



Love received and given

A Progressio guide to *Caritas in Veritate*

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Progressio helps people gain power over their lives and overcome barriers that keep them poor. We enable poor communities to solve their own problems through support from skilled workers. And we lobby decision-makers to change policies that keep people poor. We were formerly the Catholic Institute for International Relations.

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Front cover: Irene Musarapasi and her daughter Tabeth, in Zimbabwe. Irene has been HIV-positive for more than 10 years. "I tell people: you must understand those who are HIV-positive, love them, support them and take care of them. They are just like you."

Photo: Marcus Perkins/Progressio

Introduction

“Charity is love received and given”

Caritas in Veritate n.5

Caritas in Veritate, Pope Benedict XVI’s third encyclical, is a source of inspiration and challenge. The encyclical, issued in 2009, commemorates Pope Paul VI’s groundbreaking letter *Populorum Progressio* from 1967, and Pope Benedict’s letter draws on many of the themes from his predecessor’s text. As such, it is a social encyclical, following in the footsteps of Pope Leo XIII who first issued such a letter in 1891, *Rerum Novarum*; a tradition of social encyclicals continued by the Popes ever since. These documents continue to speak to Christians and, as the documents state, “all people of goodwill” about how we relate to one another and the world around us. The release of *Caritas in Veritate* was delayed to give time for the Pope to include a response to the global economic crisis. Economic issues are definitely at the forefront of the thinking in the document itself, as well as what authentic human development truly means.

This guide is neither a full commentary, nor a summary of the entire text of *Caritas in Veritate*. Instead, it highlights five themes which stand out as vital to the encyclical. The five themes are not the chapter headings from the encyclical itself, but themes which criss-cross the entire text. Each section includes a summary of

the general tenets of the Pope’s thinking on the theme, followed by a photo showing the challenges faced by people in some of the countries where Progressio works, in order to help draw out what the encyclical might be saying in the concrete reality of development. This guide is not intended to replace the need to read the actual text of *Caritas in Veritate*; rather it is intended as a way-in for those who may not have already read it. The encyclical is not short, and contains some complex themes, yet it is accessible if you’re prepared to stick with it.

Our hope is that this guide will inspire you to pick up *Caritas in Veritate* and see what Pope Benedict is saying to us within our everyday lives and the area of human development. What he says is likely to challenge us and make us think, but also inspire us and affirm what we believe in. Each of the sections in this guide includes references to paragraphs in the encyclical which particularly relate to the theme, so you could start by looking them up. However, the whole encyclical needs to be read in full to see the inter-connections within it.

At the end of this guide are some ideas of ways you could take action, or think through the messages of the encyclical. One way is through progressio.org.uk which contains comments on how the document has chimed with and challenged people from Progressio’s international and local work. You may be inspired to share your reflections, too.

In a group, by yourself, with a friend – pick it up, give it a read, reflect, pray, and be inspired!

Charity and truth

“**Caritas in veritate in re sociali: the proclamation of the truth of Christ’s love in society**”

Caritas in Veritate n.5

The encyclical’s title encapsulates its main concepts: charity and truth, both of which come from God and, as Pope Benedict states, are planted within each person’s heart, wanting to break forth. Charity is at the heart of the Church’s social doctrine because God is love, with the word *caritas* coming from the Latin for love (cf Pope Benedict’s first encyclical, *God is Love*; John 4.8, 16). Charity is love given by God, received by us and given to others (cf n.5).

Truth, the other main concept, is what keeps this love, this charity, authentic. Without God’s truth, any Christian charitable act would be interchangeable with a pool of good sentiments. The Pope warns that without the truth which comes from God, “social action ends up serving private interests and the logic of power” (n.5) rather than the common good of all peoples.

“**This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you**”

John 15.12

Truth and charity are deeply connected. Truth is sought, found and expressed within charity, and charity is understood, confirmed and practised in the light of truth. This is charity in truth. Truth is important because today’s world can relativise it. Truth enables people to move beyond cultural and historical differences and provides the foundation we need to come together.

Pope Benedict writes that to love someone is to desire that person’s good and to take effective steps to secure it. This is not limited to individuals: desiring and striving for the common good is a requirement of charity and justice. Justice is intrinsic to love since if we love others with charity, then first we are just towards them. Charity demands justice.

