

## NEW CHALLENGES FOR CATHOLIC-INSPIRED NGOS IN LIGHT OF *CARITAS IN VERITATE*

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*The non-governmental organization (NGO) is perceived not only as a disseminator of information, monitor of human rights or provider of services but also as a shaper of national, regional, and international policy. Many members of the lay faithful, working with others from various Christian denominations, have established NGOs to monitor and to promote the rights of the unborn, the natural family, and many other topics of common interest. These NGOs lobby at the national, regional, and international levels. This paper discusses the role of the Catholic-inspired NGO on the international level with reference to the thought of Pope Benedict XVI in his encyclical, Caritas in veritate.*

### Introduction

Today, the non-governmental organization (NGO) is not only a disseminator of information, monitor of human rights or provider of services but also as a shaper of national, regional and international policy. Indeed, NGO participation has greatly increased since the 1945 Charter of the United Nations when the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), one of the six main organs of the United Nations, was empowered to “make suitable arrangements for consultations” with them.<sup>1</sup> Over the years, ECOSOC has adopted resolutions setting out the principles that govern the establishment of consultative relations with NGOs.<sup>2</sup> Many NGOs seek consultative status with the United Nations while a few choose to maintain a certain distance in order to protect their freedom of expression, although they frequently network with others who have such status.

Many members of the lay faithful have worked together with others from various Christian denominations to establish NGOs to monitor and to promote the rights of the unborn, the natural family and many other topics of common interest. The purpose of this paper is to discuss the role of Catholic-inspired NGOs<sup>3</sup> in a globalizing world with reference to the thought of Pope Benedict XVI in his encyclical, *Caritas in veritate* (CV). To this end, the paper will be divided into two parts. Part I will give a brief introduction to key themes, and their relevance for the Catholic-inspired NGO. Part II will consider its role in facing new questions presented by globalization as well as old challenges associated with the universal call to holiness, the bedrock for a correct and sustainable application of *Caritas in veritate* in society.

## *Caritas in Veritate: Points and Principles*

The specific theme of *Caritas in veritate* is “proclaiming the truth of Christ’s love in society” (no. 5). It forms part of the social doctrine of the Catholic Church, and marks a significant point in its history. In specific regard to Pope Benedict XVI, “*Caritas in veritate* represents a conclusive point of an ideal ‘trptych’ opening with *Deus caritas est* and continuing with *Spe salvi*.”<sup>4</sup> The theme of God’s love characterizes his first encyclical, runs through the second on Christian hope, and returns to the third, with attention to developing the social dimension of love and hope.<sup>5</sup>

The social doctrine of the Church is offered to all men of good will as a valid instrument for interpreting the signs of the times, and for assisting with the proper formation of consciences, which is the preliminary step in establishing just structures, especially in a globalizing world.<sup>6</sup> Founded on Scripture and Tradition, the social doctrine is an important aspect of evangelization. It highlights what is knowable by right reason and offers an important interdisciplinary approach (*CV*, no. 31).

*Caritas in veritate* does not purport to be an answer book for technical problems (no. 9). Nonetheless, it is a fundamental resource for the Catholic-inspired NGO, since it is the lay faithful who are primarily called to shape and direct the social dimension; this is brilliantly explained in the Apostolic Exhortation, *Christifideles Laici* (no. 3). Indeed, the lay faithful play a fundamental role in making the Church of Christ known “as a sign and source of hope and love” (no. 3).

### *1. Christian Anthropology and Authentic Human Development*

Pope Benedict XVI tells us that the social dimension has become a “radically anthropological question” (*CV*, no. 76). Indeed, humanism without God is the backdrop for many socio-economic policies that do not value or safeguard the integrity of the human person, as a “unity of body and soul” (*CV*, no. 76; cf. GS<sup>7</sup>, no. 14). In contrast, *Caritas in veritate* is firmly rooted in the Christian anthropological vision of man, which means that authentic human development must involve the good of “the whole of man” (*CV*, no. 11), and the good of “everyman” (*CV*, no. 18). It is “primarily a vocation,” a response to the transcendent call to God’s command to love (*CV*, nos. 11, 16).

