

Solidarity and U.S. Foreign Policy

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Introduction

I am grateful to the Catholic Peacebuilding Network and the dozen co-sponsors who made this conference possible. In a special way, I want to greet Cardinal Peter Turkson, President of the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace. Your Eminence, on behalf of my brother bishops and all assembled here, thank you for bringing the perspective of Pope Francis and the Holy See to our gathering. I very much look forward to welcoming His Eminence to Des Moines in mid-October for a major presentation at the World Food Prize.

It is particularly fitting to be reflecting on the fiftieth anniversary of Blessed John XXIII's encyclical, *Pacem in Terris*, in these early weeks of the ministry of Pope Francis. Francis has placed great emphasis on his namesake's commitment to peace and those in poverty. In his first *Urbi et Orbi* Message on Easter, the Holy Father prayed for "...the risen Jesus, who turns death into life, to change hatred into love, vengeance into forgiveness, war into peace." He declared: "...Christ is our peace, and through him we implore peace for all the world" (March 31, 2013).

I will begin with some general thoughts on the continuing relevance of Pope John XXIII's encyclical. Then in the heart of my talk I will explore the specific teaching of *Pacem in Terris* related to solidarity with fellow Bishops' Conferences especially in Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Middle East and some implications for U.S. policy. Finally, I will conclude with a note on the spirituality of solidarity.

Relevance of the Encyclical Today

Over these two days we are pondering the theme: “*Peacebuilding 2013: Pacem In Terris at 50.*” John XXIII never used the term “peacebuilding,” but the vision of *Pacem in Terris* embraced it. He called for a world in which “love, not fear, must dominate the relationships between individuals and between nations” (No. 129). He championed an international order based on “truth, justice, willing cooperation, and freedom” (No. 80). Almost a decade before Paul VI popularized the phrase, “If you want peace, work for justice,” John XXIII taught that peace “is founded on truth, built up on justice, nurtured and animated by charity, and brought into effect under the auspices of freedom” (1972 World Day of Peace Message; No. 167).

In other words, peace is built by attention to the truth of the human person, respect for human rights, and the free exercise of our duties to ourselves and to one another. It is not achieved, as Pope John noted, by “an equal balance of armaments” (No. 110). Pope John argued that “true and lasting peace among nations cannot consist in the possession of an equal supply of armaments but only in mutual trust” (No. 113). John XXIII maintained: especially in an age of nuclear weapons, “it no longer makes sense to maintain that war is a fit instrument with which to repair the violation of justice” (No. 127).

We would do well to heed Pope John’s warning today. The nuclear non-proliferation regime is fraying and needs urgent action by the international community to preserve it. The nuclear powers must make credible commitments to fulfill their disarmament obligations under the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty at the same time as non-nuclear countries are held to their commitments to nonproliferation.

The teaching of *Pacem in Terris* has aged well. Like a fine wine, its complex textures have matured, or perhaps it is our world that has matured so that we can better appreciate and hear the profundity and challenge of its teaching.

Solidarity

Half a century ago, Blessed Pope John, without the benefit of today's popular understanding of "globalization," sketched a broad vista of the "universal common good" of the whole of humanity (Nos. 132-141). In a prophetic passage, Pope John wrote: "National economies are gradually becoming so interdependent that a kind of world economy is being born from the simultaneous integration of the economies of individual States. ...[E]ach country's social progress, order, security and peace are necessarily linked with the social progress, order, security and peace of every other country" (No. 130). "...[N]o State can fittingly pursue its own interests in isolation from the rest, nor, under such circumstances, can it develop itself as it should. The prosperity and progress of any State is in part consequence, and in part cause, of the prosperity and progress of all other States" (No. 131) The interdependence among nations that John describes, when it serves the "universal common good" of the "whole human family," is another name for global solidarity (Nos. 132 ff.).

I have been asked to speak about "Solidarity and U.S. Foreign Policy," more specifically about how the virtue of solidarity animates the work of the U.S. bishops on international issues in general and U.S. foreign policy in particular. The mandate the bishops have given to the Committee on International Justice and Peace, which I chair, focuses on "advancing the social mission of the Church on international justice and peace through policy development, advocacy, education, outreach, and acts of ecclesial solidarity."

