

Considerations for Remuneration in Papal Social Encyclicals

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Papal encyclicals have been a source of study for various philosophers, theologians, and more recently, business ethicists. Several social encyclicals have contributed to the *corpus* of Catholic social teaching. Drawing from *Rerum Novarum*, *Quadragesimo Anno*, *Mater et Magistra*, *Pacem in Terris*, *Populorum Progressio*, *Redemptor Hominis*, *Loborem Exercens*, *Centesimus Annus*, *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis*, *Veritatis Splendor*, *Deus Caritas Est*, *Evangelium Vitae*, *Caritas in Veritate*, and *Laudato Si*, the issue of “fair and just” remuneration is discussed. We also draw from *Gaudium et Spes* and the *Compendium of the Social Teachings of the Church*. Despite having a religious basis, these social encyclicals also have important ramifications for secular scholars because they appeal to stakeholders’ mutual duties and responsibilities in facilitating a socially just workplace. These teachings, rooted in natural law, focus on the harmony between labor and capital to bring about prosperity for nations and their citizens.

*Each needs the other: capital cannot do without labor,
nor labor without capital.*

~ Pope Leo XIII¹

Introduction

Certain papal encyclicals have attracted the attention of researchers who are interested in understanding business ethics through the lens of Catholic social teaching (CST). For example, the discourse on business ethics has included encyclicals such as Pope Leo XIII’s *Rerum Novarum* (RN), Pope Pius XI’s *Quadragesimo Anno* (QA), Pope John XXIII’s *Mater et Magistra* (MM) and *Pacem in Terris* (PT),

Pope Paul VI's *Populorum Progression*, Pope John Paul II's *Laborem Exercens*, *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis*, and *Centesimus Annus*, and Pope Benedict XVI's *Deus Caritas Est*.² Since the publication of Pope Benedict XVI's encyclical *Caritas in Veritate (CV)* in 2009, there have been sixteen articles published in the *Journal of Business Ethics* in 2011 that have sought to expound on the relevant themes in *CV* for businesses.³

Other social teachings include *Gaudium et Spes (GS)* and the *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*. The Second Vatican Council produced *GS* (or "Joy and Hope"), one of the four pastoral constitutions of the Catholic Church.⁴ Meanwhile, the *Compendium* comprehensively summarizes the Catholic Church's social teachings.⁵ Both documents cover issues relating to social justice, the economy, and stakeholders' duties and responsibilities relating to the treatment of workers.

These social teachings offer a paradigmatically different way of analyzing the dynamics of businesses. With the advent of social unrest during the Industrial Revolution, Pope Leo XIII issued *Rerum Novarum* on May 15, 1891, to call on employers to uphold the dignity and rights of workers, recognition of the right of workers to unionize, and the state to promote social justice or the common good. Subsequent popes have echoed similar concerns in their encyclicals relating to the need for individuals, organizations, and the state to work toward establishing true social justice.⁶ Evidently, the thrust of these social encyclicals lends themselves to studying business ethics issues pertaining to various stakeholders, such as the government, unions, employers, employees, suppliers, customers, shareholders (and other investors), and the community.⁷ While these social encyclicals and teachings have significant ramifications for business management, there is still a dearth of attention paid to extracting the teachings for human resource management (HRM).⁸

One particular area in HRM where crucial lessons from these social teachings can be applied to promote distributive justice in the workplace and beyond is "remuneration." Perceived injustices in remuneration have led to various organized strike actions, organizational sabotages, work disruptions, and, more recently, social protests at the grass root level, such as the Occupy movement.⁹ Some studies in the fields of applied psychology, organizational behavior, and HRM have found that perceived pay inequity has significant impacts on an individual's performance level, job satisfaction, organizational commitment, withdrawal behaviors, loyalty to the organization, and turnover (intention and actual).¹⁰ Thus, there are humanistic, financial, and social implications for a "fair and just" remuneration.

This article contributes to the extant literature on business ethics in two main ways. First, by providing brief background information about the various social encyclicals and teachings, we lay the groundwork for applying their contributions to addressing the contextual factors of the workplace. Thus, in light of the social encyclicals and teachings, our second contribution is to develop and discuss suggestions for addressing workplace inequity regarding remuneration.