The Catholic-inspired NGO must make Christ’s “love in truth” visible to contemporary men and women (*CV*, no. 11). This will entail working to ensure that an authentic vision of man lies at the heart of human development. It ought to promote activities and initiatives based

on a firm understanding of the Christian understanding of man, which asserts and justifies the inherent dignity and worth of each human person, and the full meaning of his or her growth, both spiritually and materially (*CV*, no. 18). In this regard, the following words of the Pope are significant: humanism without God is “inhuman humanism” (*CV*, no. 78).

What is the Christian vision? It is the truth about man the creature, man the sinner, and man redeemed in Christ. It is fleshed out in the Magisterium for the Catholic-inspired NGO. By way of summary, God created man “in His own Image and Likeness” (cf. Gen 1:26). “[E]ach individual man is truly a person,” endowed by nature with intelligence and free will (*PT*<sup>8</sup>, 9), called to know and to love God and neighbor (*GS*, no. 12). This means that man is made to know the truth and to become free through loving adherence to it (cf. Jn 8:32). The human person, a body-soul unity, by necessary implication has two dimensions, spiritual and material (*GS*, no. 14). Man is inherently social, created male and female. Their “companionship produces the primary form of interpersonal communion” (*GS*, no. 12). Yet, man created in an original state of holiness, set himself against God (*GS*, no. 13). His mind is darkened and his will turned towards “serving the creature rather than the Creator” (*GS*, no. 13). Man’s impoverished humanity, requiring purification and liberation, in the search for truth and love (*CV*, no. 1), has been redeemed in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

## 2. *The Principle of “Caritas in Veritate”*

Man receives love and finds truth. He is called to give love and share truth. Pope Benedict XVI tells us that *caritas* is “creative love, through which we have our being; it is redemptive love, through which we are recreated;” and it is *revealed love*, made present by Jesus Christ (*CV*, no. 5). In Him, the authentic meaning of charity is fully revealed as “love received and given”; it is “grace” (*CV*, no. 5). The Pope speaks about the relationship between *caritas* and *veritate*. Only in truth can charity be authentically lived and radiated, since truth, grasped “through the light of reason and the light of faith,” gives natural and supernatural meaning to charity, “as gift, acceptance and communion” (*CV*, no. 3).

This means that the Catholic-inspired NGO must be formed in the faith, and professionally prepared to develop well-reasoned arguments founded in natural law, illumined by faith, with the assistance of the Magisterium. Moreover, ideas should be exchanged on how an argument might best be developed, presented or communicated.

### 3. *Justice and the Common Good*

The principle of *caritas in veritate* is applied to moral action in the criteria of justice and the common good. Charity is prompted, in the first instance, to give to the other what is his, but goes beyond it, “to give to the other what is mine” (*CV*, no. 6). A society is not fully human if it rests on the mere respect for the rights and duties of others. It must transcend earthly justice, to complete it through the “logic of giving and forgiving” (*CV*, no. 6), since the good of the individual is linked to living in society, and therefore the common good of “all of us” (e.g., individuals, families and intermediate groups) (*CV*, no. 7).

In practice, the Catholic-inspired NGO must influence the international tendency to make human rights, even if authentically interpreted, the standard by which everything is judged. We are called to go beyond justice to include the principle of gratuitousness, inclusive of the understanding that every person is a gift to humanity. This perspective must be promoted in policy initiatives that range from protection of the environment and debt forgiveness to respect for religious liberty and human life. In the final analysis, respect for the common good is an obligation each Catholic-inspired NGO will fulfill according to its “degree of influence” in national, regional, and international fora (*CV*, no. 7). Members of the NGO should be greatly encouraged by the Pope’s words when he states that the “political path” of charity is no less worthy than the personal path (*CV*, no. 7).

### 4. *Principles of Natural Law*

The Pope emphasizes that the integral development of man is linked to the development of peoples. He argues that the “principle of gratuitousness and the logic of gift” must be the golden thread running through all relationships as an “expression of fraternity” (*CV*, no. 36). He assures us that this, in turn, will foster and disseminate solidarity, responsibility, cooperation, and respect for the principle of subsidiarity within the human family (*CV*, no. 38, 57–59, 65–68).