For me as chairman of the International Committee, solidarity takes many forms. It is my frequent duty to write letters of solidarity to the suffering Church in other parts of the world. At other times, I share the concerns and insights of local Churches with government officials in letters and meetings. Frequently, our Committee shares the stories of what the Church is experiencing in far flung places with the media in order to raise awareness and to increase public support for sound U.S. foreign policies.

The word “solidarity” only appears once in the text of Blessed John’s encyclical and once again in a heading. Pope John affirms the “principles of human solidarity” in addressing the rights of those “compelled to emigrate” (No. 107) and a section entitled “Active Solidarity” maintains that “mutual collaboration” among nations is essential “to pool their material and spiritual resources” for the common good of individual nations and the “entire human family” (No. 98). He uses the terms “collaboration” and “mutual” action repeatedly to describe elements of the type of relationship that we would name solidarity today.

It was Blessed John Paul II who highlighted “solidarity” in Church teaching. His Encyclical, *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis*, defined the term. According to John Paul, solidarity is “not a feeling of vague compassion or shallow distress at the misfortunes of so many people, both near and far. On the contrary, it is 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” (No. 38).

Our committee always consults closely with the Holy See and the local Church in other countries. Taking precedence in our work is ecclesial solidarity. At heart with our brothers and sisters in faith we share a vision that is distinct from the secular. *Pacem in Terris* grounds its

teaching in natural law which is permanent in character. The secular expression is founded on consensus or majority opinion which can shift significantly over time.

It is the teaching of John XXIII that the human person is made in the image and likeness of God with an eternal destiny and thus has inherent human rights which uphold the individual's dignity. His outlook is based on human nature.

Maintaining this foundation, which is rooted in nature, the U.S. Bishops stand in support of our ecclesial counterparts as they strive to establish respect for human rights in local situations. Principal among the rights we advocate is freedom of religion and its companion freedom of conscience. They stand as the cornerstones in assuring and safeguarding the spectrum of human rights.

It is from this perspective and based on our relationships with ecclesial bodies that we interact with our United States Government as it exercises its prominent role in the world today.

This virtue of solidarity is both relational and action-oriented. We find this virtue mirrored in the thought of Pope John XXIII where he wrote: "Human society ... demands that men ... be animated by such love as will make them feel the needs of others as their own, and induce them to share their goods with others, and to strive in the world to make all men alike heirs to the noblest of intellectual and spiritual values" (No 35). Pope John maintained that it "must also regulate the relations of political communities with one another" (No. 80).

Ultimately, international relations must be based on moral relationships of mutual concern. The fates of all peoples and nations are linked.

Just as all persons have basic rights that flow from their human dignity, in the teaching of Pope John "...all States are by nature equal in dignity" (No. 86). Herein is a lesson for our nation and other developed economies. We may have attained what John names "a superior

degree of scientific, cultural and economic development.” But in his words, “...that does not entitle [us] to exert unjust political domination over other nations.” (No. 88). In Blessed John’s thought, there is a preferential option for poorer and less powerful nations. In fact, the health of the whole human family depends upon such international solidarity.

Like a physician, a powerful nation’s first duty is to “do no harm.” Like individuals, all nations have rights. Pope John declared: “States have the right to existence, to self development, and to the means necessary to achieve this. They have the right to play the leading part in the process of their own development, and the right to their good name and due honors. ... And just as individual men may not pursue their own private interests in a way that is unfair and detrimental to others, so too it would be criminal in a State to aim at improving itself by the use of methods which involve other nations in injury and unjust oppression” (No. 92).

Not only should powerful nations “do no harm;” they should “do good” in a way that respects the right of other nations to self development. A relationship of solidarity is one that comes to know the other well and to help them to be protagonists in their own development. Solidarity excludes exploitation and domination. Powerful nations do not have a monopoly on truth and they certainly do not know what is best for the development of other peoples in different situations and cultures. At times a major flaw in the policy and initiatives of major powers, including our own nation, is that we think we know best.

