Immaculate Conception Parish

Session Four

Slide 1 Tackling Dehumanising Poverty in the Global South and Introducing Pope Francis's Concept of Integral Human Development

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This session will vary slightly from what was written in the summary which introduced the whole programme because of the new emphasis on Integral Human Development by Pope Francis. So, we have to ask ourselves what does this actually mean? And how does it contribute to Tackling Dehumanising Poverty in the Global South? Pope Francis constantly refers to IHD as a necessary component if we are to heal the world's ills. Action on IHD consists of macro actions such as advocacy and campaigning and – what I want to concentrate on this evening – the micro actions which aid agencies undertake and which we can contribute to in our everyday lives.

In my research on this topic, I tried to find a magisterial (authoritative) definition such as we find with solidarity and subsidiarity but there is none. Though we can trace integral human development (though not using those exact words) back to Pope Paul VI's *Populorum Progressio* (1967), there is no doubt that Pope Francis has expanded on the term and put it at the heart of modern Catholic Social Teaching just as he has done with integral ecology which we covered in the first lecture. I want to try to unpick that this evening as it includes several CST principles and is a suitable summary of what we have been trying to say about the importance of putting CST into practice in our lives as Catholics. I say 'as Catholics' but, as I'll show, the principles can be taken up by people of other Christian denominations and indeed other faiths.

I have isolated five main points to explain Integral Human Development. In general, for Pope Francis, the term IHD expands and builds on what Justice and Peace has meant in the past. He changed the name of the former Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace to the Dicastery for the Promotion of Integral Human Development, incorporating the dicasteries dealing with charity, people on the move (refugees, migrants and asylum seekers) and health as well as integral ecology. So the first point (slide 2) is that Pope Francis forges a new

paradigm of development which is based not only on Integral *Human* Development but also (slide 3) *integral ecology*,[1] seeking solutions not to separate environmental and social crises, but to forge "one complex crisis…….[which] demands an integrated approach to combatting poverty, restoring dignity to the excluded and at the same time protecting nature".[2]

(Slide 4) The second point is that Pope Francis urges us to speak about the need to think of the planet we are leaving future generations. He says,

> Since the world has been given to us, we can no longer view reality in a purely utilitarian way, in which efficiency and productivity are entirely geared to our individual benefit. Intergenerational solidarity is not optional, but rather a basic question of justice, since the world we have received also belongs to those who will follow us.[3]

In other words, the Pope has inserted the entire gamut of services that care for humanity and the planet into the one ecclesial organisation, thus illustrating well one of his main points in *Laudato Si',* that "everything is connected".[4]

In 2017, at a meeting to celebrate the 50th anniversary of *Populorum Progressio*, Pope Francis then called integral human development "the path of good that the human family is called to follow", illustrating how we as followers of Christ must live out the common good in our lives.[5] The South African Dominican theologian, Albert Nolan OP, describes the common good as "whatever is best for the whole human family or the whole community of living beings, or the whole universe in its grand unfolding".[6] At that same meeting, the Pope said that the exercising of solidarity must lead to diminishing the gap between "those who have too much and those who have nothing, between those who discard and

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[1] *Laudato Si'*, pars. 137-144.
[2] Ibid. par.139.
[3] *Laudato Si'*, par.159.
[4] Pope Francis, *Laudato Si': on Care for our Common Home*, (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2015) par. 16.
[5] Pope Francis, Address to Vatican Conference on 50th anniversary of "Populorum Progressio", 4th April 2017. Retrieved from http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2017/april/documents/papa-francesco_20170404_convegno-populorum-progressio.html
[6] Albert Nolan OP, *Jesus Today: A Spirituality of Radical Freedom*, (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2006) 188.

those that are discarded". So, (slide 5) the third point in our understanding of IHD is that it is intimately connected to the common good and that solidarity means tackling global poverty seriously. (slide 6) In *Evangelii Gaudium (the Joy of the Gospel of 2013)*, Pope Francis writes his own definition of solidarity as "the creation of a new mindset which thinks in terms of community and the priority of the life for all over the appropriation of goods by the few".[7]

IHD is not a new development theory for Catholic development agencies but a moral theology that builds on the best community, people-centred development practices while adding insights from Catholic Social Teaching and the lives of the poorest. Pope Paul VI insisted that, to be authentic, development had to promote the good of every person and the whole person, including the spirituality of the person, shifting the emphasis from something external to an inner transformation.

Our (slide 7) fourth point is that IHD promotes a holistic development that covers the whole of life, including the transcendent. After all, in the global South, most communities follow a faith tradition which provides them with the values that inform their decisions on important life matters. (slide 8) The late Kenyan theologian, John Mbiti, wrote that it was religion that coloured Africans' understanding of the Universe and their participation in that universe, and that resulted in the saying 'I am because we are'.[8] Yet religion with its communitarian view of life is scarcely taken into account when westerners design development programmes in the sub-Saharan region where fifty per cent of the world's poorest people live. Based on the foundational principle of CST, the dignity of the human person, IHD respects traditional cultures, values and institutions and works through them so that the people own their own development and programmes which are shaped around their own beliefs.