With these insights, the Pope implicitly returns to the thought of Pope John XXIII in *Pacem in Terris*. In this document, we are asked to consider the divinely established order and how man is to cooperate in “devising the means for harnessing the . . . forces of nature for his benefit” (*PT*, no. 2). To this end, man is required to look to the moral law inscribed in his nature (*PT*, nos. 5–6), which is revealed to him by his conscience and insists upon preserving it (*GS*, no. 16). Natural Law is the common moral ground that is right for all human beings and at some level known to all human beings.<sup>10</sup> It is natural because it is founded in human nature and the ends of man himself. By practical reason, man

“knows naturally, immediately” the first precept upon which all other precepts are based: “[O]ne must do good and avoid evil.”<sup>11</sup> By speculative reason, man “grasps, intuitively, naturally” the first principle of the moral life, the principle of non-contradiction.<sup>12</sup> In brief, the human being is a moral being, imprinted with divine light, who “spontaneously, naturally” tends to the moral good, but weakened by sin, can freely choose to wallow in apparent goods—those that promise perfection and happiness, but fail to deliver.<sup>13</sup>

The Catholic-inspired NGO, with the light of faith and assistance of the Magisterium, ought to propose universal principles governing proper relationships between men (*PT*, nos. 5–6). This forms part of its obligation to build a peaceful society, founded on truth, justice, charity, and freedom (*PT*, no. 7). These contributions are essential, since they offer an alternative vision to a pervasive one that depicts man as self-sufficient and “solely responsible for producing what he becomes” (*CV*, no. 68).

### ***Caritas in Veritate: Issues and Challenges***

#### *1. Old Challenges: The Universal Call to Holiness*

The Pope makes three important remarks for the purposes of this paper. One, charity in truth is the Face of the Person, Jesus Christ, who has fully revealed man’s vocation to love each other in truth (*CV*, no. 1). Two, we are objects of God’s love, and must become subjects of grace to pour forth God’s charity and “weave networks of charity” (*CV*, no. 5). Three, the locus of charity is truth, and the truth of faith and the truth of reason are distinct but related cognitive fields (*CV*, no. 5). The three points might be summed up in the following way. Man has a vocation to “love in truth,” which is knowable by faith and reason. For this purpose, man must become a vessel and an instrument of Christ’s grace so that love in truth can be given, and shared with others.

To live out this vocation, the Pope implicitly brings us back to the thought of Pope John Paul II, as expressed in the Apostolic Exhortation, *Christifideles Laici* (*CL*). In this document, every member of the Church is reminded of his or her call to a life of holiness. Each shares a common dignity from baptism; each has the same filial grace and the same vocation to perfection (*CL*, no. 15). In specific regard to the lay faithful, they share in the priestly, prophetic, and kingly mission of Christ (*CL*, no. 9).

What is this threefold mission, and how does it relate to one’s membership in a Catholic-inspired NGO? The lay faithful share in the priestly mission because they are united to Christ, and to His sacrifice in

the offering they make of themselves and their daily activities (cf. Rom 12:1, 2) (*CL*, no. 14). Obviously, this common priesthood should not be confused with the sacramental priesthood (*LG*<sup>14</sup>, 10). Members of the Catholic-inspired NGO are involved in the vast and complicated world of international politics and socio-economics (*CL*, no. 23). Nevertheless, each is called to make a perfect donation of one's activities, including advocacy and lobbying efforts. This gift of self through work, in turn, requires a commitment to three key aspects: 1) fidelity to the Magisterium, where personal formation in the faith and spiritual development are priorities; 2) unity of life, where our faith becomes fully integrated into our private and public domains; and 3) professional training and competence, where an integral education is sought and acquired.

The lay faithful share in the prophetic mission because they are given “the ability and responsibility to accept the Gospel in faith and to proclaim it in word and deed, without hesitating to courageously identify and denounce evil” (*CL*, no. 14). This translates into the need for members of the Catholic-inspired NGO to discern the truth, with the use of reason—even political reason—as purified by faith. Then they must proclaim the true good for the integral development of the human person. The idea, however, is not to promote a “civic religion” but rather a good civil society, and to this end, universal values must be promoted that represent the solid foundation of each and every positive project for society.<sup>15</sup> From this perspective, one must know, understand and rely upon the social doctrine of the Church, which offers an important interdisciplinary approach to various questions founded in theology, metaphysics, and the modern sciences.