Encyclicals' Background

The word *encyclical* derives from the Greek word *εγκύκλιος* (translated into Latin: *encyclicus*), which means circular. As such, a papal encyclical is a letter written by the pope of the day to be circulated to the faithful around the world. These encyclicals touch on pertinent issues that are experienced by Catholics and non-Catholics. Encyclicals help to form the Ordinary Magisterium or part of the infallible teaching authority of the Catholic Church on matters of faith and morals. It should be noted that this teaching authority is made up of the *Extraordinary Magisterium* (e.g., the ecumenical councils and proclamations made by the pope *ex cathedra* or “from the chair”) and the *Ordinary Magisterium* (e.g., the consistent teachings of the popes in unity with the bishops and provided that the teachings do not contradict the Scriptures and Traditions of the Church).¹¹ An encyclical is one of the many papal documents forming the *Ordinary Magisterium* (the others being Papal Bulls, Papal Briefs, Apostolic Exhortations, Apostolic Constitutions, Apostolic Letters, and *Motu Propios*).¹² While encyclicals do not contain any new revelations, they still carry authoritative teachings that are binding on all Catholics.

Social Encyclicals

Although the Catholic Church has always been involved in the social justice movement, *Rerum Novarum* (*RN* or “Of New Things,” by Pope Leo XIII) is widely recognized as the first encyclical to address the issue of injustices between the working class and the wealthy class (employers and owners). Specifically, *RN* delves into social justice, workers’ rights and dignity, and cooperation between labor and capital.

Pope Pius XI released another social encyclical forty years later called *Quadragesimo Anno* (*QA* or “On the Fortieth Year”).¹³ *QA* also deals with the social and economic issues that arose during the Great Depression. It calls for balancing private ownership with the common good and promotes societal well-being.

In continuing the Catholic Church's focus on social justice, Pope John XXIII released *Mater et Magistra* (*MM* or "Mother and Teacher") on May 15, 1961, to commemorate the seventieth anniversary of *RN*.¹⁴ *MM* emphasizes the need for cooperation among the stakeholders (e.g., individuals, communities, and countries) to address global inequities for the betterment of societies.

The next social encyclical by Pope John XXIII is *Pacem in Terris* (*PT* or "Peace on Earth").¹⁵ Although *PT* calls for international collaboration for disarmament and global peace, it also advocates for international organizations to dialogue and collaborate.

The subsequent pope, Paul VI, issued his only social encyclical titled *Populorum Progressio* (*PP* or "The Development of Peoples"). *PP* challenges affluent nations to help those in need and emphasizes the importance of economic justice, social solidarity, and integral human development to achieve a more just and equitable world.

Several social encyclicals were issued under the pontificate of Pope John Paul II to address social justice issues. While *Redemptor Hominis* (*RH* or "The Redeemer of Man") is an encyclical that mainly reaffirms the salvific role of Jesus Christ, it also challenges everyone at large to ponder and take actions where and when human rights are violated.¹⁶ In *Laborem Exercens* (*LE* or "On Human Work") and *Centesimus Annus* (*CA* or "The One-Hundredth Year"), Pope John Paul II celebrated the ninetieth and one hundredth anniversaries of Pope Leo XIII's *RN*.¹⁷ *LE* and *CA* looked at social injustices by considering the impacts of technology, the "error of economism" (or "considering human labor solely according to its economic purpose"), and the "error of materialism" (or a belief that material gain is superior to spiritual and personal development) on the environment, changing nature of work, sociopolitical unrest, and human rights.¹⁸ Absolute control by the state in economic production promotes a distortion of outputs, wages, and working conditions. *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis* (*SRS* or "The Social Concerns of the Church") commemorates the twentieth anniversary of Pope Paul VI's *PP* and calls for fairer trade between nations.¹⁹ *SRS* was critical of the imperialist tendencies of totalitarianism and unrestrained capitalism and tried to promote human development. In *Veritatis Splendor* (*VS* or "The Splendor of Truth"), Pope John Paul II expressed concerns about the distortion and denial of the moral teachings of the Magisterium in favor of moral relativism, which helps subscribers to justify behaviors that are contrary to divine and natural laws.²⁰ Finally, *Evangelium Vitae* (*EV* or "The Gospel of Life") emphasized the roles different stakeholders could play in upholding the sanctity of human life.²¹

Benedict XVI continued the tradition of issuing social encyclicals. The first part of *Deus Caritas Est* (*DCE* or “God Is Love”) clarifies the natures of *eros* (or intoxicating and possessive love between humanity and God that are often perverted as a form of sexual exploitation by the secular), *philia* (or the love of friendship as exemplified by Jesus and his disciples), and *agape* (or sacrificial love)—Greek words for denoting love—in light of Christian tradition.²² In this line of understanding of love, Pope Benedict XVI called for a holistic approach to charity that involves individuals’ assistance and the pursuit of social justice. *Caritas in Veritate* (*CV* or “Charity in Truth”) is another social encyclical written by Pope Benedict XVI that seeks to clarify the mutually reinforcing natures of charity and truth.²³ *CV* calls for stakeholders to apply ethical approaches to economic progress by respecting human dignity, social justice, and care for the environment.

