</sup> he also notes that wrongheaded and overly aggressive politics has also often been part of the economic underdevelopment, such as in the case of Eastern Europe where “politics withdrew resources from the economy and from the culture, and ideology inhibited freedom.”<sup>65</sup> Checks and balances are needed everywhere. And just as mismanaged political action and mismanaged economic activity both contributed to today’s problems, both must contribute to the solution. He recognizes that whereas *Populorum Progressio* assigned a central role to “public authorities” in this task, today’s world requires a reevaluation of the role of these authorities especially through increased engagement of civil society.<sup>66</sup> He asserts that three different “logics”—contractual logic, political logic and the logic of the gift—must all work together to achieve true development and an international economy that truly serves the common good.<sup>67</sup> Each has an irreplaceable role to play. Rather than a uniform, monodimensional reality, “economic life,” Benedict insists, “must be understood as a multi-layered phenomenon.”<sup>68</sup>

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<sup>61</sup> CV, no. 38, referencing CA, no. 35, emphasis in original.

<sup>62</sup> CV, no. 38.

<sup>63</sup> CV, no. 22.

<sup>64</sup> CV, no. 22.

<sup>65</sup> CV, no. 23.

<sup>66</sup> See CV, no. 24.

<sup>67</sup> See CV, nos. 37, 39.

<sup>68</sup> CV, no. 38.

Despite Benedict's clear belief in the importance of global governance to promote economic development, he envisions this governance in a refreshingly variegated way, insisting, for instance, that development programs "be accomplished with the involvement of local communities in choices and decisions that affect the use of agricultural land."<sup>69</sup> It is specifically in the context of "constructing a new order of economic productivity," in fact, that Benedict proposes "a dispersed political authority, effective on different levels."<sup>70</sup> He likewise espouses the articulation of political authority at the local, national and international levels as "one of the best ways of giving direction to the process of economic globalization"<sup>71</sup>

Time after time in *Caritas in Veritate* Benedict manifests an openness to innovative solutions for remedying problems both old and new. Part of this intellectual openness means the rediscovery of perennial principles that can be reapplied to good effect in contemporary circumstances. Part of it also means a willingness to engage new partners in dialogue and new modes of cooperation that can produce effective results. Part of it means looking at completely new proposals to confront the unprecedented social, political and economic realities of the present day.

Benedict's understanding of global governance and its necessity for guiding the process of globalization provides an apt example of this openness. Resisting an attitude of laissez-faire resignation to be swept along by forces beyond our control, Benedict expresses confidence in the ability of the human spirit to properly orient these processes. Globalization, he reminds us, is neither good nor bad. It will be what people make of it. "We should not be its victims," Benedict proclaims, "but rather its protagonists, acting in the light of reason, guided by charity and truth."<sup>72</sup> While this orientation requires the effective and responsible engagement of political authority at both the national and international levels, it is ultimately the responsibility of all of us, acting in concert for the common good.

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<sup>69</sup> CV, no. 27.

<sup>70</sup> CV, no. 41.

<sup>71</sup> CV, no. 41.

<sup>72</sup> CV, no. 42.

**Summary:** *The author sets out to explain Pope Benedict XVI's view of global governance, especially as expressed in his 2009 encyclical letter Caritas in Veritate. In so doing, the author first recognizes some of the more significant arguments against global governance, then goes on to suggest that much of the opposition to Benedict's proposal stems from two misconceptions: (1) a failure to place Benedict's statements in the social tradition of the Church, which has always asserted that every society, including global society, has need of a corresponding authority to insure the common good, and (2) confusion of the terms "global governance" with "world government." The latter connotes a powerful, centralized political structure while the former allows for a subsidiary, multi-tiered approach to coordinating the world geo-political situation. The author asserts that Benedict's proposals reflect this second approach. The final sections of the article look at two special cases where global governance seem particularly pressing: international conflict resolution and global economic development.*

**Key words:** global governance, world government, world authority, political authority, public authority, law, universal common good, international common good, Caritas in Veritate, Love in Truth, economic development, conflict resolution, just war theory, Pope Benedict XVI, solidarity, subsidiarity, United Nations, Pacem in Terris, ordo amoris, Gaudium et Spes, Populorum Progressio, ius in bello.

**Parole chiave:** governo globale, governo mondiale, autorità globale, autorità politica, autorità pubblica, legge, bene comune universale, bene comune internazionale, Caritas in veritate, Carità nella verità, sviluppo sociale, sviluppo economico, risoluzione dei conflitti, guerra giusta, Papa Benedetto XVI, solidarietà, sussidiarietà, Nazioni Unite, Pacem in terris, ordo amoris, Gaudium et spes, Populorum progressio, ius in bello.