The lay faithful share in the kingly mission because with the grace of God they seek to overcome the kingdom of sin in themselves (cf. Rom 6:12) and to make gifts of themselves to others, all with a view to leading others to communion with God in Christ (cf. Mt 25:40) (*CL*, no. 14). To do so, the lay faithful must be in “union with God” brought about by Jesus Christ, in the Holy Spirit, ever present in His Church (*CL*, no. 18). Their contributions will vary based on the principle of unity in diversity. In other words, although there is a distinction in functions in the Catholic Church, based on the sacrament of orders, all are called to work in communion by offering their efforts, talents, charisms, and gifts for the welfare of the Church and society.

Unity obviously does not mean uniformity (*CL*, no. 20). Not every Catholic-inspired NGO will engage in the same way. Many organizations, for example, might already have ECOSOC status with the United Nations, for the purpose of working in a fully collaborative

fashion with believers and non-believers alike. Others might have the same status, but focus their efforts on mobilizing believers. A few organizations might not choose to obtain ECOSOC status.<sup>16</sup> Rather they might accomplish their lobbying activities as part of other NGOs that do possess such status. The reasons behind this last approach might be tied to concerns related to freedom of expression, particular funding resources, or even political connections in a given country. In a globalizing world, each organization will need to evaluate the effectiveness of the role it has carved out for itself.

## 2. *New Challenges*

Pope Benedict XVI describes globalization as “the explosion of worldwide interdependence” (*CV*, no. 33). It benefits the human family and promotes unity (*CV*, no. 42), on the one hand, but risks causing “unprecedented damage” and “new divisions” (*CV*, no. 33), on the other hand.

He fleshes out this assertion with examples. For instance, he argues that one may legitimately speak of “social issues in global terms,” which means that economic activities and political systems are no longer isolated but are far more integrated especially in the area of international trade and finance (*CV*, no. 24). This, in turn, may lead to new forms of positive engagement among public authorities and civil society, including interaction with the Catholic-inspired NGO. On the other hand, the global market has stimulated a search, especially among developed nations, for outsourcing of production at low rates with a view to reducing costs (*CV*, no. 25). This, in turn, has led to the collapse or downsizing of “traditional networks of solidarity” with an emphasis on economic utility at the expense of safeguarding “man, the human person in his or her integrity” (*CV*, no. 25).

To give another example, the Pope looks favorably on the increased possibilities for intercultural dialogue, but at the same time warns against two harmful extremes: “cultural leveling” and “cultural eclecticism” (*CV*, no. 26). The former “loses sight of the profound significance of the culture of different nations...by which the individual defines himself in relation to life’s fundamental questions” (*CV*, no. 26). The latter perceives culture groups as existing side by side, but with no real possibility for authentic dialogue (*CV*, no. 26). He contends that both of these scenarios promote a perspective which separates culture from human nature, and thus, the possibility of man to transcend culture, which, in the end, risks new enslavements of humanity (*CV*, no. 26).

In order to avoid the above noted pitfalls, Pope Benedict XVI presents the new challenge as “broadening the scope of reason and

making it capable of knowing and directing these powerful new forces” (CV, no. 33). In brief, he is calling on the Catholic-inspired NGO to illumine public reason with faith in order to ensure that decision-making is respectful of an authentic humanism, animated by the “principle of gratuitousness.” Organizations, above all, must call for a sustained commitment to promoting a relational-based universal integration that is open to transcendence (CV, no. 42); for communion and the sharing of goods (CV, no. 42); and for the principle of unity in diversity, obviously opposed to cultural leveling and syncretism (CV, nos. 26 and 55). This will require well-formed consciences and a discernment process based on the criterion of “charity in truth,” which seeks, above all, the development of “the whole man and all men” (CV, no. 55).

Needless to say, organizations will meet resistance, since the Pope is urging a new way of considering, shaping, and structuring human enterprises on the international level (CV, no. 40). To meet the various challenges, the Catholic-inspired NGO must respond lovingly to the call to holiness by ever deepening their *personal formation and fidelity to the Magisterium*. This, in turn, must lead to a *unity of life*, where one’s faith becomes fully integrated by word and deed, in private and public.