The current pope, Francis, in his encyclical letter *Laudato Si’* (*LS* or “Praise Be”), addresses environmental degradation and its impact on the poor and marginalized people, as well as the importance of caring for creation as a moral responsibility.²⁴ Specifically, *LS* calls for the development of a new economic system based on ethics, equity, and the common good, which prioritizes the well-being of people and the planet over economic growth.

Several recurring themes concerning the conditions of work, duties, and responsibilities of the employer, and workers’ rights run through these encyclicals. Thus, what can the various stakeholders do to promote socially just remuneration in light of these social encyclicals? Moreover, how do these social encyclicals lend themselves to the field of remuneration?

Other Social Teachings

Gaudium et Spes is a product of the Second Vatican Council. In addition to how the Catholic Church should engage with contemporary society and dialogue between Catholics and non-Catholics, *GS* advocates for social justice and human rights. At this juncture, it is important to recognize that while there is an overlap between the two groups’ interpretations and understanding of social justice, there are also differences.²⁵ While *GS* and other social encyclicals are based on Catholic social teaching, secular humanists attempt to champion those causes without referencing any religious beliefs. Notwithstanding the differences, fruitful progress on creating a socially just workplace and remuneration could be achieved through dialogues with different groups. In this vein, human dignity, the importance of the family, and the need for global peace and disarmament should be focused.

In 2004, the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace published the *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*. The *Compendium* summarizes the Catholic Church's social teachings and addresses social justice, human rights, economic development, and peace. Furthermore, it serves as a guide for Catholics and non-Catholics in promoting social justice and calls for building a more just and peaceful society.

Remuneration

Remuneration is one pressing workplace issue that seldom fails to capture the attention of various stakeholders. For example, academics have used theories such as distributive justice, pay equity, and organizational justice to understand the issue of "fairness."²⁶ One visible role played by unions is giving employees a voice in bargaining wages, benefits, and work conditions.

Governments in some countries also play an important role in setting the minimum wage, unemployment benefits, conditions for overtime pay, conditions for the employment of minors, rights to a wage that allows them to live in dignity, and enacting legislation in an attempt to provide a safety net and pay equity.²⁷

Nongovernment organizations have called for various initiatives for governments and corporations to promote employment equity for disadvantaged individuals in our society.²⁸ Calls for greater transparency in executive pay and restraints have been made in the political spheres, notably by former Prime Minister David Cameron of the United Kingdom and former President Barack Obama of the United States.²⁹

Various social movements, such as the Occupy movement, antiglobalization movement, and Living Wage Campaign in the United Kingdom, have sought to raise public awareness of income inequality and disparities. Several media outlets (such as *Forbes*, *The Huffington Post*, *The Financial Post*, *The Guardian*, and so forth) have shown an interest in exuberant executive compensation and income inequality.

Finally, as human resource practitioners are involved in the administration of remuneration, some feel compelled to find a balance between rewarding and motivating people on the one hand and ensuring that remuneration is fair and just on the other hand.³⁰ Even though the term "social justice" is used by the stakeholders, it is apparent that there is still tension and some disagreement about what "fair and just" remuneration means.³¹ Regarding a "fair and just" remuneration, the Catechism of the Catholic Church teaches,

A just wage is the legitimate fruit of work, and to refuse or withhold it can be a grave injustice. In determining fair pay both the needs and the contributions of each person must be taken into account. “Remuneration for work should guarantee man [*sic*] the opportunity to provide a dignified livelihood for himself and his [*sic*] family on the material, social, cultural and spiritual level, taking into account the role and the productivity of each, the state of the business, and the common good.” Agreement between the parties is not sufficient to justify morally the amount to be received in wages.³²

Implications for Employees, Unions, Employers, and the State

Pope Leo XIII reflected on the social conditions during the Industrial Revolution and acknowledged the harsh and degrading work conditions faced by the workers. He emphasized the exploitation of workers by wealthy individuals and the unjust treatment they endured. He called for the recognition of workers’ rights, including just and sufficient wages to support their families, respect for labor unions and associations, and improved working conditions. In other words, Pope Leo XIII appealed to owners, employers, and the state to address these injustices and work toward creating a more just and equitable society. Additionally, *Rerum Novarum* sparked a tradition of social encyclicals that addressed social issues and advocated for workers’ rights. These subsequent encyclicals built upon its principles and adapted them to address evolving social contexts, guiding individuals and stakeholders in promoting social justice and human dignity.