Blessed John XXIII “appealed to the more wealthy nations to render every kind of assistance to those States which are still in the process of economic development,” but noted that such assistance should be rendered “in a way which guarantees to them the preservation of their own freedom” and allows them to play “the major role in their economic and social development” (Nos. 121, 123). He called on wealthier nations to “have the highest possible

respect for the latter's national characteristics and time-honored civil institutions” and to “repudiate any policy of domination” (No. 125).

U.S. Policy and Solidarity

In discharging its mandate, the Committee on International Justice and Peace articulates the Catholic vision in relationship and solidarity with the Holy See and its sister Church communities around the globe. In doing so, it is not an agent of the United States Government. At the same time, as U.S. citizens we advocate before our government on behalf of other peoples and nations in a spirit of solidarity. What implications might this have? We see both the positive and negative.

Our nation provides an array of international assistance programs, and although the percentage of our budget devoted to poverty-focused international assistance is low among developed nations, a number of U.S. programs emphasize local country ownership. Sometimes this ownership is mistaken to be governmental only. But there is a growing recognition that partnerships with civil society and faith-based institutions in developing nations extend the reach and effectiveness of such assistance and ensure human rights at the heart of *Pacem in Terris*’ teachings. Religious leaders are trusted by local populations and faith-based institutions in their mediating role uphold the dignity of every human person which could be easily compromised for political considerations.

In recent testimony, I reminded Congress that local civil society and faith-based groups play crucial roles in promoting integral human development together with government. In poor developing countries, Church groups are particularly close to poor communities and are trusted institutions. Faith-based institutions offer health care, education and community development. Strong civil society and faith-based groups act as a critical third pillar of social development, in

addition to government and the private sector. Faith-based groups can help hold governments accountable and promote reconciliation in torn societies. Strong civil societies and responsive governments reinforce one another. Governments foster the common good in which civil society can operate. A robust civil society helps governments to be responsive and effective. As Pope John wrote: “The good order of society also requires that individuals and subsidiary groups within the State be effectively protected by law in the affirmation of their rights and the performance of their duties...” (No. 69).

The Church in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) provides a good example of solidarity in action. With U.S. assistance, in preparation for the 2006 elections, the Catholic Church did extensive civic education on the rights and responsibilities of citizens. During the 2011 DRC elections, the Church deployed thousands of monitors and uncovered instances of fraud and intimidation. The Bishops’ Conference of the DRC has worked actively with our Conference of Bishops, even to the point of offering Congressional testimony, to promote adoption of U.S. legislation that could help put an end to the illegal exploitation of Congolese minerals by international business interests that fuels armed conflict and suffering in eastern DRC.

Unfortunately, the lessons of solidarity are sometimes lost on our government. The Iraq war is one catastrophic example. The Holy See and our own Bishops’ Conference repeatedly urged our nation to resolve the serious disputes with Iraq through negotiation and diplomacy. On the eve of war, Cardinal Pio Laghi, as Papal Envoy, warned of the potential “suffering of the people of Iraq and those involved in the military operation, a further instability in the region and a new gulf between Islam and Christianity” (March 5, 2003). Our Conference of Bishops warned of “unpredictable consequences” for Iraq and the region (November 13, 2002).

Last month, I made a solidarity visit to Baghdad on the occasion of the installation of Louis Raphael I Sako as the new patriarch of the Chaldean Catholic Church. Bishop after bishop at that event testified to me of the terrible and continuing suffering wrought by the war, and of the particular devastation of the ancient Church in Iraq that is being depleted because the faithful there see no future. This is primarily so because of the lack of security, a direct outcome of the American invasion and occupation. A foreign policy more fully informed by solidarity would have better foreseen these unintended consequences and taken the moral high road.

