

SUBSIDIARITY

"This supremely important principle of social philosophy, one which cannot be set aside or altered, remains firm and unshaken: Just as it is wrong to withdraw from the individual and commit to the community at large what private enterprise and endeavour can accomplish, so it is likewise unjust and a gravely harmful disturbance of right order to turn over to a greater society of higher rank functions and services which can be performed by lesser bodies on a lower plane. For a social undertaking of any sort, by its very nature, ought to aid the members of the body social, but never to destroy and absorb them." Pius XI, *Quadragesimo Anno*, 1931.

"The international community should see to the coordination and stimulation of economic growth. These objectives must be pursued in such a way, however, that the resources organised for this purpose can be shared as effectively and justly as possible. This same community should regulate economic relations throughout the world so that they can unfold in a way which is fair. In so doing, however, the community should honour the principle of subsidiarity." *Church in the Modern World*, para 86, Documents of Vatican II, 1966

"While belonging primarily to the family, the task of imparting education requires the help of society as a whole....Part of its (society's) duty is to promote the education of the young in several ways: namely, by overseeing the duties and rights of parents and of others who have a role in education, and by providing them with assistance; by implementing the principle of subsidiarity and completing the task of education, with attention to parental wishes, whenever the efforts of parents and of other groups are insufficient..."

"But it (the state) must keep in mind the principle of subsidiarity, so that no kind of school monopoly arises. For such a monopoly would militate against the native rights of the human person, the development and spread of culture itself, the peaceful association of citizens, and the pluralism that exists today in very many societies." *Declaration on Christian Education*, paras 3 & 6, Documents of Vatican II, 1966.

Catholic social teaching constantly urged the common good, consensus, cooperation, reconciliation - in the name of Christ, his beatitudes counselled on the mount, his message and his example of love. Even at the height of the Cold War, Pope John presented these Gospel ideals in *Pacem in Terris*. Cardinal Roy in his *Reflections* for that encyclical's tenth anniversary notes that today "the conflicts that can no longer take place between States [because of the balance of terror] are being transferred to the interior of each of these States. There they fester, provoking explosions and crises of extreme gravity." *Reflections on Pacem in Terris*, April 1973.

"It is a different universe from that of John XXIII. Pope John's vision was that of an ordered and hierarchical society,...a pyramid of intermediate bodies founded on the 'principle of subsidiarity'." In John's model each individual, basic community and group contributes actively, respecting authority and serving the common good: "Society is animated by a common will. It is a

society of participation, oriented towards 'the coming of a collective order'; in short, it is a society of assent" (Reflections, 90).

Such was the expectation of John the optimist in 1963: Ten years have passed. A radical change has taken place. First of all conflict, expressed by violence, is a fact, a new fact, in all its breadth: this violence is everywhere, in countries that are not at war and in all social bodies, to the extent that a new chapter would have to be added to the Encyclical: *Bellum in Terris*. From *The Gospel of Peace and Justice*, presented by Joseph Gremillion, 1976

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