See especially paragraphs n.1-8



Roll call. Gertrude Usaiwevu leads a volunteer group of 15 women in the Zvimba district of Zimbabwe. Despite having few material possessions, the women work tirelessly to find money for food and school fees for children orphaned by AIDS.

Photo: Marcus Perkins/Progressio

Fraternal reciprocity

“In everything do to others as you would have them do to you”

Matthew 7.12

Throughout *Caritas in Veritate*, Pope Benedict talks about gift with its starting point of God’s love given both freely and abundantly to all humanity. He echoes his first encyclical, *God is Love*. The challenge in *Caritas in Veritate* is how humanity in its turn can and must reflect God’s gratuitous love to one another.

This gratuitous love that we are called to share with one another – love given free of charge and uncalled for, without being asked – is intimately linked to reciprocity: exchanging with one another for mutual benefit. It is helping one another not for what you may gain in return, but because you can.

See especially paragraphs n.36, 38, 39, 57

“The principle of gratuitousness and the logic of gift as an expression of fraternity can and must find their place within normal economic activity”

Caritas in Veritate n.36

As we mirror God’s love for us in our relationships with others, whether in the field of politics, economics, or daily life, we do so without expecting any return, yet also aware that if we all truly live in this way, in the future we may well also receive this reflection of God’s love when we are in need of it in our lives.

Inextricably connected to gratuitousness are the timeless principles from Catholic social teaching of solidarity and subsidiarity. The current economics are not built on this principle of reciprocity, yet throughout the encyclical the Pope says it must be present and that “both the market and politics need individuals who are open to reciprocal gift” (n.39). Thinking about other people, not just going after as much money as you can make no matter what the cost, is the living out of this gratuitousness.

Standing tall. At the height of the political violence in Timor-Leste in 2006, Sister Guilhermina Marcal helped care for some 23,000 people sheltering in the grounds of her convent. Today, that number is still 1,400.

Photo: Marcus Perkins/Progressio



Authentic human development

“Authentic human development concerns the whole of the person in every single dimension”

Caritas in Veritate n.11

“I have come that you may have life, and have it to the full”

John 10.10

Perhaps the theme Pope Benedict talks about most in *Caritas in Veritate* is authentic human development. Indeed, it may be the biggest challenge and greatest inspiration which the encyclical contains. Without downplaying the reality of the world in which we live and its inequalities (n.27), and the need for all people to work together to bring about change, the Pope also reminds us that development is so much more than having the basic necessities of life.

Building on Pope Paul VI's *Populorum Progressio*, development is seen as more than 'doing'; it's about 'being more'. Flowing from the principle of the inherent dignity of each and every person, human development is about the common good of the whole person and of every person.

