

Chapter 7

Three Key Concepts of Catholic Humanism for Economic Activity: Human Dignity, Human Rights and Integral Human Development

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Abstract Understanding Catholic Humanism and its consequences in economics and business entails discussing three key concepts of this humanism with great ethical relevance: human dignity, human rights and integral human development. The chapter presents the Catholic position on these concepts and discusses their foundation. This foundation, based on a combination of faith and reason, harmonically intertwined, entails a comprehensive view of the human being. Being open to transcendence gives a profound meaning to the ultimate questions of human life and makes a valuable proposition for economics and business.

Keywords Human dignity • Human rights • Human development reports • Integral human development

Understanding Christian Humanism and its consequences in economics and business entails knowing both its main contents and its foundation. In this chapter we try to show that Catholic Humanism, i.e., Christian Humanism (CH) inspired by Catholic Social Teaching (CST), entails three powerful key concepts, which in turn become a solid base for further developments and contents.

The first key element regards the enormous consideration and respect of CH for the human being, regardless of gender, religion, ideology, race or ethnic group to which one belongs or the stage of life an individual is in. This is expressed by the notion of *human dignity*, or excellence, which is inherent to every single human individual. A second key element is that all humans are endowed with innate rights – usually termed *human rights*. The third basic element is *human development*, with is understood in an integrative sense of two interrelated aspects. The first regards

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personal human development, embracing the whole person. The second refers to the human development of every human being worldwide.

These concepts, as with all the Christian tradition, find their foundation in both faith and reason, which are closely related. This is particularly true for Thomas Aquinas, who understands the human being, and the whole world in the light of both reason and faith. He put great importance on reason and maintained that faith helps reason toward a deeper understanding, and in turn reason can contribute to a better understanding of divine Revelation (Aquinas 1981, I, 1, 8 ad 2). This epistemological approach is also emphasized in papal encyclical-letters – essential documents of CST. One of these – *Fides et ratio* (FR)¹ written by John Paul II in 1998 – specifically presents the essential relationship between faith and reason. In line with Aquinas, John Paul II affirms: “faith builds upon and perfects reason. Illuminated by faith, reason is set free from the fragility and limitations” (FR 43); faith and reason strengthen each other (FR 73).²

Following this approach, this chapter analyses these previously mentioned concepts – human dignity, human rights and integral human development – drawing from significant documents of CST, and in contrast with other approaches.³ It also presents an overview of the implications of the requirements of these concepts in some current socio-economic and business ethics issues. The first and second sections develop the foundations and contents of human dignity and human rights respectively. It is also argued that the recognition and respect for both human dignity and innate human rights in CH converge with other philosophical positions and with well-known international declarations of human rights. The third section outlines how human development is understood within CST, showing some convergences and divergences from other ways of understanding development. It concludes by pointing out some practical consequences for economics and business.

Human Dignity, a Crucial Reference

The Notion of Human Dignity

The word ‘dignity’, from Latin *dignitas*, refers to the quality of being worthy or honorable; it also signifies excellence. For Romans dignity meant a certain honorable status which imposed on others an obligation of recognition and respect (Balsdon 1960).

¹ This and other CST documents are presented here in abbreviations with two letters –such as FR– followed by a number which correspond to the numeration of official documents (www.vatican.va). See a full list of these abbreviations at the beginning of this book, also in the references at the end of this chapter.

² Pope Francis (2013) has also emphasized the link between faith and reason (LF, 32–36).

³ Within the limited space available, we only aim to present a brief comparison to some other approaches that differ from CST. Basically we aim to present an overview of the Catholic position.

In our current context, *human dignity* means the consideration that every human is constitutively worthy of esteem, respect and honor. It has been defined as “a kind of intrinsic worth that belongs equally to all human beings as such, constituted by certain intrinsically valuable aspects of being human” (Gewirth 1992, 12). In practical terms, human dignity requires treating others and even oneself with respect and consideration. Human dignity has been proposed as a basic social principle (Schlag 2013), which allows building of a decent society (Margalit 1998).

The notion of dignity has a long history (Rosen 2012). The modern notion of human dignity is generally associated with the moral philosophy of Immanuel Kant (1724–1804) and his second formulation of the Categorical Imperative: “Act in such a way that you treat humanity, whether in your own person or in the person of any other, never merely as a means to an end” (1993/1785, 30). Kant distinguishes between things that should not be discussed in terms of value, and those which have dignity. Things have value, persons have dignity. He argues that every human being is endowed with dignity by being a moral agent – a being who is capable of acting with reference to right and wrong – and with an end in him or herself (1993/1785, Chap. 2). Kant therefore understands human dignity as a rational finding, independent of any religious faith, and places this concept at the heart of his ethical and political theory.

The content of *human dignity* is not, however, a Kantian invention. Several scholars (Ullmann 1967; Morris 1972; Hanning 1977; Bynum 1980; Gurevick 1994) have shown that in the twelfth century, and perhaps before, the individual was especially emphasized. We can clearly find the notion of human dignity in the fifteenth and sixteenth century in Europe. Human dignity was stressed by the Italian philosopher and scholar Pico della Mirandola in the celebrated public discourse *Oration on the Dignity of Man* (2012).

We can go even further by pointing out that the understanding of human dignity, which attributes every human being an intrinsic value regardless of their individual merits, race, religion, and of their social position has its roots in the Judeo-Christian tradition. We will try to show this next, with special emphasis on Catholic tradition.

Human Dignity in the Bible and Early Christian Writers

A crucial reference to human dignity appears at the beginning of the Bible, in the context of the Creation. The entire relation of the creation shows a particular love of God for human beings, by presenting a clear distinction between humans and non-rational animals, granting humans dominion over the Earth, and placing them in the garden of Eden to cultivate it. The human being is directly created by God (The Holy Bible 1966, *Gen* 1:26–27; 2:7) and what is more “God created humankind in his image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.” Thus, men and women are images of God on Earth. This shows the intrinsic value or dignity of every human being, which does not depend on personal qualities or merits, nor on legal mandate or social status.

The image of God finds a particular expression in human rationality as a distinctive category from other animals, and this is present in one Psalm: “Be not like a horse or a mule, without understanding” (*Ps* 31:9). In another Psalm there is a reflection on the greatness of the human being with: “what are human beings that you are mindful of them, mortals that you care for them? Yet you have made them a little lower than God, and crowned them with glory and honor” (*Ps* 8:4–5).

