

# Celebrating 100 Years



## The Catholic Social Tradition: Building a Culture of Justice and Compassion

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## Introduction

- Pope Francis:

- “Where there are old and new existential peripheries, where people are underprivileged, where people are alone and discarded, where people are disrespected, extend a hand to them . . . . We must have courage and imagination to build the right road to integrate development, justice and peace.”



- U.S. Bishops:

- “All those in the health apostolate who heed the call and follow the example of Jesus, will continue to serve the poor, the frail elderly, the powerless, and the alienated. Sometimes this will be at great sacrifice, and it will demand both courage and imagination.”



## Introduction

- The Church's social tradition is not something "added on" to who we are as Church, but it is an essential part of our identity
- If Catholic health care is truly a ministry of the Church, those involved in Catholic health care are called not only to continue the healing mission of Jesus but to help build up a culture of justice and compassion
- To engage in this ministry demands courage and imagination.

## Introduction

- Catholic social tradition often seen on the margins of Catholic moral teaching
  - “Church’s best kept secret”
  - “Merely prudentially laden issues on which people of good will can disagree”
- Catholic social tradition vitally linked to the very nature of Church
  - “Action on behalf of justice and participation in the transformation of the world fully appear to us as a constitutive dimension of the preaching of the Gospel”
  - Church “fulfills her mission of preaching the Gospel” when it “teaches . . . the demands of justice”

## Catholic Identity

- Members of Church are called into communion
  - “A people brought into unity from the unity of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit”
  - “Communion is the fruit and demonstration of that love which springs from the heart of the Eternal Father and is poured out upon us through the Spirit which Jesus gives us, to make us all ‘one heart and one soul.’”



## Catholic Identity

- Members of Church are sent in mission
  - “Church . . . receives a mission of proclaiming and establishing among all peoples the kingdom of Christ and of God, and she is on earth the seed and the beginning of that kingdom. While she slowly grows to maturity, the Church longs for the completed kingdom.”
  - Church not Reign of God
  - Church not separated from Reign of God
  - Reign of God: both end point and stimulus

## Catholic Social Tradition

- Personal dignity and the common good
  - Strong inter-dependence
- Close relationship between Catholic social teaching and an understanding of the Church
  - Stresses communion
  - Stresses the call to conversion and transformation in light of the Reign of God.

## Catholic Social Tradition

- Communion

- Only in communion “will true cooperation be possible for a single common good when the constituent parts of society deeply feel themselves members of one great family and children of the same Heavenly Father.” ➤ Pope Pius XI
- “Because it is a gift received by everyone, charity in truth is a force that builds community, it brings all people together without imposing barriers or limits.” ➤ Pope Benedict
- “This dynamic of charity received and given is what gives rise to the Church’s social teaching.” ➤ Pope Benedict



## Catholic Social Tradition

- **Solidarity**
  - Demands that members of the Church acknowledge that all are sisters and brothers
  - “All are really responsible for all” ➤ Pope John Paul II
- **Subsidiarity**
  - Tasks of social groups should be accomplished at the lowest appropriate level
  - Subsidiarity without solidarity = *social privatism*
  - Solidarity without subsidiarity = *paternalism*
- **Participation**
  - Engaging as many as possible in those tasks necessary for the common good
  - Be as inclusive as possible

## Catholic Social Tradition

- Call to conversion and transformation

- Gift from Christ who preached the Reign of God and whose death and resurrection inaugurated that Reign
- Demonstrates that “a new manner of social life is possible, in justice, solidarity, and sharing”
- Metanoia
- “Growing edge of the tradition”

➤ John Courtney Murray, SJ



## Catholic Social Tradition

- Option for the poor (1970s)
  - To ignore the poor “would mean becoming like the ‘rich man’ who pretended not to know the beggar Lazarus lying at his gate”
    - Pope John Paul II
- Transparency (2005)
  - Being transparent in their operations “can only redound to the effectiveness of charitable service”
    - Pope Benedict XVI
- Accountability (2014)
  - To whom and for what are we answerable?
  - Challenges individuals and institutions to reflect upon their own contributions to the structures of sin

## Catholic Health Care: A Culture of Justice and Compassion

- Parable of Good Samaritan
  - Each element of this parable challenges us to look at our own experience and our compassionate response to those in need of health care. The Good Samaritan challenges Catholic health care social services explicitly to respect dignity, foster trust in care and promote just health systems. (Health Ethics Guide)
  - Catholic health and social services should therefore be distinguished by their commitment to work for justice in health and social service. They seek to serve and to advocate for those who are marginalized in society, witnessing to a special obligation to the poor and vulnerable. All those who are engaged in this ministry seek to create a community of compassion.