In effect, the Catechism, the social encyclicals, and additional social teachings appeal to the mutual moral duties and obligations between an employer, an employee, and the state regarding remuneration. According to Catholic social teaching, wherever possible (within reason and without any undue hardship to the employer), employers are urged to provide a fair and just remuneration to their workers while taking into account their state of life.³³ This may include, as much as possible, paying workers above the minimum wage and providing benefits (such as health, dental, and vision coverage) even when the law does not require it. An example of where employers are urged to provide a living wage is the Living Wage Campaign in the United Kingdom.³⁴ By offering a living wage, employers can be more attractive to job seekers and improve employee retention, which could lead to increased job satisfaction and employee loyalty.³⁵ Also, adequate and fair compensation can boost employee morale, motivation, and productivity.³⁶ A living wage can help reduce employee turnover, resulting in cost savings in terms of recruitment and training expenses.³⁷ Finally, firms’

commitment to fair wages would enhance their reputation and enhance their stakeholders' engagement.

Transnational corporations wishing to take advantage of lower costs in foreign countries could find alternative ways of lowering their costs (such as investments in more efficient technologies and exercising more restraints in promoting a lavish lifestyle for expatriates) without resorting to frugality in paying the host country workers. One viable solution is for organizations to invest in training and development so that employees would be more productive, which allows them to command higher wages. Employees' moral duties and obligations to their employers include performing the work they were hired to do faithfully. Furthermore, employees are to avoid vandalizing the employer's properties, refrain from using violence or participating in riots in an attempt to settle disputes concerning remunerations. Catholic social teaching also teaches that the laws created by the state should promote a "fair and just" remuneration to realize "public well-being and private prosperity."³⁸

While promoting socially just remuneration, employers, unions, and employees need to be cognizant of striking a balance. Various popes have warned against excessively lowering or increasing remuneration, which could result in unemployment.³⁹ However, there are still visible examples of greed, especially at the upper echelons of organizations, where the rate of growth of executive remuneration far outweighs that of employees.⁴⁰ Additionally, some executives have continued to receive bonuses, and others have even received golden handshakes in spite of poor corporate performance.⁴¹ Meanwhile, various change initiatives under the guises of downsizing, restructuring, right-sizing, and strategic change are used to justify work intensification and/or the laying off of employees, resulting in existing employees seeing a reduction in pay and the removal of certain benefits.

In spite of the current unsustainable remuneration practice, social justice initiatives from various stakeholders have been futile because they do not address the heart of the problem, which is greed. The encyclical tradition laments individuals' greediness, which promotes exploiting others with weaker bargaining power.⁴² Uncompromising negotiation practices by some unions and employers may elicit the results they have sought, but in some cases, greed is an important underlying factor in the bargaining process such that it is no longer about striking a reasonable and fair balance but a zero-sum game.⁴³ The challenge is ensuring that individual employees, unions, and employers act in "good faith." Sometimes back-to-work legislations are passed when the employer and the union are at an impasse, but when these legislations are used to threaten unions before bargaining has even started, the message that the state is sending is that the employers could offer the least costly remuneration package and employees would either have

to accept them or find another job. As Pope Benedict XVI pointed out in *Deus Caritas Est*, “It is true that the pursuit of justice must be a fundamental norm of the State and that a just social order aims to guarantee to each person, according to the principle of subsidiarity, his share of the community’s goods.”⁴⁴ Thus, there is a serious breach of social justice when the state is taking sides instead of asking, “What is the socially just thing to do in this case?”