In the New Testament, human dignity is especially stressed by the fact that Jesus Christ being eternally the Son of God became man in the womb of the Virgin Mary (*Jn* 1; *Lk* 1: 26–38)⁴ and for the universal Redemption of all human individuals from their sins, wrought by Jesus Christ. This grants human beings a great dignity. In addition, humans are called to become children of God⁵ and to seek a close intimacy or ‘communion’ with God. According to the interpretation of the Catholic Church, this latter provides the human being with the highest dignity (Second Vatican Council 1965, *Gaudium et Spes*, #19). Such dignity is universal, since according to the New Testament, Redemption is universal and is addressed to all humankind: God “desires everyone to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth” (*I Tim* 2:4).

Human dignity is also expressed in the New Testament in other ways. The commandment to love one’s neighbor is especially worthy of note: “You shall love your neighbor as yourself” (*Mt* 19:19; cf. *Mk* 12:31). “In this commandment” –John Paul II (1993) wrote– “we find a precise expression of *the singular dignity of the human person*” (VS, 13).

Early Christian writers, termed the Fathers of the Church, expressed human dignity in different manners, at least implicitly. This is the case, for instance, of Pope Gregory the Great in his *Homilies on the Gospels* (2009: 8th Homily, 2) He came to consider that the angels now revere human nature as being superior to theirs, and praise humans for having accepted the King of Heaven, the God-Man. St. Augustine is particularly eloquent in his monumental work the *City of God* (1887, published originally in the early fifth century). He repeatedly mentions the dignity of man (II, 29; VI, 5, and others), or the dignity of the rational soul (VIII, 15), and the call to everybody to an everlasting dignity (III, 17). He emphasizes that God endowed humans with a nature that placed them between angels and beasts (XII, 21).

⁴This is a central point of Christian faith, known as the Incarnation of the Second Divine Person of the Holy Trinity. Regarding this, St. Paul wrote “when the fullness of time had come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law” (*Gal* 4:4). It was “in order to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as children” (*Gal* 4:5). Thus, Jesus Christ became the Mediator between God and humankind: “For there is one God; there is also one mediator between God and humankind, Christ Jesus, himself human, who gave himself as a ransom for all—this was attested at the right time” (*Gal* 4:5–6).

⁵Being children of God means being one with Christ and participating deeply in the divine life. Thus, humans might become sharers in divine nature (*2 Pet* 1:4) and call to increase such participation in the divine life forever: “we are God’s children now; what we will be has not yet been revealed” (*I Jn* 3:2).

Human Dignity: From the Middle Ages to the Renaissance

In the thirteenth century, Thomas Aquinas developed the notion of person, which was already used in Christian theology in the fourth and fifth centuries A.D. He accepted the definition of person introduced by the philosopher Boethius, in the sixth century, as “a subsistent individual of a rational nature”.⁶ Person, in short, means “a rational subject”.

According to Aquinas, talking of ‘person’ is talking of ‘high dignity’ (1981, I, 29, 3, 2), and “because subsistence in a rational nature is of high dignity, therefore every individual of the rational nature is called a ‘person’” (Ibid.). More explicitly, he affirms that “person signifies what is most perfect in all nature” of and, as applies only to the rational nature, this latter is endowed with dignity (1981, I, 29, 3).

It was in the Renaissance period, with the rise of humanists such as Pico della Mirandola –mentioned above–, when *human dignity* acquired special consistency. He argued (2012) that God fixed the nature of all other things but left man alone to determine his own nature. It is this freedom of choice and the responsibilities attached to it that constitute the dignity of the human being. The old Roman concept of *dignitas*, which Romans exclusively applied to very important persons with suitability, worthiness, rank, status, position, standing, esteem, honor and the like (Balsdon 1960), was now applied to every human being.

Dignity in Modern Catholic Social Teaching

Pope Leo XIII (Pope between 1878 and 1903), generally considered the initiator of modern Catholic Social Teaching, had great concern for human dignity and human rights. In his Encyclical Letter *Rerum Novarum* (1891), he condemned the working conditions, under which some employees had to suffer, as “repugnant to their dignity as human beings” (RN 36), adding that “[n]o man may with impunity outrage that human dignity which God Himself treats with great reverence” (RN 40). On the positive side, he encouraged everyone “to respect in every man his dignity as a person ennobled by Christian character” (RN 20).

Since Leo XIII, papal documents have insisted on human dignity. This was the case of Pius XI (1922–1939), who strongly defended (QA) such a dignity, particularly in the labor context.

Pope Pius XII (1939–1956), intensified the importance of human dignity and John XXIII (1956–1963), made human dignity a central concept in his teaching, particularly in his two social Encyclical Letters: *Mater et Magistra* (1961), where he emphasized the “sacred dignity of the individual” (MM 220), and *Pacem in terris*

⁶In Latin, *Natura rationalis individua substantia*. This definition appears in Boethius’ work *De persona et duabus naturis* (c. II; mentioned by Aquinas 1981, I, 29, 1 and 3).

(1963), where he invited us to define “the scope of a just freedom within which individual citizens may live lives worthy of their human dignity” (PT 104).

The Second Vatican Council (1963–1965) again mentioned human dignity several times and presented human dignity as a key value, along with brotherhood and freedom (GS 39). At the same time it welcomed the fact that human dignity had given rise in many parts of the world to attempts to bring about a politico-juridical order which would give better protection to the rights of the person in public life (GS 73).

