

From Mission to Service

University of Notre Dame Mendoza College of Business and Catholic Charities USA

Catholic Charities and Catholic Mission

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INTRODUCTION:

(A.) Purpose of Session: to examine the socioeconomic and ecclesial context in which Catholic Charities agencies function today.

(B.) Method of Lecture:

1. Background: the evolution of Catholic Charities in the United States; from service of the Church to service of Church and society.
2. Structural Setting for Catholic Charities: issues of church-society and church-state relationships.
3. Content of Catholic Social Vision
4. Ecclesial setting of the work of Catholic Charities.

- I. Background: The Evolution of Catholic Charities in the United States.
 - A. From mid-19th to mid-20th century: an immigrant church with multiple social needs spawns the “Catholic Social System” (hospitals, schools and social service agencies). The theme is Catholics serving Catholics.
 - B. Two forces of change
 - 1. The “pull” of partnership with government at local, state and federal level: the initial engagement, thru qualitative expansion post-New Deal.
 - 2. The “push” of Vatican II-the call of “Gaudium et Spes” for an enhanced public Catholicism.
 - 3. The result of push and pull – the transition to next section.

II. The Structural Setting of Charities

- A. Church-Society Relationships: locating the place of Catholic Charities.
 - 1. Social policy: a mix of state, market and non-profit institutions
 - 2. The role of “voluntary associations” – a broader category than non-profits
 - 3. The U.S. Style of social policy- its relationship to other industrialized democracies. The U.S. expects more from the market, less from the state and provides a broad role for non-profits.
- B. Church-State Relationships: a two-dimensional question.
 - 1. The funding issue: why partner with the state
 - 2. The freedom issue: protecting freedom to serve.

III. The Content of Catholic Social Vision

A. The Sources of Vision

1. Biblical: examples from Genesis, Prophets and N.T.
2. Philosophical: encyclical tradition
3. Conciliar: Vatican II

B. Conception of the Social Fabric:

1. Theory of Society
2. Doctrine of the State
3. Charter of Human Rights
4. Theory of Jurisprudence
5. Applied Ethic

C. Categories of Analysis

1. The Core Concepts

- (a) Human dignity
- (b) Human rights and duties
- (c) Social nature of person

2. Filling out the structure

- (a) Common Good and Public Order
- (b) Subsidiarity, Socialization and Solidarity
- (c) Voluntary Associations
- (d) The Option for the Poor

IV. The Ecclesial Context for Catholic Charities

A. Charities in the Country and in the Diocese

B. The Catholic Social System: the potential engagement of the parts acting in integrated fashion.

C. The issue of Catholic Identity

1. Source of discussion

2. Identity and Pluralism

D. The Transition to Lay Leadership

1. The fact

2. The potential and agenda

CONCLUSION

Readings:

(1) Peter Steinfels, *A People Adrift: The Crisis in American Catholicism*, chapter on “Catholic Social Institutions”.

(2) Charles Curran, “The Catholic Identity of Catholic Institutions” *Theological Studies* 58 (March 1997), pp. 90-108.