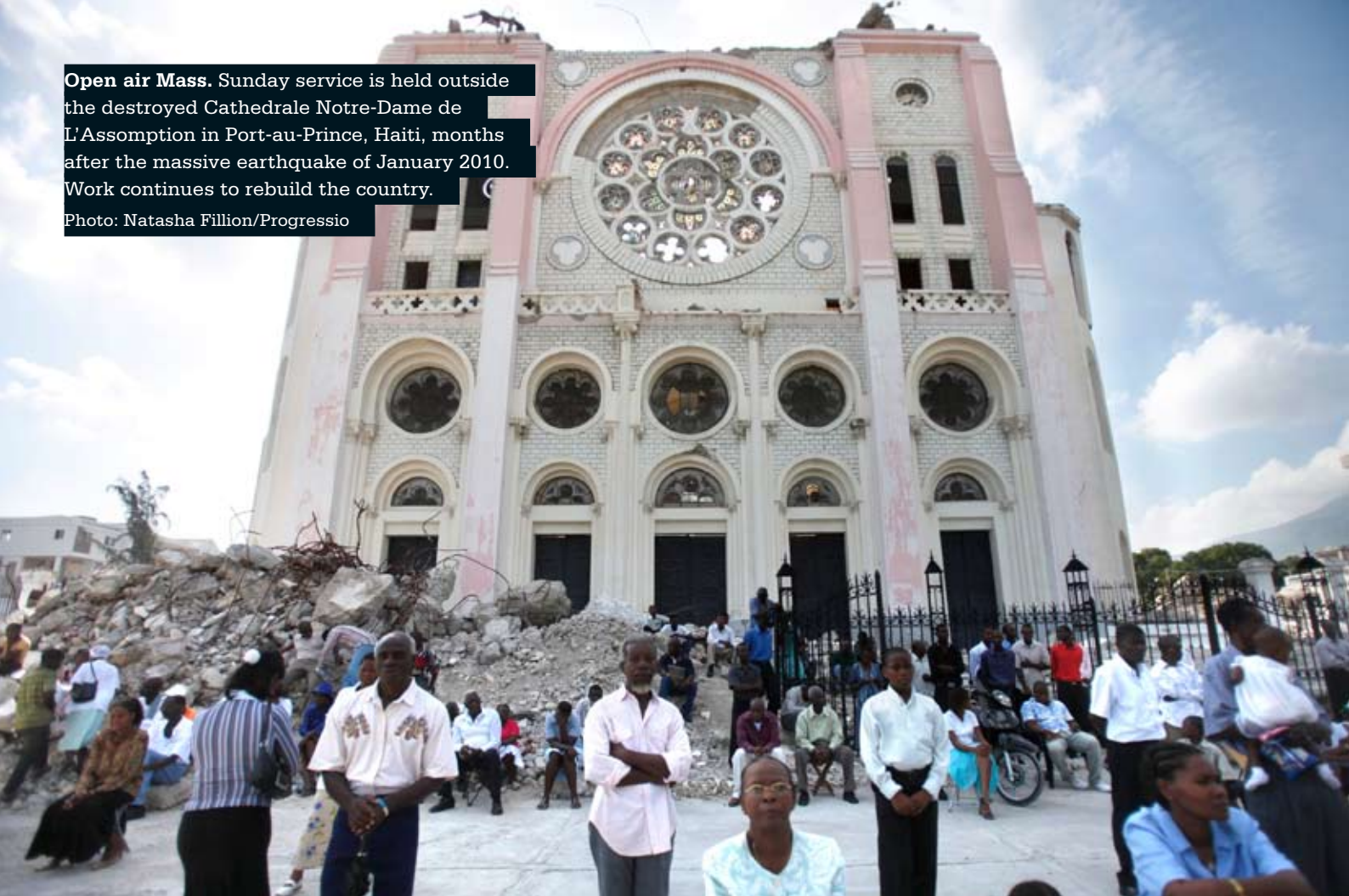
At the heart of the concept is the need of people for God. Denying people the chance to learn more about God is seen as merely enabling them to grow and evolve, not to develop. Through learning more about ourselves, who we really are, who God wants us to be, we enter into a real relationship with ourselves and God; we begin to truly develop.

This concept does not go against the need for the basics such as food and water, or for technological improvements, or for a just international order, subsidiarity and solidarity. But authentic human development requires something extra – looking to people's souls and eternal life, the 'beyond' that the material world and technology alone cannot give.

See especially paragraphs n.11, 16, 18, 27, 29

Open air Mass. Sunday service is held outside the destroyed Cathedrale Notre-Dame de L'Assomption in Port-au-Prince, Haiti, months after the massive earthquake of January 2010. Work continues to rebuild the country.

Photo: Natasha Fillion/Progressio



Globalisation and solidarity

“The human race is a single family working together in true communion, not simply a group of subjects who happen to live side by side”

Caritas in Veritate n.53

Pope Benedict reflects on globalisation, a process that while making us neighbours can increase competition among states, risking rights and solidarity. The Pope finds an important truth in globalisation: humanity really is a single family of peoples. Rather than being its victims, we should champion a new globalisation, one which is person-based, community-oriented, open to God and marked by solidarity.

Each of us is not an insignificant and ephemeral fact, a ‘stranger’ in a random universe. True globalisation should be marked by solidarity, not marginalisation. Pope Benedict offers the metaphor of a family: just as a family does not submerge the identities of individual members, so the unity of the human family does not submerge the identities of individuals, peoples and cultures – true openness means profound togetherness and connection.

“That they may be one even as we are one”

John 17.22

But what is solidarity? For Pope Benedict it is first and foremost a sense of responsibility on the part of everyone with regard to everyone. In our integrated global economy, solidarity with developing countries leads to development. At a more local level, solidarity enables markets to fulfil their proper function; economic solidarity builds up society.

The benefits of solidarity impose duties. Duties are good since they reinforce rights and defend and promote them in the service of the common good. Development, people becoming “artisans of their own destiny” (n.43), means helping people to take up their duties, their responsibilities. The duty to act in solidarity means we must also work for justice for future generations, which includes our responsibility to the environment; future generations must find an earth they can live from.