In more recent Catholic Church documents, human dignity continues to be strongly emphasized. In his Encyclical *Centesimus annus* (1991), Pope John Paul II (1978–2005) affirmed:

...in a certain sense, the guiding principle (...) of all of the Church’s social doctrine, is a *correct view of the human person* and of his unique value, inasmuch as ‘man ... is the only creature on earth which God willed for itself.’ (GS 24) God has imprinted his own image and likeness on man (cf. Gen 1:26), conferring upon him an incomparable dignity. (CA 11)

John Paul II (1988) regretted the influence of some ideologies in obscuring the awareness of a human dignity common to all, and encouraged us “*to rediscover and make others rediscover the inviolable dignity of every human person,*” and added that this “makes up an essential task, in a certain sense, the central and unifying task of the service which the Church, and the lay faithful in her, are called to render to the human family” (CL 37; always italics in the original unless the contrary is indicated). He also emphasized the fruitful activity of millions of people spurred by the social Magisterium of the Church as forming a great movement for “*the defence of the human person* and the safeguarding of human dignity” (CA 3). On his part, Pope Benedict XVI (2005–2013) presented (2009a) human dignity as a central value (CV 15) and proposed “the inviolable dignity of the human person and the transcendent value of natural moral norms.” as a moral normative guideline (CV 45).⁷

Human Dignity: Contrasting Christian Humanism and Other Approaches

According to Mattson and Clark “Western philosophers and theologians have arrived at a more-or-less shared understanding of human specialness, imparting dignity” (2011, 306). This seems correct and, to some extent, it may even be accepted beyond Western civilization, as we will see below.

As noted above, Kant has been extremely influential in the modern philosophical foundation of human dignity and in the above-mentioned second formulation of the Categorical Imperative, essential for Kantian ethics. This formulation entails

⁷A good synthesis of the Church’s teachings on human dignity can be found in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (2003 nn. 1934, 1997, 1700ff) and in the *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church* (CSDC), published by the PCJP (2004, Chap. 3).

“respect” for persons and the idea that treating human beings as mere instruments with no value beyond this is ethically unacceptable. Respect for persons, without any distinction of who they are is also crucial for Christian Humanism (e.g., CL 37).

John Paul II does not challenge Kant’s argument that the reason for human dignity is that a person is a moral agent, with free will, and consequently, persons are an end in themselves, but extends the case by saying “the person is not at all a ‘thing’ or an ‘object’ to be used, but primarily a responsible ‘subject’, one endowed with conscience and freedom, called to live responsibly in society and history, and oriented towards spiritual and religious values” (CL 5).

The Kantian rational foundation of human dignity is reinforced by other philosophical positions, such as those held by Aristotle and Thomas Aquinas, who considered that the human being has been endowed with a spiritual and immortal soul. This is a position also defended by CST (GS 14, CCC 1703).

CH shares the consideration and respect for human dignity with other religions and international declarations of human rights. With Judaism, in both the Torah and Talmudic tradition, human dignity is central (Sicker 2001).

Regarding Islam, human dignity is not a well-defined concept. Nevertheless, some modern interpretations of Islam find in this faith a foundation for human dignity. Thus, the *Universal Islamic Declaration of Human Rights* (1981) stated that “Islam gave to mankind an ideal code of human rights fourteen centuries ago. These rights aim at conferring honor and dignity on mankind and eliminating exploitation, oppression and injustice”. Similarly, the *Cairo Declaration on Human Rights in Islam*, states: “All men are equal in terms of basic human dignity (...) The true religion is the guarantee for enhancing such dignity along the path to human integrity (1990, art. 1).

In Chinese wisdom traditions the concept of human dignity does not exist as an innate feature. For the Confucian ethic, dignity is acquired by having good intentions, acting honorably, being sensitive to changes in human dynamics, calculating self-interest, and reciprocating in the right way at the right time. However, according to Koehn and Leung (2008), despite these differences, analysis of concrete practical cases suggests that it is possible to devise courses of actions that honor both types of dignity: innate and acquired.

Human dignity is also central in international declarations or covenants of human rights, starting with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) (1948). According to Arieli (2002, 1), the human dignity of every human being is “the cornerstone and the foundation on which the United Nations sought to reconstruct the future international order of mankind and of public life in general.”

The UDHR recognizes the “inherent dignity and the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family” (Preamble). This expression is repeated in two other important documents, to which many countries have adhered: the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (1966a) and in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (1966b). In contrast to CST, the justification of UN Declarations is more pragmatic than philosophical or theological. These documents see the recognition of such inherent dignity, equality and rights as “the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world” (UDHR, Preamble).

Human Rights, an Essential Requirement of Justice

The Notion of “Human Rights”

Human rights are moral rights possessed by a person who is entitled to own, perform or demand something. Thus, human rights are independent of any human authority and previous to their promulgation by means of civil law. However, human rights are often recognized as fundamental legal rights too, and even included in the constitutions of many countries. As Sepúlveda et al. affirm, human rights are “commonly understood as inalienable fundamental rights to which a person is inherently entitled simply because she or he is a human being” (2004, 3). A right creates a duty of justice for someone else or a group of people to respect or satisfy the right, since justice, according to an old definition coming from the Roman Jurist Ulpian’s is “the perpetual and constant will to render to each one his right” (mentioned by Aquinas 1981, II-II, 58).

The correspondence between right and other people’s duty entails “a reciprocal moral relationship that binds them all together” (Williams 2005, 9). Some authors hold that human dignity is the basis of human rights, while others think of human dignity independently of human rights. However, currently “the link between human rights and human dignity is increasingly seen as normative rather than accidental” (Donnelly 2009, 83).

The notion of ‘human rights’ is relatively recent, even more so than human dignity. In the intellectual history of human rights the British philosopher John Locke (1632–1704) is often mentioned as the pioneer in developing the concept of “natural rights”. According to Locke, property, life, liberty and the right to happiness are natural rights of all individuals. They are seen as self-evident and derived from divinity, since human beings are creatures of God. Natural rights are innate and therefore do not rely on any law of the state nor are privative of any particular group.

In political and legal terms, it is generally considered that the first record of human rights is *The Twelve Articles* (1525) establishing the peasants’ demands to the Swabian League during the German Peasants’ War. These articles, which contain several religious connotations, demand specific rights for peasant communities.

In 1689, the *Bill of Rights* was proposed in England, limiting the powers of the crown and setting out an array of rights of individuals and of Parliament, and which, to great extent reflected the ideas of John Locke, which had become quite popular.

In the eighteenth century in the United States several key rights were introduced in *The United States Declaration of Independence*, the constitution of the United States. In Europe, during the French Revolution the *Declaration of the Rights of Man and the Citizen* was proposed.

In all of these cases, the documents mentioned were the result of socio-political movements and a reaction against situations of oppression. This was the primary stimulus, but underlying it is the humanistic sense of human dignity and the demand for rights previous to any political concession.