Building on the commonalities of previous social encyclicals, *Gaudium et Spes* (which grew out of the Second Vatican Council in 1965) sought to remind stakeholders of their mutual social obligations. These obligations consist of a reminder of fair wages, safe working conditions, nondiscriminatory workplaces, merit-based employment, and respect in the workplace. While addressing human dignity, the social conditions by which employees can achieve their potential should be considered, as this will also drive the firm’s profits. While respecting the workers’ rights, organizations can take a macro approach to the agency of workers (subsidiarity). For example, there could be a more equitable distribution of resources, a sense of shared responsibility, and recognition of workers’ contributions. *GS* also calls workers, unions, and employers in the decision-making process to engage in fair negotiations. Additionally, it called for an end to wage discrimination against migrant workers and an improvement in their working conditions. Remuneration approaches should consider work-life balance, adequate rest, and personal development. However, applications of *GS* require careful consideration of specific social, economic, and cultural contexts in different countries.

Although *Evangelium Vitae* addressed social issues more general than worker compensation (e.g., the dignity of human life from conception until death), it could be applied to remuneration. In practice, employees, unions, employers, and the state must work towards protecting the dignity of work, enhancing basic rights in the workplace, creating decent and fair wages, recognizing the right to organize and join unions, owning private property, and economic productivity.

The *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church* elucidates the Church’s social teachings for individuals who are unfamiliar with the social encyclicals. It also presents the mutual rights, obligations, and responsibilities of all the stakeholders in an organized manner. Similarly, the *Compendium* can be applied to various stakeholders concerning remunerations. The *Compendium* reiterates the teachings in the various social encyclicals, in particular employers’ obligation to pay just wages and ensure workers’ dignity.⁴⁵ Just wages are seen as a way for employees to contribute positively to society, support their families, and participate in their communities.⁴⁶ Thus, unions play an important role in ensuring just remuneration and benefits for workers through collective bargaining.⁴⁷

Finally, the state can ensure just remuneration by establishing a legal framework that protects workers' rights, promoting just wages and ensuring that employers comply with labor laws and regulations.⁴⁸

Organizations can also incorporate Pope Francis' *Laudato Si'*. For example, businesses can emphasize the common good and the preferential option for the poor by developing policies and practices that ensure that the needs of the marginalized and vulnerable are considered.⁴⁹ This includes providing equal opportunities, promoting diversity, and fostering a culture of respect and inclusion. Specifically, policies and practices that ensure marginalized and vulnerable employees will send a signal that their well-being is taken seriously.⁵⁰ Human resource management can respond in the form of employee-friendly policies and practices, such as work-life balance, employee health and wellness programs, and employee engagement initiatives. Human resource management can also prioritize employee well-being by creating engagement initiatives encouraging employees to actively participate in the company's sustainable development initiatives. This could include employee-led initiatives, such as sustainability committees, recycling campaigns, and employee-led volunteerism initiatives. Thus, organizations can foster a culture of ethical behavior by providing training programs that teach employees about sustainable development, fair trade and ethical consumption, corporate social responsibility, and human rights.⁵¹ This type of training can also create awareness of the impact of the company's actions on the local communities and the environment and how to act responsibly to minimize the negative impact. Corporate social responsibility strategies and initiatives should be aligned with the company's values and mission statements based on ethics, equity, and the common good.⁵² Finally, by developing policies and practices that align with the values of the organization and promote responsible and sustainable business practices, an organization can incorporate sustainable development goals, such as reducing energy and resource consumption, in their recruitment, training, and performance evaluation of employees while the human resource management department can promote sustainable development by developing policies and practices that support the conservation of natural resources by recruiting candidates from sustainable and environmentally conscious organizations, encouraging employees to take public transportation or bike to work, and promoting telecommuting as a way of reducing carbon emissions.⁵³ Thus, linking sustainability goals and remuneration would allow organizations to demonstrate their seriousness and transparency to the various stakeholders.⁵⁴

Implications for Social Movements, the Media, and Nongovernment Organizations

As Pope Leo XIII condemned the injustices faced by the workers, he was cognizant of the false promises offered by the socialist movement that was gaining traction. By appealing to the poor workers' sense of envy of the wealthy class, the socialists sought to abolish private property/ownership by placing individual possessions into the hands of the state. Pope Leo XIII succinctly stated that the attempt to transfer individuals' possessions to the community would undermine the interests of every wage earner by depriving them of the freedom to use their wages and limiting their opportunities for personal growth and improvement.⁵⁵ According to Catholic social teaching, the notion of a "community of goods" proposed by the socialists goes against natural justice, rooted in natural law, which recognizes that humans have an intrinsic and natural desire to work honorably in exchange for opportunities to own private property. At the same time, individuals are encouraged to share their possessions in charity when needed.