See especially paragraphs n.19, 38, 42, 53, 57, 67

Revolution! A demonstration in Tegucigalpa, Honduras, protesting against human rights abuses perpetrated since the military coup in June 2009. Despite elections held six months after the coup, repression against social activists continues and Honduran society remains divided and polarised.

Photo: Nuria Zayas/Progressio



An economy for all

“Development is impossible without upright men and women ... whose consciences are finely attuned to the requirements of the common good”

Caritas in Veritate n.71

The publication of *Caritas in Veritate* was delayed so that Pope Benedict could reflect on the economic crisis of 2008/09 and on what Catholic social teaching can say to the situation. Through this reflection, the Pope instructs that justice must be applied to every phase of economic activity because every economic decision has a moral consequence. So it is not economic or political instruments that must be called to account, but individuals, their moral conscience and their personal and social responsibility.

In this way, we require a profoundly new way of understanding business enterprise. Business managers must assume responsibility for all stakeholders, not merely owners. Business enterprises are only ethical if they uphold the dignity of the human person and help achieve a more humane market and society.

“Let love be genuine; hate what is evil, hold fast to what is good; love one another with brotherly affection; outdo one another in showing honour”

Romans 12.9-10

Pope Benedict reminds us that in our political and social lives we are called to practise God's charity, since it is God's design that every person is called upon to develop and fulfil him or herself. In this way every life is a vocation. We are animated by true charity if we work to discover, combat and overcome suffering. Through us, God finds a place in the public realm; openness to God opens us towards our brothers and sisters and towards an understanding of life as a joyful task to be accomplished in a spirit of solidarity.

We must ensure that the whole economy is ethical. This includes all consumers since purchasing is always a moral – and not simply economic – act. So the consumer has a specific responsibility to purchase ethically, and must not be manipulated. We all have a part to play.

See especially paragraphs n.37-40, 45-46



Harvesting the benefits. Angelina Ngoza, a farmer in Malawi, has switched to organic farming, increasing her yields and earning a better income from selling her vegetables in the local market.

Photo: Marcus Perkins/Progressio

Conclusion

Charity in truth is not an easy concept. Inevitably we can find within it ideas which chime with our own views of human development and world economics, all linked through our faith. However, we also need to be open to some of the challenges which Pope Benedict's third encyclical throws at us. Every generation has its own challenges to face and situations to deal with. Pope Benedict reminds us that we have the support of each other as we look to the reality of our world in which we are "living as a family under the Creator's watchful eye" (n.57).

Take it further with Progressio

There are many ways to respond to *Caritas in Veritate* in our own lives and in our communities. To help, we've developed an online home for this guide where you can:

- comment on the themes of the guide and on Pope Benedict's ideas
- share some of the practical actions you'll be taking in response
- read about and comment on what other people are thinking and doing
- download the images, text and prayer we've used (great for assemblies!) and download a PDF copy of this guide

- find questions to use in a group setting
 - share any resources that you've created for others to use
- You can find all of this at progressio.org.uk/civ

People powered development

Progressio knows that "development is impossible without upright men and women" (n.71). All over the world our development workers (or 'local heroes' as we sometimes call them) work alongside communities that are vulnerable or marginalised to help them overcome the barriers that keep them poor. We also need the help of "upright men and women" here in the UK, to give money, to campaign, and to pray for our work. If you feel that you can do any of those things, please get in touch using the details on page 2 of this guide.

More Catholic social teaching

If this is your first introduction to the challenging and inspiring world of Catholic social teaching, don't stop: there's a great deal more to discover. Our colleagues in the *livesimply* network have created a website which uncovers the principles of Catholic social teaching, with videos, podcasts, stories, reflections and resources: see catholicsocialteaching.org.uk



Moving on. Wilbert Joseph's house was completely destroyed in the Haitian earthquake. He continues gradually to remove the debris from his house with a shovel and wheelbarrow, building a new future little by little.

Photo: Natasha Fillion/Progressio

Prayer

Father, your truth is made known in your Word.
Guide us to seek the truth of the human person.
Teach us the way to love because you are love.

Jesus, you embody Love and Truth.
Help us to recognise your face in the poor.
Enable us to live out our vocation to bring love and justice to your people.

Holy Spirit, you inspire us to transform our world.
Empower us to seek the common good for all persons.
Give us a spirit of solidarity and make us one human family.

We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

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