Human rights are a core element of CH, the roots of which can be found in the Bible, early Christian writers, the great ‘Doctors of the Church’, particularly St Thomas Aquinas, and some authors in the sixteenth and the first half of the seventeenth centuries.

Human Rights, Implicit in the Bible

Human rights do not explicitly appear in the Holy Bible (1966). However, implicitly they can be found in the Ten Commandments, shared by the Jewish, Christian and Muslims with scant differences (Ali et al. 2000), since these obligations or commandments presuppose the existence of rights inherent in persons (Harrelson 1980). Thus, “You shall not kill” entails the right of life; “You shall not steal” supposes the right to own property; “You shall not commit adultery” entails the right to marry and to found a family on the basis of mutual faithfulness; “You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor” implies the right to a fair trial, and so on. As the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* affirms, the Ten Commandments “shed light on the essential duties, and so indirectly on the fundamental rights, inherent in the nature of the human person” (CCC 2070).

The prophets preached justice often related to what we now term human rights. Isaiah, for instance, rebukes rulers telling them: “Ah, you who make iniquitous decrees, who write oppressive statutes, to turn aside the needy from justice and to rob the poor of my people of their right, that widows may be your spoil, and that you may make the orphans your prey!” (10:1–2) Similarly, in the Ecclesiastes (5:8) we read: “If you see in a province the oppression of the poor and the violation of justice and right, do not be amazed at the matter; for the high official is watched by a higher, and there are yet higher ones over them.” The prophets exhort the respect for each person’s dignity and rights, paying special attention to those who are weaker or marginalized, such as the foreigner, the widow and the orphan (e.g., Zech 7:10).

Human Rights: Aquinas and the School of Salamanca

In the Medieval period theologians and canonists (experts on ecclesiastical law) emphasized justice, understood as the permanent and constant will to give each his or her right. This led them to consider duties toward God and to the supremacy of God in public life, laws and institutions. The acceptance of the primacy of God did not prevent them from recognizing the rights of every human being; on the contrary, this was the very basis of their position. Although individual human rights were not explicitly presented, indirectly they were recognized in the teaching of moral duties in dealing with others. García López (1979) studied how human rights are present in the writings of Thomas Aquinas (1224–1274), probably the most important medieval theologian, and finds the following individual rights: life, physical

integrity, wellbeing, private property, just trial, fame, and intimacy. Aquinas also recognized the right to participate in public life within certain limits and other rights related to the common good of society.

In the sixteenth century and the first half of the seventeenth a number of theologians, members of what is known as of the School of Salamanca (Spain), openly defended the existence of universal rights in the context of the discovery and the colonization of the New World. In opposition to some who denied that the Native Americans were real human beings or were endowed with inherent rights, they defended the innate dignity and rights of men and women based on the fact of being human.

Francisco de Victoria (1483–1546), a Dominican friar and professor in the University of Salamanca, provided a firm intellectual defense of the rights of the indigenous (Amerindians). He stated that Indians were not inferior beings at all, and they had the same rights as any human, including the right to own land and other property (Fazio 1998). Another champion of what now we term human rights was Bartolomé de las Casas (1484–1566), Bishop of Chiapas, Mexico. He was also an advocate for Amerindians, defending the position that they were free persons in the natural order and deserved the same treatment as others, according to Catholic theology. Both had a great influence in enacting new laws (*Leyes Nuevas de Indias*) which established that Indians were free human beings and put them under the direct protection of the Spanish Crown (Beuchot 1994).

Regarding slavery, on the part of the Papacy, in spite of some controversy, as was shown by Panzer (1996), Popes did condemn racial slavery and the slave trade of Native American as early as 1435. This author has also reviewed a number of papal documents in which such condemnation is made explicit.

Human Rights in Catholic Social Teaching

As noted, the Bible and the Christian tradition, at least implicitly, entail the existence of innate rights inherent in every human being. However, the Roman Catholic Church was not initially too enthusiastic about the rights and freedoms of man contained in the *Declaration of the Rights of Man and the Citizen* enacted within the historical context of the French Revolution. There was a climate of hostility to the Church and an intellectual context in which human autonomy was understood as placing one's own conscience as the supreme norm of morality. Human dignity and rights rather than being based on divine transcendence and supported by God's authority were founded on human autonomy. Popes Pius VI (1775–1799) and Gregory XVI (1831–1846) strongly opposed this view and Pope Pius IX (1846–1878) condemned an array of 'errors of liberalism' in a document known as the *Syllabus* (1864).

Some years later, his successor, Pope Leo XIII reflected on the importance of human freedom, underscoring the supremacy of truth over freedom. He wrote: "to all matter of opinion which God leaves to man's free discussion, full liberty of thought and of speech is naturally within the right of everyone; for such liberty

never leads men to suppress the truth, but often to discover it and make it known” (1888, #23). However, precisely for the sake of the truth, Leo XIII energetically defended the natural rights of the human being, especially in the context of labor abuses. Leo stood up for the rights of the people especially the poor and weaker (RN 20) and did not hesitate to demand the “natural rights of man” (RN 51–53) and to defend those rights that citizens are entitled to as human beings (RN 39).

Pius XI (1857–1939) reiterated the teachings of Leo XIII by proclaiming the rights of man against various types of totalitarianism of his days (Nazism, Communism and Fascism), as well as against religious persecution in Mexico, and highlighted the legitimacy of civic defense of human rights. Pius XII (1939–1956) stressed the position of defense of the rights of man, which are presented as closely related to human dignity and democracy. It was this Pope who, from the early 1940s, sought to restore moral and inalienable rights and to develop a doctrinal statement in favor of their recognition (1940, #26). He defended human rights supported by natural right, and ultimately by God’s law (1948) and maintained that to “safeguard the inviolable rights of the human person and to facilitate the fulfillment of their duties, shall be duty of every public authority” (1941, #15).