Recently, grassroots protests by various social movements have highlighted their interest in the remuneration issue. Over the decades, extant literature has reported mixed successes in improving workers' wages and working conditions.⁵⁶ In some cases, violent clashes and social movements are synonymous, such as the G20 and Occupy movement, resulting in the commotion overshadowing the message. Sometimes, the illegal actions of a few individuals snowballed and sabotaged the mission of raising public awareness and enacting social change effectively. As pointed out by Pope John XXIII, "The natural consequence of all this was a spirit of indignation and open protest on the part of the workingman, and a widespread tendency to subscribe to extremist theories far worse in their effects than the evils they purported to remedy."⁵⁷

Organizers and participants need to be united in the mission and objectives of their movement. They also need to ensure public civility, conduct protests legally, condemn the actions of those who sabotage the movement, and present information accurately. However, these codes of behavior are easier said than done because of individuals' varied natures and motivations for joining these movements. However, social movements can serve an important role in informing the public about different grave social injustices regarding remuneration, working with their communities to effect positive change, and partnering with other stakeholders to identify and remove systemic social injustices regarding the remuneration of workers.

While some nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) have been praised for their roles in promoting various social justice issues, such as the Living Wage

Campaign, much more remains to be done. For example, the Living Wage Campaign can impact the firm's reputation and public image by demonstrating its commitment to fair wages and responsible business practices, which can draw socially conscious customers, investors, and employees. It may also help to differentiate the firm from competitors who do not pay a living wage. Taken together, this alignment demonstrates a firm's commitment to social responsibility that contributes to the well-being of the workforce and the broader society. Despite the effects of the Living Wage Campaign, the United Nations, the International Labor Organization, and other NGOs, remuneration in several countries remains relatively low. Large differentials between the remunerations of men and women in numerous countries remain to be addressed. Nevertheless, there is sometimes local concern and pressure to dampen local inflation as a result of uncontrolled wage inflation. Furthermore, while there may be administrative costs involved in managing NGOs, these costs need to be kept in check, and Pope Benedict XVI has called for these NGOs to commit to financial transparency.⁵⁸

Nongovernmental organizations that advocate for human rights and social justice can also promote policies and practices that support one's dignity by providing services to the most vulnerable. These NGOs can raise awareness about the issues threatening those lives and dignity, such as unjust labor practices and economic policies. NGOs can hold the state accountable to promote laws and policies that protect the dignity and rights of every citizen. Specifically, the state can enforce labor laws that provide fair wages and safe working conditions, provide social safety nets for the most vulnerable, and address systemic issues such as poverty and income inequality that threaten human dignity.

Although the media does a great job at raising public and sometimes international awareness of social injustices, there is a lack of concerted and sustained effort in the area of remuneration. Pope Benedict XVI wrote, "The media can make an important contribution towards the growth in communion of the human family and the *ethos of society when they are used to promote universal participation in the common search for what is just.*"⁵⁹ For the media to make a positive contribution, there needs to be greater consultation, communication, and collaboration among individuals, groups, communities, and the media interested in promoting awareness of social justice issues pertaining to remuneration. A one-off campaign to raise awareness is unlikely to inculcate tangible and long-lasting change necessary to address the widening wage gap. Thus, social movements, unions, employers, government and NGOs, and other interest groups need the continuing support of the media in disseminating the information to the masses.

Conclusion

Relations between individuals, unions, employers, and the state have always been in flux. As a result of perceived injustices, industrial actions sometimes result in deadly confrontations, vandalism, sabotage, and other extreme measures from employers and workers. In an attempt to pacify the situation, the state imposes its measures on both groups. Various stakeholders have often laid claims that their actions are justifiable because of a breach of social justice without necessarily having a full understanding of it. In contrast to an economic rationalization and reductionist approach used by various secular social justice movements, Catholic social teaching tries to avoid mere sentimentality by appealing to love and charity that is informed by faith and reason. A shift in mindset regarding how we treat one another is necessary for true and lasting social justice to emerge, which involves acknowledging that every person is created in the image of God, respecting the right of workers to unionize, mutual duties and responsibilities of employees and employers, and the role of the state to ensure that laws are aligned with concepts of social justice.

Notes

1. Pope Leo XIII, encyclical letter *Rerum Novarum* (May 15, 1891), 19, https://www.vatican.va/content/leo-xiii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_l-xiii_enc_15051891_rerum-novarum.html.
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