## Catholic Health Care: A Culture of Justice and Compassion

- Catholic health care as communion
  - “A community of compassion”
  - Right relationships
  - Principles of solidarity, subsidiarity, participation
  - Respect for diversity within ministry
  - Collaboration with others
  - Builds up the community of Catholic health care, animated by the Gospel

## Catholic Health Care: A Culture of Justice and Compassion

- Catholic health care as proclamation of Reign of God
  - Called to conversion and to “action on behalf of justice and participation in the transformation of the world”
  - Carried out within a set of social structures that are not always friendly to the Church’s identity or social teaching
  - Benevolence v. beneficence
  - Reign of God continues to act as a stimulus,
    - Calls Catholic health care out of itself to conversion
    - Asks whether Catholic health care institutions might become too entangled in the “social structures of sin.”

## Catholic Health Care: A Culture of Justice and Compassion

- A culture of justice and compassion
  - Not enough simply to avoid injustice
  - Live out Reign of God
  - Discern the signs of the times
  - Hard questions regarding a culture of justice and compassion
  - Importance of discernment
  - Demands imagination and courage



## Moving Forward with Imagination and Courage

- Imagination and Courage
  - Ecclesiology of communion demands imagination
  - Reign of God calls us to act with courage
  - Calls us to think outside of the box



## Moving Forward with Imagination and Courage

- Imagination

“Nothing is more practical than finding God, that is, than falling in love in a quite absolute, final way. What you are in love with, what seizes your imagination, will affect everything. It will decide what will get you out of bed in the morning, what you will do with your evenings, how you will spend your weekends, what you read, who you know, what breaks your heart, and what amazes you with joy and gratitude.”

*Fall in love, stay in love, and it will decide everything.*

➤ Pedro Arrupe, SJ

## Moving Forward with Imagination and Courage

- **Courage**

“I dream of a “missionary option,” that is, a missionary impulse capable of transforming everything, so that the Church’s customs, ways of doing things, times and schedules, language and structures can be suitably channeled for the evangelization of today’s world rather than for her self-preservation. The renewal of structures demanded by pastoral conversion can only be understood in this light: as part of an effort to make them more mission-oriented, to make ordinary pastoral activity on every level more inclusive and open, to inspire in pastoral workers a constant desire to go forth and in this way to elicit a positive response from all those whom Jesus summons to friendship with him. All renewal in the Church must have mission as its goal if it is not to fall prey to a kind of ecclesial introversion.”

➤ Pope Francis

## Moving Forward with Imagination and Courage

- Examination of conscience
  - Review of one's actions in light of their conformity with the Gospel
  - Are the actions of the institution consistent with what we say we are as a ministry of the Church?



## Conclusion

- Catholic health care institutions are *called into communion* with both God and others, and *sent in mission* to proclaim the Good News of the Reign of God
- Catholic social tradition calls those who lead our institutions ...
  - To a continuously greater commitment to justice and communion,
  - To conversion and compassion,
  - With imagination and courage.

## Conclusion

I prefer a Church which is bruised, hurting and dirty because it has been out on the streets, rather than a Church which is unhealthy from being confined and from clinging to its own security. I do not want a Church concerned with being at the center and which then ends by being caught up in a web of obsessions and procedures. If something should rightly disturb us and trouble our consciences, it is the fact that so many of our brothers and sisters are living without the strength, light and consolation born of friendship with Jesus Christ, without a community of faith to support them, without meaning and a goal in life. More than by fear of going astray, my hope is that we will be moved by the fear of remaining shut up within structures which give us a false sense of security, within rules which make us harsh judges, within habits which make us feel safe, while at our door people are starving and Jesus does not tire of saying to us: “Give them something to eat.” (Mk 6:37)

➤ Pope Francis

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