It was during Pius XII’s pontificate when the United Nations Universal Declaration of the Human Rights (UDHR) was approved in 1948. This Declaration was welcomed by Pius XII’s successor, Pope John XXIII (1956–1963), although with some reservations:

We are, of course, aware that some of the points in the declaration did not meet with unqualified approval in some quarters; and there was justification for this. Nevertheless, We think the document should be considered a step in the right direction, an approach toward the establishment of a juridical and political ordering of the world community. It is a solemn recognition of the personal dignity of every human being; an assertion of everyone’s right to be free to seek out the truth, to follow moral principles, discharge the duties imposed by justice, and lead a fully human life. It also recognized other rights connected with these. (PT 144)

The Second Vatican Council (1962–1965) did not mention human rights declarations but alluded to them indirectly (GS 73, 75) and talked about the necessity of a political-legal order to protect the rights of man and by considering institutions for public life (GS 74). After the Second Vatican Council, there have been numerous interventions in favor of human rights by Popes Paul VI (1963–1978) and John Paul II (1978–2005) (see a partial compilation of texts in Filibeck 1994). Benedict XVI (2005–2013) has also insisted on the importance of fighting for the promotion and respect for human rights⁸, and so are doing pope Francis (2013, nn. 64, 65, 67, 190, and others) who, besides, has remembered that “again and again, the Church has acted as a mediator in finding solutions to problems affecting peace, social harmony, the land, the defence of life, human and civil rights, and so forth” (EG 65).

Pope John XXIII published the Encyclical-Letter *Pacem in Terris* in 1963, a crucial document of CST in which human rights are central.

⁸Two addresses of Benedict XVI are particularly worthy of note regarding human rights. One to the General Assembly of the United Nations (2008) and another to the Pontifical Academy of Social Sciences (2009b).

Foundations of Human Rights

Pacem in terris, as the whole of CST, emphasizes the inextricable link between rights and duties, all applying to one and the same person (PT 28). It makes it clear by giving some examples of the link between rights and duties: “the right to live involves the duty to preserve one’s life; the right to a decent standard of living, the duty to live in a becoming fashion; the right to be free to seek out the truth, the duty to devote oneself to an ever deeper and wider search for it” (PT 29). In other words, we humans have personal moral duties to perform in accordance with moral law, and such duties require that others respect the corresponding rights which make possible the compliance of these duties. Thus, moral duties, which provide justification for human rights, are based on natural moral law, which according to Thomas Aquinas (1981, I–II, q. 94) is rationally discovered from human tendencies. And “every basic human right draws its authoritative force from the natural law, which confers it and attaches to it its respective duty” (PT 30). Human rights give rise to recognizing and respecting those rights and therefore the corresponding duty in other people (PT 28, 30). This position is closely related to those who proposed human needs as a foundation for human rights (e.g., Adler 1970, 137–154; Donnelly 1985).

The foundation of rights on duties has been recurrent in CST. In 2003, John Paul II made a call for “a renewed reflection on how *rights presuppose duties, if they are not to become mere licence*”, warning of the current paradox that while some appeal to rights, arbitrary and non-essential in nature, some elementary and basic rights remain unacknowledged and are violated in much of the world. The latter can include lack of food, drinkable water, basic instruction and elementary health care. Six years later, his successor Benedict XVI insisted that when individual rights are detached from a framework of duties which grants them their full meaning, such rights can run wild, leading to an escalation of demands which is effectively unlimited and indiscriminate. “Duties –he affirmed– set a limit on rights because they point to the anthropological and ethical framework of which rights are a part, in this way ensuring that they do not become license” (CV 43).

CH defends personal freedom with responsibility, and the respect and protection of human rights, including those relevant in business. Within the economic and business context, Benedict XVI stated that “among those who sometimes fail to respect the human rights of workers are large multinational companies as well as local producers” (CV 22). The defense of the human rights is firm, argued on the basis of their transcendent foundation. The risk we face is that of human rights being ignored “either because they are robbed of their transcendent foundation or because personal freedom is not acknowledged” (CV 56).

This emphasis on duties and on the ethical and transcendent foundation of human rights, characteristic of CH as proposed by CST, contrasts with other positions in which rights are presented with no ethical foundation, only as a matter of fact; or others in which rights prevail over duties, or personal duties remain as a subjective matter on which nothing can be said in the public arena. This leads to claim rights, while ignoring duties (PT 30).

The contrast is even greater regarding the foundation of human rights. Some theories derive human rights from certain social contract or as a, more or less, universal consensus. From this perspective the principal function of human rights would be to protect and promote certain essential human interests. This is one influential theory on human rights, nowadays (Fagan 2005). CST finds such a position problematic: “if the only basis of human rights is to be found in the deliberations of an assembly of citizens, those rights can be changed at any time, and so the duty to respect and pursue them fades from the common consciousness. Governments and international bodies can then lose sight of the objectivity and “inviolability” of rights. When this happens, the authentic development of peoples is endangered” (CV 43).

According to CST, human rights are universal (PT 132; GS 26) and original – they do not depend on will and political power (PT 28, GS 65). They are fundamental (GS 65), because they are at the base of any human relationship. They are also inalienable and inviolable (Pius XI 1937) and “the protection and promotion of the inviolable rights of man ranks among the essential duties of government” (Second Vatican Council 1965, *Dignitatis humanae*, 6). Their roots are in human nature and ultimately in God, author of this nature. Thus, human rights are sacred because they respond to God’s plan. It is God the Creator who provides the ultimate support to human rights as inviolable. This has been a constant teaching of the Church since Leo XIII. This Pope, talking about the right of workers, stated: “for it is not man’s own rights which are here in question, but the rights of God, the most sacred and inviolable of rights” (RN 40).

Whether or not human rights are accepted with this transcendental foundation, nowadays there is a wide recognition of the international declarations of human rights, which has contributed to the fact that human rights have generally become commonly accepted both ethically and legally worldwide. However, some countries – or to be more precise their governments – object that human rights are a product of Western culture. Sometimes this may be only an excuse to violate human rights by some dictatorial governments, but it is true that the elaboration of human rights began in the West, as did the notion of human dignity. As we have tried to show, both concepts came from the Judeo-Christian tradition, but the recognition of human dignity and innate rights are becoming a patrimony of humanity.

Human rights are not a matter of cultural imperialism. Their contents are trans-cultural and universal since they are based on the common condition of being human. As Mary Ann Glendon wrote, “If relativism and imperialism were the only choice, the prospect for the Declaration’s vision of human rights would be bleak indeed. Fortunately that is not the case. Much confusion has been created in current debates by two assumptions that would have been foreign within the framework of the Declaration. Today both critics and supporters of universal rights tend to take for granted that the Declaration mandates a single approved model of human rights of the entire world. Both also tend to assume that the only alternative would be to accept that all rights are relative to the circumstances of time and place” (2002, 229–230).