The Catholic-inspired NGO will also need *professional training and competence*. After all, the globalizing world is a complex world. The field of human rights, for example, is extremely fast-paced. One needs to know the facts, the issues, the arguments, and the guiding principles founded in natural law, as fleshed out by the Magisterium. In addition, a solid understanding of international law is a prerequisite, not an option. New formation initiatives in this area have already begun, but NGOs must take the initiative to access the training programs and professional development opportunities that are currently available.<sup>17</sup> Helpful tools have also been developed by various organizations and should be made available to others.<sup>18</sup>

To obtain a certain level of professional competence, *financial resources need to be mobilized*. Funding is a major problem for conservative-based NGOs, generally speaking. There seem to be innumerable grants available for liberal causes (e.g., contraception, abortion, lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender issues). This is not the case for issues such as the unborn child’s right to life and the rights of the natural family. Furthermore, funding sources greatly differ per country and continent, and effort will be needed to access these resources. Real discussion and collaboration must begin on this front. Fear of compromising funding sources should not be the cause of failed networking efforts.

Indeed, *networking and collaboration must be improved* among Catholic-inspired NGOs, on the one hand, and with the Catholic Church, on the other, always taking into consideration the independence and legitimate authority of the respective entities. Obviously, such cooperation will take place on a case-by-case basis and will vary in form. Partnership with other NGOs and inter-governmental organizations and bodies will require discernment in reference to the principles of material and formal cooperation. On a positive note, the NGO Forum provides an important opportunity for dialogue, interaction, and collaboration with each other and with the Church. It promotes a regular exchange of information on international issues, and offers deeper reflection on the problems in light of the Magisterium. All of this should be done in a spirit of communion, and respect.

Lastly, the Catholic-inspired NGO *needs to consider new forms of engagement*. In a globalizing world, organizations must be prepared to *act, not just react, and to propose, not just oppose*. They must actively participate in the process. In specific regard to human rights, for example, they must cooperate in the drafting of documents at international conferences. They should engage the ratification campaigns that follow, with a view to persuading countries to enter reservations if needed. They should also submit their own reports during the implementation process, and turn their attention to the problem of disingenuous reinterpretations of human rights by treaty monitoring bodies. Lobbying efforts should also be directed toward influencing the election process of committee members, or persuading state parties to make written and oral objections to troublesome interpretations. In the final analysis, it will be up to each organization to determine its own activities, which might also include the creation of new initiatives, such as training sessions, paid work projects, seminars, and conferences, as well as research and publications projects.

## **Conclusion**

*Caritas in veritate* teaches us that as recipients of God's "love in truth," every man and woman is called to give the same to others and create networks animated by this criterion (*CV*, no. 5). But the full and complete application of this principle is intrinsically linked to an old challenge, our loving response to the universal call to holiness. It is, by far the "greatest testimony" of the inherent and acquired dignity of the human person (*CL*, no. 17).<sup>19</sup>

This is what gives the Catholic-inspired NGO strength to meet new challenges. They abound and flow from an impoverished

anthropology, an “inhuman humanism,” which in turn, leads to distorted views about development as well as economic and technological progress. Matters are exasperated by the exclusion of the “logic of giving and forgiving” in the evaluation of human enterprises and creation of initiatives. All of this comes to a crisis point when one reflects upon globalization, without the criterion of “charity in truth” to evaluate it.

But, the Catholic-inspired NGO offers much hope. It ought not to be perturbed or deterred, since the “love in truth” of Christ, when poured into its members, enables them “[t]o defend the truth, to articulate it with humility and conviction,” and to bear witness to it through their unity of life—each an “exacting and indispensable form ... of charity” (*CV*, no. 1).

## Notes

1. Charter of the United Nations, art. 71, Stat. 1031, T.S. No. 993, 3 Bevans 1153 (1969), *signed* 26 June 1945, *entered* into force 24 October 1945.