The (slide 9) fifth point is that IHD's starting point is to uphold the dignity of the human person – the poor person in community and those who accompany them and that requires internal change. It means listening to and empowering the so-called beneficiaries. SCIAF, which I'm proud to say is a leader in IHD, got rid of the patronising language, and now calls beneficiaries 'programme participants'. That means making partners (the community-based organisations which implement programmes on the ground) co-creators of programmes. The people

[7] Pope Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium* (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana 2013). Par 188.
[8] John Mbiti, *African Religions and Philosophy*, (London: Heinemann Educational Books, 1969) 262.

themselves become the 'doers and judges' of programmes.[9] That then builds up their self-esteem which enables them to make their development sustainable.

(slide 10) It is important that the development worker (or supporter) is transformed as well as the programme participant and that they develop, in the words of the late Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI, "a heart which sees" which combines radical empathy with a deeper sense of human flourishing.[10] IHD demands that the so-called beneficiaries are the subjects of their own development and not the objects of someone else's idea of how they should be 'developed' and so the project officers become friends who accompany and facilitate and not people who dictate.

In summary, IHD means for Catholic aid agencies that human dignity comes before unbridled economic growth; that a suitable anthropology emerges out of a Catholic understanding of what 'human' means; that the poor themselves participate comprehensively and actively in their own development; that the demand issuing from the Second Vatican Council documents and *Fratelli Tutti* to engage ecumenically and with other faiths is taken seriously; that, as Pope Francis writes, there is an "integrated approach to combatting poverty, restoring dignity and at the same time protecting nature".[11]

I now want to indicate how this works in practice with just time for a couple of snapshots. I have mentioned before the research I undertook into an early Integral Human Development approach in poor areas of rural Cambodia when I was with the Australian Catholic University. (slide 11) One 35-year-old woman who lived in a cardboard hut and was divorced with three children saw her life turned around. Prior to being trained in what the Cambodians called the 'CST Approach', she and her entirely Buddhist community wouldn't go to the free clinics or send her children to school because of her shame about the part of the village she came from and the poverty she suffered but her confidence was built up, so she now accesses health care and her children go to school. She participates in community meetings and is using the skills she has learned to provide a better income for herself. Relationships have changed with the better off in the village and with the local authorities as they have witnessed the people they regarded as lazy drunkards change their ways and rebuild their lives.

[9] The term 'Doers and judges' comes from Amartya Sen's book, *Development as Freedom* (Oxford: OUP, 1999).
[10] Pope Benedict XVI, *Deus Caritas Est*, (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2005) par. 31b.
[11] Pope Francis, *Laudato Si'* op. cit.

Outside I could see how spotless they kept their little roadside shops. The newly-achieved sense of self-respect was having an effect on lifestyle.

In another rural area, a man I talked to had not only increased his income because of the skills taught to him but now helps his wife with the housework which was not a cultural norm. In the community as a whole there is much less domestic violence. The people used to lead very individualistic lives but now pool their talents, no longer using money lenders who charged huge interest rates but they have their own revolving fund now to give out loans. The young are beginning to stay in the village rather than emigrate to Thailand to find work as a cheap labourer. There are many lonely elderly people because of the massacres under the Khmer Rouge but the community has helped them establish social and savings groups which has facilitated their socialisation. As one man told me, "we now look out for one another and we are enjoying life". It reminded me of a comment by a resident in a care home run by Caritas Czech Republic in Brno, "I came here to die but Caritas has made me see that I am here to live".

(slide 12) Pope Francis compared human life to an orchestra that "performs well if the various instruments are in harmony and follow a score shared by all".[12] Integral Human Development incorporating many of the principles of Catholic Social Teaching is the music which that orchestra should play to get rid of global poverty and to care for our planet. (slide 13) And it isn't only about getting rid of poverty but being on that road we should travel to exercise the common good – no matter where we are. Here is the community working to rebuild someone's house in a village in Timor Leste.

(Slide 14) I thank you for your patience and forbearance over the past months and for the interest you have shown in the attempts of Mary and myself to share with you an understanding of Catholic Social Teaching which brings so much to living a fulfilled life. Thank you to Stephen and Iona for the arrangements and help, and to Fr Jim for the suggestion in the first place and for his generosity in giving us a space and equipment. Mary and I will be providing a list of resources for the website and we will be there for you in any actions you wish to take from this time on.

[12] Pope Francis, Retrieved from http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2017/april/documents/papa-francesco_20170404_convegno-populorum-progressio.html.