We can conclude by saying that human rights together with human dignity are a point of encounter between the doctrine of the Church and contemporary society (Benedict XVI 2009b).

Development for the Whole Person and for All Persons

In Old French, *desveloper* (to develop) means “unwrap, unfurl, unveil”. The etymology of “development” comes from this word, with a meaning close to “unfolding” and with special reference to matters regarding property. It has been applied with the sense of “bringing out the latent possibilities”, for instance, making improvements on new lands, by cultivation, and the erection of buildings, and so on.⁹ Extending the notion of development to humans, some talk of “human development”, denoting unfolding human capabilities, improvement as a human being; and even flourishing or human excellence.

The UN Notion of “Human Development”

Development of one’s own capabilities is presented by the UDHR as closely related with human rights. This Declaration states that it is essential to promote the development of friendly relations between nations (Preamble) and mentions that every human being is entitled to his or her realization; it also stresses the necessity of economic, social and cultural rights “indispensable for his dignity and the free development of his personality” (art. 22). Furthermore, “education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality” (art. 26). The UDHR also posits the necessity of the community for full development of one’s personality and, related to this, the duties of each one toward his or her community (art. 29).

The notion of “Human Development” became popular through the United Nations. For a long time most people had talked of “development” only in a material and economic sense. Thus, development has been almost synonymous of economic growth, generally measured in terms of national income. The term “human development” was introduced in the late 1980s by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the elaboration and subsequent publication of annual Human Development Reports (HDRs) from 1990. One of the main components of these reports is the Human Development Index (HDI), which covers three basic variables: life expectancy, education and incomes. These HDRs were devised and launched by Pakistani economist Mahbub ul Haq with the aim of shifting the focus from national income accounting to peoples’ well-being. The Nobel laureate Amartya Sen (1999) provided the underlying conceptual framework for HDI.

⁹cf. Online Etymology Dictionary, voices “develop” and “development”: www.etymonline.com/index.php?allowed_in_frame=0&search=develop&searchmode=none

In these reports, human development is understood as a process of enlarging the range of choices in all areas of human endeavor and for every human being.

Nowadays, HDRs are globally recognized as a crucial aid in measuring, monitoring, and managing human development. They allow policy-makers to analyze diverse challenges that poor people and poor countries face, rather than imposing a rigid economic rationality with a set of policy prescriptions. Although this vision of human development is highly oversimplified, this index and the reports on human development extend the scope of development and have become useful to convince the public, academics, and policy-makers that they can and should evaluate development in terms of improvements in human well-being, and not only through economic growth. This is why the notion of “human development” has become popular worldwide.

The notion of “human development” is not at all strange to the Christian Humanism tradition. On the contrary it is one of its key core concepts, as we try to show in this section. However, the understanding of human development in CH is wider than that presented in the HDRs and is, by no means, reduced to a process of enlarging choices.

Human Development in Catholic Humanism

Sacred Scripture and early Christian writers call the person to a progressive identification with Christ and this includes developing oneself in his or her humanity by acquiring virtues to flourish as a human being. Concern for the poor and for people’s needs in order to improve their living conditions is also to be found in the oldest Christian tradition.

The wish for human development is very much present in modern Catholic social teaching. John XXIII encouraged the attainment of a degree of economic development that enables citizens to live in conditions more in keeping with their human dignity (PT 122). Pope Paul VI (1967) wrote the encyclical-letter *Populorum Progressio* (PP) specifically devoted to the development of people. In this document, the Pope started by remembering the deep interest and concern for the progressive development of peoples of his predecessors and the Second Vatican Council (cf. PP, introductory words). Paul VI did not use term “human development”, but the concept is there. Furthermore, he mentioned “development” 52 times in this encyclical, often without any adjective, by making clear that the development he spoke about “cannot be restricted to economic growth alone” (PP 14). He added that development “to be authentic, (it) must be well rounded; it must foster the development of each man and of the whole man” (PP 14). At the same time, he encouraged a “collaboration that contributes greatly to the common development of mankind and allows the individual to find fulfillment” (PP 84).

This human development includes both “the whole person and every person” and, since Paul VI, has been called “integral human development”. The importance of integral human development was repeated by John Paul II (1990, #42), and

Benedict XVI extended this concept in his encyclical *Caritas in veritate* (2009a) stating that “the truth of development consists in its completeness: if it does not involve the whole man and every man, it is not true development” (CV 18, cf. CV 8). Pope Francis, insists on the “the integral promotion of each human being” (EG 182) and on “the integral development of all” (EG 240).

These twofold aspects of integral human development mentioned above – the whole person and every person – invite us to analyze them separately, although keeping in mind that they go together, since, as we discuss below, contributing to the development of another contributes to one’s own development.

The development of the whole person entails every single dimension of the human being (PP 14, CV 11). However, the spiritual dimension is paramount, because of the spiritual nature of humans. Spiritual growth is, therefore, an essential part of human development, although this also must include material progress, since man is unity of body and soul (CV 76). Personal development is made by good acts of freedom, which develop virtues with the subsequent human flourishing. This is a finding of reason, as the ancient Greek philosopher Aristotle (1925) suggested. Freedom is essential for this spiritual progress but it is not enough. “Fidelity to man requires *fidelity to the truth*, which alone is the *guarantee of freedom* (cf. Jn 8:32) and of *the possibility of integral human development*” (CV 9).

The development of every person concerns groups of people, starting with the family, the very core of society, and it extends to the whole of humankind. It also includes material means and conditions of freedom, education and culture for the spiritual development of people. In many countries and places there is poverty, in both material and cultural terms, and a lack of freedom and justice. This challenges individuals, societies, governmental and non-governmental institutions, national and international organizations.

Social structures may play a great role in such development. However, as CST makes clear, each individual remains the principal agent of his or her own success or failure, whatever the circumstances might be (PP 15). In Benedict XVI’s words, “*integral human development presupposes the responsible freedom* of the individual and of peoples; no structure can guarantee this development over and above human responsibility” (CV 17).