Our nation should keep the experience of Iraq in mind as it pursues a solution to the violence that grips Syria. Armed violence is not the solution; it is the problem. The international community needs to exert all of its influence to bring the elements of Syrian society together in order to work out a transition that is inclusive and respectful of human rights, especially those of religious and ethnic minorities. As Pope Francis asked on Easter: "...[H]ow much suffering must there still be before a political solution to the crisis will be found?" (March 13, 2013)

Cuba provides another example of a U.S. foreign policy largely uninformed by solidarity. For decades, our Conference of Bishops, in solidarity with the bishops of Cuba and the Holy See, has maintained that greater, not less engagement with Cuba, can bring about positive change in that country. The call of the Church in Cuba has always been one for dialogue: genuine and open dialogue within Cuba and dialogue between Cuba and the outside world, which apart from the United States exists today. The relaxation of U.S. travel restrictions announced by the Administration in 2011 was an important step, but the journey is far from over. Our nation's official policy is that change in Cuba will come about through isolation. The five-decades-old U.S. embargo is a failure, exposing the unsuccessful nature of the policy.

Last year I made a solidarity trip to Cuba during the visit of Pope Benedict XVI. Contact between our respective countries holds great promise of fostering human rights and positive change for the long suffering people of Cuba. The existing U.S. embargo of Cuba hurts ordinary citizens and compromises the ability of charitable organizations, including the Catholic Church, to provide essential services to the most marginalized Cubans. I visited Caritas Cuba programs providing child and elderly care to vulnerable persons. The staff members administering these facilities and senior Cuban Church officials repeatedly told me that their work was hampered by the inability to obtain products from the United States due to the trade embargo.

Solidarity teaches us that engagement, not isolation, is the way to enhance human rights in Cuba. The establishment of full diplomatic relations with Cuba and withdrawal of all restrictions on travel to Cuba are the paths forward, the paths of solidarity.

Let me offer one final example of U.S. policy that needs to be better informed by solidarity: the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. It is almost a cliché to say that solidarity demands a two-state solution to the conflict, a secure and recognized Israel living in peace alongside a viable and independent Palestinian state. Among the situations that Pope Francis lifted up in his Easter *Urbi et Orbi* Message was a plea for “[p]eace for the Middle East ...particularly between Israelis and Palestinians, who struggle to find the road of agreement” and “to end a conflict that has lasted all too long” (March 31, 2013).

Our Conference of Bishops has repeatedly made solidarity visits to the Holy Land. We have heard and made our own the narratives of both Israelis and Palestinians. Both parties do need to put themselves in one another’s shoes. Based on the best interests of each nation our country needs to do the same.

U.S. policy has to be based on holding both parties accountable for the mutual steps needed for a just peace. It requires a position that takes no sides but calls for the resolution of problems that are evident. There is plenty of blame to be addressed on each side.

Palestinians must promote security by halting attacks on civilians, blocking illegal arms shipments and disarming militias, and improve governance and transparency to build capacity for a future state. They need to disavow clearly and forever their radical ranks who have proposed the destruction of Israel.

Israel needs to freeze immediately expansion of settlements, withdraw “illegal outposts,” ease movement for Palestinians by reducing military check points, and refrain from disproportionate military responses. The city of Jerusalem is sacred to the three principal representative faiths. It calls for an international character that respects and facilitates free access for adherents to the three religions, all of whom have a stake in this sacred ground.

Lasting peace is built on justice for both peoples. Nowhere is the insight more applicable than in the Israeli-Palestinian standoff when Pope John states that peace today is not going to be achieved by a threatening and increasing build-up of arms. This position must be replaced by the realization that “lasting peace among nations cannot consist in an equal supply of armaments but only in mutual trust.” (113)

Spiritual Solidarity

Solidarity is about more than foreign policy, despite the critical importance of just policies. Solidarity is not just an effective technique or methodology. It is much more. Solidarity is a spiritual virtue with practical and profound applications for personal and international relationships.

Blessed John XXII taught that a just and peaceful human society is “primarily a spiritual reality.” He declared that a truly human society consists of “spiritual values which exert a guiding influence on culture, economics, social institutions, political movements and forming, laws, and all the other components which go to make up the external community of men and its continual development” (No. 36).

In a way, solidarity captures the essence of personal relationships and international relations and is absolutely essential as the world shrinks into one human community. It is a concrete expression of the greatest commandments: “[L]ove the Lord, your God, with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind” and “love your neighbor as yourself” (Matthew 22:37-39). For in the words of Blessed Pope John, “love, not fear, must dominate the relationships between individuals and between nations” (No. 129).