2. ECOSOC Resolution 1296 (XLIV) of 23 May 1968 as amended by ECOSOC Resolution 1996/31 of 25 July 1996. According to art. 3 of the 1996 resolution, NGOs must “undertake to support the UN in its work and promote knowledge of its principles and activities...” To be eligible, among other pre-conditions, an NGO must have been in existence for at least two years, established a headquarters, and basic resources must be largely derived from non-governmental sources (*Id.*, arts. 9–12). They may be accredited within one of the three categories having General Consultative Status, Special Consultative Status, or The Roster Status. General Consultative Status is reserved for NGOs that “have substantive and sustained contributions to make to the achievement of objectives of the United Nations” and “are closely involved with the economic and social life of the people of the areas they represent and whose membership, which should be considerable, is broadly representative of major segments of society in a large number of countries in different regions of the world” (*Id.*, art. 22). Special Consultative Status encompasses NGOs that “are concerned specifically with, only a few of the fields of activity covered by the Council, and its subsidiary bodies, and that are known within the fields for which they have or seek consultative status” (*Id.*, art. 23). The Roster is a list of NGOs that “can make occasional and useful contributions to the work of the Council or its subsidiary bodies or other United Nations bodies within their competence” (*Id.*, art. 24). According to arts. 5 and 61 (a) and (b) of the 1996 resolution, to obtain Consultative Status NGOs must apply to the Committee on NGOs, whose members are elected by ECOSOC, for acceptance as an organization with Consultative Status under one of the three categories (General, Special and Roster). In turn, the Committee on NGOs recommends to ECOSOC which NGO should be granted status and the nature of such status. The difference between General, Special and Roster Status is largely correlated with funding, size, reputation, and geographical reach of the organization. For more information see NGO Branch, United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, at <http://www.esango.un.org> (last accessed Dec. 31, 2010).

3. This paper was presented at the Non-Governmental (NGO) Forum: “New Challenges in a Globalizing World,” organized by the Holy See (Secretariat of State), in Rome 12–14 February 2010. The term *Catholic-*

*inspired NGO* was developed at the first NGO Forum held two years previously in the midst of finding more effective ways of collaboration, networking, presence and action, among the NGOs working in international fora. The NGO Forum's overall goal has been to better understand and articulate the common foundation, shared strategies, and mutual targets amongst NGOs interacting with one or more intergovernmental institutions, on the one hand, and the same NGOs working with the Holy See, on the other hand; always with respect for each entity's independence and organizational integrity.

4. GIORGIO CAMPANINI (CURA DI), BENEDICT XVI, *CARITAS IN VERITATE: LINEE GUIDA PER LA LETTURA*, 11 (2009) (my translation)

5. *Id.*, at 11–12.

6. *Id.*, at 12.

7. *Gaudium et Spes*. Second Vatican Council's *Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World*. Available at [www.vatican.va](http://www.vatican.va).

8. *Pacem in Terris*. Encyclical Letter of Pope John XXIII, 1963. Available at [www.vatican.va](http://www.vatican.va).

9. If to “love someone is to desire that person's good and to take effective steps to secure it,” then to love “all of us” is to desire the common good and to use appropriate means to obtain it (CV, no. 7).

10. J. BUDZISZEWSKI, *NATURAL LAW FOR LAWYERS* 21 (ACW Press 2006).

11. INTERNATIONAL THEOLOGICAL COMMISSION, *IN SEARCH OF A UNIVERSAL ETHIC: A NEW LOOK AT THE NATURAL LAW*, para. 29, (2009) cf. ST, I-II, q. 94, a.2. (translation from French to English by Dr. Robert Fastiggi).

12. *Id.* cf. ST, I, q.79, a. 12: *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, n. 1780.

13. *Id.*

14. *Lumen Gentium*. Second Vatican Council's *Dogmatic Constitution on the Church*. Available at [www.vatican.va](http://www.vatican.va).

15. Campanini, *supra* note 2, at 22.

16. See, for example, the website of the Catholic Family and Human Rights Institute (C-FAM), with offices in New York and Washington, available at <http://www.c-fam.org/> (last visited February 11, 2010).

17. Unfortunately, the NGO preparation course offered for credit at the Gregorian University, in Rome, was cancelled due to low attendance.

18. See, for example, Brian Scarnecchia, Terrence McKeegan, *The Millennium Development Goals: In Light of Catholic Social Teaching*, (IORG: 2009), available at [http://www.cfam.org/publications/id.1403/pub\\_detail.asp](http://www.cfam.org/publications/id.1403/pub_detail.asp) (last visited February 11, 2010).

19. By remaining in conversation with God throughout the day, we “join ourselves to Him, fulfill His will, serve other people, and lead them to communion with God, in Christ.” (*CL*, no. 17). The vocation to holiness is an obligation. It is “an essential and inseparable element” of our baptism (*CL*, no. 17). It is intimately connected to the mission of, and a responsibility specifically entrusted to, the lay faithful, through their work in the Church, and in the world (*CL*, no. 17).