Human Development as a Transcendental Calling

CST sees the development of each person as a calling or vocation. Even more, “integral human development is primarily a vocation” (CV 11). Within us, we can discover certain aptitudes and abilities in germinal form. Some are generic to all human beings, such as the capacity for acquiring rational knowledge and for entering in communion with other persons, while others are particular talents. We are called to flourish as a human being and to employ our talents usefully. This calling, although in a different manner, extends also to social groups, such as families and peoples. Responding to this innate vocation to development entails a sense of duty, which is actually a radical ethical obligation.

Regarding the calling to personal development, CST distinguishes between two planes: one natural, focused on achieving human fulfillment, or perfection as a human being, and another, supernatural, which regards a full communion with Christ, and requires divine help. Both of these include a transcendent vocation. In the natural plane there is a response to the calling from God the Creator, which we find in our nature, although when God is eclipsed, our ability to recognize the natural order decreases. The supernatural plane regards the Christian vocation. It includes both the natural plane and the supernatural plane (CV 18).

The vocation to development is therefore not a matter of choice, although one can respond in different ways. Benedict XVI emphasized, that “the vocation to development on the part of individuals and peoples is not based simply on human choice, but is an intrinsic part of a plan that is prior to us and constitutes for all of us a duty to be freely accepted” (CV, 52).

Recognizing *development as a vocation* has relevant consequences. First, the discovery of such a vocation is something which transcends us and leads us to understand that “Someone” higher than me is calling me. CST defends the position that development derives from a transcendent call (CV 16). Paul VI openly stated: “In God’s plan, every man is born to seek self-fulfillment, for every human life is called to some task by God” (PP 15). In developing one’s own seminal qualities through formal education of personal effort, “the individual works his way toward the goal set for him by the Creator” (Ibid.).

A second consequence is that the vocation to development is incapable, on its own, of supplying its ultimate meaning. Vocation gives human life its true meaning (CV 16, PP 42). This leads one to affirm, that “there is no true humanism but that which is open to the Absolute”, and is conscious of the meaning to life provided by the vocation to development (Ibid.).

A third consequence of seeing development as a vocation is the *central place of love (charity) within human development* (CV 19). Considering the development of the whole person, love, in the Christian sense of *agape* is at the core of all virtues (Melé 2012), and growing in love –not any love but love in truth– is growing as a human being. Based on the Gospel (Lk 17:37), *Gaudium et spes*, states that man “cannot fully find himself except through a sincere gift of himself” (GS 24). Regarding the development of people, love –or also, if you prefer, brotherhood or sense of solidarity– is also essential: Underdevelopment is an important cause of the lack of brotherhood among individuals and peoples (PP 66). Benedict XVI added a truth we realize every day: “As society becomes ever more globalized, it makes us neighbors but does not make us brothers” (CV 19).

Achieving Human Development

Human development inspired by CST converges with other approaches, but goes beyond most of them. It is fully in agreement with what UDHR says about the right to develop one’s personality, and mentions “humanity’s right to development” as

well as the role of institutions to foster this end (CV 11). The contribution of the individual to the community to favor the development of others is also considered by CST, which stresses the importance of contributing to the common good (CV 7), understood as the “sum of those conditions of social life which allow social groups and their individual members relatively thorough and ready access to their own fulfillment” (GS 26).

However, above all, CST insists on achieving a full development, as well as a good society, which is much more than a question of rights and duties and building efficient institutions. It is rather a matter of virtuous relationships. Benedict XVI affirms, using the Augustinian term *earthly city* that this “is promoted not merely by relationships of rights and duties, but to an even greater and more fundamental extent by relationships of gratuitousness, mercy and communion” (CV 6). More explicitly, he adds: “*Development is impossible without upright men and women, without financiers and politicians whose consciences are finely attuned to the requirements of the common good*” (CV 71).

Another point of agreement with United Nations is that development cannot be reduced to economic development. By no means does CH accept the separation of the human from economic development. At the beginning of 1960s, within the CH tradition, Lebret wrote: “We cannot allow economics to be separated from human realities, nor development from the civilization in which it takes place. What counts for us is man – each individual man, each human group, and humanity as a whole” (1961, 28). Paul VI echoed these words (PP 14) as did his successors John Paul II (SRS 8–9), and Benedict XVI (CV 21).

CST not only makes clear, that development cannot be restricted to economic growth alone, but also underlines that all development entails a moral dimension (SRS, 34), and, as noted above, development, to be authentic, must be well-rounded by fostering the development of each person and of the whole person (PP 14). When rationality is limited to technical or economic evaluations rejecting the rational consideration of the human being as a whole it becomes irrational: “because it implies a decisive rejection of meaning and value” (CV, 74). Since economic or instrumental rationality is not the whole of human rationality, Benedict XVI (2009) advocated *broadening the scope of reason* (CV 33) which not only includes technical and economic evaluations but the consideration of the whole person and a full meaning of development.

Another point of agreement of CST with the UN notion of Human Development is the concern for rescuing people from hunger, deprivation, endemic diseases and illiteracy, but furthermore CST has an “articulate vision of development” (CV 21) which includes defending an active participation, on equal terms, in the international economic process, the development of educated societies marked by solidarity, and the consolidation of democratic regimes capable of ensuring freedom and peace.

When CST affirms that authentic human development should permit the transition from less than human conditions to truly human ones (cf. PP 20), it not too far from the idea of “human development” proposed by Amartya Sen (1999) and others, that has already been mentioned above. However, the notion of integral human

development proposed by CST presents a substantive difference from the ideas of Amartya Sen. Sen sees development as freedom and liberty and advocates a comprehensive view which includes the expansion of human capabilities, understood as aspects and possibilities of action and identity. Thus, development is seen as improving capabilities and, therefore, making choices possible. This leads people to live in accordance with what they prefer. According to Sen, pursuing one's own capabilities requires both resources and the ability to use them (skills) in order to make capabilities real. Consequently, development is about removing the obstacles to freedom, such as illiteracy, ill health, lack of access to resources, or lack of civil and political freedoms.

As noted above, CST presents freedom as being very important as a condition for development, and stands for the necessity to remove external obstacles, but insists that this is not sufficient. Freedom requires responsibility of individuals and of peoples.

Social and political structures can foster development, but no structure can guarantee this development over and above human responsibility. Obstacles and forms of conditioning hold up development, but each individual is the main agent of his or her personal development. In other words, freedoms are necessary but not sufficient. Integral human development requires acting virtuously to flourish as a human being. This is a personal task rather than a matter of public policies. However education and culture, which are not completely independent of politics, can have an influence on a responsible use of freedom.

Practical Implications

In this chapter we have tried to show three core concepts of CH –human dignity, human rights and integral human development–, based on both reason and faith and following Catholic social teaching. All of these can serve as a base of further developments and offer relevant ethical requirements for economics and business.

Respect for human dignity entails the ethical requirement of treating people as ends, and not as mere instruments: “In virtue of a personal dignity the human being is *always a value as an individual*, and as such demands being considered and treated as a person and never, on the contrary, considered and treated as an object to be used, or as a means, or as a thing” (CL 37). In business, persons are central, and people must never be regarded merely as resources for production or as consumers to obtain gains. This entails a *fair treatment* to everybody and a positive attitude toward *diversity*. All persons deserve respect, independently on their race, sex, religion, ideology, age or sexual orientation. Unfair discriminations in selection and promotion of personnel based on criteria alien to the job requirements are not acceptable.

As concerns work in organizations, it should be considered that work itself can have a greater or lesser objective value, but all work should be judged by the measure of dignity given to the person who carries it out. Thus, John Paul II (1981)

wrote: “work is in the first place ‘for the worker’ and not the worker ‘for work’” (LE 6). In this line of thought CST proposed the priority of labor over capital by considering that labor is the cause of production; while the means of production (capital), are only mere instruments or tools (LE 12).

The recognition and respect for human rights entails practical requirements for economic activity, particularly regarding labor. CST emphasizes, that *labor rights*, which flow from work “are part of the broader context of those fundamental rights of the person” (LE 16). Among these rights, which determine the correct relationship between worker and employer, CST mentions the right to a just wage, understood as that sufficient to support the worker and his or her family, and associated social benefits; the right to a working environment and to manufacturing processes which are not harmful to the workers’ physical health or to their moral integrity; the right of workers to form unions or other associations to secure their rights to fair wages and working conditions; the *right to rest*, *first of all* a regular weekly rest comprising at least Sunday, and also a longer period of rest (vacations), the right to a pension and to insurance for old age and in case of accidents at work (LE 19–20).

Integral human development also has practical implications for business and the economy. As noted, development cannot be reduced to economic progress. CH suggests a deep meaning to development, avoiding a materialistic view, which reduces development to wealth accumulation. Development should be oriented to the service of people. CST emphasizes, that “in the economic and social realms, too, the dignity and complete vocation of the human person and the welfare of society as a whole are to be respected and promoted” (GS 63). And from here, a fundamental criterion emerges: “man is the source, the center, and the purpose of all economic and social life” (Ibid.).

Consequently, business should be oriented to people, to their development. “The fundamental finality of this production is not the mere increase of products nor profit or control but rather the service of man, and indeed of the whole man with regard for the full range of his material needs and the demands of his intellectual, moral, spiritual, and religious life; this applies to every man whatsoever and to every group of men, of every race and of every part of the world” (GS 64).

The development of the whole person requires organizing work in such a way that workers can share in the responsibility and creativity of the very work process, and can feel that they are working for themselves, instead of feeling like ‘cogs’ in a huge machine moved from above (LE 15). Integral Human development leads one to consider how making decisions favor or erode such development and how organizational structures can have an influence on fostering or preventing human development.

The development of all people leads to be concern with alleviation of poverty, fair international trading and being sensitive with the limitations of laws and in their application in some countries, and a firm attitude in fighting against corruption.

Responsibility in the application of these concepts requires practical wisdom and the prudent judgment of one’s own conscience. Responsibility in economic activity, as in every human action, entails being aware not only of actions committed but also of omissions of what is due and possible through negligence or recklessness, willingness to cooperate in doing good and to avoid cooperation in wrongdoing, and fostering a positive influence on others’ good behavior and, of course, avoiding the contrary.

It is worth noting that responsibility could be indirect (see CCC 1934–1937). This would be the case of a *supply chain* in which the final producer does not respect human dignity and basic human rights (e.g., working conditions in “sweatshops”). A company – or any other agent – bears responsibility for cooperation in wrongdoing if these unacceptable ethical conditions are foreseeable and the company or agent has the possibility of preventing them.

Considering the core concepts discussed in this chapter we can affirm that Catholic humanism has much in common with some current proposals of business ethics, especially those which emphasize human dignity and rights. However, business ethics approaches frequently only focus on ethical issues involving unacceptability or dilemmas which require certain deliberation but rarely consider the contribution of business to human development. An important difference of Christian humanism is the centrality of some specific virtues, such as charity, humility, willingness to forgive, and others. Furthermore, Catholic humanism provides reasons and motivation for respecting the dignity and innate rights of person and for promoting people’s development.

Another difference regards the foundations of the concepts under consideration. God not only strongly supports human dignity and innate rights, He also gives full meaning to the vocation for development. This reference to God is so important that Pope Paul VI stated that humanism without God is, in a certain sense, inhuman: “True humanism points the way toward God and acknowledges the task to which we are called, the task which offers us the real meaning of human life” (PP 42).

On his part, Benedict XVI affirms, that “openness to God makes us open towards our brothers and sisters and towards an understanding of life as a joyful task to be accomplished in a spirit of solidarity.” The rejection of God, on the contrary, is a great obstacle to development today (CV 78). Some atheistic “humanisms”, as Henri de Lubac (1949) pointed out, end up being inhuman by degrading the human person: “closed off from God, they will end up being directed against man. A humanism closed off from other realities becomes inhuman” (1949, 7; Cf PP 42). Similarly, Benedict XVI defends the position that “true humanism points the way toward God and acknowledges the task to which we are called, the task which offers us the real meaning of human life” and remarks upon the importance of a transcendental humanism (CV 18) facing other visions in which God is denied, or at least, is presented –using the well-known Grotius’ dictum– *etsi Deus non daretur* (if God does not exist). The exclusion of God is a risk of becoming equally oblivious to human values and subordinating humans to ideologies, interests or power.

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